

Jews and Ukrainians in Russia's Literary Borderlands

FROM THE SHTETL FAIR TO THE PETERSBURG BOOKSHOP

Amelia M. Glaser



NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY PRESS / EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

Jews and Ukrainians in Russia's Literary Borderlands

Northwestern University Press
Studies in Russian Literature and Theory

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Northwestern University Press
www.nupress.northwestern.edu

This book has been published with the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Glaser, Amelia.

Jews and Ukrainians in Russia's literary borderlands : from the shtetl fair to the Petersburg bookshop / Amelia M. Glaser.

p. cm. — (Northwestern University Press Studies in Russian literature and theory)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8101-2796-8 (cloth : alk. paper)

1. Russian literature—Ukraine—History and criticism. 2. Russian literature—Jewish authors—History and criticism. 3. Ukrainian literature—19th century—History and criticism. 4. Ukrainian literature—20th century—History and criticism. 5. Yiddish literature—Ukraine—History and criticism. 6. Ukraine—Ethnic relations—History. 7. Markets in literature. I. Title. II. Series: Studies in Russian literature and theory.

PG3501.U4G57 2012

891.709'3553—dc23

2011028657

⊗ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48—1992.

For Eran

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A Note on Transliteration and Place Names

In citations from the original Russian and Ukrainian, I have adhered to the United States Library of Congress transliteration system. Yiddish is transliterated following the YIVO system of orthography. I have transliterated proper nouns in keeping with these systems, except in cases where the name has been standardized in English (for example, Gogol, rather than Gogol' or Hohol', Mayakovsky, rather than Maiakovskii, and Sholem Aleichem, rather than Sholem Aleykhem).

The multiple cultural and linguistic communities who have lived in the Ukrainian territories spell the place names that appear in this book in different ways. The Ukrainian city of Lviv, for example, is Lvov to Russians and Lemberg to Yiddish-speaking Jews. In my general discussion of the region, except where this would be grossly anachronistic, I have tried to use the standard Ukrainian spelling for the names of cities and geographical landmarks. However, in order to avoid confusion, I have maintained the Russian place names for sites that are best known in English by their Russian pronunciation, such as Kiev and Odessa (as opposed to Kyiv and Odesa), as well as for cities and towns that are important to this book because of their appearance in Russian literature, such as Sorochintsy (Sorochyntsi in Ukrainian). In most cases of translations from, and references to, literary texts, I have maintained the place name used by the author.



Courtesy of Beehive Mapping

Preface: The Commercial Landscape

Ukrainian, Yiddish, and Russian speakers have long shared the territory that is now Ukraine. This book is about how their three stories, often told separately, are in fact interwoven through mimicry and antipathy, friendship and domination, violence and reconciliation, and especially through trade and competition. This region's markets and fairs, which I shall call "the commercial landscape," played a central role in the development of all three of these literary traditions during the last century of the Tsarist Empire and the early years of the Soviet era. Unlike churches, synagogues, and palaces, markets and fairs were important to all of the groups inhabiting Ukraine. The fair, with its combustible mix of ethnicities, languages, and products for sale, became a crucible for tensions within the greater Tsarist Empire between the provinces and the capital, between men and women, between Jews and Christians, and between revolution and tradition. Despite the many differences among Russian, Ukrainian, and Jewish cultures, the Ukrainian fair has served all three as a stage for depicting cultural and political change, from the European Enlightenment to the Bolshevik Revolution.

This study centers on the Ukrainian territories that overlapped with the Jewish Pale of Settlement. Most of the literature examined here describes the Ukrainian regions of Poltava, Kyiv (Kiev), Chernihiv, Podillia, Volhynia, and, because of its importance as a center of Ukrainian literature, Kharkiv, which bordered the Pale of Settlement to the east. This region was home to Ukrainians, Jews, Russians, Poles, Germans, Romani, Turks, and other ethnic groups. The literature of the largest ethnic groups in eastern Ukraine—the Ukrainians, Jews, and politically dominant Russians—in both Russian and the vernacular (Ukrainian or Yiddish) reveals their sometimes uncomfortable, though artistically and culturally fertile, coexistence with one another. So as to highlight the cross-fertilization that occurred between three geographically coextant language literatures, I have chosen not to include in this study those writers who represent a national consciousness that is in clear political opposition to the imperial one, such as the members

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of the Ukrainian national Cyril and Methodius movement or leading Zionists. Rather, this study is an examination of a handful of ethnically Ukrainian and Jewish writers who view their literature and culture as integral to the landscape and society of the Ukrainian territories. In the broadest terms, this study aims to do two things. First, it shows the relevance of reading a literary genealogy based not only on language, but also on geography. Second, it shows the importance of Ukrainian and Jewish cultural contributions to the Russian canon. Although the Ukrainian and Jewish communities were quite different, by viewing them together on the margins of imperial Russian culture, we gain a sense of the relationships both had with Russian cultural and political imperialism. These examples provide a case study for exploring the complex boundaries of empire.

What I call the “commercial landscape” is, at its most basic level, the literary depiction of a market or fair. This *topos* (which sometimes extends to include less organized market-style trade) is a familiar platform, on which writers from multiple cohabiting cultures describe, parody, and critique the encounters between them. Like real markets and fairs, the literary commercial landscape invites trade, conversation, and theft. For the purposes of this study, I am not concerned with the economics of rural commerce, but with the way it appears in a collective literary imagination. For the Ukrainian and Jewish writers in this study, the commercial landscape could quickly become a metaphor for a larger geographical region, be it the Ukrainian territories, the Pale of Settlement, or the whole of the Tsarist Empire. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, an important body of scholarship has emerged that approaches literary history through the lens of individual groups’ struggle for identity. This book, however, presents an argument for looking not only to national narrative in tracing literary genealogies, but also to geographical proximity and day-to-day contact. The coexistence of Jews and Ukrainians in the Russian Empire provides an ideal case study for this kind of contact.

At this point I must call attention to the way the topics of this book are balanced. Following the first chapter, which provides a historical introduction, the second and third chapters consider writers of Ukrainian origin (Gogol and Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko), whereas the last three chapters center on writers of Jewish origin (Sholem Aleichem, Markish, and Babel). This structure should not suggest that Ukrainians stopped writing about the commercial landscape after the mid-nineteenth century—to the contrary, many contributed to a growing Ukrainian national movement by publishing across the border in Habsburg Galicia. Neither should it suggest that influence ran in a single direction or that Jewish writers, by describing the fall of the commercial landscape, are responsible for spreading anti-capitalism in Russia. The coterminous rise of modern Jewish literature and the banning of Ukrainian-language literature in the Tsarist Empire meant that, while

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Ukrainian-born writers like Gogol and Kvitka can be credited with developing a popular commercial landscape in early nineteenth-century literature, it was largely Jewish writers who narrated the escalating conflicts in the commercial landscape of the late nineteenth century. The pogroms of the early 1880s led many Jews to question their place in Russian society. Furthermore, the tsar responded to the turmoil of the 1880s by placing new strictures on Jewish residence and trade in the form of the economically debilitating May Laws. Whereas the relationship between Ukrainians and the Tsarist Empire presents a creative tension in Russian literature in the early nineteenth century, the utterly different troubled relationship between Jews and the government was crucial to the literary discourse about the Ukrainian region from the 1880s through the Revolution.

The commercial landscape offers a convenient model for viewing the literary conversation that took place across languages and cultures during the century that separated the expansion of the Russian Empire and the implementation of collectivization. As we shall see in the first chapter, which provides an overview of the epoch covered in this book, the Pale of Settlement, much of which Catherine II had annexed from Poland in the late eighteenth century, presented new demographic and cultural challenges to the tsarist regime. Tsarist policy had rendered Russia a fortress empire, guarding its resources against the outside. The Ukrainian commercial landscape, however, with its porous boundaries and diverse population, is the opposite of a fortress. Thus, markets and fairs served as a way for Ukrainian and Jewish writers to unsettle imperial homogeneity. Following this historical introduction, each remaining chapter examines a distinct cultural and ideological perspective on interethnic coexistence.

Nikolai Gogol serves as a proof text for the literary commercial landscape in the Ukrainian territories, and sets the stage for the chapters that follow. Chapter 2, “Nikolai Gogol’s Commercial Landscape (1829–1852),” examines Gogol’s markets, beginning with “The Sorochintsy Fair” (“Sorochinskaia iarmarka”) and continuing with his Ukrainian epic *Taras Bulba*, his St. Petersburg stories, and *Dead Souls* (*Mertvye dushy*). In his early work Gogol presents the marketplace as a vernacular landscape, a symbolic space that helps him to negotiate between the capital and his native Ukraine, as well as to establish literary archetypes. Gogol’s commercial landscape is at once a stage for exaggerated archetypes, a microcosm of a uniquely Ukrainian landscape, and a chronotope that, through its many opportunities for camouflage and exchange, offers a hint of what Kant called the “world beyond experience.” Gogol’s early marketplace settings established a model for the frightening, intercultural, and sometimes metaphysical exchanges that later writers would depict, in different languages, across the same region. By the end of his life, Gogol shifted his focus from representing Ukraine

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for Russian readers to probing human behavior against the backdrop of the broader Russian Empire. This late stage in his career, during which he produced *Dead Souls* as well as a second version of *Taras Bulba*, saw Gogol develop more universal subject matter than he did in his earlier period. Particularly in Gogol's later works commercial exchange, which no longer takes place at an enclosed fair in Ukraine, but across all of Russia, exposes the futile aspects of life and culture.

Chapter 3, “Apelles’s Gallery: Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko and the Critics (1833–1843),” explores the rise of modern Ukrainian literature. Although Hrihorii Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko (Kvitka) was a generation older than Gogol, the two wrote roughly at the same time. I place him after Gogol in this study, since Gogol’s “Sorochintsy Fair” appeared before, and quite possibly inspired, Kvitka’s well-known Ukrainian tale, “The Soldier’s Portrait” (“Sal-datskii patret”). Kvitka, who was both influenced by and in turn influenced Gogol, began writing in Russian but would later initiate a uniquely Ukrainian prose genre. Kvitka uses the commercial landscape to dramatize relationships across class and ethnic lines. “The Soldier’s Portrait” (1833), Kvitka’s first major work in Ukrainian, portrays an artist who tests the veracity of a portrait he has painted by taking it to a fair. Kvitka’s 1840 Russian-language novella *The Fair* (*Iarmarka*), through a combination of the burlesque and the sentimental, presents the fair as a stage for multiple social performances, through which the laughter of the Ukrainian crowd defrauds the pride of the upper classes. Kvitka’s commercial landscapes showcase the relationship between an artist and his audience, a relationship that was, in the 1830s and ’40s, of particular concern to the Ukrainian writer who faced constant attacks by his Petersburg critics for his provincial language and themes.

Chapter 4, “The Marketplace Origins of Modern Yiddish Literature (1842–1916),” begins with a look at the importance of the commercial landscape to the rise of Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment) literature, and culminates with a discussion of the classic Yiddish humorist Sholem Aleichem (Sholem Rabinovitsh), whose work sprang from the trends in nineteenth-century Yiddish fiction and nineteenth-century Russian fiction, in particular Gogol. Yisroel Aksenfeld, a leading *maskil* who wrote in both Yiddish and Russian, wrote what is considered to be the first Yiddish novel, *The Headband* (*Dos shterntikhl*), in the 1840s. In this love story, Jewish community, religious practice, and courtship are all compromised because of financial interests. Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh, whom Sholem Aleichem would dub “the grandfather of Yiddish literature,” began publishing Yiddish fiction in 1863. His literary persona, “Mendele the Book Peddler” (Mendele Moykher-Sforim), linked his project—selling a new literature to his readers—with his literary subject—everyday exchanges among Russian Jews. The pogroms of the early 1880s, along with the harsh government measures that followed

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them, constituted a crisis for Jewish writers and prompted a reexamination of the commercial landscape. Sholem Aleichem, with his comic Yiddish fiction, was offering a corrective to both the political agenda of the Jewish enlighteners and Gogol's stereotyped portrait of Russian marketplace Jews.

Chapter 5, "The Market Crucified: Peretz Markish's Civil War (1917–1921)," considers the destruction wrought on the shtetl market through revolution and war in what was, beginning in 1919, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. With the Revolution, trade came to represent an old, overturned order. World War I (1914–18) and the Ukrainian Civil War (1918–20) were disastrous for western Ukraine, Galicia, and Poland. This period saw the largest wave hitherto of anti-Jewish violence, much of it occurring on market squares. The period also saw the emergence of multiple modernist movements, including futurism, which capitalized on shocking images of religion and violence. Peretz Markish, who would later become a major Soviet Yiddish writer, uses the marketplace as a metaphor for death in his early verse. From his very early, futurist-influenced work to his long expressionist poem *The Mound (Di kupe)*, which is set during the Ukrainian Civil War, Markish develops a poetics that conflates human bodies with merchandise.

This book concludes with a writer who carried a Gogolian cultural duality into the Soviet period. Whereas Gogol's "double-soul" combined Russian and Ukrainian identities, Isaac Babel's "double-soul" combined Russian and Jewish identities, and like Gogol, Babel flaunted his insight into a multiethnic conversation. Chapter 6, "Isaac Babel and the End of the Bazaar (1914–1929)," presents Babel in light of the Revolution and the dissolution of both the geography of the Pale of Settlement and the commercial landscape of the nineteenth century. A century earlier Gogol had entered the Petersburg literary scene with exaggerated tales from his Ukrainian background; Babel brings his Jewish background into his Russian prose, suggesting, as Gogol had done before him, the value of a marginalized ethnic and geographical perspective for a universal Russian literature. Babel's *Red Cavalry* cycle (*Konarmiia*, 1923, 1926) presents a self-fashioned narrator of a new, Soviet, literature. The stories in this cycle associate the disappearance of the commercial landscape with the disappearance of outdated cultural categories. A new order was soon to replace the traditional Jewish communities of Ukraine, as it would replace the commercial landscape itself. In 1930 Babel again traveled to the Ukrainian countryside, this time to witness this process. One of Babel's unfinished projects at the time of his death was a novel chronicling the effects of collectivization on Ukrainian communities.

The commercial landscape is a symbolic space that allows us to view three literary cultures within a shared network, often in direct dialogue or conflict with one another, despite catering to separate communities of readers. The present study contributes to a larger project of repositioning

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our understanding of the Russian literary canon, traditionally centered in St. Petersburg and Moscow, to the cross-fertilizing territory of the Ukrainian borderlands, a territory that remains, even today, a contested cultural space. Among the broader questions this book seeks to answer is whether we might shift from the study of *national* literatures to the study of *coexisting* literatures. What can the relationships among such literatures teach us about cross-cultural relations, both historically and in the transnational culture of the twenty-first century?

Acknowledgments

This book, like all utterances, contains echoes of many conversations, ideas sparked by countless books, and attempts to respond to shrewd questions. Monika Greenleaf, Gregory Freidin, Gabriella Safran, and Steven Zipperstein were ideal advisors on my doctoral dissertation, and all four have continued to offer their time and expertise as my graduate research evolved into this book. I am indebted to several additional colleagues who read parts or all of this book at critical stages: Zachary Baker, Steven Cassedy, Volodymyr Dibrova, Donald Fanger, Luba Golburt, Anne Eakin Moss, Kenneth Moss, Lynn Patyk, Natalia Roudakova, Marilena Ruscica, Joshua Safran, Sasha Senderovich, William Mills Todd III, Kyla Wazana Tompkins, Myroslav Shkandrij, Marci Shore, and two anonymous reviewers. Many colleagues, teachers, students, and friends have offered advice and assistance as this project has taken shape. Of these, I owe special thanks to Svetlana Boym, Marc Caplan, Anastasia Denysenko, Valery Dymshits, Gennady Esstraikh, Judita Gliauberzonaite, Bernard Gowers, George Grabowicz, Kathryn Hellerstein, Dov-Ber Kerler, Viktoria Khiterer, Yuliya Ladygina, Maggie Levantovskaya, Roger Levy, Serena Mayeri, Harriet Murav, Abraham Nowersztern, Ihor Papusha, David Roskies, Efraim Sicher, Timothy Snyder, Alla Sokolova, Yaryna Tsymbal, Claudia Verhoeven, Ruth Wisse, and Alexander Zeyliger. My colleagues and students at the University of California, San Diego, have inspired me and asked the right questions. These scholars are not responsible for the inevitable shortcomings of this project, but their intellectual generosity has allowed me to complete it.

Much of this book was written during a handful of research and writing fellowships. I am grateful to the U.S. Department of Education for a Fulbright-Hays grant that brought me to Ukraine and Russia, and especially to Martha Bohachevska-Chomiak for her help and advice in my travels and research throughout Ukraine. The Geballe family funded a predoctoral fellowship at the Stanford Humanities Center; the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania provided wonderful temporary homes during my postdoctoral

Acknowledgments

research. The American Philosophical Society and the Hellman family sponsored summer research trips to Eastern Europe. The Davis Center at Harvard University provided institutional support during my sabbatical from UCSD.

Of the librarians and archivists who have helped me navigate large bodies of Russian, Ukrainian, and Yiddish literature, I owe special thanks to Zachary Baker of Stanford, Oksana Mikhailova of the National Archives in Kiev, Viktor Kel'ner of the National Library in St. Petersburg, Irina Sergeeva of Kiev's Vernadsky Library, Eliot Kantor at UCSD, and the staff at Harvard's Widener Library and at YIVO in New York. Thanks also go to the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, the National Photo and Film Archive in Kiev, and the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra for their assistance and permission to use images in this book. Some of the stories that fueled this project cannot be found in books. Olga Repai housed me for a week in Kiev and spoke candidly of her father Peretz Markish. I also had the fortune to speak with Markish's widow, Esther Markish, and his son David Markish, in Israel.

I am grateful to the dedicated team at Northwestern University Press, especially to Mike Levine for his faith in the project and Anne Gendler for guiding the book to its completion. Kelly Sandefar of Beehive Mapping helped to visualize Ukraine's myriad intersections. Sections from chapters 5 and 6 of this book were combined in an article in *Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe* 2:53 (2004). A portion of chapter 5 was published in Joseph Sherman, Gennady Estraikh, Jordan Finkin, and David Shneer, eds., *A Captive of the Dawn: The Life and Work of Peretz Markish* (Cambridge: Legenda, 2011).

My family has lovingly supported me as I have followed what began as a fascination with the Russian language to Yiddish and Ukrainian literature. My mother, Carol Glaser, visited Berdichev and Zhitomir with me; my father, John Glaser, read everything; my sister, Bronwyn Glaser, offered sanguine advice along the way. I am blessed to count among my closest friends my three living grandparents—Barbara Glaser, Elton Boone, and the tireless Barbara Boone, who proofread this book and then dove into the entire corpus of Gogol. Finally, I thank Eran Mukamel, who provided the exhilaration on which I completed the first version of this book in graduate school, and who has been my reader, interlocutor, and partner ever since. His footprints are everywhere.

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Expulsion of the Merchants from the Temple (Izgnanie torgovtsev iz khrama),
fresco, Trinity (Troitska) Church, Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, eighteenth century.

Photograph from Alina Kondratiuk, Serhii Krolevets', and Valentyna Kolpakova, *Monumental'nyi zhycopys Troits'koi nadbrannoi tserkvi Kyevo-Pechers'koi lavry* (Kiev: Komp'iuterno-vydavnychiy informatsiinyi tsentr, 2005). Reproduced by permission of the Kievo-Pecherskaia Lavra

Chapter One

From Enlightenment to Revolution: A Century of Cultural Transformation

A CURIOUS RENDITION of Jesus's expulsion of the moneychangers borders the entrance to the Trinity Church in the Kiev Cave Monastery. The monastery's icon school painted this fresco in the 1730s and '40s, and it is positioned in such a way as to suggest that Jesus is driving a group of merchants and moneychangers out the actual church door. Jesus shows a full face, reminiscent of the holy figures of Orthodox icons; most of the moneychangers and sellers of doves, depicted in profile as they bend toward their spilling wares, show only one eye, an iconographic representation of evil.¹ Unlike their counterparts in expulsion scenes by Rembrandt and El Greco, these merchants and moneychangers are made to resemble Jewish merchants of eighteenth-century Eastern Europe: at least two wear yarmulkes, and the others have beards and hats characteristic of Jews of the Ukrainian territory. Beyond the theological relationship between Jesus and the moneychangers, the fresco suggests a conflict between the Christian Slavs and the Jews of this region, as well as between official Christian culture and market commerce in eighteenth-century Kiev. As concern over issues of cultural coexistence in the Ukrainian territories increased in the Tsarist Empire in the nineteenth century, images of market vendors and market products became increasingly important to the art and literature of these territories.

The historical backdrop for this study of literary exchange is a century of profound transformation in demographics, politics, and culture, a century bracketed by the Russian-language writings of a Ukrainian, Nikolai Gogol, and a Jew, Isaac Babel. Gogol wrote "The Sorochintsy Fair," the first of his stories based in the Ukrainian territories, in 1829, and Babel wrote his stories about Stalin's agricultural collectivization in Ukraine in 1930. Gogol, Babel, and a great many writers who came between them evoke a commercial landscape as a means of describing the cultural exchange constantly taking place in the Ukrainian territories. The popularity of the commercial landscape as a

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literary device reflects three historical developments. First, Catherine II had annexed these regions into the Tsarist Empire in the late eighteenth century, bringing in new European ethnic groups. Second, political institutions responded to this newfound diversity by gradually seeking to dominate and modernize ethnic minorities. Finally, and most important for our purposes, these demographic and political trends spurred artists' and writers' preoccupation with the conflicts and intersections among Russia's many ethnicities.

The century covered in this book coincides with the duration of the Jewish Pale of Settlement. The borders of this region were expanded for the last time in 1835; restrictions on Jewish residence were not lifted until 1917. Within the greater Pale of Settlement, which extended beyond Vilna and Vitebsk in the north, Warsaw in the west, and the Crimean Peninsula in the south, the Russian-ruled Ukrainian territories known as Malorossiia, or "Little Russia," offer a remarkable case study in literary and artistic cross-fertilization.² The commercial landscapes depicted in the Russian, Ukrainian, and Yiddish texts in this study were modeled on actual fairs and markets within these Ukrainian borderlands, but all were written for a broader readership throughout the Tsarist Empire and beyond.

Before the partitions of Poland (1772–95) that divided the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth among Russia, Prussia, and Austria, Jews played an integral role in an economic system dominated by the Polish magnates. These nobles in turn granted the Jews freedom and protection. Tsarist Russia had no ready infrastructure to similarly integrate the hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews it absorbed.³ Accordingly, the tsarist government attempted to remake the economic configuration of the region, weakening business bonds among Jews, Polish lords, and peasants.⁴ The Russian majority viewed Jews as outsiders, untrustworthy because of their religious differences and their historical link to the Polish overlords and not easily integrated into Russian conceptions of a nation and its people.

By contrast, Ukrainians' fraught relationship with Russia has constituted what Orest Subtelny has called a "together-separate-together-separate sequence," from the end of Kievan Rus' in the thirteenth century to territorial reunifications in 1654, 1795, 1935, and 1944, and, most significantly, with Ukrainian independence in 1991.⁵ A series of Cossack rebellions in the eighteenth century led Catherine II to dismantle the Zaporozhian Sich, the center of the Cossack infrastructure, and to revoke Cossack rights. In the nineteenth century the Tsarist Empire increasingly subordinated Ukrainians as a native community, limiting their self-determinacy for fear of rebellion and secession. At the same time Russians often exalted Ukrainians for their perceived folk authenticity.

As the empire absorbed Jewish and Ukrainian populations, at the

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same time suppressing the Polish uprising of 1830–31, Russian policy, and by extension Russian culture, was increasingly defensive. “By 1830, when [Russia] had consolidated its hegemony, it could no longer afford to take risks,” writes John LeDonne.⁶ Tsar Nicholas’s decision to protect his ruling classes rather than expand the imperial economy through industrialization and a stable trade policy meant maintaining its control over the south and west through restrictions, rather than through economic incentives. However, unlike the fortress empire, which aims to limit access from the outside, the commercial landscape facilitates the entrance of outsiders, and thus often serves in literary texts as either a reflection or a critique of Russia’s defensive anxieties.

Ethnic and political conflict in the 1830s and ’40s motivated later institutional reforms under Alexander II, most significantly the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. Another Polish uprising in 1863–64 further destabilized the cultural and economic hierarchy in Russia’s western territories. This prompted new cultural strictures against Ukrainians who, the government feared, might now unite and secede. In 1863, all Ukrainian-language publications except belletristic literature were banned in the Tsarist Empire; in 1876, literary texts in Ukrainian were banned as well.⁷ Although many Ukrainian-language writers published their work across the border in the Habsburg Empire, these developments limited the Ukrainian voice in the imperial Russian literary forum. Ukrainian-born Russian-language writers, however, like Vladimir Korolenko, while writing in the language of the empire, nonetheless focused on multiethnic content, making the Ukrainian territories into a stage to present the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Tsarist Empire.

Whereas the tsarist government aimed to connect Ukrainians (whom they viewed as “Little Russians”) to Russians on the basis of Orthodoxy, it approached Jews as potentially dangerous religious outsiders. Tsar Nicholas I, in an effort to break down Jewish insularity, mounted a project of “enforced Enlightenment.” This project coincided in certain ways with the project of Jewish Enlightenment thinkers (in Hebrew and Yiddish, *maskilim*), while working in direct opposition to it in other ways. Although the government prevented the publication of much Yiddish Enlightenment literature, the imperial minister of education Count Sergei Uvarov called upon Jewish enlighteners to consult on tsarist policy and to teach in schools.⁸ New laws abolished the system of Jewish self-governance, known as the *Kahal*, in 1844, and limited dissemination of religious material through temporary closures of many Jewish printers.⁹ Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern writes, in his study of Jewish conscripts into the tsarist army, that Nicholas II “planned to draft Jews into the empire, making them useful, loyal, and assimilated with the rest of the population.”¹⁰ The conscription of young Jewish boys, along

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with Russia's other subjects, into the tsarist army (beginning in 1827), and the founding of government schools for Jews, were further efforts to compel Jewish allegiance to the government. Alexander II, as part of his own liberalizing measures of the 1860s and '70s, gradually allowed greater numbers of Jews to live outside the Pale of Settlement.¹¹ It is, however, important to note that these government efforts toward Jewish Enlightenment were different from the restrictions placed on Ukrainian cultural independence that accompanied the liberation of the serfs. Whereas the government viewed Ukrainians as similar in culture and religion to Russians, it continued to view Jews overall as outsiders and aimed less at assimilating them than at creating order within the multiethnic empire.

In the 1880s Russian and Ukrainian anxieties over Jewish entry into Russian society and culture devolved into blatant and violent antisemitism, and this inevitably penetrated the consciousness of Russian-Jewish writers.¹² Members of the People's Will, a militant revolutionary movement frustrated by the tsar's reluctance to adopt a new constitutional policy, assassinated Alexander II in 1881, which paradoxically led to an immediate reversal of progress toward social equality. This reactionary social climate bred a wave of anti-Jewish pogroms throughout the Pale of Settlement.¹³ Two decades later, Russian citizens demanded increased rights for all, including Jews, in what became known as the failed Revolution of 1905.¹⁴ These steps toward increased rights, however, accompanied a new wave of pogroms in Ukraine. Jews were still widely perceived as outsiders in Russia, and they found themselves in increasing physical danger. Although the Bolsheviks who led the 1917 Revolution declared national minorities, including Jews and Ukrainians, equal in the Soviet Union, the variable Soviet nationalities policy would continue to reinforce differences, sometimes generating, as Yuri Slezkine has put it, "a curiously solemn parade of old-fashioned romantic nationalisms."¹⁵

World War I (1914–18), the Ukrainian Civil War (1918–20), and the Polish Campaign (1920) left the Ukrainian borderlands war-torn and impoverished. Stalin's rise to power in the mid-1920s brought the onset of state-implemented industrialization. In 1929, exactly a century after Gogol wrote his "Sorochintsy Fair," Stalin instituted collectivization, in which the state took control over peasant agriculture and tied millions of peasants to the land, where they were now forced to raise crops that would help to fuel industrialization. The process led to the 1932–33 famine in Ukraine.¹⁶ Although fairs and markets (albeit in drastically altered form) existed during the Soviet period, open exchange, which provided a model for the relationship between communities, ended within the decade following the Revolution. At least temporarily, the commercial landscape ceased to be a site for the critique of contemporary society, becoming instead a window into the past.

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"WHERE THERE ARE TWO THERE IS A MARKET": A BRIDGE BETWEEN COMMUNITIES

To the extent that the Ukrainian commercial landscape was a shared literary *topos*, this landscape includes markets and fairs in widely differing morphologies, so long as these sites evoke the material and social exchanges deemed characteristic of the borderlands in Ukrainian, Jewish, or Russian literature. These exchanges include commercial interactions between coexisting ethnic groups as well as encounters between imperial Russian authorities and the provinces, the latter taking place either during Russians' visits to the borderlands or in Russia proper, where the commercial landscape could be reminiscent of the provinces.

In the words of a Russian folk saying, "Where there are two there is a market, where there are three is a bazaar, and where there are seven is a fair."¹⁷ Although these gatherings are as interchangeable as the saying implies, it is worth differentiating for the sake of clarity. The most generically used term for a marketplace, *rynek* (Russian and Ukrainian) or *mark*



A bazaar in the city of Poltava, early twentieth century.
M. S. Zabochen' collection. Reproduced by permission of the National Photo and Film Archive (TsGAMLI),
Kiev, Ukraine (O-192714)

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(Yiddish), usually refers to an open space that has been divided into either rows of *lavki* (market stalls) or into makeshift rows of individual vendors who have laid their wares on the ground or on a table. The marketplace offers basic food products—locally grown vegetables, meat, dairy products, baked breads, bread flour, and fresh fish. The term *bazar* (bazaar), a word with Persian roots that entered Slavic languages through the Tatar-Mongols, is used in Russian, Yiddish, and Ukrainian but is most often used in discussing Ukrainian markets to describe the location where trade takes place.¹⁸ Taken out of context or in its Russian adjectival form (*bazarnyi*), the word can also imply chaos, a riot, or a loud noise.¹⁹ The words *iarmarka* (Russian) and *iarmarok* (Ukrainian) derive from the German *Jahrmarkt*, literally “yearly market.” (The phonetically similar *yarid* [Yiddish] derives from the Hebrew.) The *iarmarka* (sometimes, colloquially, *iarmonka*) is a fair occurring at set weekly, monthly, or yearly intervals and usually involves the selling of livestock, grain, and manufactured items like furniture and dishware, in addition to dry goods. Whereas the *rynek* serves the local community, merchants often travel great distances to attend the *iarmarka*.²⁰ For the present study, the functional differences among bazaars, markets, and fairs are less



Fair in the town of Putivlia, Kursk region, before 1917.

Reproduced by permission of the National Photo and Film Archive (TsGAMLI), Kiev, Ukraine
(file 70, op. 4, d. 298)

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crucial than their common characteristics as sites of interethnic commercial exchange.

By the early nineteenth century the commercial landscape was undergoing a significant change in the greater Tsarist Empire. Traditional fairs were rapidly giving way to permanent markets, where factories sold goods directly to buyers. According to Michael Stanislawski, this caused “the near-disappearance of the old-fashioned itinerant trader, both Jewish and gentile. Only in the Ukraine did the fairs grow during this period, but there, too, the wholesale merchant played a steadily declining role, losing ground to industrialists distributing their own products.”²¹ Markets and fairs remained central to the livelihood of many Jews and Ukrainians living in Ukraine. However, for those Ukrainians whose livelihood depended on farming, the commercial landscape was a pseudo-urban space, which they visited in order to sell their goods and buy household products. Jews, by contrast, were more often artisans, peddlers, common laborers, distillers of alcohol, and industrial workers, and their trades necessitated proximity to a commercial center.²²

The most common location for a regular market was a Jewish shtetl (*mestechko* in Russian, *mistechko* in Ukrainian, and *miasteczko* in Polish). What defined a shtetl in imperial Russia ranged from the size of the town, to its ethnic breakdown, the presence of a church, the presence of a market, or the presence of Jews.²³ However, shtetls were often redefined as villages, and vice versa, based on political and proprietary interests. An 1887 petition from the small town of Sarazhinka, in the Balta district, attempts to recategorize the village as a shtetl by stating that it has always had a market:

In our village from time immemorial there has been a bazaar every Tuesday at which local products are sold. According to old residents the village of Sarazhinka was until 1830 referred to as a shtetl [*imenovalos' mestechkom*] and, presumably, was officially redesignated as a village [*pereimenovano v selo*] because of a landowner's petition, though de facto it remained a market center [*torgovym mestom*].²⁴

This document illustrates the tendency, in the nineteenth century, to define a shtetl [*mestechko*] as a small town where markets and fairs take place. By the nineteenth century, the village [*selo*] tended to be dominated by Ukrainians, and had few Jewish residents. A village would not usually have a market, though it often had a church. Although villages were, generally speaking, smaller than shtetls, Ukrainian villages often constituted large communities, with populations of several thousand.

Jews made up over half the population of eastern Ukrainian shtetls, which themselves ranged greatly in size.²⁵ Wealthy Jewish homes and the synagogue were often built around the market square. Nonetheless, dif-

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ferent groups constantly competed to, quite literally, corner the market-place. Lukin, Sokolova, and Khaimovich include residents' descriptions of the architectural layout of the market in their study of Ukrainian shtetls. In Trostianets, a shtetl in Podolia, "Jews' homes, together with their market stalls and stores, were arranged primarily at the center of the shtetl, around the market square and on the nearby streets. After a Cossack officer built two large buildings and stores in the region of the train station, he forbade Jews from settling in the vicinity in order to eliminate his competition."²⁶ Jewish market stalls did indeed create competition for the non-Jewish vendor. Strategically placed together, a few Jewish merchants could offer a full range of products. "In welcoming rows are stone market stalls, in which local Jews have small wares, silk ribbons, china, everyday linen and linen from Moscow, scarves of variegated colors, sugar, salt, fish, pepper, eggs, tobacco, snuffboxes, tar, resin, pipes, cigars, games and ropes, various curiosities from the nearby shtetls."²⁷

Market days, which brought peasants from the surrounding countryside throughout Eastern Europe, were windows to the world outside the shtetl. In his 1913 memoirs of his childhood in the Belarusian shtetl Kamenets, Yekhezkel Kotik writes:

Business was slack except for Sundays, because the peasants rarely came into the town during the week. So the women sat in their stores and had nothing to do. On Sundays, however, they set up a great market, and crowds of peasants came and congregated around the doors of the shops and they created such congestion, like flies around sugar-coated window panes.²⁸

If for shtetl-dwellers the commercial landscape was a reminder of the rural landscape of the greater borderlands, markets offered residents from surrounding villages not only a necessary forum for trade, but also the city-like allure of restaurants and taverns. Rural parish priests viewed these temporary urban landscapes with apprehension, particularly when their parishioners visited them on Sundays. One priest complained in 1887 that the Ukrainian peasant was forced to spend the morning of the church service traveling to town, where he indulged in "the spices of lavish foods and in particular drink [*prianostiami iastva i v osobennosti pitiei*]."²⁹ Church authorities concerned that the commercial landscape would negatively distract the rural Ukrainian community were quick to blame social problems associated with markets and fairs on Jews, who were easily presented as opponents of Orthodox Christian worship for their religious difference, and their eagerness to trade on Sundays.³⁰

Historians of Russian-Jewish relations have found multiple connections between antisemitism and trade. Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern cites an

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article from 1810–11, in which Nicholas I wrote that “Yids are multiple in the provinces returned from Poland; they live by trade and entrepreneurship [*promyshlennostiu*].”³¹ Michael Stanislawski remarks, “From the time of the first Partition, every Russian official who discussed the question noted and bemoaned the role of the Jews in trade.”³² Russian writers and ethnographers visiting the western borderlands in the nineteenth century also paid close attention to the Jewish presence in the commercial landscape. Stanislawski cites an 1844 article in the *Journal of the Ministry of the Interior* that asserts, “One might say that every Jew is born a merchant. Anytime something comes into his hands, he is ready to sell it, to speculate on anything.”³³ In his 1858 study of the Ukrainian marketplace, the Slavophile Ivan Aksakov describes the Jewish market vendors in terms of their physical presence, their noise level, and the widely held notion (which he never disputes) that they swindle non-Jews: “At those markets where Jews have the right to trade freely, they lend the bargaining process a particular sort of fervent animation; they run, fuss, barge in, uttering every word with such quick gestures, their swift, guttural speech resonates everywhere, everywhere, at every step, they stop passersby, advertising their wares.”³⁴ Jewish-Ukrainian market exchange persists, according to Aksakov, because of both the overpowering level of Jewish noise, and the architectural layout of the market, which, he suggests, traps the buyer:³⁵

You pass by the Jew, but he continues to name off his products, not listening to you, he begins to take all of the supplies out of their boxes and to a large extent, succeeds in waylaying you, and you, cursing both him and yourself, buy anyway. Such things happen often with the Jews at the Il'inskii fair [Il'inskaia iarmarka], where they take up an entire “Jewish row” [*Evreiskii riad*], up to thirty market stalls of sundry items.³⁶

For Aksakov, who traveled from St. Petersburg to the southwestern borderlands, the commercial landscape was synonymous with uncivilized Jewish space.³⁷ Aksakov’s distaste for the Jewish commercial presence was consistent with Russian responses to Jews in St. Petersburg itself; in the imperial capital, despite strict quotas on Jewish residence, Jews had a visible presence in the city’s Haymarket Square (*Sennaia ploshchad’*) by the mid-nineteenth century. An October 1848 police journal article described the importance of Jews at the Haymarket: “In order to have a clear understanding of the material power of the community of Yids at that time, one had but to glance at the Haymarket Square: this comfortable little spot [*teploe mestechko*] lures them with its cheap lodging and goods.”³⁸ “*Teploe mestechko*” literally means a snug berth or financially comfortable place, implying that a Jewish familial and material space has been established within the capital city. *Mestechko* is

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also the Russian word for shtetl. The double entendre suggests that the Jewish presence in the city's marketplace brings an undesirable borderlands element to St. Petersburg. The article illustrates a perceived lawlessness among the provincial Jewish population that threatens the city's order. "Close to the time of the festivities, the Jews made merry, sang, or, more accurately, shouted deafeningly, wildly, 'Who'll get the lumber, who'll get the firewood,' and as the evening neared its end their feast climaxed in a loud bacchanalian orgy." It is not ethnic Jewishness to which the article's author objects. On the contrary, "those, on whom educated members of the capital have had a positive influence, have left the practices of their fathers, for example, by converting to the Christian faith; but, unfortunately, their number of enlightened comrades-in-arms hasn't been high."³⁹ Rather, the festivities prescribed by traditional Judaism compete with the law and order of the state.

Jewish practice, with its own incomprehensible set of laws and its own calendar, was seen as undermining the imperial capital's infrastructure by breaking down accepted social rules and gender roles. In his memoirs of the turn of the twentieth century, the Russian-Jewish poet Osip Mandelstam appears to have internalized this conflict between the imperial order of his Petersburg upbringing and the shtetl order of his Jewish ancestry when he writes, "The whole well-built mirage of Petersburg was but a dream, a gleaming cover thrown over the abyss, but extending in every direction was a Judaic chaos, not a homeland, not a home, not a hearth, but precisely a chaos."⁴⁰ The foreignness of Jewish rituals in public space, like the seeming lawlessness of the commercial landscape, threatened to remove the delicate mask of sophistication that the governing authorities strove to maintain in St. Petersburg. The commercial landscape was, of course, not limited to the Pale of Settlement, but occurred in all of the major cities and provinces of the Tsarist Empire. In the popular imagination of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, markets and fairs in Russia proper could evoke Russia's multiethnic borderlands. Artists like A. A. Popov frequently sought out fairs as sources for folk scenes.

ETHNIC PRIDE IN THE LANGUAGES OF THE MARKET

The Russian literary critic Vissarion Belinsky wrote, in 1843, "Ours is a dirty, kopek [*kopeechnaia*] literature, which hides away in the caverns of second-hand markets."⁴¹ Ironically, it was Nikolai Gogol, with his tales of rag fairs in distant borderlands, who gave Belinsky hope for the future of Russian literature. Gogol's success was due in part to the early-nineteenth-century fascination with the conceptions of nationhood and the "spirit of a people" (*Volksgeist*) put forth by Johan Gottfried Herder (1744–1803). The term

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Andrei Popov, *A Folk Scene at the Fair in Old Ladoga (Narodnaia stsena na iarmarka v Staroi Ladoge)*, 1853, oil on canvas, 44.5 x 52 cm.

Courtesy of the Russian Museum, St. Petersburg

“nation,” in Herder’s formulation, belonged not to governments and territories but to an ethnically identified group sharing a religion, cultural and culinary traditions, dress, and especially, George Luckyj reminds us, “a common language spoken by the folk masses and recognized by the educated class as their native tongue, even if they normally employed the more artificial and foreign-influenced language of high society, of the court, and of fashionable art.”⁴² To understand how language affected readers’ understanding of the multiethnic commercial landscape, we must examine the embrace or, alternatively, rejection of folklore in each of the literatures explored in this study.

All the writers at the heart of this study possess dual identities: a Ukrainian or Jewish ethnic background and the dominant Russian language and culture. Some of them, including Isaac Babel, might be said to exhibit a triple identity—with Jewish, Russian, and Ukrainian elements surfacing at different points in their work. Necessity or choice led them to write in either

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a national language (Ukrainian or Yiddish, for our purposes) or Russian, the language of the empire. The language an author used affected the role of ethnography and folklore in his or her work. In any of these languages, the commercial landscape could evoke a multitude of national communities, set apart from one another through caricature and accents. Although Russian-language literature was sometimes intended for the minority groups who read Russian-Jewish, or Russian-Ukrainian, journals, any Russian-language text had the potential to quickly reach a wider readership. Writings about similar landscapes in a national language like Ukrainian or Yiddish targeted an educated, if not thoroughly Russified, majority of Ukrainians or Jews, often with the goal of examining a subculture's role within the diverse empire. Modern Hebrew in the nineteenth century, beginning with the literature of the Haskalah, could reach those Jews who had studied classical texts. Yiddish, as the Jewish vernacular, had the advantage of terminology that could vividly describe day-to-day life in the Pale of Settlement. The sophisticated Yiddish literature that developed in the second half of the nineteenth century appealed to new readers. Writers in Ukrainian and Yiddish could respond to Russian literary depictions of ethnic accents with a corrective in the group's vernacular: Russian, like Hebrew, could *evoke* the actual language of a Ukrainian fair, but Ukrainian and Yiddish *were* the actual languages used at the Ukrainian fair.

Although Gogol was born in Ukraine, aspired to be a professor of Ukrainian history, and often used Ukrainian phrases and syntax, none of his works is in Ukrainian.⁴³ What he called his “*dvoedushie*” (“two-souledness”) placed him on the border between imperial Russian high letters and Ukrainian folk culture, and the marketplace allowed him to exploit this cultural hybridity without resolving it.⁴⁴ The conflicts at Gogol’s fair were universal enough to be familiar to his Russian readers, regardless of whether they had set foot in the Ukrainian territories. At the same time, his bits of folklore and geographical references helped to arouse the public’s taste for ethnic *Volksgeist*, and to establish his own reputation as someone who had come from the provinces. Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko negotiated the same kind of Ukrainian-Russian hybridity by writing in both Russian and Ukrainian. Both S. Abramovitsh (Mendele Moykher-Sforim) and Sholem Rabinovitsh (Sholem Aleichem) made conscious decisions to write in Yiddish.⁴⁵ Sholem Aleichem and, more surprisingly, the Soviet Yiddish writer Peretz Markish spoke Russian with their children.⁴⁶ Isaac Babel wove his Jewish ethnicity into his literary persona in much the same way Gogol built upon his Ukrainian background. Babel was familiar with Ukrainian history and Ukrainian realia, knew Yiddish, occasionally translated Yiddish literature, and frequently included Yiddish-accented, as well as Ukrainian-accented, characters in his Russian prose.

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Ukrainian folk songs and verses by “Little Russian” poets were popular in the early nineteenth century. M. Maksimovich published an anthology of Ukrainian folk songs in 1827.⁴⁷ Periodicals devoted to Ukrainian culture, such as the *Ukrainian Herald* (*Ukrainskii vestnik*), *Ukrainian Journal* (*Ukrainskii zhurnal*), and *Ukrainian Miscellany* (*Ukrainskii al'manakh*) were increasingly read in St. Petersburg. Alexander Pushkin’s epic poem *Poltava* (1828) tells of a failed attempt by the Ukrainian hetman Mazepa to gain independence from Russia. Kondratii Ryleev (1795–1826) wrote a number of works about Cossack hetmen, including a poem titled *Mazepa* (1819).⁴⁸ According to Vasili Gippius, Ukraine was, to Russian readers, “a neighbor, a blood relation, yet it could easily be seen, in the half-real light of Romanticism, as a ‘Slavic Ausonia.’”⁴⁹ Russian and Ukrainian writers’ interest in Ukraine’s past both fueled, and was fueled by, interest in Ukrainian history in the West, as well. Lord Byron, who had taken the idea for his 1818 (pub. 1819) *Mazeppa* from Voltaire’s *The History of Charles XII, King of Sweden*, inspired the Russian literary circle to consider the history of the Ukrainian warriors as material for an organic Romantic epic. Russia’s interest in Ukrainian folk culture did not necessarily imply a deep knowledge about the subject. Georgii Fedotov admitted, “We were interested to a criminally small degree in Ukraine’s history over the past three to four centuries, during which time it developed a nationality and culture different from that of Great Russia.”⁵⁰

It was on the advice of the Ukrainian-born writer and ethnographer Orest Somov (1793–1836) that Gogol completed his first short-story cycle, *Evenings on a Village Farm near Dikanka*.⁵¹ In his 1823 essay “On Romantic Poetry,” Somov points to Ukraine to argue against what he claims is the popular belief that Russian literature is too young to have a sense of folk-quality (*narodnost’*): “Without even mentioning those who are in the strictest sense Russian, we have the Little Russians with their sensual songs, and the warlike sons of the Quiet Don, and the courageous settlers of the *Zaporozhian Sich*—all united by their faith and their fiery love for the fatherland, and bearing the same distinctive features in mores and appearance.”⁵² Somov compiled *Tales of Hidden Treasures* (*Skazki o kladakh*), a collection of stories and superstitions from his own semi-scholarly ethnographic research that John Mersereau, Jr., has called “the last grab-bag of anecdotes, legends, and beliefs from Ukrainian folklore.”⁵³ Somov’s most popular works were fairy tales of Ukraine, such as “Kievan Witches” (“Kievskie ved’my”) and “The Evil Eye” (“Nedobryi glaz”). Gogol used this collection in addition to his father’s Ukrainian-language plays and his mother’s letters to him as sources for the folklore he wove into his early stories.

By setting his tales in his native Poltava region, Gogol was claiming a territory of his own, “in which he was more the expert than writers like

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Pushkin and Ryleev, but more the Russian writer than Somov.⁵⁴ Like the Romantics, Gogol used the tools of ethnography to place familiar characters in a believable landscape. However, Gogol was more interested in fiction than folklore. He went a step further than his fellow writer-ethnographers with his development of what the formalists would later call *skaz*, a device by which an illiterate folk-narrator speaks to a literate reader. “Parallel to his work on vulgar *skaz* conversational elements, and comic transformations of the formulas of the ‘high’ style,” writes Viktor Vinogradov, “Gogol resorted to diverse variations of the Romantic style, transforming them and complicating their ancillary elements.”⁵⁵ This style would eventually transform into “Gogolian naturalism,” a genre that reappears in a number of other writers who inhabit this region, expanding to include Soviet and Jewish milieux in the works of Isaac Babel.

Ukrainians, viewed as Russians’ brethren, enjoyed greater trust from the tsarist government and more cultural sympathy than did Jews, who were, like Catholic Poles and Muslim Turks, simultaneously national and religious minorities. The imperial conception of “Russianness” as characterized by Orthodox Christianity and allegiance to the tsar allowed for a view of a Russia rich in diversity, a Russia united under one God and one ruler.⁵⁶ However, the emphasis on similarities between Russian and Ukrainian sometimes served to justify Russian literary critics’ suppression of Ukrainian literature. Vissarion Belinsky asks, “Is it required, and is it possible, to write in Little Russian [*dolzhno li i mozhno li pisat’ po-malorossiiski?*]?” Usually one writes for a public [*dlia publiki*], and the ‘public’ is understood to refer to that class of people for whom reading is a form of constant occupation, in a certain sense, a necessity.⁵⁷ Here Belinsky both assumes Ukrainian culture to be a subset of Russian culture and excludes Ukrainian speakers from the reading public, relegating them to a subaltern category and implying, as Gayatri Spivak might remind us, that they must be represented by Russian cultural institutions, be they ethnography or Gogolian *skaz*.⁵⁸ Although critics like Belinsky actively discouraged writing in Ukrainian, some Ukrainian-born writers not only countered Russian condescension by writing in Ukrainian; they sought readers from outside Belinsky’s imperial reading public. Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko was known to test his Ukrainian stories by literally entering the rural marketplace and reading them aloud to the vendors.⁵⁹

Just as Ukrainian writers had to navigate Russia’s ethnographic simplification of Ukrainian folk culture and its simultaneous suppression of linguistic and cultural self-determinacy, Jewish writers had to counter Russian antisemitism with an alternate narrative about the Russian-Jewish experience. Antisemitism—cultural and racial discrimination against Jews—can be broadly defined as the attempt to systematize anti-Jewish sentiments through specific grievances against Jews’ race, culture, class, or business

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practices.⁶⁰ Jacob Katz places Christian Judeophobia and racial antisemitism along a historical continuum.⁶¹ Katz's understanding of antisemitism is helpful in assessing the place of Jews in Russian and Ukrainian literature, for these characters are often hybrids of biblical and racial stereotypes. In Russia before the partitions of Poland, Christian prejudice against Jews could largely be defined as Judeophobia: regardless of whether they had met actual Jews, Christians largely viewed Jews as antithetical to Christian worship. Institutional and interpersonal anti-Jewish discrimination following the partitions of Poland can be categorized as antisemitism. However, although by the nineteenth century most Ukrainian writers, depending on the region where they lived (and whether it was a city, a town, or the countryside), would have come into contact with Jews, we must bear in mind that a Russian writer from outside the Pale of Settlement might have had little occasion to meet a Jew.⁶² Well into the nineteenth century and sometimes beyond, some Slavic writers perpetuated stereotypes that resembled the Christian Judeophobia that had dominated the collective European imagination since the medieval period. Thus, even as some Ukrainian and Russian writers were portraying Jews based on actual encounters, many nineteenth-century Slavic images of Jews in the commercial landscape still reenacted a New Testament Jewish-Christian antagonism that cast the Jew, if not as moneychanger or Judas, then as a comic facilitator of plot, usually through monetary exchange.

Jewish literature often directly countered these stereotypes. Unlike publication in Ukrainian, Yiddish and Hebrew publication was permitted within the Tsarist Empire from the 1840s until the Revolution, but was subject to severe censorship.⁶³ The languages spoken by Jews in the Tsarist Empire formed a complex network of functions. Jews spoke at least three languages: Hebrew, Yiddish, and one or more local or international languages. Benjamin Harshav calls this the "triglossia" of the Jews of Europe. The languages were not necessarily translated directly from one to another, as someone might translate between Italian, French, and German. Rather, each language played a distinct role in the community—Hebrew was used for prayer, Yiddish for day-to-day Jewish life, and the local language for non-Jewish or local affairs—thereby dividing a large, multilingual vocabulary among three functional categories. However, one must not assume an equality of non-Jewish languages. Russian, like Polish or German, was the language of an empire, occupying a different status from the languages of ethnically defined, often politically disenfranchised, East European communities. Although many Jews living in small towns or villages (especially women, who often worked in the market alongside Ukrainian merchants) would have spoken Ukrainian rather than Russian in the nineteenth century, a Jew living in a large city in the eastern Ukrainian lands would more likely have spoken Russian than Ukrainian. Nineteenth-century Ukrainian litera-

ture sometimes exaggerates these linguistic nuances: Jewish characters (like Russian visitors or tsarist officials) are often made to speak Russian, which emphasizes their foreignness and breaks the flow of a Ukrainian-language text.

Given the triglossic nature of Jewish language, writers could change languages to accommodate their readership. Yiddish literature flourished in the nineteenth century not only as an art form, but also as a vehicle for conveying the ideas of the Jewish Enlightenment and modernization to a wide Jewish readership. It was his discovery of Alexander Tsederboym's Yiddish journal *Folksblat* in 1883 that inspired Sholem Aleichem, whose work had been rejected by several Russian and Hebrew publications, to seek a career in his native tongue. The decision to use Yiddish may have felt like intellectual backsliding to some Russified Jewish writers, but it gave them access to dialogue and settings that simply did not exist in Hebrew.⁶⁴ Although Hebrew literature was, in many ways, more advanced than Yiddish literature in its ideological content, Yiddish, the language of exchange, was a language readily suited to the commercial landscape. The combination of an emerging Yiddish literature and the commercial landscape allowed writers to target a new readership: to truly effect change in Jewish lives the vanguard of modern Jewish fiction had to address men and women who lived, studied, and traded in the vernacular.⁶⁵

Hebrew was the accepted language of the Jewish intellectuals of the time; for them, this switch to Yiddish might be compared to Gogol's use of the *skaz* form. Jewish intellectuals saw themselves as stooping to the language of the unenlightened, albeit literate, Yiddish-speaking masses. But whereas the ethnographic fashion of the early nineteenth century drew Russian writers toward an exotic (and presumably illiterate) Ukrainian folk culture, Jewish writers of the late nineteenth century had a more complex relationship to the very notion of tradition. The attractive aspects of traditional practice and ancient tales were tempered by a religious hegemony that opposed social and scientific progress.⁶⁶ For the founding practitioners of modern Yiddish literature, folk ethnography was necessarily deeply ironic and self-critical. Yiddish stories of the nineteenth century may have adhered to folk form, but the message often pointedly criticized the limitations of Jewish tradition. That is to say, the Yiddish writers who emerged from the Jewish Enlightenment made use of folk motifs in their prose, while taking care to critique Jewish tradition rather than romanticize it. By the turn of the twentieth century, a rich Yiddish modernism was developing, and the Ukrainian region of the Pale of Settlement was its epicenter. The modernist Dovid Bergelson, who was at the center of the Kiev literary circle, believed, according to Gennady Estraikh, that Ukraine (rather than Poland) "was the cradle of real talent."⁶⁷

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Even in a contested territory, literary motifs and styles are fluid commodities, and are traded across languages and communities. The combined voices that make up this study approximate a bazaar with their diverse accents and languages. Just as the gritty marketplace has influenced the halls of literary high culture, the Ukrainian borderlands, thanks to writers who were not ethnically Russian, changed the face of Russian literature. Since most Ukrainian- and Yiddish-language writers were well read in Russian, the influence was mutual. For a writer in Ukrainian or Yiddish, there was no more compelling Russian model than the double-souled Gogol who managed to show, beneath the positive, merry atmosphere of the fair, the frightening potential for cultural and spiritual obsolescence. Taras Shevchenko, father of the Ukrainian national revival, references the well-known “laughter through tears” soliloquy from *Dead Souls* in his 1844 poem “To Gogol” (“Hoholiu”): “You laugh . . . while I must weep.” Sholem Aleichem draws from the same passage in his self-authored epitaph: “and just as the people were laughing . . . he cried alone, so that no one would see.”

ALL THE WORLD'S A FAIR: STAGING AN EMPIRE

In the present study, the commercial landscape is a framework for conceptualizing relationships across multiple languages and cultures within a shared territory—a microcosm of a multiethnic empire. In conceptualizing the commercial landscape as a microcosm of a complex, interethnic society, I am indebted to past scholars who have explored literary markets and fairs to explain trends in a single language, particularly theorists who focus on the western European Renaissance, a period when theater was almost inextricable from the marketplace.

The historian Jean-Christophe Agnew argues that the Renaissance, with its popular drama, generated a movement toward realism and Romanticism that was “theatrical in the sense that such realism took the social world to be so thoroughly ‘staged’ as to make its truths accessible not so much by what those performances claimed to display as by what they unwittingly betrayed.”⁶⁸ Fairs were the most common stages for the kind of unmasking involved in this shift toward literary realism. Ben Jonson (1573?–1637) opens his play *Bartholomew Fayre* with an invitation, promising a wealth of people, language, and objects:

Your Maiesty is welcome to a Fayre;
Such place, such men, such language and such ware,
You must expect: with these, the zealous noyse
Of your lands Faction, scandaliz'd at toyes,

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As Babies, Hobby-horses, Puppet-playes,
And such like rage, whereof the petulant wayes
Your selfe have knowne, and have been vext with long.⁶⁹

A contemporary of Shakespeare, Jonson was an astute observer of class relations and used speech patterns to illustrate class, setting, and strength of character. As David Riggs writes in his biography of Jonson, “Within his plays, grammatical sloppiness in a character’s speech is an infallible sign of moral and intellectual weakness, and the same rule applied to society at large: ‘Wheresoever, manners and fashions are corrupted, language is. It imitates the publicke riot.’”⁷⁰ Peter Stallybrass and Allon White show that at the time Jonson was writing, a “popular play” bore the strong influence of its audience and performance space, “for within a classical aesthetic, the text was ‘contaminated’ both by its subject-matter and by its relations to the ‘dirt’ of the theatre and the theatrical marketplace.”⁷¹ The Soviet scholar Mikhail Bakhtin, who generally looked unfavorably upon performance, surmises that the fine line between Renaissance comedy and market speech is due to a de facto double-casting of the market vendor as actor: “The colloquial and artistic forms are sometimes so closely interwoven that it is difficult to trace a dividing line, and no wonder, since the barkers and vendors of drugs were also actors in performances at the fair.”⁷²

The commercial landscape has, moreover, a literary precedent as a secular public forum. Shakespeare’s marketplace is, as Patricia Parker has shown, both the antithesis of biblical authority and a forum for publication.⁷³ As Seth Lerer observes, “the Shakespearean theater is a market phenomenon, and the plays often take as their themes the ways in which men and women are themselves commodities in a marketplace of power or ideas.”⁷⁴ Lerer suggests that Shakespeare’s references to the marketplace appear most clearly in his Roman plays, which attests to the strong connection in the Renaissance imagination between Elizabethan theater and the Roman forum, but also appears in historical episodes such as Hamlet. Both forms of public performance mix art with politics and the economics of persuasion: “Lend me your ears—and in the process, give me your purses and your hearts. Rulership becomes an act of salesmanship, a pushcart politics played out in Forum stalls.”⁷⁵

Shakespeare’s market is moreover the site of cultural and linguistic camouflage, a characteristic mirrored in the *skaz* Gogol and his followers employed. In *Henry IV, Part I*, LaPucelle instructs his soldiers to

Take heed, be wary how you place your words;
Talk like the vulgar sort of market-men
That come to gather money for their corn.⁷⁶

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The soldiers' obscuring of their noble origins displays the versatility of the English language and, in a characteristically Shakespearean gesture, draws attention within the play itself to the art of play-acting. When Prince Hal and Falstaff are flaunting their dexterity with language in the Boarshead Tavern, Hal boasts of his ability to "drink with any tinker in his own language."⁷⁷ Patricia Parker observes, "*I Henry IV*, like *Merry Wives* and the Lancastrian histories generally, is filled with the bourgeois language of the marketplace, including resonances of 'debt' (I. ii. 209) and 'redeeming time' (I.ii.217) that surround the older biblical language of redemption."⁷⁸ The fascination with language, empire, and commerce among Russian writers of the early nineteenth century drew them to borrow Shakespearean devices of camouflage and wordplay. Indeed, as Monika Greenleaf reveals in her study of Pushkin, *Henry IV* (parts *I* and *II*) had a particular influence on the Romantic Shakespeareans.⁷⁹

The rapid proliferation of print culture in Russia in the 1830s was a further factor that created parallels between Pushkin and Gogol's era and the western European Renaissance, an era when the still young printing press offered a new forum for popular vernacular literature that could take the place of previously spoken opinion and entertainment.⁸⁰ Elizabeth Eisenstein has shown that print culture following the Gutenberg era echoed recitation and conjured images of an ideal gathering space, even if "the printing of poems, plays, and songs altered the way 'lines' were recited, sung, and composed."⁸¹ Although Gary Marker warns us against understanding the history of Russian printing through the lens of technological determinism, the combination of theater and commerce in markets and fairs made them natural settings for printed imitations of vernacular performance.⁸² As we shall see in the next three chapters, however, far more important than technology to the recitative and vernacular qualities of modern literature in Russia was cultural mimicry, whether parodic, complementary, or corrective. The nineteenth-century fair in Russian and Ukrainian literature was becoming a new stage on which to examine the cultures of the Tsarist Empire. The writers in this study, particularly Gogol, Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, and Abramovitsh, often perform two roles, writing and marketing their stories as worldly authors and performing their ethnic identities through their folkloric narrators.

In the works of Gogol and Kvitka, the commercial landscape is, at least on the surface, portrayed as a place for celebration. But, as we shall see in chapter 4, between the 1880s and the turn of the twentieth century markets became sites of violent interethnic conflicts. The last two chapters of the present study focus on the breakdown of the commercial landscape. In approaching the transformation of the commercial landscape during and immediately following the Revolution (chapters 5 and 6), it is worth bearing in

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mind Mikhail Bakhtin's attention to the celebration, destruction, and rebirth present in the Western carnival tradition. Such rebirth is insinuated in much of the literature of revolution. Originally a medieval church festival, carnival is celebrated just before Lent in both the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, and it includes feasting, dancing, and theatrical events, often involving devils and other "unholy" characters.⁸³ In his writings on Francois Rabelais (1490–1553?), Bakhtin presents the marketplace as the complementary opposite of the structure of the church or government: "In the marketplace a special kind of speech was heard, almost a language of its own, quite unlike the language of Church, palace, courts, and institutions."⁸⁴ Bakhtin suggests, in an early comparison of Gogol and Rabelais, that Gogol offers similar fodder for a study of popular festivity. In this early study Bakhtin is concerned with "those features of Gogol's work, which, independently of Rabelais, reveal his direct connection with forms of popular festivity on his native soil."⁸⁵ Bakhtin's proposal that markets enter the tradition of carnival helps to explain the transformative power of the commercial landscape, particularly in the social breakdown and regeneration that accompanied the Bolshevik Revolution and the rise of the Soviet Union.⁸⁶

However, Bakhtin's conception of the marketplace in his study of Rabelais, which has provided the requisite epigraph for most twentieth-century studies of carnival, fails to acknowledge the risks and uncertainties inherent in the commercial landscape. The writers considered in this book highlight the dangers of the porous market, which could admit unwanted products and individuals. Gogol's devils penetrate the otherwise merry atmosphere of his early stories, paralyzing normal exchange and reminding those present of the unholy. Rather than positively overturning society to let the crowd do good, Gogol's fairs pervade every element of society, exposing shallow, mundane materialism.⁸⁷ After the pogroms of the 1880s Jewish writers felt these dangers less on a spiritual, or even cultural, level than on a physical level, for the market-going crowd's potential to become violent increasingly threatened Eastern Europe's Jewish communities.

Whereas Bakhtin's simplified market-church dichotomy confines the commercial landscape to the shadow of organized religion (or to its secular replacement—the all-powerful state), I am proposing that the commercial landscape be read as a social center in its own right. Ukrainian markets and fairs may have existed on the margins of the imperial Russian territory; however, they are themselves models of the empire, inclusive of its margins, its porous borders, and its class, religious, and ethnic conflicts. The Ukrainian commercial landscape imposes its own relevance on Russian, Ukrainian, and Yiddish readers, forcing them to place themselves within a large, heterogeneous empire. As we shall see in the next chapter, Nikolai Gogol, by bringing the Ukrainian fair to the Petersburg bookshop, brought these margins to

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the center of Russian high art. Nikolai Nekrasov attests to this in his 1878 narrative poem, *Who Lives Well in Russia?* (*Komu na Rusi zhit' khorosho?*), in which he laments Russian peasants' preference for *lubok* picture books, with their coarse chivalric tales, to the high culture of Gogol and Belinsky:

When will the peasant, instead of Blücher
or the idiotic "Milord"
Bring Belinsky and Gogol
home from the bazaar?"

Kogda Muzhik ne Blukhera
i ne milorda glupogo —
Belinskogo i Gogolia
*s bazara poneset?*⁸⁸

Chapter Two

Nikolai Gogol’s Commercial Landscape (1829–1852)

*It's dreary living in the hut.
Oh, take me away from home,
To where there are throngs and noise,
Where the girls all skip about,
Where the boys carouse!*
—From an ancient legend¹

SO BEGINS NIKOLAI Vasilevich Gogol’s 1829 “The Sorochintsy Fair” (“Sorochinskaia iarmarka”): an epigraph from an “ancient legend” (*starinnaia legenda*) of dubious origin, a wistful longing for urban entertainment. This anonymous opening summons a procession of wares that will form an immense marketplace:

Since morning the endless string of ox-carts with salt and fish had been making its way along the road. Mountains of earthenware pots, packed in straw, bumped slowly about [*medlenno dvigalis'*], annoyed, it would seem, at their confinement to the dark; only at a few points would some brightly decorated bowl or tureen ostentatiously make an appearance from behind the tall wattle side of the cart and draw the onlookers’ admiration with its gorgeous patterns [*privlekala umilennye vzgliady poklonnikov roskoshi*].²

And so begins Gogol’s career as a Russian comic prose writer, making his way, amidst a parade of props, characters, and costumes, into the landscape of a story. The similarity between the entrance into the fair and the entrance into Gogol’s fiction is anything but accidental. The stories that comprise the collection *Evenings on a Village Farm near Dikanka* (*Vechera na khutore bliz Dikanki*), Gogol’s first significant contribution to Russian literature, present the reader with a fair of salt, fish, oxen, and artfully painted pots (their craftsmanship a reminder of provincial art). “The Sorochintsy Fair” provides a map of Gogol’s commercial landscape. With its vehicles, market stands,



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and goods for sale, the landscape itself is essential to the exchanges that will take place there.

Gogol may have been only twenty-two when he published “The Sorochintsy Fair,” but the story introduces a relationship between space, time, and material objects that would give structure to his later work.³ Gogol instills a collective spatial memory in the minds of his readers with his commercial landscape. The fair, however, is ephemeral, and the transience of this pseudo-urban space reflects the impermanence of life itself. From the folk-influenced *Evenings* to the Petersburg tales to the heroic epic *Taras Bulba*, Gogol’s commercial landscape undergoes its own series of transformations, from naive and folkloric to deceptive, finally emerging as the quintessential metaphor for the commodification of the human spirit in his narrative tour de force *Dead Souls*. Gogol’s fair would also provide a framework and literary address for the development of the geographically cohabitant Russian, Ukrainian, and Yiddish literatures that emerged in the Pale of Settlement.

Gogol’s early commercial landscape already consists of three defining motifs: the theatrical, the ethnographic, and the “otherworldly.” These motifs gave shape to Gogol’s poetics. The marketplace is first and foremost a stage—a surrogate, perhaps, for the St. Petersburg stage on which Gogol had hoped to produce his father’s Ukrainian plays.⁴ As we have seen in chapter 1, the marketplace was an ideal theater for the masking and unmasking that was essential to Renaissance drama. Gogol borrows many of his vernacular themes from the Renaissance theater, renewing them to fit his own nineteenth-century context. Moreover, like the puppets in the Ukrainian nativity theater, *vertep*, Gogol’s characters perform their archetypal identities for the reader. The recognizably Ukrainian setting of Gogol’s early stories has been interpreted as both a unifying and a distancing device vis-à-vis Gogol’s imperial Russian readership. Adherents to the “universalist” school of Gogol scholarship contend that folk culture, which had come into fashion among the Romantics, often stood in for an authentic, collective Slavic soul, which included Russians as well as Ukrainians.⁵ The “national” camp claims that Gogol’s ethnographism is a subtle act of resistance, and that he asserts Ukraine’s difference from Russia through cultural and political shibboleths.⁶ I take the position that Gogol was writing, to the best of his ability, for both a Russian and a Ukrainian audience, and that he used the stereotyped dichotomy between rural Ukrainians and urban Russians to simplify (and sometimes to thwart) metaphors for pure soulfulness and corrupt materialism.⁷ Just as the cosmopolitan characters who appear in Gogol’s Ukrainian stories show that capitalism and the Enlightenment have reached rural Ukraine, elements of Gogol’s Ukrainian marketplace appear

in his St. Petersburg stories to expose the actual chaos and lack of sophistication among residents of the capital. The tension between Gogol's Ukrainian and imperial allegiances, a tension that Gogol would refer to as his "double soul" (*dvoedushie*), is moreover what allows later writers of widely diverse ethnic and ideological affinities to reinterpret Gogol's commercial landscape for their own purposes.⁸ Finally, in its function both as a puppet theater and as a place for economic exchange, Gogol's fair is a landscape with trapdoors. The marketplace, multiethnic and driven by capital and currency, is vulnerable to the ideas and products of the outside world. And, like the audience in a theater, Gogol's readers are always aware of two worlds: the fictional world that Gogol has staged for them, in which they, through their suspension of disbelief, are complicit, and the world beyond Gogol's "stage." By limiting "The Sorochintsy Fair" to a theater-like landscape, Gogol can selectively expose openings in the fictional diagesis through which the puppeteer, God, audience members, and accidents of fate might intervene in the plot. This occasional transparency and penetrability allows Gogol to offer a glimpse of his own vision of the eternal.⁹

STARTING WITH SOROCHINTSY: A FOUNDING FOLKTALE

Gogol situated what would be his first widely read story in his birthplace.¹⁰ Born Nikolai Vasilevich Gogol-Ianovskii in 1809 in Sorochintsy, Gogol grew up in a middle-class, Russian-speaking family, studied in Nezhin, and like many of the Ukrainian-born writers of his time headed to St. Petersburg to test his mettle. After an unsuccessful attempt at poetry with his famously bad idyll "Gants Kiukhel'garten," Gogol shed his poetic pseudonym, V. Alov, and instead embellished his Ukrainian persona and turned to fiction set in Ukraine.¹¹ The writer's grandfather had adopted the name "Gogol'" as part of a scheme to invent a noble heritage. The family's real name, "Ianovskii," suggested Polish origins, which would have been particularly stigmatizing for a Ukrainian-born writer following the 1830 Polish uprising against the Tsarist Empire.¹² Mostly free from family and old acquaintances Gogol built a selective heritage for himself, made up of layered connections and Ukrainian folklore.¹³ The decision to begin *Evenings on a Village Farm near Di-kanka* in Sorochintsy was an important part of this mythmaking. With its novel combination of a mask, a market, and a theater, his work met with immediate success.

"The Sorochintsy Fair" comprises two distinct layers of narrative: the frame story is a simple love affair between a cunning folk hero and an attractive heroine; an internal folk-style tale involves a devil and his red coat.

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As in many of the stories in *Evenings*, Gogol's metadigetic internal folktale penetrates his frame story, changing the outcome for the characters. The commercial landscape in "The Sorochintsy Fair," complete with a tavern, aisles filled with commodities, and a pastoral backdrop, as well as the theme of perpetual marketplace exchange, is necessary for the plot twists and outcome of both stories.

The frame narrative is a love story. Paraska, an eighteen-year-old, black-browed Ukrainian beauty, travels to the fair for the first time. Hrytsko, a dashing fellow in a white coat, shouts a compliment at her, and then flings mud and insults at the girl's stepmother Khivria (an act that is later justified by Khivria's clandestine affair with a priest's son). This Rabelaisian gesture is in keeping with Bakhtin's observation that "the slinging of dung, the drenching in urine, the volley of scatological abuse hurled at the old, dying, yet generating world [are] (in the dimension of laughter) like handfuls of sod gently dropped into the open grave, like seeds sown in the earth's bosom."¹⁴ Hrytsko's slinging of dirt is as regenerative as his compliment to Paraska: overturning the old and planting his seed is precisely what he has in mind. Later the young heroine wanders through piles of wares, longing for the feminine lures of ribbons and lace. In this scene of sensory cross-fertilization amid goats and crayfish, Hrytsko catches Paraska "by the embroidered sleeve of her blouse" (*za shityi rukav sorochki*) and the pair fall in love.¹⁵ The sleeve of the maiden's blouse connects her to the ensuing folktale about a devil and his missing sleeve; moreover, the type of blouse she wears, the uniquely Ukrainian *sorochka*, is mnemonically linked to the town of Sorochintsy itself. Female and devilish interests are stitched together more and more tightly as the story develops.¹⁶

Hrytsko quickly convinces the girl's dim-witted father, Cherevik, to approve of the match. The deal is sealed "in a popular market eatery [*v izvestnoi iarmarochnoi restoratsii*]—beneath a Jewess's tarp [*pod iatkoiu u zhidovki*], which was strewn with a great fleet of casks, bottles, and flasks of every sort and age."¹⁷ After initially offering his blessing, Cherevik changes his mind, reprimanded by his heavy-handed wife for promising his daughter to the mud-slinging youth. The wedding is called off, and Hrytsko must, with the help of marketplace folklore and his many friends at the fair, craftily win back his father-in-law and bride.

A seemingly unrelated folktale is told for Cherevik's benefit, and it is about another marketplace exchange gone awry. An errant demon takes to drink and falls into debt. He is forced to pawn his bright red coat "to a Jew who peddled vodka at that time at the Sorochintsy fair" (*zhidu, shinkovavshemu togda na Sorochinskoi iarmarke*).¹⁸ The demon promises to return in a year, but the Jew cannot help but sell the coat to a passing gentleman, for "such cloth, even in Mirgorod you couldn't procure the likes of it [*i v*

*Mirgorode ne dostanesh'!]!"¹⁹ The devil returns to find that the coat, having passed from merchant to merchant, has been shredded and distributed around the fair.²⁰ Ever since, the devil returns each year in the form of a pig to gather his lost scraps of jacket. The ubiquitous red cloth, which had assumed a devilish life of its own, would continue to reappear in Gogol's later work, with its final cranberry-hued incarnation appearing in *Dead Souls* on the back of Chichikov, whose own pig-like presence finds him wandering from market to market, collecting the misplaced souls of the Tsarist Empire.*

The temporary owners of the red coat appear in order of their respective threat to the Slavic soul. The devil is the initial owner; the Jew, an ethnic and religious Other, begins the process of transmitting the superfluous item to the fair by selling it to a gentleman (*pan*), whose class, within the folk hierarchy of the Dikanka stories, suggests a dangerous affinity for foreign customs. (Given the context, the *pan* is likely Polish.) "Some Gypsy robbed the gentleman and sold the coat to a market woman; she brought it back to the Sorochintsy fair."²¹ It is only the final owner, a peasant selling butter (presumably not a foreign import, but the fat of his own land), who recognizes the coat for what it is: "Ekh, evil hands have thrown me this coat!" (*Ekh, nedobrye ruki podkinuli svitku!*)²² The Ukrainian peasant has virtue enough to destroy the item, but fragments of the devilish material remain at the fair.

The Jew who pawned the devil's coat is punished with this most famously non-kosher of animals: just as he begins "to pray in the Jewish fashion [*po-zhidovski molit'sia bogu*]," he sees "pigs' snouts poking in at every window."²³ Thus the folktale concludes with a vague sense of poetic justice. Cherevik and other listeners look up to find that a pig's face has appeared at the window of the tavern "as if to ask, 'And what are you doing here, good people?'"²⁴ The listeners can only assume that the devilish legend has penetrated the real Sorochintsy fair.

In actuality, a Gypsy has helped Hrytsko to stage a reappearance of the pig-demon. Soon after hearing this story, Cherevik is chased by someone he can only assume is the demon himself. Paraska's terrified father loses consciousness and loses track of his possessions. Accused of stealing his own horse and grain, he is bound in ropes like an animal taken to market. Hrytsko heroically appears to untie him and presents him not only with the returned objects, but also with buyers for them. By righting what has gone terribly wrong, Hrytsko wins the peasant's gratitude and Paraska's hand. *Khitrost'* (craftiness) and *mudrost'* (wisdom/wits) are two of the qualities in a market vendor most admired and feared by a largely uneducated market-going community. Though his only business interest is that of his own marriage, Hrytsko, possessed of both these qualities, successfully navigates the market

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for his own purposes. The reader is aware that Hrytsko has given the peasant nothing that was not already rightfully his. Similarly, little of lasting value is produced through the marketplace turnover and exchange, except for the successful weaving of a story.

GOGOL'S FATHERS

Gogol distributes quotations from his Ukrainian literary predecessors liberally throughout *Evenings*. Most of these epigraphs come from Ivan Kotliarev'skyi, the father of modern Ukrainian literature, and Gogol's own father, Vasilii Hohol'-Ianovskii, an amateur Ukrainian playwright. Citations from Kotliarev'skyi's Virgilic travesty, *Eneïda*, illustrate the overlapping plot lines in "The Sorochintsy Fair."²⁵ A curious image from *Eneïda* immediately follows the legend of the pig-devil and his coat:

. . . Pulled his tail between his legs, like a dog,
Like Cain, starting to shake all over;
Snuff seeped from his nose.

. . . *Pidzhav khvist, mov sobaka,*
Mov Kayin, zatrusivs' uves';
*Iz nosa potekla tabaka.*²⁶

These lines signal Gogol's grounding in the Ukrainian literary tradition.²⁷ They also separate Gogol's folk legend from his frame story and, by synecdoche, invite the devilish pig snout to appear at the window of the tavern in the subsequent chapter. The decontextualized hero of Kotliarev'skyi's *Eneïda* draws attention to his own uninvited nose by filling it with snuff. Kotliarev'skyi's reference to Cain, moreover, helps to signal the story's turn from young love to the realm of devils.

Gogol inherited the comic tradition from both sides of his family. A relative on his mother's side, Vasilii Transky, wrote *vertep*-influenced farces.²⁸ A dabbler in writing, Vasilii Hohol'-Ianovskii adhered strongly to the archetypes of *vertep*. *The Simpleton, or, The Wits of a Woman Outwitted by a Soldier* (*Prostak, abo khitroshchi zhinky, perekhytreni Moskalem*) parodies the antagonism between a husband and his crafty wife. It consists of five characters: Roman (a former Cossack), Paraska (his young wife), Sotskii (Paraska's godfather), the church chorister (Paraska's paramour), and a soldier.²⁹ The farce begins when Paraska sends Roman hunting with a pig while she cavorts with the church chorister.³⁰ That Nikolai Gogol would name the young bride in "The Sorochintsy Fair" Paraska may not be entirely coinci-

dental. Indeed, she is soon to be married, and may soon tire of the pompous Hrytsko. Only time separates Gogol's Paraska, the archetypal maiden, from her stepmother Khivria (who, in a comical side story, is caught in a love nest with the son of a priest). Hrytsko himself reminds us of this by calling the stepmother a "hundred-year-old witch" (*stoletnaia ved'ma*), thereby implying that her age is her greatest fault. By the end of "The Sorochintsy Fair," Gogol's young bride Paraska may be poised to turn into the scheming (but ultimately disillusioned) Paraska of Hohol-Ianovskii's *The Simpleton*.³¹

Citing Hohol-Ianovskii and Kotliarev'skyi as authentic sources of Ukrainian lore gave Gogol a Ukrainian literary genealogy. But it also served to distinguish between the nascent Ukrainian-language literature and Gogol's project, which he hoped would reach a larger audience, and which was rooted in a broad pool of Russian and European literature.³² As Iurii Lotman suggests, literary eras should be defined not only by what writers write at a given time, but by what they read. "Pushkin, for instance, in 1824–5, took Shakespeare as his most topical writer, Bulgakov read Gogol and Cervantes as contemporaries, and Dostoevsky is just as relevant at the end of the twentieth century as he was at the end of the nineteenth."³³ Gogol came of age during the flowering of Romantic literature in Russia. The 1820s saw regular publication of not only the works of Zhukovsky, but translations of E. T. A. Hoffmann and Walter Scott. In drafts of *Dead Souls*, Gogol's narrator claims that on his wall hung Shakespeare's portrait, alongside those of Pushkin, Cervantes, Ariosto, and Fielding.³⁴ Though it is difficult to prove exactly which of Gogol's European predecessors he actually read, it is significant that he recalls portraits of his immediate Romantic predecessors and figures from the western European Renaissance in his own masterpiece. Gogol's marketplace, like that of many of his Russian contemporaries, is a forum for concealment, for classical themes and vituperative language, a combination often associated, as we have explored in chapter 1, with the theater and fiction of the Renaissance.

Gogol also drew themes and characters from his Russian and Ukrainian contemporaries, sometimes basing a work entirely on another author's plot line, and he was in dialogue with writers and publicists with an interest in folklore, such as Mikhail Pogodin and Orest Somov.³⁵ Many have suggested that Gogol modeled his *Government Inspector* (*Revizor*) on A *Guest from the Capital or Turmoil in a District Town* (*Priiezzhii iz stolitsy ili sumatokha v uezdnom gorode*), a play by his older contemporary Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, whom I shall discuss in chapter 3.³⁶ Gogol's early stories, especially those in his *Mirgorod* cycle, bear a strong resemblance to the Russian novels of Vasilii Narezhnyi. Narezhnyi's 1825 novel, *The Two Ivans, or A Passion for Litigation* (*Dva Ivana, ili Strast' k tiazhbam*), features a conflict between two characters named Ivan, a description that also applies

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to the characters in Gogol's more popular "The Story of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarreled with Ivan Nikiforovich" ("Povest' o tom, kak Ivan Ivanovich posorilsia s Ivanom Nikiforichom").³⁷

Not only do Narezhnyi's Ivans provide a prototype for Gogol's Ivans, but Gogol also seems to have mined Narezhnyi's novel for scenes that he would incorporate into his commercial landscape.³⁸ Narezhnyi sets one of his chapters at the Mirgorod fair, where he describes the sound of the livestock, which defines the landscape from miles away:

Far away from the fairgrounds one could hear whistles, the clapping of cymbals; if you add to this the neighing of horses, the braying of bulls, the bleating of sheep and the barking of dogs, it's easy to get a sense of the various pleasures waiting there. [Daleko ot mesta eia raspolozheniia slyshny byli zvuki gudkov, vol'nok i tsimbalov; prisoedinia k semu rzhanie konei, mychanie bykov, bleianie ovets i lai sobak, mozhno imet' poniatie o tom veselii, kakoe ozhidalo tam vsiakago.]³⁹

In "The Sorochintsy Fair," Gogol records strikingly similar audible pleasures ("The noise, the swearing, the mooing, bleating, roaring" [*Shum, bran', mychanie, bleianie, riov*]) to those found in Narezhnyi's *Two Ivans*.⁴⁰ Reviews of *The Two Ivans* criticized its author for, among other things, "a lack of taste, as shown by his choice of low subject matter; a lack of refinement, as demonstrated by his often coarse language; a lack of measure, as betrayed by his tendency toward grotesque caricature."⁴¹ This apparent lack of taste and refinement offered Gogol a marketplace aesthetic that he could adapt to his own ends.

THE COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE AS A THEATER

In the preface to *Evenings*, Gogol's narrator, the beekeeper Rudyi Pan'ko, invites his readers to participate, virtually, in a village gathering.

Where we come from, my dear readers, if you'll pardon the offense (you, perhaps, will get angry that a beekeeper would speak to you so directly, as if you were some kind of in-law or chum [*kak budto kakomu-nibud' svatu svoemu ili kumu*]), where we come from, on the farm, we have an old tradition: as soon as work in the fields lets up, when the peasant settles down for a long winter's rest atop the stove, and our brother hides his beehive in a dark cellar, when there isn't a stork in the sky, not a pear on the tree and you can't see anything but the evening, and probably someplace far off at the end of the street there glimmers a little fire, laughter and in the distance you can hear

songs, the strum of a balalaika and now and then a fiddle too, talk, noise . . . that's what we call an evening gathering—a *vechernytsa*!⁴²

The narrator's description of music and stories around a fire, followed in the subsequent story by a traditional site for a performance—a fair—evokes the oral origins of literary discourse.⁴³ Like Ben Jonson, with his seemingly oxymoronic introduction to *The Bartholomew Faire*, "Your majesty is welcome to the fair," Gogol's Rudyi, with disingenuous subservience, invites his listeners to bridge ethnic (Russian/Ukrainian) and class (aristocrat/peasant) divides. Gogol's narrator addresses his audience as "dear readers," then apologizes for his familiarity and colloquial language. This mocking obsequiousness suggests that the written text is a poor substitute for a more authentic spoken original. Gogol, with *Evenings*, may be presenting folktales, but he frames them with a careful eye to literary tradition, from the declamatory to the theatrical, from the spoken to the printed word. "Sorochintsy," the town where Gogol was born and baptized, recalls the author's birthplace; "the fair" recalls the birthplace of European literature.

Ukraine's nativity puppet theater (*vertep*) constitutes an older tradition of combining the marketplace and art. Scholars have long observed that many of Gogol's types come directly from Ukraine's *vertep* plays, the Russian carnival theater (*balagan*), and the Western commedia dell'arte.⁴⁴ *Vertep* was similar to *balagan* and commedia dell'arte but had its own set of scripts, including secular as well as religious characters, and was typically performed at festivals and in markets, especially at Christmastime. Despite its simplicity, *vertep* shares a number of traits with Shakespearean theater. Both were conceived in the sixteenth century.⁴⁵ Both genres are connected, through thematic references and their vernacular style, to the marketplace.⁴⁶ Both involve frequent parabasis, which bridges the gap between audience reality and stage reality. With this device, according to Paul de Man, the author asserts "the ironic necessity of not becoming the dupe of his own irony and discovers that there is no way back from his fictional self to his actual self."⁴⁷ John Russell Brown, in his study of Shakespeare, claims "the device was so common in Elizabethan performances, so constantly to be expected, that authors, scribes and printers seldom bothered with stage-directions."⁴⁸ It is common for a character from commedia dell'arte, *balagan*, or *vertep* to address the audience without stepping out of character, an act that expands the stage to include the surrounding arena, which, in its Ukrainian context, was often a marketplace.

What sets Gogol's marketplace-stage apart from that of his Renaissance predecessors is that it went beyond subtly drawing attention to masks to explicitly unmasking prominent officials, wealthy landowners, and other members of polite society. This theatrical tradition of exposure derives from

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Gogol's commedia dell'arte and *vertep* influences. The market, with its perpetual chaos and movement, is the natural habitat for carnival motifs, and it undermines appearances by flaunting them. Valery Briusov goes so far as to suggest that hyperbole is Gogol's only artistic tool: "All the power of his art is concentrated in one device and one only: an extreme thickening of colors."⁴⁹ Indeed, by exaggerating the colorful overcoats of the world, Gogol highlights the emptiness that is hidden underneath.⁵⁰ Briusov's statement is itself an exaggeration, for Gogol was a master of subtlety as well as hyperbole.⁵¹ It is only in his disguise as a government inspector (*revizor*) that the harlequinesque Khlestakov unveils the true corruption and buffoonery of a provincial government (and of the audience).⁵² The market mass, whose vulgarity and superstition is assumed from the outset, reveals the corruption of the upper classes by finding its reflection in the hidden corners of wealthy homes or in the false organization of bureaucrats' offices.

The *vertep* stage was built on two levels, the lower half housing a secular play, which alternated between comedic and serious subjects, and the upper half a religious play. A similar alternation between comical and serious subjects can be found in Gogol's *Evenings*. Madhu Malik has noticed that "Sorochintsy Fair" and "A Lost Letter," stories that might be likened to theatrical comedies, are placed beside the more tragic "St. John's Eve" and "A May Night."⁵³ Malik argues that we can easily find the structure of a *vertep* dichotomy between the sacred and profane in Gogol's work if we replace the classical Christian sacred realm with Victor Turner's expanded understanding of the sacred, which includes "a cultural realm which is defined as 'out of time,' i.e., beyond or outside the time which measures secular processes and routine."⁵⁴ The characters that most frequently appeared on the lower level of the stage often possessed devilish qualities, but existed in real time. They fit in far more comfortably with the audience and its marketplace surroundings.

In the *vertep* theater comic puppets occupied the lower realm. The most popular archetype was "Petrushka" (sometimes known as "Van'ka rata-tui"), a contrarian who, in a series of stock plots, tends to either beat his adversaries or be beaten. Petrushka, often compared to the western European "Pulcinella" or "Punch" character, spoke through a high-pitched whistle, had a large nose and hunchback, and "sported a red peasant shirt and a cap of some sort."⁵⁵ Petrushka's antics belong to marketplace humor and often exploit ethnic stereotypes. A popular chain of events could include Petrushka bargaining with a Gypsy for a horse, falling from the horse, making fun of a doctor who comes to treat him, killing a German clown who competes for the audience's attention, attempting to pass the dead clown off as market goods ("Potatoes, potatoes! Piglets, piglets! [*Kartofeliu, kartofeliu! Porosiat, porosiat!*]"), and fighting with a Tatar who is selling dressing gowns.⁵⁶

Gogol rarely names his characters for the *vertep* types they represent, one exception being Petrushka himself, Chichikov's lackey in *Dead Souls*, whose clothing and features belie his indebtedness to the popular puppet: "It's hardly necessary to add to what the reader already knows, that is, that Petrushka went about in a rather wide brown frock coat [*v neskol'ko shirokom korichnevom siurtuke*] from his master's back and had, as is the tradition for people with his calling [*po obychaiu liudei svoego zvaniia*], a large nose and lips."⁵⁷ Gogol's dim-witted Petrushka pokes fun at himself and the audience; his act of reading is more performative than substantive, which reflects a general ignorance of belles lettres, despite an ambitious literacy initiative that took effect while Gogol was writing. The Kiselev reforms, which were initiated under Nicholas I and carried out between 1837 and 1858, offered peasants new incentives to learn to read.⁵⁸ It would be decades, however, before peasants who had gained literacy would have the training or leisure time necessary to enjoy literature.

Like Akaky Akakievich, who earns the reader's cruel laughter in "The Overcoat" by admiring the shape of the letters he writes and not their content, the lackey Petrushka makes himself ridiculous by reading with no regard for the words' meaning: "He liked not so much the things he read about, but more the very act of reading, or, better put, the reading process itself, the way that from those letters there eternally emerged some word or other, even when the Devil only knows what it means."⁵⁹ Gogol, with this passing reference to the devil, advises us that this kind of inattentive reading possesses an endemic blasphemous combination.⁶⁰ The character is, at times, overtly slapstick. Following Chichikov's visit with Sobakevich, "Petrushka tried to take [Chichikov's] boots off and nearly pulled his master onto the floor with them."⁶¹ Gippius observes that earlier variants of *Dead Souls* include additional humiliations of the Petrushka character: "[Gogol] cuts from Chapter III the conversations between Selifan and Petrushka, with the narrator's gibes at Petrushka's 'ugly mug.'"⁶² We may infer that Gogol leans on the ready-made *vertep* hyperbole in his initial drafts, and that his later redactions render such likenesses more subtle.⁶³

In the twentieth century, the archetypes of *vertep* and *balagan* would again be transformed, this time into sympathetic victims of entrapment and desire. In Diaghilev and Stravinsky's ballet *Petrushka*, the popular puppet enchants his audience at the Shrovetide fair.⁶⁴ Having been accidentally given too much life, he sees the confines of his puppet box for what they are. If Gogol's characters are rarely as wholly sympathetic as Diaghilev's modernist Petrushka, they are far ahead of their time in their tragic awareness of the world beyond the confines of the stage or story.⁶⁵ Although there are numerous shadows of *vertep* in Gogol's later work, it is *Evenings*, and especially

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“The Sorochintsy Fair,” that contains a cast of characters closely resembling nativity puppets.⁶⁶ Before she meets Hrytsko, the heroine of the story marvels at the mix of peoples: “A Gypsy and peasant slapped hands violently after a bargain, then cried out from pain, a drunken Jew slapped a woman on the backside; arguing fishwives hurled abuse and crayfish . . . a Russian strokes his long, goatish beard with one hand, while with his other . . .”⁶⁷ As in *vertep*, which is often performed by a single puppeteer, the interactions are played out by pairs of characters.⁶⁸ Moreover, the slapstick humor in this scene depends on the unlikely mixture of people, the carnivalesque, and sexual innuendo. The peasantry in Sorochintsy would have been Ukrainian, the officials and soldiers Russians, and the passing gentry ethnic Poles. Jews would have dominated the merchant class, and Gypsies, depicted in Gogol as devilish and untrustworthy, often dealt in horses or provided musical entertainment. What happens when Gypsy meets peasant meets Russian meets Jew? Even the natural result, in the pre-Emancipation Tsarist Empire, will sound like a punch line. But to this Gogol adds an element of exaggerated slapstick. Once a year in Sorochintsy, he implies, all lines of cultural order are broken down, creating hybrids that are not only hilarious but merge the sacred and the vulgar, the upper and lower realms of the *vertep* theater.

Past scholars have argued that Gogol’s primary concern was movement between the world of the demonic and that of the mundane. Dmitri Merezhkovsky has suggested that Gogol’s greatest challenge was to turn the devil into a figure of comedy. “The Devil is the denial of God and consequently the denial of the infinite as well, the denial of all beginnings and ends . . . The Devil is the noumenal median of being, the denial of all heights and depths—eternal planarity, eternal *banality*.” We can understand the *noumenal* to include those elements of Gogol’s work existing outside the confines of the original story and its setting, as opposed to the *phenomenal* elements of the known world, or, for the purpose of fiction, of a story’s diagesis. Merezhkovsky’s analysis sheds light on the ability of Gogol’s devils to transcend a story’s material setting. However, Merezhkovsky fails to accurately categorize Gogol’s demons, simultaneously calling them “banal” and placing them in the noumenal “world beyond experience.” In Gogol’s use of *vertep*, rather, the comic devils serve as small ambassadors, capable of appearing on either the lower “human” level of the puppet stage, or the upper “godly” level.⁶⁹ Gogol’s devils seldom appear in an obvious form. Instead, they take the form of other archetypes, often the Jew or another foreigner, a woman, or a pig. The connection between the archetypal characters in *Dikanka* is itself crude, and their actions depend upon Gogol’s layered fictional reality. Gogol’s pigs will always haunt Jews, his women will always draw nearer to mirrors, and his pretty girls are always, on some level, already old witches.

GOGOL'S PIGS

Pigs, the ideal marketplace beasts, might be considered a cross between humans, devils, and merchandise. The New Testament parable of “the Gadarene swine” places a herd of swine in the role of the proverbial scapegoat, the swine serving as a vehicle for purging evil spirits:

Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand) and were choked in the sea.⁷⁰

Like the Gadarene swine, the pig snouts [*svinnye ryla*] that haunt the Jew and the pig-devil who collects his scraps of coat in “The Sorochintsy Fair” absorb the sins of the community and protect it from further downfall. These swine-scapegoats return in “Christmas Eve” (“Noch’ pered rozhdestvom”), when Vakula’s lovers, having been hidden in sacks, are mistaken for large pigs, and in “The Lost Letter” (“Propavshchaia gramota”), in which the narrator’s grandfather is surrounded by transformed demons: “The snouts of pigs, dogs, goats, birds, horses, all of them pulled and pushed themselves forward to kiss him [*vse povytiagivais’ i vot tak i lezut tselovat’sia*].”⁷¹ The pig, both a *vertep* object and a biblical archetype, frequently appears in Romantic literature as a subversive or endearing approximation of a human. In Shelley’s parodic *Oedipus Tyrannus*, a chorus of swine represents the multitudes.⁷² Sir Walter Scott’s virtuous “Gurth the swineherd” attempts to protect his pigs in *Ivanhoe*.⁷³ Gogol’s pigs are disseminators, synecdoches for markets, noses, and sometimes phalluses.⁷⁴ Pigs are more carnal, and more ridiculous, versions of human beings. The pastoral idyll of Hrytsko’s pursuit of his maiden is muddied and sexualized by the fleshy pig-demons.

Iuri Lotman writes, “Into the concept of space go also such ‘indivisible’ phenomena as music, dance, feasting, battle, and comradeship uniting men into a continuous, undivided whole.”⁷⁵ The thickening of the plot in “The Sorochintsy Fair” is further accompanied by the dispersal of market products, including animals. When a pig-devil sniffs around the market, searching for his last pieces of sleeve, the merchant/merchandise relationship is upset. The pig should be a product, but in Gogol’s unusual market he is walking around like a merchant or buyer. Objects, livestock, and people exchange places in Gogol’s market to form the “single monstrous body” of the commercial landscape.⁷⁶

Gogol’s pigs are, like his coats, also masks that obscure more important

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themes under the ubiquitous clutter. This clutter is capable of becoming a tragic distraction. As Vladimir Nabokov writes, “The torrent of ‘irrelevant’ details (such as the bland assumption that ‘full-grown young pigs’ commonly occur in private houses) produces such a hypnotic effect that one almost fails to realize one simple thing (and that is the beauty of the final stroke).”⁷⁷ In “The Story of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarreled with Ivan Nikiforovich,” the protagonists’ comparisons of one another to pigs give way to a “brown pig [*buraia svinia*] [who] ran into the room and snatched, to the surprise of those present, not a pie or a crust of bread, but Ivan Nikiforovich’s petition, which lay on the end of the table, its pages dangling off.”⁷⁸ The pig’s sudden entrance exposes the true disorder of the landowners’ behavior, masking with chaos the tragedy of a lost friendship. Humor is a consolation prize for the loss of innocence. One of Gogol’s rare explicit mentions of *vertep* occurs in this story. Ivan Ivanovich, having just put his old clothing and sword outside to air, is mesmerized by their splendor:

Everything, mixed together, composed for Ivan Ivanovich a very engaging spectacle, as the rays of the sun, touching in one place or another a blue or green sleeve, a red cuff or a piece of golden brocade, or playing on the tip of the sword, turned it into something unusual, like that *vertep* act migrant theater folks take from village to village. Especially when the throng of people, tightly shifting, gazes at King Herod in his golden crown or at Anthony driving the goat; a fiddle wafts from behind the puppet theater [*za vertepom*]; a Gypsy strums his fingers on his lips instead of a drum and the sun sets and, unnoticed, the fresh southern chill of night presses tighter against the fresh shoulders and breasts of the chubby village girls.⁷⁹

The sun on Ivan Ivanovich’s objects creates a spectacle that serves the same purpose as the magical commercial landscape in Sorochintsy. It transforms the scene into a theater, transporting the character (and the reader) into the realm of the aesthetic.

By casting his fictional characters as *vertep* archetypes, Gogol is not only working within a traditional Ukrainian literary genre; like Diaghilev after him, he evokes the arena containing both the stage and the audience. Through the marketplace setting and the layering of tales in “The Sorochintsy Fair,” the reader is drawn into the vortex of the story. We are reminded of the mayor’s famous aside to the audience in *The Government Inspector*. After learning that Khlestakov was not the true government inspector, the mayor cries, “I can’t see anything. I see something like pig-snouts [*svinye ryla*], instead of faces; and nothing else,” and a few lines later, “What are you laughing at? You’re laughing at yourselves!”⁸⁰ In *The Government Inspector*, pigs, whose snouts are the most intrusive of Gogol’s noses, who are capable

of removing important documents, and who frighten peasants and Jews at the fair, are played not by actors but by the audience.

UKRAINIAN FASHION

Debates about *narodnost'*—national authenticity in literature—were springing up in St. Petersburg in the 1820s and '30s. Pushkin claimed that “*narodnost'* in a writer is a virtue that can only fully be valued by his compatriots: for others it is either nonexistent or might even seem a shortcoming.”⁸¹ Yet Gogol, writing in Russian with just enough folk references to spark interest but not enough to be viewed as a threat to the imperial agenda, used the fashion for *narodnost'* to his advantage. In St. Petersburg there was a new eagerness to view “Little Russia” as an idiosyncratic but somewhat idyllic folk complement to Russian high culture. It made perfect sense for Gogol, who wanted to succeed in the world of Russian letters, to serve his readership a taste of Ukrainian folk culture—fresh flavors from his own backyard. Gogol fashioned himself as the actor/storyteller in an ethnic performance. As Richard Gregg writes, in his early years in St. Petersburg Gogol sought to emphasize his Ukrainian origins through a Cossack-inspired upsweep known as a “*khokhol'* [Ukie] (the similarity to Gogol’s name was, according to Gregg, part of the effect). Only later, when he had established himself, did he adopt his trademark Shakespearean bob.⁸²

Scholars have compared the festive ambiance of *Evenings* and *Mirgorod*, both set in Ukraine, to the darker tone of Gogol’s later work, viewing the difference as evidence of the author’s underlying Ukrainian allegiance. Gogol’s south has been read as warmer, happier, and far more wholesome than the Russian north,⁸³ a corrective to the “colorless” Great Russians,⁸⁴ a response to the colonialist atmosphere of the Tsarist Empire. “While he Russified his Cossacks,” writes Edyta Bojanowska, “Gogol also Ukrainianized the idea of Russia. The cradle and treasury of Slavdom in Gogol’s view, Ukraine could reorient Russia toward its Slavic roots and thus serve as an antidote to excessive Westernization, so inimical to an incipient national culture.”⁸⁵ Indeed, the national implications of Gogol’s Ukrainian work are important and reveal much about his conflicted identity and his mistrust of the St. Petersburg fashion for western Europe. However, a purely national reading of Gogol’s work would ignore a crucial layer of irony: Gogol’s hyperbolic Ukrainian landscape functions most importantly as a metaphorical theater that extends well beyond the confines of the Tsarist Empire.

Never particularly rigorous about historical accuracy (and, by most accounts, a failure as a historian), Gogol was taking advantage of a cultural map that already existed in the minds of his readers, a map that equated

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Ukraine with innocence and Russia with the corruption inherent in the culture of European Enlightenment.⁸⁶ Whereas writers like Taras Shevchenko and Mykola Kostomarov were working toward Ukrainian linguistic and geographic independence, Gogol was using a ready-made dichotomy, in which rural Ukraine stood for the purity of the Slavic soul and the West-leaning residents of the capital represented corrupt materialism, to speak to his readers on a metaphorical level. Ukraine, an idealized geographic origin that Gogol certainly held dear, was also an available *metaphor* for a cultural loss of innocence.

Gogol sought to make his setting as believably authentic as possible, at least to the extent that this provided a vivid backdrop for his stories. He filled his *Book of Various and Sundry* (*Kniga vsiakoi vsiachiny*) with words, facts, and folklore drawn from works like Yakov Markovich's *Notes on Little Russia* (*Zapiski o Malorossii*) (1798), Ivan Kulzhinsky's *The Little Russian Village*, and letters from his mother describing costumes, from the village priest to the bride. In 1829 he wrote, "In the next letter I await from you a description of the full costume of the village, the names of the dress worn by our peasant girls down to the last ribbon [*do poslednei lenty*]."⁸⁷ Kulish complained that there were enormous inaccuracies in Gogol's descriptions of Ukrainian weddings.⁸⁸ Some Ukrainian critics remain skeptical of Gogol's concern for Ukrainian culture; Ivan Sen'ko argues that Gogol's cultural artifacts are limited to the realm of the allegorical. "The author of *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka* could only help the decaying social sphere in Ukraine [*suspil'noho zhittia v Ukraini*] with Aesopian language, historical allusion, eloquent chronotopes."⁸⁹ Gogol might have corrected many of the mistakes in "The Sorochintsy Fair," such as the omission of the wedding details, including the traditional *druzhky*, *korovai*, and *divych-vechir*, had he followed the information given in his mother's letters.⁹⁰ The most plausible argument for these oversights is that Gogol simply wrote these sections before receiving his mother's letters, and did not want to change them.⁹¹ Gogol's confidence in ignoring his mother's details implies that he was more interested in using existing archetypes in his poetic system than in correcting assumptions about Ukraine.⁹²

The caricatured result contains parables applicable to broader issues, such as the falsity of crowds and the transience of life. Of course, national and universal concerns are not mutually exclusive, and Gogol's works always function on two levels, the immediate and the eternal. Ukrainian words, set against a backdrop of Russian description, signal a character's Ukrainian identity. The glossary of Ukrainian terms that Gogol includes at the end of *Evenings* establishes the Ukrainian identity of the cycle's narrator, and immediately estranges him in the eyes of his Russian readers. Panteleimon Kulish, in the epigraph to his novel *Black Council*, praises Gogol's linguistic flexi-

bility by commenting that “Pushkin had not yet mastered all the treasures of the Russian language.” It was Gogol who had renewed the Petersburg literary climate, for “in Gogol’s language the Russian ear heard something native and somehow forgotten since childhood, that in the land of Russia was discovered a source of language from which our northern writers had long ago ceased to draw.”⁹³ Pushkin, for his part, compared Gogol to Molière and Fielding in an 1831 review of *Evenings*, simultaneously offering praise and subtle skepticism about Gogol’s vernacular style: “For God’s sake take his side if the journalists, as is their habit, attack the *indecency* [*nepriliche*] of his expressions, the *idiotic tone* [*durnoi ton*], etc.”⁹⁴ Vissarion Belinsky claims to have overheard the following comment at a book stand: “Words like *svintus* (piggy), *skotovod* (cattleman), *podlets* (rascal), *fetiuk* (sucker), *chort znaet* (the devil knows), *nagadit’* (to despoil), and the like—seeing such words in print is somehow strange.”⁹⁵ Andrei Belyi, in his early-twentieth-century study of Gogol, writes: “One could collect Galicianisms, Polishisms, Ukrainianisms with a flycatcher: they buzz like flies from the text . . .” [*oni, kak mukhi, zhuzhzhat iz teksta . . .*].⁹⁶ Indeed, distinctly Ukrainian words for foods such as *buriak* (beet) and *kavun* (watermelon); Ukrainian marketplace terminology like *perekupka* (female vendor), *pivkopy* (twenty-five kopeks), or the oft-used *dobre* (good); and sometimes complete Ukrainian phrases are interspersed throughout Gogol’s texts.⁹⁷ Gogol’s hybrid vernacular, combined with a selection of informed and invented Ukrainian customs, produces an array of details, some authentic, others charming imitations. The product is not a description of Ukraine as such, but a metaphor for the transience of what appears to be untouched. Gogol thus offers a recognizable pastoral ideal that has been penetrated from the outside and urbanized. One of the most salient features of the Sorochintsy fair is that it is malleable, penetrable, and ultimately portable.

“The Sorochintsy Fair” is set only a few decades before it was written. However, it emerges from the narrator’s distant memory, and therefore exists somewhere between the vernacular present and idealized past:

It was with such luxuriance that one of those hot August days sparkled in eighteen . . . eighteen . . . Well, it’ll be a good thirty years ago, when the road, some ten versts from the small town [*mestechka*] of Sorochintsy, boiled with people hurrying from all the farms near and far to the fair.⁹⁸

Gogol, by staging his Russian-language stories in the Ukrainian borderlands and by using his father’s and Kotliarevs’kyi’s words (in their Ukrainian original) as epigraphs, offers an alternative literary history to the epics that were gaining popularity in St. Petersburg.⁹⁹ Indeed, the mock epic made a mockery of those belated attempts to establish an alternative epic in

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eighteenth-century Russia.¹⁰⁰ According to Bakhtin, the epic, affirmed by its relationship to the past, is unbalanced by the comic, vernacular present: “Laughter destroyed epic distance; it began to investigate man freely and familiarly, to turn him inside out, expose the disparity between his surface and his center, between his potential and his reality.”¹⁰¹ The vague geography of Sorochintsy and its surrounding countryside joins Ukrainian folk motifs to offset the centrality of the imperial capital.¹⁰² The idea of Ukraine’s historical precedence, mirrored in its claim to authentic folk tradition, creates the image of a uniquely Slavic “center,” as opposed to the capital with its Western aspirations. Moreover, if Ukraine made up a paradigmatic provincial outskirts of Russia proper, the Sorochintsy fair is an alternative city center within the Ukrainian provinces.

Sorochintsy and its surrounding countryside may belong to a fixed geographical point, but the landscape of the market is defined by its lack of structure. Paraska wanders with her father “around the wagons full of flour and wheat” but “yearned to be where, beneath linen market awnings, there hung neat rows of red ribbons, earrings, tin and copper crosses and ducats.”¹⁰³ Both sections of the fair contain radically impermanent objects that can be quickly concealed and carried away. Gogol’s market maintains its fluidity through the flowing substances it contains. While the grains at one end of the fair are quite different from the ribbons and jewelry at the other end, all are substances that appeal to the appetite, spilling, seeping, and pouring. The livestock possess motion, as do many of Gogol’s inanimate products (the painted pots described at the beginning of the story bounce their way into Sorochintsy). Ribbons are a metonymy for the festivity of a fair and bait for women. In “Christmas Eve” (“Noch’ pered rozhdestvom”), Gogol depicts women in church with their holiday clothing as movable market stalls, thereby calling attention to the obsession with physical possessions even in a church service, which should be the domain of the soul: “Girls who had whole market stalls of ribbons wound round their heads [*na golovakh namotana byla tselia lavka lent*], and around their necks pendants made of crosses and ducats, pushed their way toward the iconostasis.”¹⁰⁴ The mixtures of crosses and coins, body parts and icons accentuate not only the impermanence of the market, but also its ungodliness.

Gogol’s characters, by wearing the commercial landscape in the form of clothing and jewelry, make the products at the fair all the more movable. Gogol’s interest in ribbons may come largely from Ukrainian ethnographers, such as Iakov Markovich and Afanasii Shafonskii, who writes that maidens “on holidays . . . would wind around the braids various types of ribbons in such great abundance that they reached to their feet, the more well-to-do women intertwining their braids with silver netting and lace.”¹⁰⁵ The combination of marketplace costumes and props in “The Sorochintsy Fair” creates

a movable *landschaft*, which would make its way more subtly into the settings of Gogol's later works. The ubiquitous ribbons would wind their way through Gogol's work, stretching into Chichikov's long scarf "of every color of the rainbow" (*vsekh tsvetov radugi*) in *Dead Souls*.¹⁰⁶

FROM SOROCHINTSY TO NEVSKY

Gogol's fair and Gogol's characters have the ability to travel great distances. Consider Vakula's journey to St. Petersburg astride a devil in search of the Empress's slippers in "Christmas Eve," Yankel in *Taras Bulba* with his eternally resurrected market stands, and Chichikov's vast peregrinations in pursuit of dead capital. As mythical objects like the devil's coat are smuggled into the Sorochintsy fair, the Ukrainian products peddled in Sorochintsy seep into the markets of the imperial capital. Even in St. Petersburg, the center of high culture, a market is unmasked at the city's very core.¹⁰⁷ The morning crowd in Gogol's "Nevsky Prospect" may as well be a market crowd in Ukraine, and the combination of objects is similar to that in his Ukrainian stories:

The Russian peasant talks about his *griven'* or his seven copper *groshy*, the old men and women wave their arms around or talk to themselves, occasionally with quite explicit gestures, but no one hears them or laughs at them, the only exception being really young boys with hempen smocks, holding empty bottles or fixed boots, running like lightning along Nevsky.¹⁰⁸

The currency in circulation is referred to in Ukrainian and Polish (*grivni* and *groshy*), in a provincial manner that, the narrator suggests, would be risible if elements of Ukrainian realia had not so thoroughly penetrated the capital.¹⁰⁹ The hempen smocks of the young boys are artifacts of daily life in the provinces that appear to have migrated to St. Petersburg. Nevsky Prospect, though stretched along a paved avenue, has the properties of the monstrous, movable fair.¹¹⁰ As the time changes, so does the crowd: the afternoon street is full of tutors and governesses and, between two and three o'clock, gentlemen appear whose clothing, profile, and hairstyles earn them the kind of superficial superlatives with which a vendor might advertise his wares: "One shows off his foppish jacket of the best beaver fur [*s luchshim bobrom*], another a fine Grecian nose [*grecheskoi prekrasnoi nos*], a third sports attractive sideburns [*prevoskhodnye bakenbardy*]."¹¹¹ Gogol's St. Petersburg is full of the sounds and products found in "The Sorochintsy Fair." Barely below the surface of the "cleanly swept sidewalks" and "smells of promenades," fish, cherries, and watermelons are displayed alongside their prices.

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Throughout Gogol's oeuvre, objects assume independent actions: "It is as though sideburns, mustaches, waists, women's sleeves, smiles, etc. were wandering along Nevsky Prospect all by themselves."¹¹² These inanimate (read: "soul-less") objects (*neodushevlennye predmety*) literally step in to challenge the individual in his or her spiritual development. Russian literary scholar and editor of Gogol's works Iurii Mann connects the materiality of Gogol's objects directly to Christianity: "What preoccupies the human being—and I am talking about the development of a Christian sensibility [*rech' idet o khristianskom samovospitanii*]—takes place inside him and, of course, with his participation, but alongside that is the influence of another, stronger, divine power. Once again we see the natural and relentless procession of objects."¹¹³ Mann, by pointing out the struggle between Christian and material forces, correctly observes that Gogol's commercial landscape, even in St. Petersburg, is a stage on which the material phenomena of the everyday disturb the noumenal world of the spirit. However, Gogol, who ridicules church sacristans and moneylenders alike, is also concerned with a higher spiritual process separate from the earthly trappings of Christian practice.

Gogol was not alone in his concern about money, geography, and Enlightenment in the early 1830s. In the aftermath of the Napoleonic War, Russia was struggling to regain control of its market. In an 1833 essay, Alexander Bestuzhev-Marlinsky observes the proliferation of historical souvenirs on the market. According to Marlinsky, in the Romantic period historical memory had itself become a commodity:

It jostles us with its elbows on the promenade, worms its way between you and your lady at the cotillion. "Baron! Baron!" the street vendor shouts, "buy an *Ervinka* hat." "Would you care to order a frock coat cut *Warsaw-style?*" asks the tailor. A horse comes a-prancing—it's a *Wellington*. Glance at a sign-board—Kutuzov beckons you into an inn, arousing both native pride and appetite at once. Take a pinch of snuff—the box is engraved with a likeness of Charles X. Stamp a letter—the seal is the Emperor Franz Joseph. Plunge your fork into a sweet pastry and—its name is Napoleon!¹¹⁴

Gogol's St. Petersburg mirrors the aesthetic environment of his time, complete with its eclectic currencies, languages, and its anxiety about markets, money, and the encroaching European material culture. He kept detailed lists of world currencies and their respective values in rubles and kopeks.¹¹⁵ Commodity culture threatens Gogol's characters in the superficial St. Petersburg and pastoral Sorochintsy alike. Far more dangerous than the peasants who wander through St. Petersburg's streets are the foreigners, city-dwellers, and merchants willing to sell foreign material in Petersburg and Sorochintsy, and the unceasing proliferation of such material. This is, after

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all, the same young man who, after his first negative review, had gathered up and burned all of the copies of his self-published “Gants Kiukhel’garten” from the St. Petersburg book vendors, an act uncannily like the pig-demon’s obsessive ingathering of the dispersed fragments of his coat.¹¹⁶

JEWS AND OTHER OUTSIDERS IN GOGOL’S MARKET

Gogol often uses Jews or Gypsies to stitch together a layered plot.¹¹⁷ The Jewess in whose tavern Hrytsko and Paraska become engaged is a neutral conduit of exchange, and she can therefore facilitate the unfolding plot. As a tavern-keeper she occupies the most derided of Jewish professions, as does the Jew [*zhid*] who “peddled vodka in Sorochintsy” in the internal folktale. Both of these Jewish alcohol vendors are crucial to the flow of the marketplace and its stories.¹¹⁸ The Jew’s religious marginality in Ukraine endows him with the power to mediate between the worlds of humans and demons. He is the only character in the story able to make a profit on the red coat. The Orthodox Christians who receive the cursed object are unable to sell their goods when it is in their possession, thus obliging the final owner to destroy it. In “The Sorochintsy Fair,” the implied kinship between pigs, devils, and Jews presents a moral lesson about the dangers of overzealous trade, in which the Jew is invariably the negative example. The Jew’s status as an outsider also adds to the porous quality of the commercial landscape. A natural trader and traveler, and therefore a conduit of foreign products, the Jew facilitates the infringement of the outside world into Sorochintsy.¹¹⁹

Gogol’s heavily caricatured Jew is a marketplace expert, profiting against all odds from the devil’s coat and closely tied to pigs and other products. Jews often appear in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ukrainian and Russian literature as Polish spies or agents. Their language and mobility allows them to move between East European groups, but also makes them suspect on all sides.¹²⁰ Occasional references to Jewish characters in early Ukrainian literature link Jews to their marketplace presence. Ivan Kotliarev’skyi’s Ukrainianized version of Virgil’s Hell boasts a motley array of sinners, including Jewish merchants:

There were cunning merchants
Who went to every fair
And on false yardsticks
Sold bad merchandise.
There were all kinds of crafty types,
Petty traders and dirty sorts,
Jews, barterers, tavern-keepers . . .

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*Buly tam kupchyky provorni
Shcho iizdly po iarmarkam
I na arshinets' na idbornyi
Pohanyi prodavaly kram.
Tut vsiakii buly pronozy,
Perekupky i shmarovozy,
Zhydy, minialy, shinkari . . .¹²¹*

The Jews who occasionally appear in Kotliarev'skyi's *Eneida* (usually exemplifying overzealous trade) add to the sensation of a tale told from the margins of the Russian Empire. Gogol uses Jewish characters in a similar way.

A Jewish stock character has an important function in Gogol's *Taras Bulba*, an epic novel set in Ukraine and based loosely on one of a series of Cossack rebellions that led up to the uprising Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi led against the Polish magnates in 1648.¹²² Much of the violence in *Taras Bulba* either occurs on market squares or makes direct reference to material treason. The Cossacks in *Taras Bulba* are drawn into battle by outrage against blasphemous religious intermingling. “‘Hang all the Jews!’ rang out from the crowd, ‘don’t let their Jewesses sew skirts out of our priests’ garments!’” (*Pust’ zhe ne sh’iut iz popovskikh riz iubok svoim zhidovkam!*).¹²³ The Jewish women who make skirts out of (Orthodox) priests’ vestments are turning religious garb into commonplace material, an act that assumes a connection between the Jew in Ukrainian culture and pragmatic commercialism. While despised, the Jews in *Taras Bulba* can negotiate between the hero and his goal, not unlike the Gypsy in “The Sorochintsy Fair.” Having spared Yankel’s life, Taras continues to encounter the Jew, the latter magically appearing to negotiate difficult situations, for the right price. “Riding out of town, Taras noticed that his little Jew [*zhidok*], Yankel, had already constructed some sort of market stall with an awning and was selling flints, bolts, gunpowder and various other military items that one might need on a journey, even braided loaves and bread rolls [*kalachi i khleby*].”¹²⁴ Yankel perpetually surprises Taras by “already managing” to appear in one place or another. Outside of the town of Dubno, “Taras looked at the Jew and was surprised that he had already managed to get inside the town [*uzhe uspel pobyvat’ v gorode*].”¹²⁵ When Taras pays Yankel a visit to ask for help seeing his youngest son Ostap,

He had already become both a leaseholder and a tavern keeper there [*On uzhe ochutilsia tut arendatorom i korchmarem*]; little by little he had swept all the local lords and nobility into his hands, sucked little by little almost all their money and forcefully realized his Jewish propensity [*zhidovskoe prisutstvie*] in that direction.¹²⁶

Taras is able to view Ostap's hanging thanks to a disguise, "for which the foresighted Jew had already managed to procure an outfit [*dlia chego plat'e uzhe uspel pripasti dal'novidnyi zhid*]."¹²⁷ Yankel, with his talent for "already managing," defies time and space. He is a marginal character in the story, but he bridges crucial gaps by slipping easily from one sphere to another.

Whereas Taras, as a Cossack warrior, evokes Ukraine's history, Yankel evokes the eternal return that is indicative of the market and that effectively negates history.¹²⁸ Yankel's movement between groups, like the movement of the minor devils in the *vertep* theater tradition between the upper and lower realms, closely resembles the movement of the trickster who, according to Paul Radin, "possesses no values, moral or social, is at the mercy of his passions and appetites, yet through his actions all values come into being."¹²⁹ It is Yankel who later informs Taras that his son Andrii has fallen in love with a Polish woman and deserted his Cossack band to join the enemy forces. And once again, Taras returns to the Jew to request his intervention so that he may once more see his son Ostap, who has been captured and sentenced to death by the Poles. A professional intervener, Yankel is able to bring this about by speaking Yiddish to the Jews who live in the Polish town. Strikingly, although the emphasis on Ukrainian national pride wanes between the 1835 and 1842 redactions of the novel, the emphasis on the marketplace and on ethnic exchange increases. In the 1835 edition, upon hearing of Andrii's defection, Taras tells Yankel, "You're mistaken, accursed Judas! The baptized child could not have sold his faith. [Ne mozhno, chtoby kreshchenoe ditia prodalo veru.] If he were a Turk or a dirty Jew [nechistyj zhid] . . . No, he couldn't have done it! Oh, God, he couldn't!"¹³⁰ In this version, Taras's response is a Cossack's lament, based on concerns for nation and religion. Ukrainianisms such as "ne mozhno" (rather than the Russian "ne mozhet byt") perpetually remind the reader of the Ukrainian setting in both versions of novel. In the 1842 edition, however, the conversation is much longer, and Gogol dwells on the double meaning of "selling" in the minds of the Cossack and the Jew. Here, Taras asks Yankel, "How could he, in your opinion, have sold his native land and faith?" (*Tak eto vykhodit, on, po-tvoemu, prodal otchiznu i veru?*). To this, Yankel responds, "I'm not saying that he sold something, I only said that he went over to their side" (*Ia zhe ne goroviu etogo, chtoby on prodal chto, ia skazal tol'ko, chto on pereshel k nim*).¹³¹ The later version shows Gogol's increased attention to the moral imperative of resisting commercial exchange, as well as a stronger emphasis on Orthodox Christians' national solidarity. This emphasis accompanied a more general shift, in Gogol's later work, toward portraying Ukrainian Cossacks as Russians' brethren within the Tsarist Empire. That Andrii's act represents, for Taras, the lowest form of treason is evident in his comparison of the defection to a sale. For Yankel, crossing borders and changing fatherlands is a

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natural part of the Jewish condition. The marketplace, in this later period, is still a necessary metaphor for the threat outside forces (in this case Jewish and Polish Catholic ones) pose to the Slavic spirit. Gogol's narrative now occupies a far vaster territory, but the cultural and spiritual danger threatening the Cossacks is still the loss of their freedom of self-governance.

DEMONIC SHOPPERS IN TRANSPLANTED MARKETS

With its products and peoples, Gogol's early commercial landscape provides a laboratory to inspect the effects of the European Enlightenment, which he believed were tainting the Russian spiritual and cultural tradition.¹³² In his 1846 essay, “Enlightenment” (“Prosveshchenie”), he laments that the meaning of the term has been distorted through the inaccuracies of translation:

We now pronounce the word “Enlightenment” [*Prosveshchenie*] without attaching any meaning to it . . . To enlighten [*prosveshit'*] does not mean to teach [*uchit'*], or to instruct [*nastavit'*], or to educate [*obrazovat'*], or even to elucidate [*osvetit'*], but only to completely illuminate [*vysvetlit'*] a person in all his powers, and not only in his mind, but to take his whole nature through a kind of cleansing flame.¹³³

Gogol's most morally suspect characters are the ones most attracted by the objects representing the West in general, and France, the cradle of the Enlightenment, in particular. In *Dead Souls*, when Chichikov becomes distracted, “it must be added that at the same time he was thinking about a special brand of French soap which imparted an unusual whiteness to the skin and freshness to the cheeks.”¹³⁴ In “The Portrait” (“Portret”), upon discovering a sum of money hidden in the demonic painting, Chartkov “visited a French restaurant [*zashel k restoratoru-frantsuzu*].”¹³⁵ The porous Russian market tests the resilience of the spirit, and Gogol's characters usually fail the test.¹³⁶

Frivolous items easily distract women in Gogol's commercial landscape. Women are also, themselves, frivolous distractions. Part of his *Mirgorod* series, “Vii” (1835) presents a young seminarian unable to exorcize an evil spirit from a woman's body, even in a church. The story begins and ends at a marketplace, the protagonist's attraction to products signaling the weakness of the flesh. At the beginning of this story, market women are scornful of the philosophers and theologians who sample their wares without buying them. And when the dead woman's spirit kills the protagonist, the consensus among his colleagues is that witches are all around them—“in Kiev, all of the women who sit at the market—they are witches [*v Kieve vse baby, kotorye sidiat na bazare—vse ved'my*].”¹³⁷

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The quick translation of women into witches did not originate with Gogol. Ukrainian folktales are filled with seemingly ordinary women who have the power of changing into cats and other animals.¹³⁸ Dangerous women appear in Gogol's later stories like "Nevsky Prospect," which might be seen as a St. Petersburg version of "Vii." In the elongated market of St. Petersburg in "Nevsky Prospect," women, personifying illusory beauty, threaten both the comic Pirogov and the tragic Piskarev. Pirogov follows a woman home only to find himself in the grotesque realm of her husband, a German named Schiller. Smitten with a beautiful prostitute, Piskarev seeks refuge in drug-induced fantasies: opium is a purchasable aesthetic experience that replaces his own art. His suicide exemplifies the defeat of the soul by marketplace illusions.

"The Portrait," which Gogol included in the 1835 and 1842 redactions of *Arabesques*, reveals St. Petersburg's geographical hierarchy, from the central homes of the members of high society to the poor Kolomna suburb of St. Petersburg. In this story, many of the themes from "The Sorochintsy Fair" reemerge, taking a more literal and didactic form. Here, our antihero is the artist Chartkov, who discovers one thousand gold rubles hidden inside a portrait. Catapulted from obscurity to fame, Chartkov gains admirers, patrons, students, and all of the material benefits of an artist of stature. Only later, upon gazing at the work of a less celebrated, but far more accomplished, colleague, he recognizes his life and talent to have been wasted, and he uses the remainder of his wealth to buy up and destroy all of the good art he can find.¹³⁹ "The Portrait" lacks the humor of Gogol's earlier work, functioning more as a manifesto on the meaning of art than as the kind of entertaining story Gogol's readers had come to expect of him. Gogol wrote two versions of the piece (1835 and 1842), both of which Belinsky harshly criticized. ("I beg your pardon," wrote Belinsky of the second version, "but such childish phantasmagorias could have captivated and horrified people only in the ignorant middle ages, whereas for us they are neither notable nor frightening, but rather funny and boring.")¹⁴⁰ Precisely because of its simplicity and lack of humor, "The Portrait" helps to clarify the function of markets and merchandise in Gogol's poetics.

Like "The Sorochintsy Fair," "The Portrait" contains an internal parable. The artist who had caused Chartkov's envy reveals to a spellbound crowd that his father once painted a portrait of a devilish moneylender whose wealth, like the Sorochintsy devil's coat, brought hardship upon its recipients: "But what was strangest of all, and what couldn't not astound many, was the strange fate of everyone who got money from him; all ended their lives in unhappy ways [*vse oni okanchivali zhizn' neschastnym obrazom*]."¹⁴¹ The portraitist, to cleanse himself of the evil spirit, enters a monastery, and after years of ascetic penitence he is able to lift the spell, whereas the un-



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suspecting Chartkov loses his talent to the money that had been sealed in the painting. “As he remembered the whole strange story, as he remembered that in some sense it, the strange portrait, was the cause of his transformation, that the stash of money, which came to him in such a wondrous way, had born in him all of the vacuous incentives that had ruined his talent, fury was almost ready to burst into his soul [*pochti beshenstvo gotovo bylo vorvat’sia k nemu v dushu*].”¹⁴² We can read the story as a warning against the dangers of the artistic market. The marketplace has triumphed over artistic inspiration: because art can be bought, it can also destroy.

Gogol’s many demonic market-goers prepared him to create the ultimate demonic shopper in *Dead Souls*. An unholy form of exchange powers Chichikov’s journey, and each of the landowners from whom he attempts to buy deceased souls, even if they have nothing to sell, is drawn in by the process of bargaining, their estates transferring into temporary market stalls. Korobochka, in her peculiar mixture of Ukrainian and Russian, takes the sale the most literally:

“Well, how am I to give them to you?”

“Well, just like that. Or, if you please, sell them to me [*Ili, pozhalui, prodайте*]. I’ll give you cash for them.”

“But how? I really don’t get it at all. You don’t want to dig them out of the ground, do you?”¹⁴³

If souls can be products, they are far inferior to the common market products Korobochka is used to selling: “‘Really, I’m not sure what to do; I’d rather sell you some hemp [*Pravo, ia vse ne priberu, kak mne byt’; luchshe ia vam pen’ku prodam*].’”¹⁴⁴ Korobochka, whose name, literally meaning “small box,” conjures images of a locked treasure trove, parts with a few of her dead peasants only after convincing Chichikov to eventually purchase her other products.¹⁴⁵

In Pliushkin, Gogol flashes an image of his archetypal miserly Jewish vendor: “‘And how much would you give?’ asked Pliushkin, and himself turned Jewish [*i sam ozhidovel*]: his hands started to shake like mercury.”¹⁴⁶ The estates Chichikov encounters in his odyssey map the Russian countryside into an expansive, polyphonic, and economically driven commercial landscape. Pliushkin, when bargaining, can “turn Jewish.” Ukrainian exclamations punctuate Korobochka’s Russian. Although Chichikov’s adventures never take him to an actual market, each of the characters in *Dead Souls* carries a bit of the market with him, the most exaggerated being Nozdrev.

If at the fair he was lucky enough to fall upon a simpleton and give him the run-around [*napast’ na prostaka i obygrat’ ego*], he would sell him all of the

things that once took his fancy at market stalls: horse collars, matches, kerchiefs, a stallion, raisins, silver washstands, Dutch linen, gritty flour, snuff, pistols, herring, pictures, a sharpening device, pots, boots, faïence dishware, for whatever amount of money one had.¹⁴⁷

It is the chaotic Nozdrev who brings the valuelessness of Chichikov's promissory language to light. Nozdrev is not simply reminiscent of the fair; he *is* the fair. The list of items in his orbit is even longer than the list of items detailed in "The Sorochintsy Fair," and, as at a market, they appear as a haphazard collection of categories. Excitable and ever-ready to sell his possessions or gamble for high stakes, Nozdrev, with his air of carnival chaos, later exposes Chichikov before a crowd for his strange business behavior. This unmasking is further evidence that Nozdrev serves the same function as a marketplace, disorienting whoever comes his way with a carnival of trickery and proposals for trade, and ultimately revealing the disorder that underlies an otherwise convincingly refined person or place.¹⁴⁸

As he travels through Russia, bargaining for landowners' deceased human property, Chichikov is concerned with whether or not these souls are documented on the census (*revizskaia skazka*). Gogol's double entendre links the census to his own literary work, especially *The Government Inspector* (*Revizor*). The souls Chichikov collects are, like an author's characters, utterly necessary to his personal *revizskaia skazka*. If Chichikov is competing with an author (be it the tsarist census bureau or Gogol), it is for the right to be the first to put a character on paper. His list of peasants' names is the ultimate proof of his successful accumulation of meaningless capital. The similarity between Chichikov's avarice and the affectations of authorship presented an inescapable paradox for Gogol. After gathering so many souls into his novel, Gogol went on to exhibit Chartkovian destructive impulses toward his own Russian epic, burning *Dead Souls*, *Part II* not long before he took to his bed and died of self-enforced starvation in 1852.

At the end of *Dead Souls*, *Part I*, Gogol's readers leave the movement of the market just as they had entered the fair at Sorochintsy: drawn by horses, awed by the scenery and the mystifying swirl of peoples. Unlike the provincial Ukrainian fair Cherevik and Paraska entered in Sorochintsy, the landscape in the famous troika passage that concludes *Dead Souls* includes "everything on earth" (*vse, chto ne est' na zemle*), and our fellow passengers are not clay pots, but all of imperial Russia:

The carriage bells ring out with a wondrous pealing; the air, torn to bits, thunders and turns into wind; everything on earth flies by and, standing aside, the other nations and states will make way for her.¹⁴⁹

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GOGOL'S PENETRABLE LANDSCAPE

"A literary work is similar to that of a geographer and ethnographer,"¹⁵⁰ Abram Terts writes in his study of Gogol. Indeed, in the 1831 soliloquy "Thoughts on Geography (for Children)" ("Mysli o geografii [dlia detskogo vozrasta]"),¹⁵¹ which would eventually appear in *Arabesques*, Gogol asserts that children should be instilled with an instinctive understanding of space, beginning with a rough sense of the world map, gradually filling this picture with natural resources, and finally adding culture. They should develop a mental map that they can access like a game board when told about a new event: "The pupil, if he pays close attention, should observe a place on his map and then the tiny spot should, as it were, move to one side to make room for the images produced in his mind by his teacher's lectures."¹⁵² Although he would never write his anticipated study of Ukraine, Gogol's concern for geography is crucial to his craft. According to his friend Annenkov, Gogol said that for any story to be successful the author had simply to describe a familiar room and street.¹⁵³ Gogol's concern that the reader be aware of the surrounding region not only gives a sense of context, it defines the boundaries of the fictional universe he has created, and the landscape that frames each of Gogol's works plays an integral role in the story's outcome.

In a lyrical interlude in *Dead Souls*, Gogol's narrator describes his enjoyment, in his youth, of new places:

Perhaps a stone house of familiar architecture with a half-false window, towering all alone amid the neat woodpile of one-story common petit bourgeois [*meshchanskie*] houses, or a perfectly round cupola, all covered in white iron shingles, towering above a new church that has been whitewashed as bright as snow, or a market, or a provincial dandy who shows up in the middle of town—nothing slipped from my fresh, fixed gaze and, poking my nose out of my carriage, I looked too upon the unusual cut of some waistcoat I'd never seen before, and upon the wooden boxes filled with nails, or with sulfur turning yellow in the distance, or with raisins and soap, flashing through the door of the vegetable stand along with jars of dried candy from Moscow, and I looked at the infantry officer walking along the roadside, carried God knows from what province to these suburban doldrums, and at the merchant, flashing by in his Siberian coat on a speeding droshky, and in my mind I followed them to their poor lives.¹⁵⁴

Present in this string of observations are the most important ingredients of the Gogolian landscape. The market is right beside the church. Also present is the dandy, market commodities (raisins and soaps), and, seemingly independent of a wearer, "the unusual cut of some waistcoat" (*nevidannyi dotole*

pokroi kakogo-nibud' siurtuka). The marketplaces and coats glimpsed from a cart liken the narrator's childhood to a trip to the fair: like the movable landscape of Sorochintsy, the scenery "flashes by" the moving cart. Perhaps following Potemkin, who attempted to (cosmetically) transform Ukrainian villages into ideal towns in advance of the Empress Catherine II's 1787 tour of the Crimea, Gogol's narrator appears to have collected and redistributed the props for many stories of Russia's fluid markets.¹⁵⁵

Gogol's interest in geography (particularly Ukrainian geography) in the 1830s helps to explain his insistence on beginning the Dikanka stories with a broad, natural landscape and gradually focusing on the exchanges and interactions that take place at fairs and in villages. In 1835 Gogol claimed to prefer Pushkin's strolls through nature to his walks in the city. "Pushkin's writings, where Russian nature [*russkaia priroda*] is able to breathe, are as soft and continuous as Russian nature."¹⁵⁶ The "continuous" (*bespreryvnyi*) quality of a natural landscape defines, in *Evenings*, an outer circle, which is itself part of Gogol's penetrable landscape. Whatever enters the story from beyond the physical landscape that contains it belongs to the realm of the "world beyond."

Cherevik's wagon, as it moves toward the Sorochintsy fair, passes through this outer circle of countryside, which serves as a spatial frame for the *landscape* of the rest of the story. Gogol changes the countryside, however, by inverting the setting into a realm of fiction and magic.

The cart with our familiar passengers had now driven onto the bridge, and the river in all its beauty and greatness, like a broad glass pane, threw itself at their feet. The sky, the green and dark blue of the forest, the people, the carts full of pots, the mills—all this was now inverted, everything stood and walked upside-down, without falling into the lovely blue abyss [*vse oprokinulos', stoialo i khodilo vverkh nogami, ne padaia v golubuiu, prekrasnuiu bezdnui*].¹⁵⁷

Reflected in the water the scene is reversed, the mirroring suggestive of Dante's *Purgatory*, where a reflected image of reality usurps the narrative from the landscape it is reflecting. "Think, Reader, how I marveled,/when I saw the thing itself stand still,/and the image transformed" (*Pensa, lettore, s'io mi maravigliava, /quando vedea la cosa in sé star quieta, /e nell'idolo suo si trasmutava*). Dante addresses an interlocutor who lies "beyond the sacred river" (*di là dal fume sacro*), and the image in the water's reflection takes on a life of its own.¹⁵⁸ Likewise, Gogol's wagon is no longer entering a common fair, but instead encountering the reflection of a fair, in which everything "stood and walked upside-down" (*stoialo i khodilo vverkh nogami*).¹⁵⁹

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Gogol's continuous use of the Ukrainian-inflected word *chudnyi* (marvelous, magical, strange) to describe the setting throughout *Evenings* is in keeping with Dante's marvel (*meraviglia*) at the inverted world.¹⁶⁰ Andrei Belyi notes that although two adjectives meaning "strange," *chudnyi* and *strannyi*, can be used interchangeably, Gogol's preference for *chudnyi* over the more standard Russian *strannyi* (strange, odd) is unique to *Evenings*: "We more often encounter the epithet *chudnyi* [magical, marvelous] in the everyday tales instead of the epithet *strannyi* [strange, odd]."¹⁶¹ *Chudnyi* evokes an idealized world, a world full of happy surprises, but it also evokes the uncanny dimension of trickery and black magic.¹⁶² Gogol employs the word *chudnyi* in a similar description of a river in "A Terrible Vengeance" ("Strashnaia mest'"):

It seemed that together with a faint ringing sound there spread an eerie [*chudnyi*] light to all the corners of the room, and suddenly, it too faded and there was darkness. All that could be heard was a noise, as if the wind in the soft hour of evening were playing, circling along the water's reflection, bending the silver willows ever lower toward the water [*kruzhas' po vodnomu zerkalu, nagibaia eshche nizhe v vodu serebrianye ivy*].¹⁶³

Most critics agree that "A Terrible Vengeance" is unlike the rest of *Evenings* in that Gogol appears to have abandoned the festive folk-spirit of the other stories and embarked upon a grander, more biblical allegory. To understand the tragic fate that befalls all of the characters in "A Terrible Vengeance," the reader must learn of a hidden history in which one brother betrays another, bringing a curse upon the family line.¹⁶⁴ "A Terrible Vengeance" exposes a crack in the structure of Gogol's *vertep* theater. Only by broadening the frame of the narrative is it possible to make sense of the terrifying events of the story. This crack is already present, albeit less obviously so, in "The Sorochintsy Fair."

Whereas *Evenings* is all too often dismissed as immature work, this cycle allows Gogol to create what John Kopper has aptly called an "aesthetic of inscrutability."¹⁶⁵ Gogol, by suddenly revealing the outer geographical reaches of his landscape, transcends the Kantian polarity between the *phenomena* of the here and now and the *noumena* of an invisible and intangible other dimension. In "A Terrible Vengeance," Kopper writes, "what lies beyond the horizon is suddenly made visible: 'In all directions even the ends of the earth had become visible.'"¹⁶⁶ By the end of "A Terrible Vengeance," water, along with its life-giving (and reflective) properties, has disappeared.¹⁶⁷ This story exposes the noumenal, or "world beyond," in far greater detail than any of the other stories in *Evenings*.¹⁶⁸

In “The Sorochintsy Fair,” the noumenal is only insinuated. The “world beyond experience” reveals itself through the inversion of ordinary things in ordinary space. Beginning with the wagon’s encounter with the river, “The Sorochintsy Fair” should be read as an image reflected in a distorting river. As the outer circle of the landscape is inverted in the river’s reflection, the inner landscape turns on its axis, which Gogol compares to the swirl of a whirlpool. (“Isn’t it true, isn’t it the very same feeling the instant you enter the whirlpool of a village fair?”) The swirling fair, together with its movable parts and people, might be described as a Foucauldian *heterotopia*, a space that “has the power of juxtaposing in a single real place different spaces and locations that are incompatible with each other.”¹⁶⁹ Simultaneously real and utopian, Gogol’s fictionalized Sorochintsy acts as a reflecting pool on reality, sharpening the reader’s perception by offering multiple perspectives.

Such a change in perspective occurs in the final pages of “The Sorochintsy Fair,” where the reader is reminded that the joy of the fair has been transient, and therefore illusory. Sitting alone in the hut, shifting between apprehension, excitement, and laughter, Paraska thinks of Hrytsko: “How wonderfully [chudno] his black eyes burn! How lovingly he says ‘Parasiu, dove!’ How his white coat suits him [*Kak pristala k nemu belaia svitka!*]!”¹⁷⁰ This mention of Hrytsko’s coat, in Gogol’s semiotic system, taints Paraska’s innocent reverie. Coats can, after all, be stolen, shredded, and dispersed; white fabric can be soiled (especially when worn by a young man who is wont to sling mud). Paraska’s infatuation with Hrytsko is skin-deep and all too dependent on the marketplace. Henri Bergson has proposed that “whilst introspection reveals to us the distinction between matter and spirit, it also bears witness to their union.”¹⁷¹ The absent trappings of traditional Ukrainian weddings may attest to Gogol’s laziness in his research, but the omission is in keeping with the inverted, distorted landscape. Paraska’s fixation on clothing, along with the rush of the festivities in general, displaces proper ritual. She has forgotten the world beyond for the material excitement of the here and now.

In his early notes on Gogolian laughter, Mikhail Bakhtin reads Gogol for the danger underlying his comedy: “A school of nightmares and horror. The funny fiends [*smeshnye strashilishcha*] in Gogol. The plague and laughter in Boccaccio. The funny fiends in ‘The Sorochintsy Fair.’”¹⁷² These funny fiends would appear increasingly in Gogol’s fiction. The comical, allegorical evil in “The Sorochintsy Fair,” where no one is murdered or dies from cold or from drug addiction, nonetheless gives way, in the final section, to a terrifying acceleration of time. Paraska dreams of life as a married woman when she need no longer heed the words and warnings of her stepmother:

“The sand will sooner rise up to the rock and the oak will bow into the water like a willow, than I will ever bow before you! Oh, but I’ve forgotten . . . let

Nikolai Gogol's Commercial Landscape (1829–1852)

me try on a married woman's bonnet, even my stepmother's, it suits me somehow!" [Skoree pesok vzoidet na kamne i dub pognetsia v vodu, kak verba, nezheli ia nagnus' pered tobou! Dai a i pozabyla . . . dai primeriat ochipok, khot' machekhin, kak-to on mne pridetsia!]!¹⁷³

The image of a bowing tree (*dub pognetsia*) and personally bowing (*nagnus'*) before Khivria recalls the images of the river at the beginning of the story: "Bowing [*nagnuvshiesia*] under the weight of its fruit are the vast boughs of the cherry, plum, apple and pear trees; the sky's pure mirror is the river with its green, proudly raised frame."¹⁷⁴

Paraska's stream of consciousness, connected synecdochically to the beginning of the story, leads her to bow before her own hand mirror:

She stood up there and then, clutching the mirror in her hands, and, bowing her head to it [*naklonias' k nemu golovoiu*], walked with trepidation around the hut, as if afraid of falling, seeing before her instead of the ground, the ceiling with its boards set on the rafters, from which the priest's son had recently darted, and the shelves covered in pots.¹⁷⁵

The story is thus re-reflected through a second mirror, and like Alice returning through her looking glass, the reader must return from the whirlpool of the fair to a reality in which time races on. When Paraska's cart is first reflected in the river she is a young girl. In this second reflection, just before her wedding, she is wearing her stepmother's cap. Cherevik is compelled to join his daughter as she dances before the mirror: "he stepped forward and joined in the dance, forgetting about all his other business [*pozabyv pro vse dela svoi*]."¹⁷⁶ Hrytsko then interrupts the dance, causing Paraska to blush "a brighter red than the ribbon fastened around her head [*vspykhnula iarche aloi lenty, poviazyavshei eie golovu*]."¹⁷⁷ Paraska's ribbon, which Gogol quite likely clipped from the pig-devil's lost sleeve, would seem to be an ill omen that fastens her fate all the tighter to that of her stepmother whom, we may recall, Hrytsko first acknowledged by crying, "And look, the devil is sitting in front of her [*vot vpered i d'iavol sidit*]!"¹⁷⁸

The wedding is less a celebration of the young people's love than a terrifying miscegenation of marketplace types. A fiddler transforms the crowd "into a scene of unity and harmony," including the old women "whose ancient faces breathed the indifference of the tomb," who come between the young couple. The end of "The Sorochintsy Fair" resembles the conclusion to a *vertep* performance, in which all of the puppets break into a dance. The narrator, however, quickly widens the frame to include a previously unseen puppeteer: "Carelessly, indifferent, lacking any childish delight or a spark of empathy, driven only by drink, which, like the puppeteer with his lifeless

automaton [*kak mekhanik svoego bezzhiznennogo avtomata*] made them do human-like things; while they quietly nodded their besotted heads, shuffling after the merry crowd, without so much as glancing at the young pair.”¹⁷⁹ Bergson reminds us that to create comedy, we have “merely to fancy that our seeming freedom conceals the strings of a dancing-jack, and that we are, as the poet says, ‘. . .humble marionettes/The wires of which are pulled by Fate.’”¹⁸⁰ With Gogol’s puppetlike death-women (previously unmentioned in the story), the wedding, and therefore the fair, represents an overlapping of the present world of smells, sounds, and matter and the mysterious world beyond. The humans, through their automatic motion, blend into the inanimate objects of the fair, heightening the comic effect and suggesting visions of a hidden god by removing the impression of freedom of the apparently bustling market.

The only dissenting voice is that of the stepmother, Khivria (whom Paraska has begun to resemble, if only by donning the older woman’s hat). Cherevik silences his wife: “what’s done is done; I don’t like to go back on a bargain [*ia peremeniat’ ne liubliu!*]!”¹⁸¹ With this pronouncement, the marketplace disappears into the rapid passage of time: “The fiddling died, weakening and losing its indistinct sounds in the emptiness of the air.”¹⁸² Having brought the story to a *vertep*-like dancing climax, Gogol’s narrator leaves us on an abrupt note of dissatisfaction:

Isn’t it the same with happiness, a lovely and impermanent guest who flies from us, while for naught a single sound tries to express joy? . . . The one left behind is lonely! His heart remains heavy and sad, and nothing will help.¹⁸³

A fine line separates the fullness of consumption and the emptiness of the human soul when the fair is over. Having entertained his readers with a fair and its ensuing festivities, the narrator suddenly reveals the post-fair emptiness. The transience and false handshakes of the Sorochintsy fair haunt all of Gogol’s writing, from the false government inspector to Chichikov’s false property in *Dead Souls*: nothing will remain. The phenomena of life, like the market and the movable objects within it, are destined to disappear, leaving only what we cannot see or grasp.

Chapter Three

Apelles's Gallery: Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko and the Critics (1833–1843)

Apelles . . . exhibited his finished pictures in a gallery for passers-by to see. He used to hide behind the pictures and listen to what faults people found, reckoning that the general public were more perceptive critics than he was himself. The story is told of a shoemaker who criticized him because in drawing sandals he had omitted a loop on the edge. Next day the critic was so proud that Apelles had corrected the mistake to which he had previously drawn attention that he found fault with the subject's leg. Apelles was indignant and, looking out from behind the picture, said to him: "A shoemaker should stick to his last!" [Ne sutor ultra crepidam.]

—Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*¹

W H E N H R Y H O R I I Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko (Kvitka) retold this Alexandrian episode in Ukrainian, he recast Apelles as a Ukrainian artist, Kuz'ma Trokhymovych, who displays his painting at a rural fair. In Kvitka's 1833 "Saldatskii Patret" ("The Soldier's Portrait"), a bootmaker, who finds fault with the artist's rendering of the soldier's footwear, returns to critique the pant-leg. The artist Kuz'ma repeats Apelles's remonstrance: "'But don't you know?' Kuz'ma Trokhymovych cried out from behind his market stall. 'Cobbler know your cobbling, but don't butt into the tailor's trade! [*Shvets' znai svoie shevstvo, a u kravetstvo ne mishaisia!*]'"² A growing number of Ukrainian writers in the nineteenth century shifted from writing in Russian, the language of the empire, to Ukrainian, but like the Greek artist Apelles, they ran the perpetual risk of encountering harsh critics who were more than willing to overstep their bounds.

The period that saw Gogol's rise in popularity among Russian readers

also saw a Ukrainian national revival in both left-bank Ukraine, the territory to the east of the Dnieper River, and right-bank Ukraine to the west.³ The Herderian ethnographic trends of the turn of the early nineteenth century not only played a role in Gogol's repackaging of his native landscape for export, which appealed to his Russian readership's vague image of Ukraine's countryside, ethnicities, and material products. These trends also gave strength to intellectual interest, within the Russian Empire, in literature in Ukrainian.⁴ According to Vadim Skurativs'kyi, the Ukrainian language was, with its "written folklore, first and foremost [*peredusim pys'mennym fol'klorom*], an important artistic tool for the grandiose lyrical transformation of Ukrainian literature."⁵

The paternity of what is commonly called "New Ukrainian Literature" (*Novoukrains'ka litaratura*) is usually assigned to Ivan Kotliarevs'kyi (1769–1838), a nobleman from Poltava whose six-part Virgilic travesty, *Eneïda*, appeared in fragmented epigraphs to Gogol's Dikanka tales. Shevchenko, Ukraine's Romantic poet, artist, and national symbol, is also a contender for the position.⁶ Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko (1778–1843), though hailed by many as the first Ukrainian prose writer, is a more problematic candidate to be Ukrainian literature's founding father, for critics have remained divided about the quality of his work, and he has never been quite politically, or artistically, correct in either the Ukrainian or Russian cultural climate. Kvitka's conservative approach to bolstering Ukrainian identity frustrated many Ukrainian critics, who prioritized resisting an imperial Russian cultural hegemony. Although some Russian critics saw him as a nationally conscious Ukrainian writer who was eager to forge a positive relationship with Russia, others accused him of appealing to uncultured readers. Unlike Gogol, who altered Ukrainian themes in the interest of creating an artful story, Kvitka took a rigorous approach to ethnography, prioritizing cultural authenticity over aesthetics. "According to old Kharkov residents," Nikolai Sumtsov recounts, "Kvitka could be found at the bazaar on Sundays and holidays, where he wandered around and observed subtle details of folk habit and sayings."⁷ Descriptions of Ukrainian markets abound in Kvitka's Russian and Ukrainian work. For Kvitka, the commercial landscape is both a source of authentic Ukrainian behavior and speech patterns and an allegory for the critical reception of Ukrainian literature in the nineteenth-century Tsarist Empire. The most notable example of this is "A Soldier's Portrait."

Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko (usually called simply "Kvitka" or "Osnov'ianenko") was more than thirty years Gogol's senior. The Ukrainian writer's relative late start, however, made the two writers literary contemporaries, and thematic, as well as artistic, influence ran in both directions. Born in the town of Osnova in the Kharkiv (Russian: Kharkov) region, Kvitka began writing fiction in his forties. His early adulthood was nonetheless de-

A painting by Apelles depicting a group of people in a gallery setting, likely a critique of Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko's work.

Apelles's Gallery: Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko and the Critics (1833–1843)

voted to the promotion of Ukrainian culture, spanning a spectrum from religion to theater. At twenty-three he entered the Kuriazh Monastery, where he received what was then the closest equivalent to a higher education available to a Ukrainian living in Kharkiv.⁸ Although he left the clergy, Kvitka remained deeply religious, and he produced a number of overwhelmingly moralistic texts. His Panglossian beliefs have led many of his readers to dismiss him as socially conservative and apathetic to the struggle to overcome Russia's hegemony over Ukraine. He began writing satirical sketches, plays, and stories in Russian and produced translations of Horace. Kvitka was involved in editing a number of Ukrainian and Russian journals, including the *Ukrainian Herald (Ukrainskii vestnik)*.⁹

Kvitka's native Kharkiv region was originally called "Slobids'ka Ukraine." This region (about 100 miles to the east of Gogol's hometown of Sorochintsy) housed several monasteries, and, in 1805, saw the founding of Kharkiv University—the first secular Ukrainian institution of higher learning.¹⁰ Richard Stites attributes the city's cultural vibrancy to its location: "Kharkov looked north toward Kursk, Orël, Elets, Tula, Ostrogozhsk, Voronezh, Ryazan, and Tambov as well as to Ukrainian towns and fairs."¹¹ It was also the birthplace of Ivan Kotliarevs'kyi. Like Kotliarevs'kyi, Kvitka gravitated toward the Ukrainian theater. Kharkiv had long hosted theatrical touring groups, and in 1812, the same year Napoleon invaded Russia to the north, Kvitka helped to establish the Kharkiv Theater and began serving as its first director.¹² Before the Ems Ukase of 1876, which banned Ukrainian publishing in the Tsarist Empire, Kharkiv was an important center of Ukrainian publishing.¹³

In a paper presented in honor of Kvitka's centennial in 1878, V. P. Naumenko described Kvitka's critics as having been divided into two camps: "one, fully acknowledging the merit of his Ukrainian stories, considered his work written in Russian and in translation to be weak; the second, also recognizing his talent was more significant in his Ukrainian works, regret that he didn't write them in Russian."¹⁴ The critics Pypin and Spasovich, writing in 1865, rather simplistically draw the dividing line along national boundaries. Russians, they observe, "found Osnov'ianenko's stories in general to be sentimental idylls, his female folk characters were too idealized, his turn of phrase too affected and gossipy; but his countrymen to this day have preserved the favorable impression Osnov'ianenko made on them when he first appeared on the scene."¹⁵

Variations on these divisions have persisted into the twenty-first century. Ivan Franko and Dmytro Chyzhevs'kyi saw Kvitka as an important model of national pride but too politically and socially conservative.¹⁶ Into the more laudatory category falls the Ukrainian critic Karlov who, writing in Kharkiv in 1900, remembers his own first encounters with "A Soldier's

Portrait” and ‘The Brave Young Woman’ (“Kozyr-divka”) as one might describe a portrait: “By their composition and the force of their expression they were full returns on a great talent [*povni zadatkov krupnogo talantu*].”¹⁷ The Soviet critic D. V. Chalyi calls Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko the “first talented prose writer in the new Ukrainian literature.”¹⁸ Obscured by more canonical Ukrainian writers like Shevchenko and Franko, and the universally recognized Gogol, Kvitka has received little attention from literary scholars outside Ukraine. However, the Canadian critic Myroslav Shkandrij, writing in 2001, suggests that Kvitka served the cause of Ukrainian national unity on a fundamental, albeit passive, level. Shkandrij points to Ahapii Shamrai, who “sees Kvitka much as Marx saw Balzac—as a reactionary monarchist who, nonetheless, wrote better than he knew. According to this thesis, Kvitka and similar loyalist figures worked for the Ukrainian movement without being fully aware of the direction it was taking.”¹⁹

Kvitka’s protests against his Russian critics often appear uncomfortably personal. Sounding more like Akaky Akakievich, the pitiable protagonist in Gogol’s “The Overcoat,” than Gogol, Kvitka wrote as follows to the journal *Russian Herald (Russkii vestnik)*: “I never said a word to make them stop printing things against my work: it’s difficult to compel others to think as we do. But at this late date it is my humble honor to ask that you give the author some peace [*maiui chest’ pokirno prosyty daty spokii osobi avtora*].”²⁰ Dmytro Chalyi compares Kvitka’s attempt to question his own critics to the poor boy in Gogol’s “Theatrical Review” (“Teatral’nyi raz’ezd”), who accuses the critics of being “such fools they couldn’t tell between a meat pie and a buckwheat pie.”²¹ However, Kvitka’s relationship to his critics was not entirely naive.²² A Ukrainian- and Russian-language writer struggling to be taken seriously, he was painfully conscious of his own role as a vendor on the Russian literary market. And indeed, Kvitka’s fictional portrayals of the Ukrainian commercial landscape reflect the anxious relationship between an artist and the critics.

His foray into the Ukrainian literary scene included three early contributions: the sentimental “Marusia,” the comic “Soldier’s Portrait,” and “An Appeal to the Editor” (“Suplika do Pana Izdatelia”), a mock “apology” that functions as a manifesto on Ukrainian-language literature. Kvitka’s first three texts in Ukrainian appeared in 1833, just two years after Gogol’s “Sorochintsy Fair.” Kvitka’s concern with his critics must be read in the context of the overwhelmingly positive response Gogol received for his far more popular, and far less carefully researched, tales of Ukraine. Both authors read and borrowed from one another. Kvitka, who continued to write in both Russian and Ukrainian until his death in 1843, may have been inspired by Gogol’s success with *Evenings* when he set his 1833 “A Soldier’s Portrait” at the fair. He would go on to base other works on the commercial landscape,

A painting by Apelles's Gallery depicting a woman in traditional dress, identified as Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, surrounded by critics. The scene is set in a studio-like environment with various objects and figures in the background.

Apelles's Gallery: Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko and the Critics (1833–1843)

as well, including his 1834 Ukrainian-language story “Tumbleweed” (“Per-ekotypole”) and his 1840 Russian novella *The Fair* (*Yarmarka*).

BETWEEN TRAVESTY AND SKAZ

If Ivan Kotliarev's'kyi brought classical travesty to Ukrainian poetry, then Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko brought it to prose. Let us examine the concept of Ukrainian literary travesty. “*Kotliarevshchyna*,” a term used by the early Soviet Ukrainian critic Mykola Zerov, refers to the tendency among Ukrainian writers after Kotliarev's'kyi to write in a village humoresque.²³ George Grabowicz refines this concept, pointing out that Kotliarev's'kyi was using language to create a unique literary landscape. “In a word, *kotliarevshchyna* creates a magic space, an Eliotic objective correlative of an ideal community of *communitas*, and a foreshadowing of what in the twentieth century would be called the domain of the word [*derzhava slova*].”²⁴ Travesty had long existed as a mode of destabilizing the dominant culture from the margins. The baroque fashion for parodying Virgil can be traced back to Scarron's 1648–49 four-part *Virgile Travesty*, which, though not the first of its kind, became hugely popular throughout Europe. To cite Gérard Genette,

Its success was instantaneous and immediately unleashed a wave of imitators, which might have been expected, especially at a time when success was valued over originality—or rather, I should say, when the road to success did not necessarily involve a display of originality.²⁵

Nor was Kotliarev's'kyi's project the first in the Tsarist Empire, for Nikolai Osipov and Aleksandr Kotel'nitsky had published a burlesque version of *The Aeneid* in Russian in 1794.²⁶ *Eneïda*, which Kotliarev's'kyi wrote between 1794 and 1820, had the advantage of flaunting a widely spoken, culturally specific, vernacular language, a language that represented an economically and politically disenfranchised people. It therefore provided modern Ukrainian literature with a proof text that was both comic and countercultural, one that was rich in artifacts from the Ukrainian quotidian, but that also wrote Ukraine into Virgil's canonical tale of the birth of a nation.

The first half of *Eneïda* appeared in Petersburg in 1798, where it enjoyed a degree of success among Ukrainians, as well as Russians who found it a humorous, ethnographic curiosity. The vernacular defilement not only pokes fun at a classical tradition; it flaunts the nuances of the Ukrainian language and sets many facets of the Ukrainian quotidian down on paper for the first time. And conversely, the language and images from Ukrainian street

life are all the more comical when set against the lofty, classical premise. In a scene reminiscent of Aeneas's journey beyond the Acheron, Kotliarevs'kyi describes a flock of sinners who may as well constitute Gogol's Dikanka archetypes, from Jewish merchants to deceitful philosophers to negligent clerics. Kotliarevs'kyi describes a crowd clambering to gain portage on the ferry:

Like Slobodans at the fair,
Or at the aisles of expensive fabrics
Crowds thronging 'round the fish
It was just like this on the field.
And they chattered like magpies;
This one jostled, that one shoved, another sneaked:
All trampled, pushed their way through,
Shouted, argued and butted in,
And everyone wanted to be picked.

*Na iarmarku iak slobozhany,
Abo na krasnomu torhu
Do ryby tovpliat'sia myriany,
Bulo na s'omu tak luhu.
I skrehotaly, mov soroky;
Toi pkhav's, toi sunuvs', inshyi liz:
Vsi m'ialysia, perebyralys',
Krychaly, sporyly i rvalys',
I vsiak khotiv, ioho shchob viz.*²⁷

Virgil's condemned are, in Kotliarevs'kyi's rendition, a mindless crowd whose automatic actions mimic those of a rural Ukrainian market. Kotliarevs'kyi's deflement of Virgil's hallowed lines suggests the triumph of material objects over sacred human traditions, an inversion that Bergson believes leads to formulaic laughter: "As soon as we forget the serious object of a solemnity or a ceremony, those taking part in it give us the impression of puppets in motion. Their mobility seems to adopt as a model the immobility of a formula. It becomes automatism."²⁸ The scene in *Eneïda* says much about the Ukrainian fair and little about the afterlife.²⁹ The laughter evoked by what Bergson identifies as automatism, more accurately than the somewhat derogatory *kotliarevshchyna*, explains Kvitka's literary relationship to both Kotliarevs'kyi and Gogol.

Kotliarevs'kyi's literary language is exaggerated and theatrical. He was the director of the Poltava amateur theater, and his writing, beyond *Eneïda*, included popular plays like *Natalka Poltavka*. Phrases like "na krasnomu

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torhu" (going after a good bargain) and "*vsi m'ialysia, perebyralys'*" (all trampled, pushed their way through) capture the language of the street for a privileged, bilingual audience. The young Kotliarevs'kyi is believed to have engaged in surreptitious forms of anthropological study while working as a tutor for provincial nobles. In a 1908 introduction to Kotliarevs'kyi's work, Iulian Romanchuk writes, "There he spied on the detailed life of the people, and often disguised himself in folk costume and went out that way to evening gatherings and parties [*vechernytsi ta dos'vitky*]."³⁰ S. Steblin-Kaminskii adds,

In that epoch of his life, studying the Ukrainian language, in the words of his contemporaries, he became aware of the customs, beliefs, and sayings of the Ukrainians [*vin sposterihav zvychai, povir'ia i perekazy ukrainitsiv*]; he was at meetings and events of the common people and himself, disguised, took part in them, attentively listening and writing down the words of Ukrainian speech [*malorosiis'koho narichchia*.³¹

Zerov has called Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko's earliest works "prose travesty," combining as they do classical sources, caricatured descriptions of Ukrainian folk culture, and *kotliarevshchyna*.³² Kvitka's "Appeal to the Editor," which accompanied his first Ukrainian stories, is playfully self-effacing, mixing mock-apology with justification:

So what are we going to do? They don't understand our language, and they even snarl at our little book: "This is some kind of crazy Finnish gobbledegook [*neshto po-chuknons'ki*] . . . why publish it when no one will understand it?" [*zachym pechatat', kahda nikhto ne rozumiie?*]³³

If Rudyi Pan'ko's pseudo-vernacular prepares the reader to enter the folk world of Gogol's *Dikanka* tales, Kvitka's "Letter" prepares the reader to enter his Ukrainian prose. The step requires a measure of audacity, and Kvitka, writing the words "Why publish it when no one will understand it?" sarcastically calls attention to his primary readership (not the St. Petersburg salons), his primary stumbling block (Russia's homogeneous literary culture), and his objective (to subvert precisely that culture by introducing texts about Ukraine in Ukrainian).

Among Kvitka's greatest stumbling blocks was Vissarion Belinsky, the lion of nineteenth-century Russian literary criticism, who was once an advocate of national literatures, but later became an almost unconditional critic. Belinsky was deeply suspicious of the Ukrainian literary project, and his writings on Ukrainian poetry often read as formulaic literary imperialism. It is worth citing one such passage at length:

Poetry is an idealization of real life: so whose life will our Little Russian poets [*nashi malorossiiskie poetry*] idealize? The high society of Little Russia? But the life of this society has outgrown the Little Russian language, which remains only on the lips of the simple folk, and this society reflects its feelings and ideas not in Little Russian, but in Russian and even in French. And what a difference there is between Little Russian sayings and the Russian language [*mezhdu malorossiiskim narechiem i russkim iazykom*]! A Russian novelist can fill his novel with people of all social classes and make each one speak his own language—the educated person in the language of educated people, the merchant as a merchant, the soldier as a soldier, the peasant as a peasant. But Little Russian sayings are the same for all social classes—they belong to the peasants. This is why our Little Russian writers and poets always write works describing the simplest way of life and familiarize us only with Marusias, Odarkas, Prokips, Kandziubas, Stets'kos and other such characters . . . A peasant's life in itself is not particularly interesting for the educated person, so one needs a great deal of talent in order to idealize it to the point of poetry. This is a job for a Gogol, who knew how to find the universal and the human in the Little Russian day-to-day . . . What deep significance we can draw from the fact that Gogol, who passionately loved Little Russia, would nonetheless have become a writer in Russian, and not in Little Russian!³⁴

Belinsky, of course, is speaking on behalf of a Russian-language readership, and not the growing population of Ukrainians eager to read literature in their native language. The salon culture of St. Petersburg appreciated the appearance of Kotliarevs'kyi's *Eneïda* as an eccentric relic, but unlike Kotliarevs'kyi's mock epic and Gogol's stylized Russian-language *Dikanka* tales, Kvitka's Ukrainian-language stories are for and about actual Ukrainians.³⁵ There is little doubt that Kvitka needed both Gogol's commercial landscape and Kotliarevs'kyi's language in order to find his own voice in the Ukrainian vernacular. Moreover, the state of literacy among Ukrainian peasants and the tenuous status of a Ukrainian-language press meant that Kvitka's readers would have been, largely, city-dwellers.³⁶ Kvitka's experience in journalism and theater certainly helped him to achieve a measure of success with his target audience, the men and women at the Ukrainian fair. Particularly popular were his sentimental stories, beginning with "Marusia."

"Marusia" is a novella about a young Ukrainian couple, the eponymous, black-browed heroine and the handsome but poor orphan Vasyl'. Their love, guilt (over premarital sex), and deaths are interwoven with vivid descriptions of Ukrainian folk objects and customs. "Marusia," while never threatened by the censors, does not avoid politics: Vasyl' is drafted by the tsarist army; Marusia grows ill waiting for him, and dies before his return. Vasyl' enters a monastery, where he too dies soon after. Kvitka's sentimental

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curtain obscures a political message about Ukrainian disenfranchisement, which remains there for the taking, should anyone notice.³⁷

Written in the sentimental (rather than folk) tradition, “Marusia” contains no signs of *kotliarevshchyna* or travesty. Accordingly, the marketplace is almost entirely absent, an exception being a meeting between the young couple at the market, where the love-shaken Marusia jumbles her language: “I only have to buy mother some flint for her pipe, and father some red string to embroider a handkerchief, and beef for the Fast of St. Peter and Paul [til'ky i treba kuputy materi . . . kresalo na liul'ku . . . a bat'kovi . . . nytok krasnykh . . . na merezhky do khustok . . . ta ialovychyny . . . na petrivku].”³⁸ Of course, even as Kvitka eschews the comic archetypes of Kotliarevskyi’s *Eneida* and Gogol’s *Evenings*, his novella, tightly structured around Ukrainian tradition and folk ideals, strains under the weight of sentimental hyperbole. Marusia, like Gogol’s Paraska, is the ideal Ukrainian beauty:

Tall, straight as a little arrow, dark, with eyes like wild berries [*ternovi iahidky*], finely threaded brows, face ruddy as the nobleman’s rose that blossomed in the park, her tiny, slightly bowed nose like a little hill, her little lips bloomed like flowers, and between them her teeth were pearls threaded on a string.³⁹

The detail with which Kvitka decorates otherwise clichéd superlatives assembles a veritable dictionary of everyday Ukrainian folk objects. In his description of Marusia’s clothing, Kvitka appears to be selling his items to a very specific set of readers, women who frequent the Ukrainian market and appreciate the value of berries, roses, pearls, and good textiles: “Her blouse was white and fine, she had spun it herself, and her puffed sleeves she had embroidered out of fancy threads [*nytok krasnykh*]. Her linen shawl was red checkered [*kartats’ka, cherchata*], she had inherited it from her mother; they don’t make them like that any more.”⁴⁰

Kvitka claims to have tested “Marusia” by taking the story to the marketplace and reading it to the vendors. In a letter of 1839 to his friend and colleague Petr Aleksandrovich Pletnev, Kvitka writes,

Seeing my Marusia, read by our dear countrymen and women standing at their market stalls and selling peppers, tobacco and whatnot, read in huts, in the family wagon in cities and hamlets [*u rodynnomu koli v mistakh i selishchakh*], which thanks to this delegation, I am able to write in our language, I decided to write something instructive [*shcho-nebud’ povchal’ne*] for this class of people.⁴¹

Kvitka, cautious to maintain his image as “one of the people,” walked a careful line between conformity and social enlightenment.⁴² His moral didactic-

cism made him appear both overly conservative to his Ukrainian contemporaries and innocuous to his government. However, in his Ukrainian prose Kvitka hints that his readers should take a closer look at authority. The careful reader will gather, from “A Soldier’s Portrait,” that what appears to be a menacing tsarist officer may actually be skillfully crafted artifice.

THE JEALOUS JUDGE

“A Soldier’s Portrait: A Latin Tall Tale Told in Our Tongue” (“Saldatskii Patret: Latyns’ka pobrekhen’ka po nashomu rozkazana”) appeared in the Kharkiv journal *Utrenniiaia zvezda* in 1833 and, like Kotliarevs’kyi’s *Eneïda*, places Greek antiquity on Ukrainian soil. The main character, Kuz’ma Trokhymovych, is an artist of such skill that he can make anything lifelike (*zhyvisin’ko*):

So whatever one observes, that’s just how it appears in the portrait; take even a garbage can or a pig, and it will be exactly as it is in real life; just whistle, and lo and behold, there it is [*til’ky posvystysh, ta i hodi!*]! And if you want him to paint something he just dashes it off—for even dashed off you would have the spitting image of a watermelon, or a plum like a perfect blue plum [*a slyva, tak taky tochni-sin’ka slyva*].⁴³

Kuz’ma’s dark blue plums suggest a second inheritance from antiquity, this time from a tale of Zeuxis, who allegedly entered a competition with another painter, Parrhaseus, to see who was the better artist. Zeuxis painted grapes so lifelike that “birds flew up to the stage-buildings where it was hung.”⁴⁴ Like Zeuxis, Kuz’ma is renowned for confounding his viewers with his realistic likenesses. Unlike his classical forebear, however, Kuz’ma is not tasked with attracting birds. At the behest of the gentleman who commissions a portrait, he must produce a painting that will frighten birds away.

So one gentleman got word of this Kuz’ma Trokhymovych, and he had a great many grapes growing in his garden; so, you see, here was the trouble: that summer the sparrows had all appeared . . . So he called Kuz’ma Trokhymovych and asked him to paint him a soldier, and to make him so lifelike that the sparrows would be frightened away [*ia k zhyvji, buv, shchob i horobtsi boialysia*].⁴⁵

Kuz’ma, concerned that his soldier should be an accurate enough likeness to fool humans as well as birds, carries it to the fair in Liptsy, a large village outside of Kharkiv.⁴⁶ The artist hides behind the painting and listens,

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as passersby interact with his soldier. The picture successfully frightens vendors, angers soldiers, and attracts women. Only a brazen shoemaker, noting the portrait's flawed shoe, is not fooled. The commercial landscape, Kvitka implies, is a place where the collective wisdom of the people can eventually distinguish truth from artifice. But it is also a place where artists risk encountering unfair critics. Indeed, Kvitka's tale can be traced to yet another source as well: Aesop's fable "Momus and the Gods" ("Momi sensura"), a tale in which Jupiter, Neptune, and Minerva choose Momus to judge their newly fashioned man, bull, and house. Momus, who finds fault with all of these creations, becomes the archetypal jealous judge.⁴⁷

Kvitka, who attempts to preempt his own critics with his "Appeal to the Editor," later claimed to have addressed "A Soldier's Portrait" to his critics as well. In a letter to *Russkii vestnik*, he informs his readers, "I wrote 'Marusia' to prove to one unbeliever that something gentle and moving can be written in the Ukrainian language . . . I wrote 'The Soldier's Portrait' to stop the critics from explicating that of which they know nothing."⁴⁸ Kvitka's claim that "Marusia" responded to a challenge to write "something gentle and moving" in Ukrainian suggests an attempt at targeting a new readership in a new literary language. "The Soldier's Portrait," however, not only explains Kvitka's anxiety about literary criticism; it provides a model for his artistic method.

The first attempt by a vendor (a woman selling bagels [*bubliki*]) to approach the portrait leaves the woman disconcerted. She approaches the soldier deferentially, asking him to "kindly move out of the way" (*budte laskavi, zvedit' z nashoho mistsia*), for he is frightening the customers. When the soldier does not respond, she attempts to bribe him by thrusting bagels (*bubliki*) into his hand:

"Here, take these, sir! But please go home [*Kete, oz'mit', vashe blahorodie! Pozhaluite, doma zdast'sia!*]" The soldier won't budge. Just then our Yavdokha realized what was what, that this wasn't a real soldier, but merely a likeness. Horrified, she blushed bright red as a crayfish and, not looking at it . . . withdrew her bagels, put them in the box, and sat down.⁴⁹

Like Zeuxis, Yavdokha has temporarily failed to see the difference between reality and art. Her attempts at bribing a material object exemplifies what Bergson would call "mechanical inelasticity," which, as we have seen in the works of Kotliarevs'kyi and Gogol, must be balanced through comedy. "This rigidity is the comic, and laughter is its corrective."⁵⁰ The fact that the soldier's face and stature do not change, despite his many interactions with the human characters in the story, creates a rigid comic center to the story. Unable to vary emotions, "a comic expression of the face is one that promises

nothing more than it gives. It is a unique and permanent grimace.”⁵¹ The lifelessness of an object, be it a well-crafted portrait or an uneaten bagel, makes the human characters look foolish.

The various market-goers’ foolish interactions with the false soldier give Kvitka’s story its substance. In the commercial landscape that is the backdrop for “A Soldier’s Portrait,” inanimate objects, most notably the portrait itself, produce comic effects due to what Bergson would call their inelasticity. The story unfolds almost entirely from the artist’s hidden vantage point, and the plot, like that of the formulaic “Marusia,” appears to be a pretext for the naming of multiple objects from Ukrainian daily life. Lists of items, descriptions of the buyers who purchase them, and examples of market speech suggest that Kvitka is in subtle competition with his character to create an absolute likeness. Kvitka’s enumeration of items at the fair is a virtuosic display of the descriptive capabilities of the Ukrainian vernacular, and consumes well over a page.

Nearby old men sold ground snuff and tobacco; and over there—ironware: horseshoes, nails, axes, axle-bands, horseshoe nails, anything you could possibly want. And just over there are market stalls with fine items for gentle-folk: peppers strung on strings, raisins, figs, onions, various plums, nuts, soap, little wooden honey pots . . . Wagon grease in vats, and tar pails; they even sold the brushes [*kvachki*]; near those were bagels, round loaves of white bread [*bukhanki*] . . .⁵²

In his broad depictions of the fair Kvitka demonstrates the poetic potential of Ukrainian day-to-day vocabulary. Zerov observes that Kvitka’s language becomes more jargonized in this passage than throughout the rest of the story. “Beside this people, Kvitka unfolds before us a broad picture of the Ukrainian fair; the tone of the narration is intentionally colloquial, the manner of speech is verbose, and a bit charged. Reading it is indisputably exhausting.”⁵³ This exhaustion is important. Kvitka is using the commercial landscape to display the quality and wealth of the Ukrainian language, complete with intricate vocabulary and ambiguity. Folk variants and accents are used whenever possible. *Fiki* (figs) becomes “*khifiki*”; *kartofli* (potatoes) becomes “*kartokhli*.” By spelling the words phonetically, according to dialect, Kvitka was expressing solidarity with his fellow writers of left-bank Ukraine who opposed the Russification of Ukrainian orthography. Oleksii Pavlovsky, author of the first Ukrainian (Little Russian) grammar, expressed a similar belief about language when he wrote, “I intend to write all Little Russian words using the exact letters with which they are pronounced there (including *i* instead of *o*, *khv* instead of *f*, *tsia* instead of *tsa*, and *i* instead of *iat’*).”⁵⁴

Many of the everyday items Kvitka mentions double as slurs. A

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wretched peasant might be called a “Tar pail” (*maznitsia*). “*Kvachki*,” brushes used for oiling wheels, can describe weak-willed people. Someone who is extremely drunk is said to be “drunk as an oil brush” (*p'ianyi iak kvachka*). In a street fight, “bread rounds” (*bukhanki*) mean blows or cuffs. On a purely formal level, most of the items described at the fair could also describe carnivalesque behavior. Kvitka’s Ukrainian commercial landscape serves as a glossary of Ukrainian terms used in far broader contexts. Mykhailo Vozniak would later suggest that the language of the Ukrainian commercial landscape was the root of the Ukrainian language of commerce on a larger scale.

The language of the upright gentleman reflects his life experiences, the language of the bookkeepers and petty officials is drawn completely from the distorted turns of the Russian bureaucratic style, and the language of the merchants is achieved from the manners and customs of the bazaars and stores.⁵⁵

The trance-like dictionary of double meanings appears to cast a spell, assigning matter to human form, for out of the magical, transformative market space the portrait’s rogue twin emerges. This live double moves dexterously between vendors’ booths and sideshows, stealing vegetables and fruit.

There and then a soldier appeared, and this time a real soldier, as lifelike as you and me . . . He swiped a bunch of onions from a cart, quickly selling them at half price, and did all of this so craftily and so cleverly, that not a single proprietor noticed. Having gotten to the place where they sell pears he sees a group of boys standing around by the carts and gaping, open-mouthed, at some bears. And so he put his hand on a bag—no one saw him; pulled it closer—no one was watching; put it squarely on his shoulder—no one was watching . . . and, without looking back, scampered off! And just then the vendors happened to see that a *moskal* had walked up and, without asking, grabbed an overflowing bag of pears and taken it, as though it were his. They let out a whoop and took off running after him.⁵⁶

The apparent transformation of the painted soldier to a real soldier, like the portrait’s earlier apparent transformation, in the eyes of Yavdokha the bagel vendor, from a soldier to a portrait, mirrors the kind of “transformation of a human being into a thing” that, according to Bergson, is at the heart of laughter.⁵⁷ Like the women who, at the end of Gogol’s “Sorochintsy Fair,” resemble marionettes, Kvitka’s soldier, masked by the commercial landscape, is simultaneously a human being and an object, an individual and an example of artifice. It is not immediately clear whether Kuz’má’s portrait has come to life or found a twin in another uniformed young man. Both

are labeled *moskal*, the derogatory Ukrainian term used for a Russian (particularly a Russian in uniform).⁵⁸ Both are young and attractive. Both are capable of artful trickery. The theft undertaken by the live soldier justifies the mistrust of the vendors who confront Kuz'ma's picture. The crowded marketplace hides the live soldier's theft from the vendors. It also allows the painted soldier to stand, in plain view, tricking market-goers into mistaking him for a live Russian soldier.

The painted soldier is exposed to his potential critics when Domakha, a lively young girl whose name ("Domicile") implies that she belongs there, approaches the *moskal* flirtatiously. Her girlfriends are eager to hear about the exchange:

"What? What is it? What did he say to you [*shcho vin tobi skazav*]?" The girls, surrounding her, asked Domakha in one voice.

"Ehe! What did he say?" says Domakha. "Well it isn't a live soldier at all, but his portrait [*To ne zhyvyi saldat, a to ioho parsuna!*]!"⁵⁹

Whereas the bagel vendor, who approaches the portrait out of fear at the beginning of the story, remains frightened and ashamed, the girl, who approaches the soldier out of sexual desire, readily exposes him, compelling other passersby to behold the portrait differently. And it is only after Domakha has verbally transformed the painting back into an object that the critic steps in.

This story repeats many of the devices Gogol's readers most admired in *Evenings*. Not only does Kvitka's "Appeal to the Editor" bear a striking resemblance to Gogol's foreword to *Evenings*, told in the voice of the semi-literate Rudyi Pan'ko, but the doubling of the devilish *moskal* at Kvitka's fair resembles the doubling of the pig-demon at Gogol's Sorochintsy. "A Soldier's Portrait" also shares an important theme with Gogol's "Christmas Eve" ("Noch' pered rozhdestvom"), a story that appears in part 2 of *Evenings on a Village Farm near Dikanka*. Vakula, the protagonist in "Christmas Eve," travels to St. Petersburg astride a devil, who helps him to procure the Empress's shoes for his beloved Oksana. He is successful, but, as Edyta Bojanowska has noted, his strange request is a tragic distraction from a more pressing diplomatic matter. Catherine II chooses to grant Vakula his wish for a pair of her shoes rather than hear the request of Vakula's Cossack countrymen, who have come to St. Petersburg to ask the Empress to restore the Zaporozhian Sich, which the Russian army had razed in 1775.⁶⁰ Upon returning from his journey to St. Petersburg, Vakula devotes his energies to painting, pleasing his fellow villagers by decorating his house with bright colors and images of Cossacks. He does penance for his sinful trip to the capital by helping to maintain the local church:

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[Vakula] painted, free of charge, the entire left wing in green paint with red flowers. And this isn't all: on the church wall, as you are entering the church, Vakula painted a devil in Hell, such a horrifying thing that people would spit when they passed it; and the women, when the child in their arms was about to cry, would carry him closer to the painting and say: "Look at what poop is painted there [*on bach', iaka kaka namalevana*]!"—and the child, holding back his tears, would look sidelong at the painting and press closer to his mother's breast.⁶¹

Art that has the power to move a child is the only viable form of redemption for Gogol's character. We may recall, from the introduction to this study, the fresco in Kiev's Trinity Church, in which the monastery's icon school attempted to portray realistic merchants and moneychangers by making them closely resemble Ukrainian Jews. Similarly, Vakula, having come to know Cossacks and devils intimately in his travels, reproduces these visages of good and evil for his fellow villagers.

In "A Soldier's Portrait," Kuz'ma, like Gogol's Vakula, uses his artistic powers to produce a frightening soldier rather than an object of beauty. Kuz'ma's *moskal* may not be as terrifying as Vakula's devil, but it surpasses Vakula's devil in its realism. The portrait does not merely transcend reality; it enters the reality of the fair. Kvitka similarly aestheticizes the mundane with his commercial landscape. By showcasing authentic marketplace colloquialisms, the items for sale, and the ill-mannered market crowd in a story about artifice and disguise, Kvitka presents the reader with an artistic paradox. Whereas Russian-language writers like Gogol were presenting an artificial Ukrainian reality for their imperial readers, Kvitka, a connoisseur of authentic Ukrainian language and behavior, was offering something far closer to reality. However, the content of his story suggests that the artist may use realism to mask the truth and manipulate his audience.

THE DEVIL'S IN THE MUSCOVITE

Bergson reminds us, "Below art, we find artifice."⁶² Kuz'ma's painted soldier is a figure of art, but he also recalls the artifice of an ineffectual governing body. The falseness that is exposed in the end is not so much the innocuous painted figure as it is the innocuousness of an apparent law-keeper. There is a distinction between "ours" (*nash*) and what belongs to the *moskal*. Yavdokha provokes the portrait in an attempt to remove the *moskal*, with his menacing gaze, from the locals' market stands. The Muscovite soldier is an unwanted authority figure, and perhaps an evil omen, intruding upon the Ukrainian fair and frightening away customers.

Moscow is more clearly portrayed as devilish in another Ukrainian story, “The Tumbleweed” (“Perekotypole”), a tale of divine judgment. In this story’s tragic climax two neighbors, the crafty Denys and honest Trokhim, travel home through the woods from a fair. Denys learns that Trokhim has earned money at the fair, and kills him for it. Even at the beginning of the story Denys bears a cultural mark of Cain: “He teaches the boys to sing a Moscow song and spits with contempt, Moscow-style [*Vin vchyt’ parub-kiv spivaty moskovs’kykh pisen’ i pliue cherez hubu po-moskovs’ky*].”⁶³ The character, who prizes Russian culture, is marked as untrustworthy through his demonstration of a Russian’s contempt for Ukrainians.

“The Tumbleweed” departs from *kotliarevshchyna*, and includes none of the comic automatism we find in “A Soldier’s Portrait,” despite also including a journey to and from a fair.⁶⁴ Whereas in “A Soldier’s Portrait” the inanimate objects produce the story’s comic effect, here the fair serves only as an impetus for a fateful journey undertaken by a Ukrainian and a Muscovite. Kvitka provides only the most cursory descriptions of the fair, focusing instead on the tragic trip home. The title object, the tumbleweed, appears on the trip home, and represents no less than the omniscient presence of God, the only witness to Denys’s crime.⁶⁵ Significantly, in an early draft of “The Tumbleweed,” Kvitka provides a much more detailed description of the fair. In keeping with the somber story, however, he removed a long, descriptive passage about the fair, and would later include it in his 1840 novella *The Fair*.⁶⁶

IARMARKA

The Fair (Russian: *Iarmarka*) is a tale of a provincial family for whom the commercial landscape offers a rare urban adventure. The protagonists are redolent of those Gogol uses in “The Sorochintsy Fair”: the main characters include a wife (possessed of compulsive buying habits and a meddling nature), a husband (ill-equipped to sell his products), their two marriageable daughters, and a young son (the trickster). Moreover, both Kvitka’s title and the motif of matchmaking in a market recall Gogol’s earlier story. Thematically, the novella also resembles Ivan Nekrashevych’s 1790 poem “The Fair” (Ukrainian: “Yarmarok”), which is sometimes considered to be the first poem in Modern Ukrainian. Nekrashevych’s poem takes the form of a dialogue between Khvilon and Khves’ko, two peasants who are bargaining over an ox. After discussing the quality of the animal and his financial means, Khves’ko pulls his trump card: the potential marriage of their children. “When you say the word, we will be in-laws/Let our families grow greater” [*Koly kaesh, dak kai, ta i budem svatamy/Nekhai-taky shche rodni prybude mizh namy*].⁶⁷ In the course of the exchange, Nekrashevych flaunts

A painting by Apelles depicting a group of people gathered around a central figure, likely Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, who is holding a book or manuscript. The scene is set in a studio-like environment with various objects and figures in the background.

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his broad Ukrainian vocabulary and suggests that the skilled bargainer must also be a rhetorician.⁶⁸

The main characters in *The Fair* are as poor at bargaining as they are at rhetoric. Moreover, as in “A Soldier’s Portrait,” the central characters in *The Fair* are incapable of dominating the objects in their midst, again recalling Bergson’s connection of the comic to the physical.⁶⁹ However, their poor skills at negotiating a deal ultimately save the family from an ill-fated match. The novella opens with the family’s disorganized preparations for a journey. Zakhar Demianovich seeks advice about pricing his wool. The matron of the family, Matrena Semenovna, makes shopping lists, and convinces her husband to bring along their daughters, Fesinka and Minichka, and their young son Pavliusha. Only after several forgotten items and false starts does the family set out.

The next section involves a description of the fair. In addition to the requisite census of the ethnicities present, the account includes a series of dialogues about pricing. The merchants, in hopes of raising their prices, evoke the world market, citing as references *Moskovskie vedomosti* [*The Moscow Observer*], Russia’s widest circulating newspaper at the time, and *Severnaia pchela* [*The Northern Bee*], a St. Petersburg literary newspaper. Kvitka thus slips his own craft into the bargaining circle: fact and fiction are held up as equal sources for the fluctuating textile market.

“Pardon me,” interrupts [a vendor named] Ermolai Ivanovich. “Have you read the latest issue of *The Moscow Observer*? ”

“How could we not have read it? We’re a trading people, after all,” answer the buyers.

“And *The Northern Bee*? ”

“That one we read out of curiosity.”

“So, I’m not really sure,” said Ermolai Ivanovich, sounding confused, “Is it there or in other papers that they write about how factories are cropping up everywhere lately; people are demanding an unbelievable amount of cloth; an Egyptian Pasha has started to uniform all his soldiers in an immeasurable amount of material, and the roads to him are backed up with vehicles transporting fabrics. So—why lower the price on us?”

“Just so, Sir. The Pasha is his own master, and you are master of your products, and I am master of my money. [*Sbudetsia, sudar’; tochno tak. Pasha vlasten u sebia, kak i vy s svoim tovarom, a ia vlasten s svoimi den’gami.*]”⁷⁰

Literary texts and performance are as much a part of the vendors’ bargaining process as real world events and the products themselves. Kvitka characteristically suggests that the well-read buyer will be less susceptible to the fictions and news items proposed by the likes of Ermolai Ivanovich. How-

ever, these references to Moscow and Petersburg papers allude to a growing concern among rural market-goers: in the 1830s and '40s, with the growth of textile production, individual farmers were beginning to compete for the business of domestic and foreign industrialists.

The great miscalculations that propel the story generate humor at the expense of a balanced budget. Having misjudged the market value of their products, the family returns home in worse economic straits than when they began. Most frustrated of all is Matrena Semenovna, who has not only failed to pay for the clothing and household items she desired, but has lost a potentially advantageous match for her youngest daughter Minichka due to a minor family fiasco at a ball. Pavel Grigorevich, the attractive, well-educated, and affluent object of Minichka's desire, upon returning to his seat after dancing, finds himself on the floor:

What a pity! Instead of a chair he went sprawling on the floor and lay in a pitiful, unenviable position! Everyone roared with laughter, and the first thing the mixed-up Pavel Grigor'ich saw was Minichka chortling heartily.

"Oh, this is certainly one of Pavliusha's tricks!"—shouted Matrena Semenovna, spilling over with laughter.

"I sure did! I—I pulled his chair out from under him when he tried to sit down!" giggled the playful boy, clapping his hands. Beside himself, Pavel Grigor'ich grabbed the boy by the hair and lifted him. "Let me go, let me go! Minichka taught me to do it," squeaked the little boy, hanging in the air. Minichka was laughing with all her heart.⁷¹

Pavel Grigorevich's lack of balance at his seat and the family's miscalculation about his sense of humor costs them a degree of dignity, but allows them a happier ending than that of Paraska in Gogol's "Sorochintsy Fair." Minichka is spared a hasty match conceived as a business transaction. Her elder sister's longtime suitor proposes marriage, and her parents, humbled by the embarrassing carnival of errors, bless their union. In the final lines of the novella Zakhar Demianovich reminds his distraught wife that there will be other fairs: "They'll be selling wool and there will be husbands there too [Sherst' prodadut i zhenikha syshchut]."⁷²

ADVENTURES IN A JEWISH TAVERN

In *The Fair*, as in "A Soldier's Portrait," art is on display. Here, Kvitka displays his own artistic origins through a lengthy section devoted to the fair's theater. Petr Semenov's one-act vaudeville operetta *Fortune from Ill Fortune, or Adventures in a Jewish Tavern* (*Udacha ot neudachi, ili prikliucheniya*)

Apelles's Gallery: Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko and the Critics (1833–1843)

nie v zhidoskoi korchme) was staged in Kharkiv in 1840, the year Kvitka wrote *The Fair*.⁷³ In his 1879 memoirs, Erazm Stogov (the poet Anna Akhmatova's maternal grandfather) recalls seeing the play forty years earlier: "I remember, the whole theater roared with laughter when a Jew, dressed down in his stockings and shoes [*zhid, odetyi po domashnemu v chulkakh i bashmakakh*], on the avant-scène, with all of the characteristic grimaces of a crafty Jew, jumped about from one side of a calm gentleman to his other side and sang . . ."⁷⁴

Stogov could easily have conflated his memory with Kvitka's story, for indeed, the exaggerated characters that emerge in the play, in their resemblance to *vertep* archetypes, call attention to the relative absence of hyperbole in Kvitka's prose. By presenting an interaction between the viewers and the cast, Kvitka returns to his earlier theme of artifice and authenticity by revealing the awkward space between the world of fiction and the world of the audience: "The laughter, the chortling didn't cease; a scream was even heard: 'Ay, bravo! There's a Jew, like a real Jew' [Ai, da bravo! . . . vot *zhid, tak zhid!*]!" The volunteer critic from the audience echoes the compliment paid to Kuz'ma Trokhymovych at the beginning of "A Soldier's Portrait": "A plum like a perfect blue plum [*slyva, tak taky tochni-sin'ka slyva*]." Within the story, the well-received scene sharply plummets into a dramaturge's nightmare.

But suddenly everything went quiet: the Jew, having begun to speak his line, suddenly changes the tone and subject of the dialogue; he begins to talk, in clean and simple language, about some sort of adventure, how he saved a drowning maiden . . . The actor wants to stop, but the prompter persistently feeds him his lines, setting each word deliberately into his mouth.⁷⁵

The prompter, realizing he has mixed up the pages of the script with another, Nikolai Il'in's 1803 Russian drama *Liza, or the Solemnity of Gratitude* (*Liza, ili Torzhestvo blagodarnosti*), offers the audience a choice: he can run home and retrieve the missing second half of *The Jewish Tavern* or the actors can continue with *Liza*.⁷⁶

Kvitka usually leaves the stereotyped Jews, Gypsies, and Turks of *vertep* out of his own narrative, ridiculing instead figures of political or social authority: the *moskal* in "A Soldier's Portrait" and Minichka's wealthy prospective fiancée in *The Fair*. The inclusion of Semenov's play allows Kvitka to take advantage of ethnic stereotypes, which provide *vertep*-style comic relief and display the kind of caricatured hybridity typical of a marketplace tale. Kvitka's insertion of *The Jewish Tavern* is nonetheless unsettling. The episode highlights Kvitka's unsophisticated treatment of Jewish characters, which stands in sharp contrast to his nuanced understanding of Ukrainian

culture. Whereas Gogol frequently included Jewish stereotypes in his work, Kvitka seldom did, even in his comedies. Indeed, this play is the only significant appearance of Jews in the entire novel. The Jewish stereotypes may be filtered entirely through an existing play, but Kvitka uses the clash between a tavern-keeping Jew and a Ukrainian Romantic hero to create an ideal fiasco. The combination of the two characters is so unthinkable that the misplaced lines produce a verbal carnival. Kvitka suggests that the fair is a place where diverse groups can meet and ethnicity can be placed on display. However, whether intentionally or not, Kvitka demonstrates, through the audience's hearty laughter at the caricatured Hasidim, the animosity with which this particular crowd might approach an actual meeting.

This theater scene is reminiscent of Kvitka's own alleged practice of testing his stories by seeking out lay critics at the fair. In *The Fair*, however, the performance that began as a critical success turns into critical uproar. The audience, empowered with a choice, cannot agree. As in "A Soldier's Portrait," the market has spontaneously become a forum for the critique of art, and, Kvitka reminds us, critics are not always consistent. The choice between genres, burlesque and sentimentalism, not only reflects Kvitka's preferred literary genres but suggests a measure of wishful thinking: a critic's negative response to art may be due to a preference in genre. Some members of the audience would prefer a switch to the drama; others insist they paid to see the operetta. When the play is resumed, the prompter is forced to shout the lines, for the actors have not learned them. The generous audience, however, cheers the prompter to the stage for an ovation:

Someone shouted to him, "Thank you! You have done everyone's work!"

"I am grateful to the respectful audience for encouraging my meek talent [*Blagodariu pochтеннейшии публике за поощрение slabogo moego talanta*]," the prompter improvised, "though this isn't the first time I've had this kind of work, the honor you pay me now inspires me to strive to distinguish myself even more [*отличат'я еще боле*]," and to the sound of deafening applause the curtain hid him from his grateful public.⁷⁷

The lauded prompter, eager to take his bow, brings the farce to a comic conclusion. The theatrical miscalculation prefigures the great miscalculation in grain that the characters discover at the end of the novella. Yet the prompter's heroic aversion of fiasco prefigures a happy future for his main characters, despite their economic losses. Hearty laughter and a sympathetic audience, Kvitka suggests, is more important than correctly counting one's profits, marrying a wealthy man, or getting the script exactly right. Kvitka, a pioneer in Ukrainian prose, is, like the prompter, a bearer of unrehearsed lines. Kvitka's suggestion that this comically diligent prompter not only de-

A painting by Apelles depicting a group of people in a studio setting, possibly critics or artists, gathered around a figure who appears to be Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko.

serves appreciation but also sees room for improvement addresses the same critics he targeted with “A Soldier’s Portrait.” This time, however, Kvitka was writing in Russian, the literary (and critical) language of the Tsarist Empire, which meant that the critical responses would be harsher.

THE CURTAIN

Kvitka wrote *The Fair* during the summer of 1840, and it appeared shortly afterward in the journal *Sovremennik* (*The Contemporary*).⁷⁸ In a letter to Pletnev, who edited the St. Petersburg journal, Kvitka wrote “I am enclosing . . . the article *Iarmarka* by your request for the fourth issue of *Sovremennik*.” Pletnev, in turn, wrote to his coeditor Iakov Karlovich Grot, “This very day Kvitka sent me a new novella: *The Fair* is a delight [*Iarmarka—prelest’!*]!”⁷⁹ Grot, however, responded, “*The Fair* is rather boring [*Da i Iarmarka skuchnovata*]; in his novellas Kvitka is almost always too drawn out; actually, I still haven’t read much of *The Fair*.⁸⁰ Pletnev disagrees, and argues that *The Fair* may be Kvitka’s best work. After all, he notes, “Only Pushkin draws things out in just the right way!”⁸¹

Kvitka is often the subject of Pletnev and Grot’s correspondence. Throughout the subsequent year their letters often descend into crude gossip about their Ukrainian colleague. Like Kvitka’s other critics, the two editors remain polarized on the topic of Kvitka’s worth. Grot is, for the most part, unconvinced by Kvitka’s prose. Pletnev perpetually comes to his friend’s defense, recounting discussions of Kvitka’s story in the salons and aristocratic homes of St. Petersburg.⁸² In February 1841 Pletnev is dismayed that “Senkovsky says Kvitka’s composition is *mauvais genre*, that he lacks syllable and that his language is vulgar [*u nego net sloga i podlyi iazyk*], that his scenes interest no one, for they only have to do with the vices and lacks in private, provincial lives.”⁸³ Pletnev, frustrated with Senkovsky’s criticism, writes to Grot: “But how can I convince him that these things don’t seem funny to him because the author discovered them in the provinces and not the capital?” The political and cultural power imbalance between the capital and the provinces proves to be the subtext underlying of the critics’ differences of opinion about Kvitka. Addressing another of Grot’s complaints (Kvitka’s writing is too journalistic), Pletnev writes, “If he has composed so many characters, so many situations, so many scenes; if he has opened before us so many varied, original, sincere objects of beauty in human life and in his own soul—how can you criticize him for starting a phrase with the word *t’fu!*? ”⁸⁴

“There is nothing that is major or revolutionary except the minor,” Deleuze and Guattari inform us.⁸⁵ Like Parrhaseus, who wins his competi-

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tion with Zeuxis by painting an image of a curtain itself, Kvitka gained his most ardent admirers through his apparent Ukrainian authenticity, whether in Ukrainian or Russian. Even Kvitka's harshest critics would acknowledge that the Ukrainian territories in Kvitka's writing were far more Ukrainian than anything being circulated in the capital, Gogol's stories included. Kvitka's commercial landscape paradoxically serves as both an artist's refuge and a place to engage with one's critics. The colloquial language that conceals, confuses, and irritates, the provincial trade, and even the conservatism that likened Kvitka to many of his provincial characters usually frustrated his Russian readers and endeared him to his Ukrainian readers. Shortly after the writer's death in 1843 one reader of *Moskvitianin* (*The Muscovite*) declared that Kvitka's life's work had been "to affect those receptive to human language with his simple 'village quotidian [*byt*]'"⁸⁶ As one of many Ukrainians making his place in the Petersburg bookshop, Kvitka had to break through a critical public that would receive his works based only on their broad appeal to an imperial readership. Kvitka, like Gogol, uses the Ukrainian commercial landscape to portray a world hidden behind a curtain of objects and artifice. But Kvitka's mastery is in painting this curtain like a curtain.

Chapter Four

The Marketplace Origins of Modern Yiddish Literature (1842–1916)

NIKOLAI GOGOL CARRIES his reader into his “Sorochintsy Fair” amid an “endless procession of ox-carts”; Kvitka’s protagonists in *The Fair* squeeze uncomfortably into “a carriage, impossibly loaded with boxes and pillows.”¹ Born fifty years after Gogol, the classic Yiddish writer Sholem Rabinovitsh (1859–1916), better known by his pseudonym Sholem Aleichem, uses the commercial landscape as a metaphor for his own literary project:

Why did I call my autobiography *From the Fair*? A man, as he travels *to the fair*, is full of hope, he himself does not yet know what bargains he’ll manage to swing and what he’ll manage to fix . . . He flies there swift as an arrow, at full tilt, don’t mess with him, he hasn’t got the time! But when he travels *from the fair*, he already knows the deals he’s swung and what he’s fixed up there, and now he doesn’t fly so fast. *He has time.*²

Sholem Aleichem wrote *From the Fair* between 1914 and 1916, just after he had left Europe for New York. It is set in his hometown of Voron’kiv, a shtetl in the Pereyaslav region, located about 200 miles from Gogol’s native Sorochintsy.³ If both Gogol’s and Kvitka’s fairs introduce Ukrainian motifs to imperial Russian literary culture at a fragile point in Ukrainian-Russian relations, the fair frames Sholem Aleichem’s stories of the Ukrainian borderlands at a time when Jews were at the center of imperial Russia’s ethnic concerns.

Although scholars have long acknowledged the importance of Gogol to Sholem Aleichem’s writing, they have been content to limit comparisons between these writers to anecdotes and isolated plot lines. Fundamental differences between the two writers’ ideological and social agendas frustrate efforts to equate their poetics: whereas Gogol warns of the risks of introducing foreign material into a pastoral Slavic landscape, Sholem Aleichem



Photograph of the market square in Pereiaslav.

From the collection of M. S. Zabochen'. Reproduced, with permission, from the National Photo and Film Archive, Kiev, Ukraine (F-180539)

warns of the dangers facing the Jew as Russia's perennial foreigner, and in the process critiques the scapegoating of Jews that had become prevalent in the 1880s. To bridge this gap we must look to the literary and social history that unfolded during the half century that separated the two writers, and that empowered Sholem Aleichem not only to claim Gogol's commercial landscape for a Yiddish-speaking audience, but to reclaim Gogol's Jewish characters, correcting stereotypes about the role of the Jewish vendor in the Ukrainian borderlands. Reading Sholem Aleichem through the lens of the commercial landscape reveals Gogol's strong influence on him: both portray this landscape as a microcosm of the Russian Empire. Yet Sholem Aleichem's development of a Yiddish storytelling persona within that landscape is more in keeping with the Yiddish fiction of the Enlightenment, particularly that of Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh (Mendele Moykher-Sforim). Furthermore, in his critique of antisemitism Sholem Aleichem is in dialogue with contemporary Russian and Ukrainian writers, including Gorky and Korolenko—social reformers who hoped for a change in the relationships between Russia's coexisting ethnic groups, relationships that had grown especially troubled in the late nineteenth century. Sholem Aleichem synthesizes these three models—classic Russian humor from the Ukrainian borderlands, innovation

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in Yiddish prose, and a commitment to Jewish cultural and political empowerment—into a unified project.

The 1880s constituted a turning point in the intercommunal ethnic relations of the Ukrainian borderlands. Following the 1881 assassination of Alexander II, a large wave of anti-Jewish pogroms led to the implementation of devastating laws restricting Jewish residence and trade. Besides affecting provincial trade, this change in Russian-Jewish relations put Jewish culture at the center of imperial Russian conversations about diversity.⁴ The literary function of the commercial landscape was bound to adapt as well. By the late nineteenth century, market trade came to symbolize the conflicts between Jews and their Slavic neighbors—in literature by Jews and non-Jews alike. Representations of the commercial landscape in Yiddish literature reflected the new state of Russian-Jewish relations in this period, with Jews taking over the role of the alien other from their Ukrainian neighbors. Although it was after the violence of the early 1880s that the motif of the commercial landscape came to the fore in Yiddish literature, particularly with Sholem Aleichem's critical variation on the Gogolian fair, its development began in the 1840s with the fiction of the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment). Before turning to Sholem Aleichem's commercial landscape, let us examine the rise of the Yiddish fiction of the Russian Haskalah.

THE EARLY YEARS: YIDDISH LITERATURE ENTERS THE COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE

Maskilim (Jewish enlighteners), having the choice to write in Russian, Hebrew, or Yiddish, often moved among the three languages to target different readerships, not unlike Ukrainian writers who shifted between Ukrainian (the language of the folk) and Russian (the language of empire). Joseph Perl, who wrote his 1819 anti-Hasidic satire *The Revealer of Secrets* in Hebrew, later rewrote the novel in Yiddish.⁵ Osip Rabinovich, who was one of the first *maskilim* to write in Russian, was also one of the few Jews to attend the University of Kharkiv, the center of the Ukrainian national revival.⁶ Olga Litvak reveals that while in Kharkiv between 1840 and 1845, Rabinovich became close to the Ukrainian-born Russian language poet Nikolai Shcherbina (1821–1869); the friendship “nourished a common interest in translating a regional southern idiom into the imperial vernacular.”⁷ This affinity should come as no surprise, given that both writers were engaged in building their respective national literatures.

Modern Yiddish literature followed a peculiar course of development that combined entertainment with satire. The early Yiddish writers of the Haskalah, often having abandoned the religious communities in which they

were raised, viewed Yiddish not as fodder for folklore but as a tool for educating a Yiddish-speaking readership. Israel Aksenfeld (1787–1866) wrote what is considered to be the first Yiddish-language novel, *The Headband (Dos shterntikhl)*, during the 1840s, though it was not published until 1861.⁸ Born into a Hasidic family in Nemirov, Aksenfeld left his community as an adult to become a follower of the Haskalah, as well as a military purveyor during the Napoleonic War. The hero of his novel, Mikhel, follows a similar path, escaping a corrupt community to become a broker and an enlightener. Mikhel's mentor Oksman (whose name not coincidentally resembles Aksenfeld's) demonstrates the social power of literature and the virtues of theatrical disguise by teaching the young man about theater. We learn that Oksman once fooled a town's Hasidic followers into thinking he was a great rebbe, only to reveal their gullibility, in an act resembling Khlestakov's unmasking of the mayor's entourage in Gogol's *The Government Inspector*. This kind of social reform through performance sums up Oksman's (and Aksenfeld's) philosophy of Enlightenment: a writer should "mock [religious Jews'] false laughter and their wrinkled grimaces, so that the simple folk begin to mock them in the street, then will they listen to reason."⁹ Moreover, Oksman proposes that *maskilim* urge the tsarist government to mandate Jewish literacy in Russian "so that Jews will read today's young, bright Russian authors' scholarly works."¹⁰

For Aksenfeld Yiddish was a temporary means to an end, an educational tool through which *maskilim* would convince religious Jews of the fallacy of their beliefs, eventually leading them to abandon religion and Yiddish. As Dan Miron puts it, "This suicidal principle was the final and inevitable consequence of the 'aesthetics of ugliness.'"¹¹ Yiddish was ugly, and so Yiddish literature was correspondingly undesirable. Crude market scenes and unsavory business transactions add to this their own "aesthetics of ugliness." Aksenfeld opens his novel with a description of shtetl trade: "A small shtetl has a few houses. Every other week there is a Sunday fair. The little Jews [*yidlekh*] there deal in spirits, in grain, in contracts for bags [*mit redne oyf zek*], or in tar. Here is someone aspiring to become a true Hasidic rebbi [*a guter-yid*]."¹² To add emphasis to the shtetl's unsavory qualities, Aksenfeld gives the small town the name "Loyhoyopole" (No-suchville). The larger Jewish town of Berdichev proves to be a greater version of the shtetl's gritty commercial landscape: "What did Mikhel see in the big town of Berdichev? Ten Loyhoyopole puddles in one, fifteen times as many slovenly wives and ragged Jews as in Loyhoyopole, and thirty-eight times as many beggars tearing at your coattails, forty times as many horse-drawn wagons."¹³ It is only upon leaving tsarist Russia that Mikhel escapes the uncivilized commercial landscape. In Breslau, a city without puddles, "even the steps leading into the large buildings were washed clean, and no one stood in front of the shops shouting 'Come on around, what are you buying?'"¹⁴

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It would take a later generation of Yiddish *maskilim* to strike a more nuanced balance between respecting the cultural practices of Yiddish-language readers and urging them to broaden their horizons. Both Yiddish and the commercial landscape became more powerful tools in the hands of the Hebrew writer Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh (1836–1917). The Yiddish modernist Y. L. Peretz suggests in 1910 that Abramovitsh “was the first who showed love and caution towards his artistic instrument—to the Yiddish word.”¹⁵ Like Gogol’s semi-literate beekeeping narrator Rudyi Pan’ko, a fictional businessman-cum-storyteller, Mendele Moykher-Sforim (Mendele the Book Peddler), is the narrator who presents Abramovitsh’s fiction to his readers.¹⁶ “The Little Man” (“Dos kleyne mentshele,” 1863) is Abramovitsh’s first work of Yiddish fiction, and the narrator Mendele sells the tale alongside other knickknacks.

They know me everywhere. I travel across all of Poland with all sorts of holy books published in Zhitomir. Besides that I’ve got prayer shawls [*taleysim*], ritual undergarments with the correct number of tassels, shofars, prayer thongs, amulets, little mezuzahs, wolfs’ teeth—and sometimes you can also find brass and copperware. And yes, it’s true, since *Kol mevaser* began to come out I carry a few issues of that with me too [Yo. *Pravde, zint der ‘kol mevaser’ iz aroysgekumen fir ikh amat fun im mit mir etlekhe numern*].¹⁷

Mendele’s cart carries a seemingly odd array of objects from the Pale of Settlement: Hasidic texts, amulets, and, he admits with a measured mixture of pride and sheepishness, the *maskilic* Yiddish weekly magazine *Kol mevaser* (*A Voice That Brings News*), which began publishing in 1862, and which first published Abramovitsh’s story.¹⁸ The insertion of a Russian word, “*pravda*” (it’s true), marks this Enlightenment publication as culturally distinct from the ritual and superstitious items he has already listed. The journal is something new and slightly foreign, perhaps even suspect, but he is carrying it anyway.

Abramovitsh employs a version of *skaz* in creating his freethinking, but unassimilated, Mendele. There is an important difference between the modern Yiddish literary project and its Gogolian model, however.¹⁹ Whereas Gogol used illiterate narrators to entertain an educated Russian readership, Abramovitsh’s semi-educated characters were designed to enlighten a semi-educated, albeit yet unmodernized Yiddish readership.²⁰ The Yiddish literary project, in this way, shared goals with Ukrainian-language prose, exemplified by writers like Kotiarevs’kyi and Kvitka. Like his Ukrainian colleagues, Abramovitsh charged himself with inconspicuously eavesdropping on the language as it was spoken on the streets. The market vendor Mendele may have allowed the *maskil* Abramovitsh to preserve a degree of anonymity even as he became famous. This kind of anonymity could only have

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been possible in a city like Odessa, where Abramovitsh lived and wrote, a city where Mendele's Yiddish readership would have been far less numerous than throughout the rest of the Pale of Settlement. Steven Zipperstein writes,

Imagine the surprise of writer Yitzhak Dov Berkowitz, son-in-law of Sholem Aleichem, when, as a newcomer to Odessa, he finds Mendele wandering the city streets for hours without being recognized, gathering much of the material for his fiction, spying on conversations. Mendele could do this with efficiency because, though lionized elsewhere, he walked Odessa's streets relatively unnoticed.²¹

Yiddish literature, like the marketplace, belonged not to the modern Jews of Odessa, but to the more provincial cities, towns, and villages of the Pale of Settlement. Unlike the world of Abramovitsh, which is filled with classical European literature, ideas of changing traditional Jewish practices, and thoughts of migration to a Jewish state, Mendele's world centers on shtetl trade with its beggars, bags, and wares.

Among Abramovitsh's most popular works is *Masoes fun Binyomin Hashlishi* (*The Chronicles of Benjamin the Third*, 1878), a picaresque series of adventures narrated by a Jewish Don Quixote whose goal is to find the ten tribes of Israel lost beyond the river Sambation and in doing so convince the Jews of the world's diasporas to return to Palestine.²² Abramovitsh was continuing a tradition of rewriting *Don Quixote* in a Ukrainian landscape: one of Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko's last works, his 1841 novella *The Hero of Ochakov* (*Geroi ochakovskikh vremen*), places a Ukrainian Quixote in the historic 1789 Siege of Ochakov and was originally titled *The Ukrainian Don Quixote* (*Ukrainskii Don-Kikhot*).²³ The East European fascination with *Don Quixote* bordered on romanticization: Turgenev, in his 1860 speech "Hamlet and Don Quixote" ("Gamlet i Don-Kikhot"), suggests that Cervantes's hero is the ideal altruist.²⁴

Mendele's introduction to these mock-chronicles, a prelude reminiscent of Gogol's Rudyi Pan'ko and Kvitka's playful letter to the editor, offers an off-the-cuff explanation for telling his tale in the vernacular.

I couldn't very well keep from saying to myself: before those learned Jews, whose little finger is thicker than my loins, before they all wake up and publish these holy books of Benjamin's travels in *Loshen-koydesh* [the holy tongue], in the meantime I'm going to give it a shot and publish at least a little excerpt [*khotsh a kitsur*] of it in plain and simple Yiddish.²⁵

Benjamin's inadequate intellectual preparation to travel the world consists of a limited Hebrew and yeshiva education and a smattering of decontextu-

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alized stories. Instead of the Bedouins and Samaritans of the Bible, he encounters the hazards of daily life in the Pale. Peasants speak only Ukrainian, carts nearly run him over, and most dangerous of all, Jewish kidnappers force him to enlist in the tsar's army. By naming his character "the Third," Abramovitsch places him in a line of Jewish chroniclers that includes at least two prior Benjamins, which Ken Frieden identifies as "the twelfth-century Benjamin of Tudela and Israel ben Joseph Benjamin (1818–64), also known as Benjamin the Second—who wrote travel books."²⁶

Benjamin, lacking any real navigational skills, wanders in circles. He returns time and again to a familiar commercial landscape—his shtetl market.²⁷ Benjamin embarks upon his first adventure alone. Lost and hungry, the desperate pilgrim at last asks a passing peasant for help.²⁸ The exhausted traveler loses consciousness and, awakening on the Good Samaritan's wagon, amid a pile of market wares, determines that he is bound for market.

When he opened his eyes and came to, he found himself lying in a wagon upon a giant sack of potatoes, covered in a coarse coat [*grober svite*]. By his head lay a bound rooster who beheld him all the while from the corner of its eye and clawed him. At his feet stood crates stuffed with heads of garlic and onions and other delicacies . . . It occurred to him that a roaming merchant had probably captured him in the desert and was going to sell him as a slave.²⁹

Benjamin's quixotic vision is a case of reading obscuring reality—his fantasy resembles Bible tales that formed the basis for shtetl Jews' education despite having little to do with their modern reality. In an effort to save himself, Benjamin promises the driver, in a mixture of Yiddish and poor Ukrainian, "In Tuneyadvek my wife will give you some strong spirits and a bit of Sabbath loaf and will kindly thank you [*U Tunayadevki zhinka tebi dos shtarke shlish i shabashkove bulke, i dobre dankuet tebi*]."³⁰ The peasant does bring Benjamin to a market, but, instead of being the slave market of Benjamin's imagination, it is the familiar market of Tuneyadvek, and the market-goers are pleased to discover their lost neighbor.

They carried Benjamin, just how he was, lying upon a sack of potatoes, across the marketplace to his house and with a great parade the whole town of Tuneyadvek from small to big paid him their respects, no one begged, and they greeted him with much noise and fanfare: Holy! Holy! Holy!³¹

The town's mockery of the errant Benjamin is punctuated by the ironic nickname he is given: Benjamin the Holy.

Benjamin's second foray into the wide world is only slightly more successful, thanks to his friend and traveling companion "Senderl der yidene"

(Senderl the Jewish wife), who takes care of the duo's practical needs. Senderl, Benjamin's "Sancho Panza," sets out disguised as a woman in hopes of evading recognition and indeed becomes, throughout the journey, an ideal wife, cooking, generating ideas, tolerating Benjamin's many schemes, and, as women often did in Jewish families, translating. Senderl's superior knowledge of non-Jewish languages helps to reinforce Benjamin's delusional sense of importance: "Here in the Diaspora [*khuts l'orets*] you'd be better off talking to the peasants in their crude tongue than I. After all your missus [*ploymiste*] used to drag you with her to the market all the time."³² In contrast to both Benjamin's and Senderl's real wives, who find their husbands respectively ridiculous and ineffectual, the men, in forging a homosocial bond, create an alternative community to traditional marriage.³³ Benjamin's dismantling of a traditional relationship urges the reader to think beyond the confines of the shtetl and its archetypal roles.³⁴

Abramovitsh includes a long and colorful description of the market-place in the town of Glupsk (Foolsville), a recurring *topos* modeled on the town of Glupov in Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedryn's 1869–70 satire *History of a Town* (*Istoria odnogo goroda*).³⁵ The town, which recurs throughout Abramovitsh's oeuvre, is a thinly veiled Berdichev, and indeed resembles the Berdichev Abramovitsh later describes in *The Wishing Ring*, with its multitude of puddles and beggars. The items Benjamin describes in this commercial landscape seem to materialize from the pages of the Bible or a Russian fairy tale: Holy Land apples can be found beside Baba-Yaga's house on chicken-feet, which comes from East European folklore.

There, women sit in long rows, with troughs filled to the brim with heads of garlic, with cucumbers, cherries, gooseberries, currants, Holy Land apples, Kol Nidre pears, and with all kinds of other things. Off to the side, an old hunched booth stands on its chicken feet, without a door or windows; according to what the old and gray Jews tell you, a sentry [*budotshnik*] once stayed in this booth and the whole town came running to have a look at the miracle of the booth and the soldier. Next to the old booth, which Foolsville is as proud of as if it were a fortress, sits Dvossye the market woman, completely surrounded by troughs, under a small roof covered with moldy planks, rotten straw, and rush mats and resting on four bent and crooked poles.³⁶

These descriptions offer a mixture of mockery and wonder. Benjamin's exaltation of the fruits of the Holy Land and the miracle of the market booth calls attention to the narrow experience of Jews themselves in the Pale of Settlement. At the same time, for Benjamin, Jewish and Slavic stories, the dual boundaries of his provincial imagination, merge at the Glupsk market. These stories temporarily turn the mundane commercial landscape into an otherworldly Glupsk, a Glupsk of combined Jewish and Ukrainian fantasies.

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Benjamin and Senderl do not find the ten lost tribes of Israel, but they do explore the outer limits of their assumptions and experience. Their travels end when, still in Glupsk, they are abducted by Jewish *khappers*—kidnappers whose job it is to deliver a number of Jews (usually in place of more affluent Jewish young men) to be enlisted in the tsar's army.³⁷ This event brings Benjamin back to the beginning of his adventures. Atop the peasant's cart during his first return home, amidst chickens, eggs, and other market goods, Benjamin had hoped to be sold into the hands of Jews, and not of gentiles: "If he could at least sell me to a Jew, I might be saved yet, unless he were to sell me to a Prince or, God forbid, to a Princess, the daughter of a non-Jew [*fun di umes haoylem*], in which case I am lost, lost forever."³⁸ In the end, however, it is a Jew who, having picked Benjamin and Senderl up on the side of the road, sells them into slavery. When the two, having attempted to escape, are court-martialed and learn that their actions were illegal, Benjamin cries in self-defense:

"Your honor [*Vashe Blagorodie*]! . . . Snatching [*khappen*] people in the middle of the afternoon and selling them like chickens at a marketplace—this is allowed, but as they, poor souls, try to free themselves, this you call a crime! If so, then this is a godforsaken world, and I sure don't understand what you call allowed and not-allowed!"³⁹

This small speech, for which Benjamin and Senderl are, happily, discharged on grounds of insanity, contains Abramovitsh's message to his readers: official Enlightenment has failed Russia's Jews. The Diaspora proves to be a dangerous place for a Jew from Tuneyadve, where the greatest danger is in fact not a Ukrainian peasant (who tends to mind his own business, occasionally offering assistance), but a religious Jew. The unruly commercial landscape in this novel, in addition to providing a framework for displaying Benjamin's mistakes and misconceptions, is a metaphor for a fundamentally unjust system in which the government, through the system of forced recruits, turns human beings into commodities. With the violence and repressive laws of the 1880s, the actual commercial landscape would become the site of dangerous Jewish-Slavic encounters.

THE 1880S AS A TURNING POINT FOR THE COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE

In March 1881 members of the revolutionary terrorist organization, the "Peoples Will" (Narodnaia volia), assassinated the popular Alexander II, who had earned the moniker "Tsar-Liberator" for his emancipation of the serfs in 1861. The pogroms that followed in 1881–82, as well as the subsequent

legislation enacted in response, altered the commercial landscape both in fiction and in reality. Many of the pogroms themselves broke out at markets, fairs, or the festivals associated with Christian holidays. The laws designed to avoid further violence in the provinces imposed restrictions on Jewish trade. The commercial landscape thus became central to Russian discourse about Jewish-Slavic antagonism. Alexander Orbach has shown that the initial pogroms took the form of “discernible waves”:

In the first series, from mid-April through the first week of May 1881, over 175 incidents took place in both small hamlets and large cities, including the cities of Odessa and Kiev. After a two-month respite, another wave of pogroms ravaged the provinces of Poltava and Chernigov with over thirty incidents being reported. Furthermore, violence against Jews broke out in Warsaw on Christmas Day 1881. Finally, the Balta pogrom of March 1882 closed out the wave of pogroms associated with the years 1881–1882.⁴⁰

The government attempted to reestablish social calm by closely monitoring Jewish-Christian relations.⁴¹

These laws, which were to be carried out only in the *gubernias* of the Pale of Settlement, were altered several times between 1882 and 1917. They were officially designed to protect Jews from the kind of antisemitic rioting that left hundreds homeless in 1881–82. In practice, however, they severely limited Jews’ mobility and material position within the Tsarist Empire.⁴² “During the interval between the pogrom of Warsaw and that of Balta,” writes the Jewish historian Simon Dubnow, “the Government was preparing for the Jews a series of legislative pogroms [*legal'nye pogromy*].”⁴³ The three major provisions of the May Laws were as follows:

1. To forbid the Jews henceforth from settling anew outside of the towns and shtetls (*mestechki*).
2. To temporarily suspend the perpetuation of deeds of purchase and mortgages in the name of Jews, the witnessing of lease agreements for landed property outside the boundaries of towns and shtetls, and the power of attorney for the management and disposal of this property.
3. To prohibit the Jews from conducting trade or business on Sundays and Christian holidays. The same order is to be observed among Christians.⁴⁴

The effects of the first two provisions of the May Laws were devastating. Pauline Wengeroff, in her memoirs of nineteenth-century Jewish society, *Memoirs of a Jewish Grandmother*, writes, “All remaining freedoms were taken from the Jews. Restrictions were piled upon restrictions, and these

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continue more or less sharply to this day, with no end in sight. The areas where Jews were allowed to live were more and more restricted.⁴⁵ The outlawing of Sunday and holiday trade, however, while intended to limit unruly gatherings, effectively criminalized many manifestations of the commercial landscape.

Like the other provisions of the May Laws, this final clause was subject to interpretation.⁴⁶ Socially, however, the May Laws emboldened Christian residents of the Ukrainian borderlands to voice their anti-Jewish sentiments through complaints about markets and fairs. Archived petitions addressed to local and central branches of the tsarist government give a sense of the Christians' negative association of Jews and marketplaces. One 1883 petition claims that measures to change the markets to weekdays had been blocked because Jews had been bribing police officers and other local authorities: "Neither your decrees, nor the desires of the community have any meaning, but only the craftiness [*khitrost'*] of the Jews."⁴⁷ Another priest complained, in 1887, that his parishioners, "inappropriately spending the morning of the holy service, are not ashamed later to let their conduct slip to various kinds of carelessness, the likes of which are practiced by exploiter-Jews [*evreieksploratory*]."⁴⁸ The chief procurator, Pobedonostsev himself, wrote to Tsar Alexander III in 1889:

In the Western and South-western provinces it has gotten to the point where the working population is entirely in the Jews' servitude, and the worker can't even think about church on a holiday—the Jews won't let him . . . "How am I to close my market stand in the commercial square, when the neighbor's is open?"⁴⁹

More often than not the official responses to these petitions asserted that "without bazaars the peasant could not make a living";⁵⁰ or "moving the market days would be bad for the city's economy."⁵¹ However, just as the pogroms established the risk of violent attacks on Jews by their Ukrainian neighbors, the May Laws cast the Jews in the Pale of Settlement as antagonists to Christians, specifically through their marketplace presence.

Although many of the literary images of the Jews that appeared in the 1880s reflect this mistrust and suspicion, Jewish writers and socially progressive non-Jewish writers sought to combat advancing antisemitic stereotypes.⁵² The Russian philosopher Vladimir S. Soloviev and the Ukrainian-born Russian-language writer Vladimir Galaktionovich Korolenko voiced their own opposition to the pogroms by shifting the blame for social ills from Jewish vendors to a system of culturally accepted, and institutionalized, intolerance.⁵³ Korolenko, in his naturalist depictions of Jews and Christians, attempted to correct the popular scapegoating of Jewish market vendors.

Jews and Ukrainians in Russia's Literary Borderlands

In his 1890 novella “Day of Atonement” (“Sudnyi Den’”), the devil Khapun (whose name recalls the notorious “*khappers*” who kidnapped Jewish boys for the tsarist army) has come, in keeping with Ukrainian folklore, to carry a sinful Jew away on the eve of Yom Kippur. This year he has captured Yankel, an entrepreneur who appears to have emerged straight from Gogol’s *Taras Bulba*. The devil enumerates, to his tavern-keeping victim, the sins of which Jews are guilty:

“You take a percentage from the people—One!”
“One,” repeated Yankel, also counting on his fingers.
“You feed on the peoples’ sweat and blood—Two!”
“Two.”
“You fill the people with vodka—Three!”
“Three.”
“And you also water down the vodka—Four!”
“Oh, let number four go. And what else?”
“What, is that too little? Ai, Yankel, Yankel!”⁵⁴

The contradiction between the devil’s third and fourth points exemplifies Korolenko’s critique of the scapegoating of Jewish vendors. In “Day of Atonement,” Yankel makes a deal with the devil. He will stop struggling and allow the devil to carry him away for a year. If, however, a Christian steps in to fill his tavern-keeping role and commits all of the aforementioned sins himself, Yankel will be set free and his financial losses recovered. A Ukrainian miller indeed takes over Yankel’s business, within a year runs not one but two taverns, dilutes the alcohol, and is, like Yankel before him, universally despised.

Korolenko was a well-known advocate for the disenfranchised in the early twentieth century. His exposé of the 1903 Kishinev pogrom, “House # 13,” earned him a reputation as a philo-Semite. His 1907 essay, “The Sorochintsy Tragedy” (“Sorochinskaia tragediia”), was an important condemnation of the government’s violent response to a peasant uprising in the town Gogol had made famous nearly a century earlier. In “Day of Atonement,” Korolenko may be employing a Gogolian caricature of a Jew who deals readily with the devil. However, his scenario suggests that the village’s economic troubles should not be blamed on the Jews but on a broadly dysfunctional society.

MENDELE’S REVISED COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE

For Jewish enlighteners who had spent the better part of their careers criticizing traditional Jewish culture, condemning Christian antisemitism and

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the dysfunctional rural economy was not as simple as it was for their Russian and Ukrainian colleagues. Abramovitsh stopped writing during the 1880s, and, like many of his fellow *maskilim*, appears to have reassessed his commitment to the tenets of Enlightenment rather than welcoming the revolutionary fervor of the People's Will. The Yiddish journalist B. Brondt wrote, in 1889, "Our greatest misfortune in the twenty years before the pogroms, is that we began to deny our very being, to forget who we were. We cried out in a single voice that we are Russians, Germans, French, but not Jews."⁵⁵ Because of the official Soviet condemnation of nationalism in favor of class-consciousness, Soviet scholars were obliged to condemn Mendele's renewed concern for Jewish solidarity during the latter portion of his career. The Soviet Yiddish literary scholar Meir Wiener highlights the 1880s as a period of backsliding in Mendele's career in which he abandoned his progressive political and social agenda, moving, in the wake of the anti-Jewish violence and economic upheaval, toward petit bourgeois and nationalist sentiments. Abramovitsh's last novel, *Dos vintshfingerl* (*The Wishing Ring*), is, according to Wiener, evidence of the author's reactionary response to the 1880s, and of his shift from social rebellion and anti-clericalism toward a justification and romanticizing of things Jewish, "even the Hasidim . . . against whom the *maskilim* had so vehemently fought."⁵⁶ What Wiener condemns as a reactionary turn toward the past might also be read as a complex shift toward a more nuanced understanding of the volatile place of Russian Jewry following the pogroms of the 1880s and the subsequent May Laws.

The Wishing Ring does show the strong effect the 1880s had on Abramovitsh's work. Abramovitsh first published *The Wishing Ring* as a novella in 1865, and it was not particularly successful. His later version, which he began serializing in Sholem Aleichem's *The Jewish Popular Library* (*Di yidishe folks-bibliotek*) in 1888, is a historical novel that begins in the 1830s and culminates with the pogroms of the 1880s.⁵⁷ Markets and fairs had not only been the sites of anti-Jewish violence during these pogroms; they exemplified the economic stagnation in the Ukrainian borderlands that came with the implementation of the May Laws. Among the most striking changes in the longer, later edition of *The Wishing Ring* is the inclusion of a detailed and dangerous commercial landscape.

The novel presents the market as the site of exploitation, crime, and loss; it is seldom a place where money is made or valuable products obtained. As the story begins, the town of Glupsk (Foolsville) appears to offer financial opportunity to the young residents of Kaptansk (Beggarsville).⁵⁸ As we know from Abramovitsh's earlier work, however, Glupsk is more likely to derail individuals on their life journey than provide financial success; it is in Glupsk that Benjamin and Senderl are kidnapped and sent to the army. The most prevalent commercial landscape in *The Wishing Ring* is the Glupsk slave market. Here, Hershele's young friend Beyle, along with a number

of other young women in the novel, is kidnapped and sold into prostitution. Abramovitsh's slave market, which at first appears to the characters to be merry and innocuous, quickly shocks the reader with its vivid tableau of human trafficking and exploitation:

Philistine housewives moan, groan, wipe their noses, and rub their eyes [*opge-kumene balebostes okhtsn, krekhtsn, vishn di nez un raybn di oygn*]. Dealers wrapped in shawls or in jackets with only one sleeve [*yupes oyf eyn arbl*], circle like angels of destruction. One catches, as though a hen out of its cage, a young wife or a girl and leads her off somewhere. A second comes running, madder than hell, very displeased with somebody. And the third contends, speaking sugar-sweet words to proprietresses right there on the spot, praising her merchandise to the skies: this one here is a genius of *khale*, that one has golden hands for scouring even the oldest brass and copper, and that one is a cook without an equal, the king could eat what she makes—she's never worked for others before, she was mistress of her own home. No joke—she was Nokhem the Idler's wife [*a katoves nakhomtse dem batlens a vayb*].⁵⁹

The reader might overlook the resemblance between Abramovitsh's "déclassé housewives [who] moan and groan [*opgekumene balebostes okhtsn, krekhtsn*]" and Gogol's "arguing market women [who] hurled abuse and crayfish [*possorivshiesia perekupki perekidyvalis' bran'iu i rakami*]".⁶⁰ But she is sure to notice the brokers whose single-sleeved jackets [*yupes oyf eyn arbl*] seem to be cut from the same pattern as Gogol's pig-devil's coat, a garment that is missing one damning red sleeve [*krasnoe svitko*]. Moreover, Gogol's "Sorochintsy Fair," a story that is similarly cheerful at first glance, reveals the crude commercial aspects of courtship. But whereas Gogol's Paraska is complicit in her own betrothal in Sorochintsy, Abramovitsh's Beyle, who enters Glupsk looking for work, is utterly naive about her entrance into sex-slavery.

The slave market in the absurdly foolish town of Glupsk, where orphans disappear along with sleeves, illustrates the heavy influence of Gogol, Saltykov-Schedrin, and possibly Dickens on Abramovitsh. This commercial landscape, which, like others of its kind, is a microcosm of the Pale of Settlement, provides him a site to exhibit human behavior, and to expose the cruelty humans inflict on one another (especially the cruelty that Jews inflict on fellow Jews). However, this market, with its madams, abuse, and sexual transgressions, is strangely bereft of ordinary goods. Trade itself is rarely the catalyst for the development of the plot in a Yiddish story.⁶¹ Far more important than the objects procured are the lessons gleaned about humanity. These lessons are often bundled into folk-sayings—verbal commodities in their own right. These include warnings against superstition ("That seems

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to be the way of the world: everyone loves to be fooled”),⁶² advice to learn a trade (“If you want to do good, you need wisdom and money”),⁶³ and even hints at the value of modernization and integration (“Better a Jew without a beard than a beard without a Jew”).⁶⁴

The first edition of *The Wishing Ring* is a relatively uplifting story of a boy, born in the shtetl, who rises above his poor beginnings to attain a modern education—a prototypical *maskilic bildungsroman*. The full title of this ode to secular education was *The Magic Ring, with Which Everyone Can Achieve Whatever His Heart Desires and Through Which He Can Become Useful to Himself and to Society*.⁶⁵ The expanded redaction of *The Wishing Ring* remains a story of Jewish Enlightenment, but its message is a far cry from the dry, heroic secularism of the first edition or the caustic critique of Jewish provincialism found in *Benjamin III*, let alone the outright anticlericalism of Aksenfeld’s *The Headband*. The later *Wishing Ring* does not simply advocate Jewish integration into Russian life. This expanded version of the novel is framed by the story of a grown-up Hershele, who has given his autobiography (the book within a book) to Mendele the Bookseller. At the end of the novel Hershele, having become the worldly Hirsh Rotman, returns to his hometown Kabtsansk in the 1880s only to learn that his beloved Beylke has been raped and killed during the pogroms. This tragedy reinforces Hershele’s life mission: to devote himself to the improvement of the Jews’ living conditions. However, as a *maskil*, Hershele finds himself at an insuperable distance from his former townsmen. No longer having the trust of the shtetl-dwellers, he turns to Mendele, Abramovitsh’s market-going alter ego, who remains conversant with the *maskilim* and traditional Jews alike, as an intermediary.⁶⁶ By setting the well-disguised narrator Mendele, who easily blends in with the traditional shtetl-dwelling Jews, side by side with the now-foreign *maskil* Hershele, Abramovitsh points out the tragic distance between Jewish enlighteners and most Jews and demonstrates the need for his Mendele mask.

Abramovitsh’s inclusion in this later redaction of a critique of the ineffectuality of *maskilim* in protecting Jewish communities’ resources or Jews’ physical safety reflects his growing sensitivity to his readership in the face of the pogroms and subsequent May Laws. It was at the prodding of the young Sholem Aleichem, who wanted a story for the first issue of his *Jewish Popular Library*, that Abramovitsh rewrote *The Wishing Ring*. Sholem Aleichem, who was just beginning his literary career in the 1880s, developed his poetics under the conditions of crisis in the Pale of Settlement. In the commercial landscape of Ukraine, Jews felt both financially and physically threatened. Sholem Aleichem’s marketplace poetics combine the folk-inspired humor of Nikolai Gogol, the provincial Jewish characters of Abramovitsh, and the concern for the social welfare of the working classes that

was of prime concern to the reform-minded intellectuals of his own generation. Sholem Aleichem's preoccupation with social interactions in the Pale of Settlement is especially apparent in his stories of marketplace exchanges gone awry.

SHOLEM ALEICHEM'S GOGOLIAN LANDSCAPE

"In Russian literature the names of Gogol and Turgenev will live forever, for the former was a satirist and the latter a humorist, and both were great poets," Sholem Aleichem wrote in 1884. "Our poor Yiddish literature, too, has its humorist (Abramovich) and its satirist (Linetski)—of course, on a smaller scale."⁶⁷ Portraits of Gogol and Abramovitsh purportedly hung side by side in Sholem Aleichem's Kiev study.⁶⁸ Born Sholem Rabinovitsh, he used his adopted name, "Sholem Aleichem," in some personal correspondence (including many letters to family), suggesting that he chose to imbue his identity with the same authorial irony that he admired in Abramovitsh's narrator Mendele.⁶⁹ Whereas Sholem Aleichem sought to work closely with his role model Abramovitsh, he found in Gogol a model for developing his persona as a writer of the people, and he is said to have labeled a box for his works in progress "Gogol."⁷⁰ As Gogol mimicked the Ukrainian people through his clothing and hairstyle, Sholem Aleichem mimicked the successful Russian writer with his own late Gogolian bob.⁷¹ In the tradition of Abramovitsh, he traces individual Jewish market vendors as they traverse the Ukrainian landscape. In the tradition of Gogol, he presents a commercial landscape as a microcosm of the Ukrainian borderlands and a memory space for East European Jews.⁷² For Gogol's Russian-language readers, the Ukrainian fair is a stage on which ideal provincial characters encounter the dangerous material influences of the outside world. Similarly, for Sholem Aleichem's Jewish readers, who were rapidly emigrating from the Tsarist Empire or migrating to large cities, the Ukrainian fair was becoming a newly sanctified site of collective memory.⁷³ However, whereas Gogol includes Ukraine and Russia in a vision of a united Rus' in his later works, Sholem Aleichem is increasingly convinced that Jews should leave, if not Russia, then at least the shtetl. It is in this spirit of honest (albeit humorous) disillusionment that he wrote *Old-New Kasrilevke (Alt-Nay Kasrilevke)*, a parodic Baedeker that includes seven sections in decreasing order of desirability: "Transportation," "Hotels," "Restaurants," "Liquor," "Theater," "Fires," and "Bandits."⁷⁴

The man who was to become Sholem Aleichem was born into a family of relative wealth and learning. Nokhem Rabinovitsh, his father, was not only well educated, but enjoyed rare wealth in the economically depressed shtetl.⁷⁵ Sholem Aleichem's marriage to Olga Loyeff made him the heir to a

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fortune. Although a series of bad investments on the Kiev Stock Exchange would eventually lead the writer into more difficult straits, his own struggles with business ventures would become fodder for his popular characters like the untrustworthy Menachem-Mendl and even his country cousin Tevye. Sholem Aleichem would connect his interest in the global economy to his fictional depictions of the provincial commercial landscape. This was, after all, the writer who once wrote to his friend Ravnitsky, “Even a poet must study Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill.”⁷⁶

Sholem Aleichem spoke Russian at home and published a number of stories in Russian. After serving as the state-appointed crown rabbi for the town of Lubny from 1880 to 1883, he began to publish in Yiddish in addition to Russian and Hebrew.⁷⁷ Writing in Yiddish rather than Hebrew, besides engaging far more Jewish readers, allowed the writer to revisit the same landscape that gave rise to Russian literature in a fresh idiom. Like the enlighteners who had begun using Yiddish in the 1840s, his goal was to reach the same lower-class Jews he described. Like Abramovitsh, he revised his work throughout his life, making changes to fit the changing political climate.

Illusory material objects of desire represent an important theme in Sholem Aleichem’s earliest works. In his first successful story, “The Penknife” (“Dos meserl”), the young protagonist is compelled to steal a penknife that belongs to the family’s lodger, an enlightened Jew named Hertz Hertzenhertz who “was bareheaded, beardless and without earlocks.” Hertzenhertz, with his name and enlightened ways, caricatures Germany, the heart of the Jewish Enlightenment movement, or Haskalah, and therefore appears to be an outsider to the Yiddish-speaking shtetl community. “How could I keep a straight face,” relates the protagonist, “when this Jewish *goy* (or *goyish* Jew) spoke to me in his fractured Yiddish—a queer dialect that was more German than Yiddish?”⁷⁸ Like the French soap and restaurants of Gogol’s stories, which are corrupt owing to their link to the European Enlightenment, the coveted knife is tainted (and particularly desirable), coming as it does from the origins of the Haskalah. The protagonist who, at the age of ten, is learning to hate his cruel *kheyder* teacher, and has already been labeled “little apostate,” a gruff term of mixed endearment and ridicule by his father, is linked to the *maskil* by more than his coveting of the *maskil*’s property.

Once the knife has been stolen, it takes on a Gogolian-nose-like life of its own. The protagonist witnesses his *kheyder*-teacher brutally ridiculing a poor classmate who has stolen money from a charity-box, and resolves to throw his own stolen object into the water.

I grabbed the penknife and dashed to the well. I wasn’t holding a knife, I imagined, but something hideous and despicable that I wanted to get rid of—and the quicker, the better. Still, I regretted losing the knife—it was so

expensive. I stood for a minute lost in thought. I fancied I was holding a living thing, and my heart grieved.⁷⁹

The character's guilt brings him to the point of feverish hallucination, and his eventual recovery and redemption only occur through the semi-lucid realization that the knife is at fault. The message Sholem Aleichem imparts to his young readers appears transparent: one should not steal or lie. The deeper message, however, is aimed at his adult readers, and involves the child's newfound ability to cut through surface-level assumptions about good and evil. Those who care about the child, including his parents and the *maskil*, are at his bedside when he recovers; the *kheyder* teacher, bent on teaching the pupils a moral lesson, is exposed (through the child's delusional ranting) for his cruelty. The "German's" little knife "that could cut anything I wanted [*un vos ikh vil, zol dos mir shnayden*]"⁸⁰ can, however, cut both ways: the tools of Enlightenment may enable a perspective that sees beyond traditional Jewish life, but the narrator is always at risk of losing his community and support system by running after them too eagerly.

The stolen penknife replaces a lost knife that had been bought partially on credit. "I bought it from Shloyme for seven groschen down [*ziben groshen mezumen*], and I owed him three."⁸¹ The missing three groschen, joined now by the discarded knife, leaves the story's debt unpaid, suggesting further wandering and further seeking. Sholem Aleichem's stories often begin with items bought on credit. In his popular *Menachem-Mendl* stories, which appeared between 1892 and 1913, the title character travels the world inventing get-rich-quick schemes. His adventures begin when he is given, in place of a promised dowry, a small sum of cash, two promissory notes, and an illegitimate "draft" on bad credit, to be redeemed in Odessa. These notes become the story's currency, initiating and continuing the narrative flow in much the same way that sleeves and collars piece together Gogol's tales. To Menachem-Mendl, Odessa is an enormous commercial landscape, complete with a seemingly infinite number of products. Menachem-Mendl relates:

I take my walking stick and venture out onto Greek Street, as the place where Jews do business is called, and there are twenty thousand different things to deal in. If I want wheat, there's wheat. If I feel like wool, there's wool. If I'm in the mood for bran, there's bran. Flour, salt, feathers, raisins, jute, herring—name it and you have it in Odessa.⁸²

Like Gogol's marketplace objects, these products distract Sholem Aleichem's characters from their own best intentions.

The *Menachem-Mendl* stories are organized in the form of a corre-

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spondence between Menachem-Mendl and his wife Sheyne-Sheyndl.⁸³ A *luftmensch*, Menachem-Mendl appears to eat and drink the deals he finds, mistaking signifier (money) for signified (products).⁸⁴ Displaying the appetite and fastidiousness of Gogol's Chichikov, as well as the eloquence and idleness of Hrytsko, Menachem-Mendl is a master of the marketplace form, but not of its content. He is expert at writing delightful letters that temporarily placate his wife, Sheyne-Sheyndl, without ever promising to come home or put food on the table. Sheyne-Sheyndl remains home in Kasrilevke, alternately scolding her husband for neglecting his family life, sending him money when his ventures fail, and briefing him on local news. The *Menachem-Mendl* stories reveal two distinct but narratively interdependent voices that compete on an open market for the reader's sympathy. The ongoing dialogue in this epistolary novel juxtaposes changes in the wide world and changes in the shtetl, all told in the naive voices of the little man and the little woman.

Although Sholem Aleichem only occasionally assembles competing vendors and choruses of livestock to form a complete fair, he constantly evokes the shtetl market both directly and as a metaphor. Menachem-Mendl writes to his wife Sheyne-Sheyndl:

The real market is at Semodenni's. All the brokers of the world gather here. There is always noise here, and an uproar and disorder—just like in a synagogue, may I be forgiven the comparison. Everybody is talking, laughing, and sawing the air with their hands. Sometimes a quarrel breaks out and words are exchanged, and then it gets patched up, because whenever there is a commission to be divided, there is always room for argument, for curses, insults, thumbing of noses, slaps, and me in the middle.⁸⁵

A café in Kiev that was run by an Italian, Semodenni's became the de facto bourse (*birzha*), where agents would trade stock over coffee or ice cream. According to Sholem Aleichem's daughter Marie Waife-Goldberg, her father "himself never fell below Semodenni's, but out of personal interest, which was of course literary, he consortied with the hopeful traders in the street."⁸⁶ The curses and insults in this makeshift market are the linguistic counterpart of a full-fledged fair. The *Menachem-Mendl* stories trace the main character through an immense landscape of commercial exchanges. When he is in the transport business, Menachem-Mendl explains to his wife that "whenever one Jew meets another, their first how-do-you-do is: What's Transport doing today? [Vi azoy iz haynt transport?] You come into a restaurant, the owner greets you with: 'What's the price of Transports today? You go to buy a box of matches, and the shopkeeper asks, 'How high are Transports today?'"⁸⁷ For Sholem Aleichem's characters, market language

may not imply any immediate financial exchange; rather, it creates the pre-text for dialogue.

Menachem-Mendl, like Abramovitsh's Benjamin, exaggerates his disappointments to biblical proportions. His regret in one letter over losing a small fortune turns to optimism in the next. Only upon meeting Menachem-Mendl in other story cycles do we realize how undependable our *luftmensch* really is. The second section of the *Tevye the Dairymen* stories, "Tevye Blows a Small Fortune," centers on an unfortunate event in which the gullible Tevye gives his distant cousin (by marriage) Menachem-Mendl a large sum of money to invest. Despite his quixotic nature, Menachem-Mendl is a sympathetic character—far less the madman than Abramovitsh's Benjamin, and less the antihero than any of Gogol's characters.

Menachem-Mendl writes to his wife about what he learns of the modern market. "The exchange keeps swinging up and down like mad; telegrams fly back and forth, Jews scramble about like at a fair [*yidn loyfn arum, vi oyf a yarid*], buying and selling, rushing, pushing, shouting, making business and getting rich—and me in the middle."⁸⁸ As urgent as his business is, the only words Menachem-Mendl has for describing it are from a provincial market language. While neither Menachem-Mendl nor Sheyne-Sheyndl pays much attention to the other's letters, the affairs they describe are poignantly similar and, to the reader, plainly interconnected. What emerges is a sense that the marketplace in Kasrilevke feels every quiver of the events in the Duma, the stock market, and the world Zionist conferences and responds with enormous aftershocks. Through this comparison, the Jewish viewpoint is liberated from the local, marginalized world of the shtetl and connected to the global affairs of the rapidly changing contemporary Jewish world. Menachem-Mendl, a shtetl Jew and a speculator, may still echo his Gogolian type as a perpetual merchant and a cultural go-between—but through his letters he becomes a mediator of the fate of his community.

Sholem Aleichem's characters reflect the confusion and frustrations of his Yiddish-speaking readers who were watching their world rapidly change around them. One adventure takes Menachem-Mendl to a Zionist meeting. "I have attended a couple of Zionist meetings [*bay di hige tsionistn oyf di zasedanies*] because I wanted to find out what it's all about. But they all talked Russian—and even that, at great length. Seems to me, it wouldn't hurt anybody if Jews talked Yiddish to one another."⁸⁹ Unable to understand what the enlightened Russian-speaking Jews are saying, Menachem-Mendl has no access to anything beyond his world of Jewish trade. The dialogue between Menachem-Mendl and Sheyne-Sheyndl may be expressed in the naive voices of the little market-going man and woman, but it actually reveals the far more complex relationships between tradition and modernity, shtetl and city, Pale of Settlement and Zionism. Between 1892 and 1913 (the

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latter year marked, for Russian Jews, by the blood libel case against Mendel Beiliss in Kiev), Menachem-Mendl travels to Odessa, Warsaw, America, and Palestine. It is to readers who, like Menachem-Mendl, are curious about the changes in the Jewish world, but have little access to it, that Sholem Aleichem directs his fiction.

Sholem Aleichem thus reveals a similar tension between the enlightened writer and the provincial shtetl that Abramovitsh expresses in his 1888 *The Wishing Ring*. The haphazard Menachem-Mendl, like Abramovitsh's market-going narrator Mendele the Book Peddler, urges the Yiddish reader to imagine a Jewish world that is not limited to the confines of Kasrilevke. This incitement to imagination looks something like the conversation, in Sholem Aleichem's short story "Seventy-Five Thousand," between Yankev-Yosl and his wife Ziporah, when the former has (erroneously) decided that he has won a jackpot of 75,000 rubles:

"So how much have we won?" says my wife to me and looks me straight in the eyes, like someone saying, "Well, then, go ahead and lie, but you can't fool me!"

"Gimme a for instance—how much do you guess we should've won?"

"How should I know?" she says. "Maybe a few hundred rubles?"

"Why not," I say, "a few thousand?"

"How much does 'a few thousand' mean?" she says. "Five? Or six? Or maybe as much as seven?"

"You can't," I say, "imagine more?"⁹⁰

By juxtaposing Kasrilevke and the wide world, Sholem Aleichem wanted his readers to imagine more, even if the odds of getting it were slim.

If Menachem-Mendl (like many of Sholem Aleichem's male protagonists) represents a dream of something more, Sheyne-Sheyndl is the voice of mundane reality and common sense. To push the metaphor a step further, Menachem-Mendl, with his Zionist meetings and journeys into the unknown, bears some resemblance to the worldly Yiddish writer, even to the idealistic *maskilim* who were Sholem Aleichem's literary predecessors. By contrast Sheyne-Sheyndl, who remains in the shtetl with their children, is the Jewish reader. Much like the *maskilim*, who proved ineffectual in changing the lives of most shtetl-dwellers, Menachem-Mendl proves, throughout the course of his letters, his lack of business talent. For Sheyne-Sheyndl, money creates troubles on a literal level. She tells her husband: "I bought some live fish—they were still twitching—and I hear the child screaming to high heaven. I pinch him, I pummel him—he doesn't stop yelling. 'What do you want, you little wretch, you miserable creature! Here, take all my miseries! Take a kopek! Take a bellyache!' [Na dir tsures mayne! Na dir a kopike!]

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*Na dir boykhveytik!]*⁹¹ This all results in a brief scare when the coin disappears and Sheyne-Sheyndl thinks it has been swallowed. The kopek is the root of the family's shared miseries. Without coins her children would not risk swallowing them, her husband would cease his quest for fortune, and there would be no corruption in Kasrilevke.

Sheyne-Sheyndl is closest to the tactile Gogolian marketplace. Gogolian characters occasionally appear in her shtetl. In one letter she writes that a government inspector has arrived in town to ascertain what has become of certain sums of money meant for charity, an echo of Gogol's feared government inspector. Sholem Aleichem thus assimilates two distinct manifestations of the Gogolian commercial landscape. Through Menachem-Mendl he gestures toward the broad wanderings, questionable currency, and immaterial purchases of Chichikov in *Dead Souls*; through Sheyne-Sheyndl, he returns to the Ukrainian memory space of Sorochintsy, and to provincial relationships. Sheyne-Sheyndl is a writer with a keen eye for day-to-day economic comedy, which helps to dispel her idealistic husband's business illusions. Sheyne-Sheyndl writes of an event in town, "I can tell it to you in three words if you have the time to hear me out to the end, if you can put aside for a minute your big deals and your Turks and your kings and your millionaires and remember you have a wife, till a hundred and twenty years, who can't write as fancy as her husband the writer, though telling a story even a peasant in a haystack can also do."⁹² Like the *pisaki* (hacks), whom Gogol's beekeeper narrator compared to horse traders in the Dikanka tales, Sheyne-Sheyndl takes her writer husband back to the barnyard, reminding him that he is a pretender and that she has a tale to tell. Sholem Aleichem's emphasis on the woman's voice serves an important function: Sheyne-Sheyndl may represent tradition, but she does not represent the male-dominated religious hierarchy. Through Sheyne-Sheyndl's complaints, he reveals the folk wisdom and aesthetic potential of shtetl life and the Yiddish language without romanticizing traditional Jewish culture. Indeed, Sholem Aleichem's literary persona depends on the shtetl-dwelling Jewish wife as both a reader and a source of material.

STORIES FOR STEPMOTHERS

In *From the Fair*, Sholem Aleichem describes his early penchant for recording everyday language. "The hero of this biography must confess that a major part of the invective which he has incorporated in his works has been appropriated from the vocabulary of his stepmother." The stepmother, as a stock character, resembles Khivria, Paraska's debauched stepmother in Gogol's "The Sorochintsy Fair." The children cannot stand their father's new wife, who screams curses at them. Sholem Aleichem describes how, day

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and night, he arranged his stepmother's curses in alphabetical order until in the end he had "come up with quite a nice lexicon [*tsunoyfgeshtelt a gants faynem leksikon*], in alphabetical order," which, the narrator notes, "will be recorded here from memory."⁹³ Catching his son at work on the lexicon, the protagonist's father, to his son's horror, reads the work aloud to his wife, an act that leads to a surprising conclusion.

But then a miracle occurred. It's hard to know whether it's because I had caught her in a rare good moment, or whether she was just ashamed to get angry—but she broke into a strange laughter . . . She laughed so hard that she almost had a stroke. She was especially amused by "belly-button" [*pupik*] and "hat-head" [*kashkashes*]. "Belly-button" was her name for our hero, and "hat-head" was the name for an older brother, because he had just bought himself a new cap [*kashkat*] . . . Well, you'd have to be a prophet to see it would all end in laughter!⁹⁴

The writer and his stepmother-reader share a love of idiom that transcends the enmity between a temperamental middle-aged woman and a scheming young child. The anecdote describes the beginning of a collection of Yiddish epithets and phrases that would later become Sholem Aleichem's trademark.⁹⁵ The young writer's fascination with his stepmother's creative use of language, mischievous intentions aside, creates a solidarity of which the author is well aware. Sholem Aleichem would, after all, later begin his epitaph with the following lines: "Here lies a simple Jew/wrote Yiddish for wives." (*Do ligt a yid, a posheter/geshribn yidish-taytsh far vayber*.) Wives (*vayber*) make up his target audience as well as serving as a fruitful source of material. Y. L. Peretz, with whom Sholem Aleichem maintained a notoriously competitive relationship, sardonically criticized what he took to be the philistine appeal of Sholem Aleichem's stories: "The petit bourgeois Jew [*der balabos*] slathers himself [*shmeltst zikh*] in Sholem Aleichem's work like a dumpling in butter."⁹⁶ In this comment, Peretz was picking up on something that has been obscured by Sholem Aleichem's popularity in the Soviet Union. What set Sholem Aleichem apart from many of the writers of his generation is that politics came second to his concern for the individual. Market-goers, indeed more than urban proletarians, emblemized Sholem Aleichem's Jewish folk.

Although Sholem Aleichem's parody of female speech appropriates less-educated Jewish women for the purpose of entertainment, the Yiddish of his stepmother was the language in which he had found his own voice, and it is clear from his letters that he hoped to empower women to put their own voices in writing. He broadly understood the Yiddish vernacular to include, in addition to language, the material reality of the shtetl community where it was spoken. Yiddish was to the developing Modern He-

brew literature as familiar shtetl anecdotes were to tales of an odyssey to the Holy Land.⁹⁷ In Sholem Aleichem's personal correspondence, which Shmuel Niger calls "improvised word-art" (*improvizirte vortkunst*), the author adopts an exaggerated language resembling that of his own characters. Among the letters that remain with us today is the Yiddish correspondence between Sholem Aleichem and the wife of his literary colleague, David Yakovlevich Ayzman.⁹⁸ In a postcard of March 8, 1909, Sholem Aleichem writes to Mrs. Ayzman "since you are no gentile woman [*keyn goye*], one can correspond in Yiddish." The assertion that Mrs. Ayzman is "no gentile" is a playful jab at her husband's more formal correspondence in Russian.⁹⁹ Sholem Aleichem calls Mrs. Ayzman's Yiddish "*Loshen-Koydesh*" (the holy tongue), thereby drawing attention to the importance of preserving Jewish vernacular traditions: the everyday Yiddish of East European Jews is as hallowed as biblical Hebrew.¹⁰⁰

ECHOES FROM SOROCHINTSY

The protagonist in Sholem Aleichem's 1901 "The Bewitched Tailor" is another well-intentioned and ill-equipped character.¹⁰¹ Shimen-Elye-Sh'ma-Koleynu, whose oft-repeated full name and nickname can be literally translated "Simon-My-God-Hear-Our-Voice," is as ineffectual and henpecked as Gogol's Solopy Cherevik. Having saved enough money to purchase a milk goat for his wife, Shimen-Elye enters Kozodoevka (Goat-Milking Town), with its unfamiliar goat market. Shimen-Elye enters this commercial landscape to the sound of market women shouting to one another in Ukrainian, confusing the gender of chickens—an overture to his own imminent confusion about the gender of his milk goat:

Listen listen! How much for the hen?
What hen? This is a rooster, not a hen!
So let it be a rooster! Well how much for the hen?

Tshuiresh, tsuesh! A shto tobi za kurke?
Iaka kurka? Tse piven, a ne kurka!
*Nehay bude piven! A sho tobi za kurke?*¹⁰²

Just as the sights and sounds of the fair overwhelm Gogol's Paraska and Cherevik, the sights and sounds of the market, especially the long-desired goats, hypnotize Shimen-Elye:

Two steps further was the synagogue courtyard, where old women sat over tubs and sold pears, sunflower seeds and beans, where teachers were giving

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lessons and children shouted and goats, goats without end, jumped, pulled at straw from the houses, or sat on the ground with their combed-out beards, warming themselves in the sun and chewing their cud.¹⁰³

This marketplace, with its abundance of goats, marks the beginning of the witchcraft (*kishuf*) that will be Shimen-Elye's downfall. The milk goat that the hapless tailor acquires has too much power over him. En route home to Zlodoevka (Evil-Town), Shimen-Elye is tempted to stop at an inn that is managed by a distant, uneducated relative, the innkeeper Dodi, who makes up for what he lacks in Jewish learning with practical knowledge of goats. Like Hrytsko in “The Sorochintsy Fair,” who, with the help of a Gypsy, craftily orchestrates the exchange of Cherevik’s horse for a red sleeve (following the potter’s exit from a marketplace tavern), Dodi exchanges Shimen-Elye’s milk goat for a male goat (after the tailor has drunk alcohol at Dodi’s tavern), taking revenge on the boastful tailor. What was an “angel of a goat” in Kozodoevka appears to be a demon, unable to produce milk, in Zlodoevka. When the tailor attempts to return the goat to Kozodoevka, he again stops for a drink, and Dodi again exchanges the goat, rendering the tailor’s plight increasingly ridiculous.

Like Gogol’s Cherevik, Shimen-Elye falls victim to his own superstition. Visions of the goat pursue him in a chase that bears an unmistakable resemblance to Cherevik’s flight from the pig-devil in Sorochintsy.

Shimen-Elye tried to step forward, and the goat followed him; he turned right, the goat turned right; he turned left and the goat turned left . . . “*Sh’ma Yisroel!*” Shimen-Elye cried out with a voice not his own, and broke into a run. And as he ran, it seemed someone was chasing him, mocking him in a thin, goatish little voice, speaking like a human and singing like a cantor: “Ruu-uller of life and death . . . who revives the dead [*une’eman atah lehek-hayos meysim!*]!”¹⁰⁴

Unlike Cherevik’s temporary madness, the tailor’s insanity leads to his untimely death. Shimen-Elye, in keeping with Jewish tradition, manages to cry out “*Sh’ma Yisroel*” (Hear O Israel), words that are to be on a Jew’s lips as he dies. However, Shimen-Elye’s plural moniker, “Hear our voice” (*Sh’ma koleynu*), suggests that the utterance, and therefore, the death, belongs to his community. And indeed, ignorant of Dodi’s trick, Shimen-Elye’s fellow Zlodoevkan arm themselves to take revenge on their neighbors.

They gathered about sixty volunteers: tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths and butchers . . . strong youths one and all, armed with the tools of their trade—a wooden yardstick, an iron, the heel of a boot, someone grabbed an axe, someone else took a hammer, and others had simple house-

hold paraphernalia: a rolling pin, a fish-scaler or a carving knife. And it was decided that they should go straight to war with the Kozodoevkans, to kill, conquer, vanquish them once and for all.¹⁰⁵

The comic tale thus culminates in a tragic war between two Jewish communities, whose members misdirect their frustration at one another.

There is a second precedent for this story in the Russian literary commercial landscape. Maxim Gorky (Aleksei Peshkov, 1868–1936) notoriously disliked peasants, a fact that may account for how little he evoked a commercial landscape.¹⁰⁶ A notable exception to this is his 1897 “Fair in Goltva” (“Iarmarka v Goltve”), a story published just a few years before Sholem Aleichem’s “The Bewitched Tailor” and set in a market town in Poltava, very near Gogol’s native Sorochintsy.¹⁰⁷ In Gorky’s landscape, the competing presences of the central square and the towering church reflect the implicit competition between the communities of people at the fair itself.

The shtetl [*mestechko*] Goltva stands on a high square, raised above a pasture like a promontory in the sea . . . From behind the huts rising up to the cloudless and torrid sky are the five cupolas of the wooden church. Golden crosses reflect the shafts of light and lose their form in the gleam of the sun—the crosses look like torches, burning with a bright flame.¹⁰⁸

Whereas Gogol’s Ukrainian characters are at the center of the story, with Gypsies and Jews entering from the periphery to facilitate the plot and strike deals with the devil, Gorky’s groups are introduced as competitors at the bargaining table, and Ukrainian terms mark Ukrainian peasants in the story as especially provincial:

Everywhere “folks” [*choloviki*] throng, argue, and bawl [*hrehochut*]. It takes ten Ukie [*khokhly*] to utter the same number of words per minute that it takes three Jews talking for the same amount of time, but three Jews will say in that same minute no more than one Gypsy can. If you were to compare it to something, you might say that a Ukie is a cannon, a Jew a rapid-fire rifle, and a Gypsy a machine gun.¹⁰⁹

The first episode in the story involves a Gypsy who swindles a slow Ukrainian character out of his horse several times over. The ever-present crosses on the church rob the peasants of their competitive edge by compelling the Ukrainians to cross themselves before sealing each deal, a superstitious habit of which the Gypsies take full advantage. “I like the man, and I want to do good by the man. Little Uncle! Pray to the Lord! [*Mne chelovek nraovitsia, i ia khochu cheloveku dobroe sdelat!* *Diad’ko! Molites’ Gospodu!*] The

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Ukie [*Khokhol*] takes off his hat and they both devoutly cross themselves before the church.”¹¹⁰ As the peasant turns to face the cross, the Gypsy easily switches the horse. Like the hapless Shimen-Elye in “The Bewitched Tailor,” the Ukrainian is a little too pious, and not quite wise enough in livestock, to keep up with his swindling counterpart. It is likely that Sholem Aleichem drew the trope of swapping animals directly from this story. That both Sholem Aleichem and Gorky subtly reference Gogol’s “The Sorochintsy Fair” is further evidence of the borrowing.

The young Gorky made a powerful impression on Sholem Aleichem. The writer Asher Beilin, who had left Russia in 1903, returned to Kiev for a visit in 1904, and claims that Sholem Aleichem had completely redecorated his study:

Gogol's portrait had disappeared from the wall, his beloved “Gogol-box” [*Gogol-kestl*] had likewise disappeared from the desk, and in place of *Dead Souls* I found the books of contemporary Russian writers, especially Maxim Gorky. Sholem Aleichem's appearance also seemed updated, he had grown much younger and more democratic. His Gogol-look [*der Gogol-oyszen*] had disappeared and his Gorky-look had emerged.¹¹¹

Other accounts and pictures from the early 1900s have Sholem Aleichem dressing as Gorky did, in a long, loose peasant shirt with a high collar.¹¹² In the Tevye stories, Chava would attempt to convince her father of the non-Jewish Khvedka's worth by calling him “a second Gorky.”¹¹³ Sholem Aleichem met Gorky in St. Petersburg in 1904, an important time for both writers. The Kishinev pogrom, a year earlier, had led Sholem Aleichem to seek alliances with Russian political writers like Gorky and Korolenko, and had led Gorky to seek to publish Jewish writers. During their first meeting, Gorky, who was then the director of the Znanie (Knowledge) publishing company, requested that Sholem Aleichem edit a collection of Yiddish stories in Russian. In a letter to his children afterward, Sholem Aleichem called Gorky “an idol” (*an opgot*).¹¹⁴

“The Fair at Goltva” is among Gorky's least tendentious works, but it is not difficult to extract a social message from the story: misplaced superstition prevents a community from reaping material benefit. The peasants, convenient dupes in the story, are willful slaves to a useless church. The Gypsy's farcical theft of the Ukrainian's horse recalls the one-on-one scenes from the lower stratum of *vertep*. Gorky's commercial landscape includes additional stock characters, including a storyteller, a bookseller, and an old man who, before a sympathetic audience, attempts to heal a sick cow with prayers: “The crowd removed their hats and silently awaited the results of the prayer, occasionally crossing themselves.”¹¹⁵ Early reviews suggest Gorky

had the ear of a Russian readership that looked down on what they viewed to be an easily manipulable Ukrainian peasantry. In 1901 the critic Vladimir Botsianovskii wrote, “A Great Russian himself, Gorky depicts ‘Ukies’ beautifully [*prekrasno pishet khokhlov*], he depicts them as they really are, with all of their national idiosyncrasies [*so vsemi ikh natsional’nymi osobennostiami*].”¹¹⁶ It is worth pointing out that although Nikolai Gogol called himself a *khokhol*—the derogatory term for a Ukrainian—in his letters, he did not use the term in *Evenings on a Village Farm near Dikanka*. Whereas Gogol’s “Sorochintsy Fair” has most often been interpreted as an idealization of peasant life, Gorky, using an almost identical commercial landscape but underlining the foolishness and superstition of the peasantry, uses a Gogolian fair to expose a significant social ill, perpetuated in large part by the church.

The author names his most important archetypal borrowings: “A young Jew with a box at his chest shouts, ‘Romanian tobacco! Gentleman’s tobacco! Strong tobacco! The devil smoked it and it killed his wife.’ ‘Now this is some good tobacco, if it can kill off a wife!’ observes a certain Solopy Cherevik.”¹¹⁷ Solopy Cherevik, Paraska’s kindly, simpleminded father (whom, we recall, a Gypsy manipulates into appearing as though he has stolen his own horse), has wandered into Gorky’s fair in search of an antidote to his nagging wife, Khivria. The Jew’s clever advertising jingle recalls the epigraph Gogol borrows from Kotliarevskyi’s *Eneida*, in which the devil is described with “snuff seeping from his nose” (*iz nosa potekla tabaka*).¹¹⁸ The devil, albeit still in anecdotal form, roams from fair to literary fair, haunting or helping the locals. N. Stechkin, writing in 1904, sees “The Fair at Goltva” as evidence of Gorky’s failure throughout the rest of his oeuvre: “This story gives us a sense of what its author could have been had he not devoted himself to the tendentious sermons of misery and ruin [*bosiachestva i razrushenia*]. To set about describing a Little Russian country fair on the banks of the Psel, after Gogol’s ‘Sorochintsy Fair,’ is courageous.”¹¹⁹

Sholem Aleichem’s obvious borrowings from both Gorky and Gogol place him on a literary continuum that includes *vertep* and the Torah, the Ukrainian Romantics, the Russian positivists, and the Haskalah. In Sholem Aleichem’s “The Bewitched Tailor,” the Jews of the neighboring Kozodoevka are blamed for Dodi’s prank in a manner not unlike the practice of blaming of Jews for the unrest in Russia’s borderlands. Sholem Aleichem is thus critiquing the scapegoating of a community. Shimen-Elye, who closely resembles Gogol’s Cherevik, is mistaken in blaming the Kozodoevkans. Other stories reveal Kozodoevkans to be scapegoats, as their name would suggest, for other Jewish communities. “The Great Panic of the Little People,” a novella labeled a “poema” in the fashion of Gogol’s *Dead Souls*, takes place in the shtetl Kasrilevke, whose residents believe that instead of horns the Kozodoevka goats “have an odd kind of *chachka* that looks a bit like a phylac-

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tery, if you will forgive the comparison.”¹²⁰ Not only are the oft-scapegoated Kozodoevkans connected to goats; their goats resemble Jews, a fitting detail in a story that deals, albeit cautiously, with Ukrainian antisemitism. Frightened by rumors of an approaching pogrom, residents of both Kasrilevke and Kozodoevka hastily flee their towns, each group heading in the direction of the other, only to meet midway. The reader, who has witnessed the outbreak of a new series of pogroms, watches the characters’ retreat with apprehension. If there is a refuge for the Kasrilevkers and Kozodoevkans, it does not appear to be in Ukraine.

Sholem Aleichem writes primarily for and about Jews.¹²¹ However, the interaction between the many communities of Jews is modeled on interactions in the more complex and multiethnic world that he observes. Whereas Gogol relegates Jews to the margins of his stories, in Sholem Aleichem it is Ukrainian and Russian characters who lurk on the periphery.¹²² And whereas Gogol’s heavily caricatured Jew is a marketplace expert, closely tied to pigs and other marketplace products and profiting against all odds from the devil’s coat in “The Sorochintsy Fair” or from war in *Taras Bulba*, Sholem Aleichem’s characters (like the author) are usually failures at trade, especially when that trade is in livestock. Thus, the Yiddish writer works to dispel the myth so often perpetuated in Russian literature that Jews profit at the expense of their Slavic neighbors. Shimen-Elye can quote from the Torah but cannot tell female and male goats apart. Menachem-Mendl may spend his days in marketplaces, but he never seems to touch the signifying animals that have passed from market to literary market.¹²³ Longing for business, but without the stomach for gritty reality, Menachem-Mendl falls prey to every scheme he finds; his only truly marketable products are witty missives. As in Kvitka’s commercial landscape, material products perpetually triumph over Sholem Aleichem’s market-going characters, destroying the spirit and defeating the would-be speculator.

“The Sorochintsy Fair” and *Taras Bulba* are now eclipsed by *Dead Souls* and the Petersburg stories, but they were Gogol’s most popular works while Sholem Aleichem was writing. Between 1886 and 1892 “The Sorochintsy Fair” was second only, in editions published and copies sold, to *Taras Bulba*, and it remained among Gogol’s three most popular works until 1903.¹²⁴ If the devilish coat in “The Sorochintsy Fair” reflects in part Gogol’s fear of those capitalist ventures (in which Jews are understood to be complicit) that threatened the Slavic soul, for Sholem Aleichem, the Ukrainian marketplace, an increasingly frequent site of violence against Jews in the early twentieth century, represented a more immediate, physical danger. Although Gogol never intended his prose to be a tool for modernizing Russia’s Jewish subjects, his stories, which were particularly popular when Sholem Aleichem took pen in hand, had a powerful influence on his self-proclaimed

Yiddish apprentice. What is more, by borrowing from the darker side of Gogol's commercial landscape, Sholem Aleichem proves himself to be one of the first readers to observe the horror that pervades even Gogol's merry tales of Ukraine.

What is unspoken, but would have been all too clear to Sholem Aleichem's readers, was that the marketplace, like all of laughter culture, is dangerous. Having left his tailor to a tragic end, Sholem Aleichem the narrator employs his own model of bittersweet comedy to depart from the story:

The tale began very happily, and it ended, like a lot of happy stories, *oy-vey*, very sadly . . . And because you know that this storyteller isn't gloomy [*moyreshkhoyredik*] by nature, that he hates tearful [*klogedike*] stories and loves funny stories, and since you know that he hates moralizing and that preaching isn't his way, let us part ways kidding and laughing, and wish that all Jews, and everyone in the whole world, should laugh more than they cry.¹²⁵

The notion that the narrator is laughing through tears directly references Gogol's famous "laughter through tears" passage in *Dead Souls*:

And for a long time yet a wondrous power has fated me to walk hand in hand with my strange heroes, to glimpse all of this enormously heaving life, to glimpse it through laughter visible to the world and unseen, invisible tears! [*skvoz' vidnyi miru smekh i nezrimye, nevedomye emu slezy*].¹²⁶

Rather than supplanting Gogol as Sholem Aleichem's model, it would seem that Gorky supplemented Gogol. Sholem Aleichem is said to have kept a Yiddish translation of Nikolai Gogol's "laughter through tears" passage on his desk.¹²⁷ On May 15, 1916, when he was buried in the Mount Neboh Cemetery in Cypress Hills, Queens, his headstone was inscribed with his original epitaph. The closing stanza again recapitulates Gogol's "laughter through tears" motif:

And just as the public was
Laughing, chortling, and making merry
He suffered—this only God knows—
In secret, so that no one should see.

*Un davke demolt ven der oylem hot
gelakht, geklatsh, un fleg zikh freyen,
hot er gekrenkt—dos veyst nor got—
besod, az keyner zol nit zeyen.*

The Marketplace Origins of Modern Yiddish Literature (1842–1916)

If Yiddish literature could be a means of Jewish Enlightenment, the Enlightenment could also ultimately destroy Yiddish literature. This is what gave Sholem Aleichem a fear of loss that he would take with him, quite literally, to the grave. Having constructed his identity as a writer for the Yiddish-speaking folk, he no longer saw Yiddish merely as a means to achieving an end goal of modern Jewish nationalism; rather, it had become an end in itself, although his readers, like his characters, did not remain with Yiddish much longer than they remained in the shtetl. If the fair represented, for Sholem Aleichem, his calling as a Yiddish writer, then the author's unfinished, autobiographical *From the Fair* (*Funem yarid*), written in New York, is a tribute to his journey not only, as he states, away from his profession, but away from the great fair that was the Tsarist Empire—the home to most of his characters.

Sholem Aleichem, who wrote in Yiddish from the 1880s to the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution, illustrates a rapidly changing Pale of Settlement. The Jewish fictional landscape, which Mendele's quixotic Benjamin could explore to his heart's content, is, by the time Sholem Aleichem's Menachem-Mendl begins his adventures, quickly turning away from Yiddish. Sholem Aleichem would not live to witness the Revolution of 1917, which brought with it both a new level of violence and the official end to the Pale of Settlement. S. Y. Abramovitsh, "the grandfather," died a few weeks after the October Revolution, just glimpsing this new era.

Sholem Aleichem was eventually canonized in the Soviet Union as the representative Yiddish writer, and an abridged six-volume Soviet edition of his works, in Russian translation, became as common a collection for any Soviet Jewish household (and many non-Jewish households) as the works of Tolstoy.¹²⁸ However, even during Sholem Aleichem's lifetime, a younger generation was adapting his commercial landscape to a new era. The impressionist fiction writer Dovid Bergelson (1884–1952), who borrowed many of Sholem Aleichem's themes and narrative devices for his own deeply psychological, impressionist prose, foregoes the cheerful façade we find in both Sholem Aleichem and Gogol to describe a commercial landscape sunk in despair.

Bergelson's *Around the Train Depot* (*Arum Vokzal*), a novella written from 1907 to 1908 and published in 1909, illustrates the change in Ukrainian Yiddish literature in general, and in the commercial landscape in particular. The setting is a train depot, the town's commercial center. The trains that arrive and depart paradoxically emphasize the immobility of the characters, whose lives are limited to deceit and pettiness. The main character is a former scholar, whose intellectual life has descended into an obsession with the inequality of the merchants' lives and livelihoods: "Not everyone's life is the

same, and moreover . . . not everyone understands in the same manner what their lives mean. [*Nit alemen lebt zikh glaykh, un der iker . . . nit ale farshteyen glaykh, vi azoy zey lebn.*]¹²⁹] For Bergelson, the fact that the commercial landscape can obscure the quest for a meaningful life is an unspeakable tragedy. With the Bolshevik Revolution markets and fairs underwent a series of rapid changes, and we shall turn to these in the remaining two chapters of this book. For revolutionary writers the commercial landscape, rather than representing the exchanges and breadth of life in the Ukrainian lands, was becoming a symbol of a lifestyle that had, for the good of the people, to be laid to rest. These revolutionary trends in Yiddish literature shall be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Five

The Market Crucified: Peretz Markish's Civil War (1917–1921)

*Hey, come to this night market of silence,
To the nighttime trade for beards and for
bones!*

—Peretz Markish, *The Mound*¹

IN 1917 THE PAST was symbolically frozen and the future seemed frighteningly open-ended. That year a twenty-two-year-old Yiddish poet attempted to capture the expendability of the individual at the revolutionary moment.

Take it off, this tattered shirt,
Rags—up off the body! . . .
I too am a fine guest here,
Buy my head for a groschen! . . .

*Tu zikh oys, di hemd tsekhraste,
Shmates funem leyb arop! . . .
Ikh bin oykh a sheyner gast do,
Far a groshn koyf mayn kop! . . .²*

The transient guest, already an important actor in Jewish literature, was becoming a figure symbolic of the modern condition more broadly. The futurist generation had put on a poet's mantle that could suit its wandering. A few years earlier, in 1914, Vladimir Mayakovsky had sewn himself “black pants from the velvet of my voice [*chernye shtany/iz barkhata golosa moego*]” and “a yellow shirt from three yards of sunset [*zheltuiu koftu iz trekh arshin zakata*]” and paraded up and down Nevsky Prospect.³ Peretz Markish, who in his earliest poems borrowed heavily from Mayakovsky's verse and performativity, was not only calling attention to his own “tattered shirt” (*hemd tsekhraste*) but was also introducing the rural material culture of the Ukrainian commercial landscape to the literary avant-garde. Markish would re-

introduce threadbare clothing and corpses as merchandise in the opening section of his 1920–21 pogrom *poema*, *The Mound* (*Di kupe*), which Seth Wolitz has called Markish’s “Modernist dirge.”⁴ The *poema* centers on a mound of corpses piled in a marketplace. The mound of bodies confronts the heavens, and with common marketplace phrases closes a sale on (now unnecessary) Sabbath shirts:

. . . May they suit you for many years these Sabbath shirts!
And wear them in good health, proudly, all, all!

. . . *Aykh tsu lange yor di shabesdike hemder!*
*Un trogt gezunterheyt, in nakhes, ale, ale!*⁵

The three years that separated Markish’s short, declamatory poems of 1917 from *The Mound* were years in which he was developing his voice as a Yiddish poet of the avant-garde. They were also disastrous years for the Jewish shtetl. The pogroms of the 1880s, 1903, and 1906 now seemed trivial in comparison to the loss of Jewish lives and property in World War I, during which thousands of Jews were killed or expelled from their homes. In the borderlands of western Ukraine, Galicia, and Poland, the Civil War (1918–20) was accompanied by an even larger wave of genocidal violence: over 60,000 Jews were massacred in small towns over the course of a few months.⁶ Markish based *The Mound* on one of the many pogroms in Volhynia in 1919 and published versions of it in 1920 and 1921.

Markish was active in Yiddish modernist groups, including the *Kultur-Lige* and the expressionist *Khalyastre* (*The Gang*) in the late 1910s and early 1920s. He nonetheless remained outside the inner circle of Soviet Yiddish writers until the 1930s.⁷ (In 1939 he was given an Order of Lenin medal, a distinction generally bestowed upon good writers who had become Stalinist court poets.) Markish’s writing in the 1920s, while still stylistically in flux, is steeped in a uniquely modernist presentation of a Ukrainian commercial landscape. Whereas assimilated writers fled the metaphorical Jewish market for the metaphorical church of high culture, Markish combines high modernism and shtetl Jewishness and reclaims the voice of the market vendor as the epitome of the disenfranchised modern subject. Here, the old commercial landscape expresses a very new collision of the self, religion, violence, and modernity. Markish defamiliarizes the marketplace, weaving its objects and vernacular phrases into a fragmented poetics of war. Following in the footsteps of the futurists, he was fascinated by religious blasphemy and the cathartic power of suffering, and he often combined the quintessential elements of Jewish tradition with Christian iconography. Markish’s early work reveals his radical focus on the here and now; his poetics, in many

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ways, reflects the futurists' dissociation of the present from past forms and social values. Markish's use of Christian imagery illustrates the suffering wrought by war, pogroms, and revolution. Finally, Markish's formation of his more mature expressionist voice is exemplified in *The Mound*, a modernist masterpiece that draws upon the familiar language and recurring objects of the marketplace. In order to understand Markish's avant-garde commercial landscape, it is worth calling attention to the great difference between Markish's project and that of his contemporaries.

MARKISH'S "IN SIGNIFICANT NOW"

Dovid Bergelson, whose impressionist prose could hardly have differed more in form from Markish's expressionist poetry, nurtured disapproval of his rival that would last until 1952, the year both were executed.⁸ In his 1919 essay "Dikhtung un Gezelshaftlekhhkayt" ("Poetry and Society"), Bergelson outlined the role of poetry in postrevolutionary Yiddish culture. Among the most striking elements of Bergelson's review is his comparison of Markish's work to Russian futurism, which he describes as follows: "lacking the completeness of form, its intelligence can be worked out only intellectually, but not intuitively—it can only be guessed at rather than felt [*zi vet darf'n zikh mer onshtoysn eyder derfiln*]."⁹

The impetus for Bergelson's essay was the 1918 volume of *Eygn* (*One's Own*), which featured writers who were then still negotiating their relationship to the Bolshevik Revolution but who would later become the elite of Soviet Yiddish literature.¹⁰ Although both Bergelson and Markish, as writers of the Revolution, found the roots of many social ills in commerce, Bergelson takes issue with Markish's audacious form, arguing that his poetry is inferior to "full-bodied, God-given talents [*zaftige gotgebenshte talantn*] like [Dovid] Hofshteyn and [Leyb] Kvitko":

In the present chaotic condition of the world, an enormous role is played not by the content of a shout but by its strength [*nit der inhalt fun geshray, nor der koyekh zayne*]. Since there is more than enough content in present times themselves, if a shout merely reaches us from somewhere [*fun ergits a geshray*], we are instantly ready to foist meaning on it [*zaynen mir glaykh greyt im dem inhalt ontsuhengen*].¹¹

If we are now better able to appreciate the fluidity between the multiple avant-garde movements of the 1910s, at the time Bergelson was writing, the difference between these movements was paramount. The Italian futurists' cult of technology, war, mass spectacle, and liberation of word from syn-

tax was only loosely connected to the left-wing Russian futurists, who varied markedly in their approach to language and themes but who aimed, on the whole, to destabilize meaning through a “transrational” (*zaumnyi*) separation of signifier from signified. The Russian futurists were also attempting to move beyond Russian literary impressionism, a genre that Vladimir Markov, in his seminal study of Russian futurism, associates with “literary realism.” Impressionism often features a narrator or protagonist who internalizes the outer world.¹² The German (and later, Yiddish) expressionists sought to do the opposite, externalizing their own subjectivity by exploring the individual’s experience of perception. Although Markish would, by the 1920s, find his voice as an expressionist, it is important to recognize how much he was borrowing from the Russian avant-garde, in particular the futurists, which gave him formal tools with which to express his revolutionary content.¹³

Markish’s first collection, *Shveln (Thresholds)*, was published in Kiev in 1919. It included a number of poems that appear to be a dialogue between the poetic persona and the flow of time, such as the following:¹⁴

I take my leave of you
Worn out, passing time,
I know you not, my past,
You do not belong to me—
I came to you in a dream! . . .

*Ikh zegn zikh mit dir
fargeyendike tsayt,
ikh ken dikh nit, fargangenhayt,
ir kert nit mir,—
ikh hob zikh aykh gekholemt!* . . .¹⁵

This poem consists almost entirely of pronouns and verbs. Markish uses no description, few adjectives, and no adverbs, a practice in keeping with the contemporaneous futuristic streamlining of syntax. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, in his 1912 “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature,” called for a willful disorganization of language. Among his points are the following:

1. We have to destroy syntax, to scatter nouns at random, even as they come to mind.
2. We have to use the verb in the infinitive . . .
3. We have to get rid of adjectives . . .
4. We have to get rid of the adverb . . .¹⁶

Though in Markish’s poem words are not completely severed, in the most radical futurist style, from their syntax, Markish’s marked alliteration dis-

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tracts the reader's eye from the words' literal meaning. In the above poem the repeated long *i* in "ikh" (I) and "dir" (you [familiar]) and the phonetic similarity between the unvoiced "kh" and voiced "r" create an echo from the subject (I) to the object (you). Markish's shift, in the third line, from addressing "passing time" with the familiar *du/dir* to addressing it with the formal *ir/aykh* suggests a phonetic desire to maintain the *ikh/ir* connection, even at the expense of grammatical consistency, and only secondarily hints at a cooling of relations between the poet and "passing time." "*Du kerst nit mir*" loses this sustained alliteration; "*Ir kert nit mir*" maintains it. Markish does not fully embrace the free verse (*parole in liberta*) advocated by the Italians, although his inconsistent iambic meter and mixed rhyme scheme do gesture toward the kind of formal asymmetry practiced by the Russian futurists.

By relegating the past to a dream Markish appears to embrace the cult of the present promoted by Marinetti and his crowd, who declare, in their 1909 "Founding and Manifesto," that "up to now, literature has extolled a contemplative stillness, rapture, and reverie."¹⁷ In 1913, four years after the Italian futurist manifesto appeared in *Le Figaro* and four years before Markish wrote "I take my leave of you," the Russian futurist "Hylea" group famously threatened to "throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc., etc. overboard from the Ship of Modernity" in their own manifesto, "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste."¹⁸

The Yiddish poet does not stop at dismissing the past; he also dismisses the dreamlike future:

And you—who are you, future,
Grown out in gray hair?
I don't belong to you,
You still appear in my dreams!

*Un du ver bist, mayn tsukunft,
Farvaksene in groye hor?
Kh'geher nit dir,
Du kholemst zikh mir nokh!*¹⁹

By refusing to favor the future over the present, Markish subtly differentiates his verse from the forward thrust of Russian futurism, playfully declared in phrases like "Whoever doesn't forget his *first* love won't recognize his last."²⁰ In 1917 Markish was not developing a celebratory "we" in his poetics, but a disengaged "I," a first-person speaker who is dissociated from the expectations of the future and the ills of the past. Even the hypothetical future "growing out in 'gray hair'" belongs to the individual. Past, future, and privileged present all center on the subjectivity of a single persona.

Rather than heralding the forms of the future alongside his Russian and Italian contemporaries, Markish is adjusting his microscope to focus on a single point in time: the constantly renewable present.

I'm yours, "insignificant now"
Blindly!
And blind I am rich!
We both will die in an instant
And be instantly born! . . .

Kh'bin dayner, "nishtiker atsind,"
Blind!
Un blinderhayt kh'bin raykh!
Mir shtarbn beyde glaykh
Un vern glaykh geboyrn! . . .²¹

This image of death followed by rebirth occurs at one point along an empty line that extends from past to future, all but the "insignificant now" having been discarded as nebulous dreams.

The blindness of the poem's subjective point in time reflects the loneliness of its point in space.

With open eyes, with a ripped shirt,
With hands outstretched, —
I don't know whether I have a home,
Or an abroad,
Whether I am a beginning, or an end.

Mit oygn ofene, mit a tseshpillet hemd,
Mit hent tseshpreyte, —
Veys ikh nit, tsi kh'hob a heym,
Tsi kh'hob a fremd,
Tsi kh'bin an onheyb, tsi a sof . . .²²

It would appear that, as in "I take my leave of you," Markish is gesturing subtly toward the kind of syntactical dismemberment Marinetti advocates in his "Technical Manifesto." Chana Kronfeld finds evidence for this in Markish's novel use of the adjective "*fremd*":

Normally, *fremd* is an adjective, and nominal uses occur only in expressions such as *in der fremd* (line 2, "away from home"). Thus, the locution *kh'hob a fremd* (loosely translated as "I have a-far") is both grammatically and concep-

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tually jarring; it reconciles the wandering tramp with his modern surrogate—the revolutionary poet—by reinterpreting for both the notions of home and of ownership, of beginning and of end.²³

Before considering this to be an exercise in futurism, however, we must look to Marinetti's Rule #11: "In literature, eradicate the 'I,' which means all psychology."²⁴ The familiar image of the solitary individual with open arms, shrouded in his familiar ragged shirt, uncertain of a beginning or end, is emblematic of the Yiddish poet at the dawn of a new literary era. The wandering, incorporeal subject echoes Whitman's "Song of Myself": "I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable."²⁵

This particular poem typifies a quintessential Markish phrase: "*stam in velt arayn*," a phrase that figuratively means "neither rhyme nor reason," but literally means "just out in the world."²⁶ This catchphrase for incomprehensibility is in keeping with the avant-garde goal of separating a word from its meaning. Like Tristan Tzara's 1918 provocative assertion that "DADA MEANS NOTHING," Markish's "*stam in velt arayn*" suggests an utterance or action detached from past signification.²⁷ Unlike the Dadaists, however, Markish cultivated a solitary persona, and we may read his "*stam in velt arayn*" not only as a rejection of meaning, but in reference to a detached poetic subject. The Yiddish poet Moyshe Shulstejn (Moses Schulstein) remarks that in his early years Markish needed to distinguish himself as a lonely poet in order to create what he calls, in another poem of 1917, "dark-sighted songs" (*shvartszeerishe gezangen*).²⁸ Lest there be any doubt as to whether the poet of homelessness is also the poet of the pastlessness and futurelessness, one need look no further than the second stanza:

My body is foam
And smells of wind;
My name is: "now"

*Mayn guf iz shoym,
un s'shmeikt fun im mit vint;
mayn nomen iz: 'atsind*²⁹

If Markish's "insignificant now" has neither past nor present, his "*stam in velt arayn*" has neither familiar nor unfamiliar. We are left with a disengaged voice, located at the intersection of two axes, a cruciform image that places the poetic body at the point of origin, its point in time and space defined by the x- and y-axes.

For Dovid Bergelson, the resemblance between Markish's intersecting lines and a Christian cross was proof of the limitations of Markish's poetry.

Bergelson likens Markish's stark images to the "naked lines" that gave rise to Christian art. "It is now, just as at the beginning of Christianity, a time when naked lines [*nakete liniyes*] are stepping forward and with a gesture of good will we might also place new content into Markish's naked lines [*kon men oykh in Markishes nakete linies araynlegn a nayem toykhn*]."³⁰ The no-place and no-time origin at which Markish locates the poetic voice gains symbolic relevance, however, through the allusion to perpetual death and resurrection. The hint of Christianity that Bergelson saw as a liability was an image that Markish would consciously strengthen in his later verse. Markish's intersecting lines compose, then, an ideal geometrical form, both in their location of the poetic voice at the origin in Cartesian space, and in their resemblance to a cross.

In Markish's early verse, his contemporary Nachman Meisel writes, "it is as though he has been caught in his own nets [*farplontert in eygene netsen*] and can't free himself. But Peretz Markish moves through his poetic youth quickly and hastily, he soon becomes riper, and grows out of his early poetic frame and form."³¹ The lines defining Markish's regenerated moment and detached presence would soon lead to more complicated images and would accommodate more complex subjects. Markish was cultivating a landscape of transience, which, by the logic of his poetic system, was integral to the Christian image of death and resurrection. The perpetually regenerating commercial landscape is a familiar motif that allows him to destabilize East European Jewish, and Christian, tradition.

Hey, what are you peddling—sorrow? . . .
What are you buying there—despair? . . .
I'm a buyer and I deal,
And I deal and I wheel

Hey, vos handlt ir dort—umet? . . .
Vos farkoyft ir dortn—yiesh? . . .
Kh'bin a koyne un ikh handl,
*Un ikh handl, un ikh vandl*³²

A peddler narrates this poem of 1917, and his wares are the byproducts of political and social upheaval. The market, home to the proverbial Jewish wanderer—the vendor—also facilitates the passage of an object from seller to buyer, a transfer that mimics (and adds materiality to) the transience of Markish's "insignificant now." The poem continues,

Days and nights, even moments,
On a scale of joy I weigh it . . .
Buy it up and I resell it

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*Teg un nekht, a file reges,
Oyf a shol fun frayd ikh veg es . . .
Koyf ikh op un ikh farkoyf es*³³

Time, divided into days, nights, and moments [*teg, nekht, reges*], passes through the hands of the poet-wanderer, who weighs each unit for its value in happiness. Like the homeless, timeless narrator discussed above, the subject of this poem, a detached vendor, can be found, along with his scale, at the origin on the Cartesian plane. Time and commodities pass through him, but he remains firmly in the perpetually regenerating here and now. The final lines shift the vendor's wares from inanimate products to body parts.

What are you selling? Corpses? Rags?
Or already-long-dead-dads?
Hey, we've lost a buyer—
He dies and is reborn again! . . .

*Vos zhe koyft ir—meysim? Shmates?
Tsi geshtorbene shoyn tates?
Hey, a koyne geyt farloyrn—
Shtarbt un vert fun s'nay geboyrn!* . . .³⁴

The suggestion that these bodies will be perpetually reincarnated, as an emptied market will be repopulated, mocks the notion of resurrection. However, the eternal return of the marketplace compels the reader to visualize a miraculous rebirth of the dead. Markish's resurrected buyer mirrors the resurrected moment in "I take my leave of you": "We both will die straightaway/ And be straightaway born! [Mir shtarbn beyde glaykh/un vern glaykh geboyrn!]"³⁵ The dying buyer (and by extension the reader) becomes indistinguishable from the goods he is purchasing as he joins the corpses being sold. Although the vaguely Oedipal image of deceased fathers [*geshtorbene shoyn tates*] is, like the poet's separation from the past in "I take my leave of you," fundamentally revolutionary, the future does not present a victorious new generation, but promises more death. Markish's combination of Hebrew, Germanic, and Slavic roots in his choice of Yiddish words further emphasizes the uncomfortable combination of the sacred (*meysim* [corpses]) and the profane (*shmates* [rags]).

Marinetti had written of "war the world's only hygiene" (*guerra sola igiene del mondo*). The Russian futurists, while less hyperbolic in their glorification of war, were fascinated by the artistic potential of violence. Mayakovskiy, Markov informs us, wavered in his treatment of war between aesthetic fascination and horror.

Jews and Ukrainians in Russia's Literary Borderlands

As late as June, 1916, Mayakovsky complained to Blok in a telephone conversation that he (Mayakovsky) had written too much about the horrors of war without seeing them firsthand and wondered how they really looked. At any rate, Mayakovsky, as a poet and a futurist, saw in the war an artistic challenge and an untapped poetic treasury more varied, more effective, and more modern than the big city he had used previously.³⁶

Markish's relationship to violence is more nuanced. Unlike Mayakovsky, Markish did fight in World War I. There were even rumors he was killed in a pogrom.³⁷ As a romantic anti-capitalist, Markish uses death as a poetic subject, and uses the violent marketplace as evidence of the need for a radical change in social order. However, his poems beg the reader to identify with the individual caught in the time and place of war. Unlike the Rabelaisian market, which, according to Bakhtin, allows for the expression of the will of the people, Markish's market is a place where people behave and speak not of their free will, but automatically.³⁸ By placing body parts on so familiar a stage as the marketplace, Markish invites the reader to mourn the victims of war, while blaming their death, at least in part, on an antiquated rural commercial system.

THE BLASPHEMOUS CRUCIFIXION

For the Russian avant-garde, Christian imagery was increasingly a metaphor for the death and transfiguration of society. The 1920s and '30s in the Soviet Union were years of cultural breakdown and regeneration, a period in which Christianity provided potent allegories for depicting the change from an old system to a new one. Katerina Clark has dubbed the period "the Great Experiment," and suggests that the period's "master narrative, one that can be associated with the story of how Christ drove the moneychangers out of the temple, involves the repurification or resacerdotalization of space."³⁹ For an avant-garde poet in the Soviet Union, whatever his or her cultural or religious allegiance, the commercial landscape is part and parcel of this repurification, insofar as it recalls a narrative of cleansing, and the restoration of a new order.

For the Russian futurists, recognizable Christian forms, altered in context, could signify the revolutionary passage into the future. As early as 1913, in Mayakovsky's first book, *I (Ia)*, intersecting city streets form a crucifix:

I go
Alone to weep,
That at the crossroads

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Are crucified
Policemen.

*Idu
Odin rydat',
Chto perekrestkom
Raspiaty
Gorodovye.*⁴⁰

Viktor Shklovsky explains Mayakovsky's blasphemous vision of the cross as part of a conscious effort at cultural deconstruction: "Mayakovsky, seeking the simplest, most accessible mythology and fresh images, adopted religious images which he destroyed in the process."⁴¹

In Shklovsky's words, Mayakovsky's poetic crucifixions "attack an existing foe and rob him of the emotions with which he is associated."⁴² It is important to observe the subtle difference between this overwhelmingly ironic use of Christian forms and the genuine interest in Christian art many Russian modernists were developing. Whereas a neoclassicist (and assimilated Jew) like Osip Mandelstam openly admired Christian architecture, music, and even narrative, Mayakovsky is modeling the simultaneous desecration of multiple sacred images, a process he deemed necessary to society's transformation. Markish was part of a generation of Jewish modernists, including the artists Marc Chagall and El Lissitzky, who, like Mayakovsky, viewed religion through the critical lens of revolution and cultural transformation, and readily mixed religious iconography with the mundane on an expressionist canvas to imagine a revolutionary apocalypse.

A surprising number of Yiddish modernist writers employed the Christian cross to welcome a new era in East European Jewry while simultaneously deconstructing the sacred symbols of Russia's (and Europe's) past. Lamed Shapiro writes, in "Der Tseylem" ("The Cross"), of a man whose forehead is scarred in the shape of a cross during a pogrom and goes on to commit his own acts of terror. Shapiro's story appeared in 1909 in the New York Yiddish journal *Dos Naye Lebn* (*The New Life*).⁴³ That same year the journal published Sholem Asch's "In a Karnival Nakht" ("In a Carnival Night"), in which Jesus falls victim to an anti-Jewish carnival ritual in medieval Rome.⁴⁴ These stories sparked a heated debate over what was termed "the cross question" (*di tseylem frage*). On one side was Chaim Zhitlovsky, the editor of the journal, who felt that any work of literature, as long as it was in Yiddish, was by nature Jewish.⁴⁵ On the other side was the writer and ethnographer S. Ansky, who felt that Jews should find their own folk traditions rather than using those of an oppressive majority.⁴⁶

Ansky's firm stance against the use of Christian symbols is in keeping

with his research during World War I, which offers insight into what these symbols meant to Jewish writers and artists. In an editorial published on January 1, 1915, in the Warsaw Yiddish daily *Haynt*, Ansky, along with Y. L. Peretz and their fellow writer Yankev Dinezon, appealed to Jews to collect materials about World War I. “Woe to the people,” they write, “whose history is written by strange hands and whose own writers have nothing left but to compose songs of lament, prayers and dirges after the fact.”⁴⁷ Those who experienced pogroms, particularly in a shtetl, would associate icons and crucifixes with the ones Christians placed in their windows to ensure protection from the angry mob. Ansky cites a testimonial by a soldier who “was eventually driven insane by his experiences in Galicia”: whenever the Russians come through, the Christians would put icons in their windows. If there was no icon, the house was therefore Jewish, and the soldiers could destroy it without fear of punishment.⁴⁸ Christian icons, thus associated with antisemitic violence, are symbols of solidarity and physical safeguards that explicitly exclude Jews.

The cross, when combined with Jewish objects, such as a Torah scroll or prayer shawl, takes these out of the context of proper ritual, making them appear to be empty commodities and making the combination appear the epitome of disorder. Marc Chagall’s crucifixes, usually accompanied by Jewish ritual objects and revolutionary symbols, are expressionist embodiments of Jewish suffering at the crossroads of a modern era. Uri Tsvi Grinberg, who wrote in both Yiddish and Hebrew, went so far as to typeset his 1922 “Uri Tsvi Farn Tseylem” (“Uri Tsvi Before the Cross”), a poem about the destruction of East European Jewry, in the shape of a cross.⁴⁹ Grinberg’s cross, designed entirely from Hebrew letters, bears some resemblance to a page of Talmud, where commentary frames a column of biblical text in block form. This perspicuous conflation of form and content ensures that the viewer, before even reading the words, recognizes the irony of embedding Jewish text in Christian art.

A BOOT ON HIS HEAD

The avant-garde poet had two additional genres at his disposal. The manifesto was a public genre for announcing (often with mock-seriousness) an artistic movement’s vision of the future of art. Public spectacle also removed aesthetics from its expected genres and served as a means of celebrating the “ugly” or the “absurd.” The Yiddish expressionist movement, *Di khalyastre* (The Gang), could accommodate both Grinberg’s nationalism and Markish’s still-formative revolutionary sensibilities. Markish also edited a journal

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called *Khalyastra*, with two issues appearing in Warsaw and Paris in 1922 and 1924. The Paris issue featured a cover designed by Marc Chagall. According to Benjamin Harshav, “The idea that poetry should present ‘the chaotic’ rather than neat, well-made poems was in the air. For the expressionists, this meant being truthful to the real world.” By way of example Harshav cites Grinberg’s 1922 manifesto, published in his Warsaw journal, *Albatros*, in which he declares, “It is imperative to write such poems. Atrocious. Chaotic Bleeding.”⁵⁰

The first issue of *Albatros* also features excerpts from Markish’s *Painland* (*Veyland*), a long poem he wrote between 1919 and 1921, which places a Christlike child amid wagons full of carcasses. Although Markish’s writing lacks the Zionist solution of Grinberg’s “In the Kingdom of the Cross” (“In malkhes fun tseylem”), it does contain an unambiguous condemnation of a landscape replete with images of Christianity and war. The poem’s waltzing cadence suggests a lullaby, and an image that recurs throughout *Painland* is that of a child who has been slaughtered and is being carted through the landscape in a wagon. “And who is the child from the wagon of garbage?/Who bought him and who slaughtered him? [Un vu iz dos kind funem mistikn vogn?/Ver hot es gekoyft un ver hot es gekoylet?]”⁵¹ The title itself, *Veyland*, bears an alliterative and syllabic similarity to “*Viglid*”—cradle song, or lullaby. The aesthetics of a sweet, childhood melody sharpen the war-born aesthetics of *Di khalyastre*. The poem is nothing if not atrocious, chaotic, and bleeding.

The Yiddish expressionists appear to have borrowed their disdain for exclusive notions of beauty as sublime from the manifestos of the Italian futurists and their closest Russian cousins, the ego-futurists.⁵² Marinetti, in his “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature,” proclaims, “Indeed, we use all the ugly sounds, all the expressive cries of the violent life that surrounds us. Bravely, we bring the ‘ugly’ into literature, and kill off its ritual pomp wherever we find it.”⁵³ Grinberg’s 1922 manifesto in *Albatros* was part of a wave of manifestos on the aesthetics of ugliness in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. We find a similar sentiment in a manifesto published that year by the Jewish artist El Lissitzky, who had with Markish belonged to the Kultur-Lige:

Decaying souls with blind eyes stand in the storm raging around modern art and wail: “The world of the beautiful is drowning! The world of the beautiful is drowning!” What they see in modern art seems wild and absurd to them. But why don’t they judge the acts of modern science, of modern technology, with the same forbearance? There the revolutions reach more deeply and are more violent!⁵⁴

Literary and artistic fascination with science and technology was not only a response to war. The world was changing dramatically, and if poetry was to reflect these changes it had to reflect the revolution taking place in multiple spheres—art, religion, politics, even the laws of physics. The Soviet avant-garde filmmaker Dziga Vertov sketched his plans for an anti-narrative cinema in his 1922 “We: Variant of a Manifesto”: “Drawings in motion. Blueprints in motion. Plans for the future. The theory of relativity on the screen.”⁵⁵ Citing Einstein’s 1905 paper, which introduced his special theory of relativity, Clara Orban writes of the profound effect advances in physics had on the Italian futurists’ cult of speed.

What did the Futurists think of the most important elements of the Theory of Relativity, the concepts of space and time? For the first time in physics, Einstein declared that time was relative to space. Before his theories, it was assumed that time was independent of the state of motion of the body of reference. In fact, the physicist redefined these axes of the grid of motion as “space-time,” a single entity of the field.⁵⁶

Roman Jakobson recalls that in the spring of 1920 he returned to Russia from the West with the latest books on science. “Mayakovsky made me repeat several times my somewhat confused remarks on the general theory of relativity and about the growing interest in that concept in Western Europe.”⁵⁷ Mayakovsky was certain that science was on the brink of conquering mortality, and he had only to get his mind around the physics of relativity: “I’ve got to find some scientist who’ll give me a precise account of what’s in Einstein’s books.”⁵⁸ It is fair to assume that Markish, too, was familiar with Einstein’s innovations, at least after the physicist became a worldwide celebrity in 1919, and that Markish’s fascination with the individual’s relationship to time, space, and subjectivity represents a desire to incorporate changing perceptions of motion into his own poetics, regardless of whether or not he studied or understood them.⁵⁹

Modernism, broadly understood, changed the poet’s relationship to language, and to the physical world. Expressionism in particular forced a more subjective reexamination of the individual’s private perception of time and space, on an aesthetic as well as a physical level. Markish, in his 1922 essay “Farbayggyendik” (“Passing By”), takes a relativist approach to beauty: “How many hearts—that’s how many idols. How many eyes—that’s how many beauties. And all of them are the best for those who perceive them [Vifil hertser—azoyfil opgeter. Vifil oygn—azoyfil sheynkaytn. Un ale zaynen di beste far di, vos filn zey].”⁶⁰ To exemplify the underexplored range of aesthetic description available to the artist, Markish proposes the following image, a vision that parodies his own work:

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A hairless dog like a rag, who fries itself atop a mound of trash, and a bloody sunset, from which black clouds, like disciples of Christ—they drink a covert evening potion.

*A oysgekrakhener hunt vi a shmate, vos preglt zikh oyf a kupe mist, un a blutike shkie, fun velkher shvartse khmares, vi khristos talmidim—trinken a geheymen ovnt-trunk.*⁶¹

Art, for Markish, must resonate with something other than classical notions of beauty. It must help the viewer or reader to perceive something fully, and even laboriously. This “something other” resembles the concept of “defamiliarization” or “enstrangement” (*ostranenie*) that Viktor Shklovsky, a formalist critic and futurist poet, proposed in 1917: “[In] order to return sensation to our limbs, in order to make us feel objects, to make a stone feel stony, man has been given the tool of art . . . By ‘enstranging’ objects and complicating form, the device of art makes perception long and laborious.”⁶² The words Markish chooses in the passage above are, by 1922, familiar to his reader. His combination of “shmate” (rag), “kupe” (mound), and “khristos” (Christ) re-creates the chaotic, fragmented, nonsensical recombination of his own poems. The ragged shirts and corpses that Markish drags, in his early verse, to the intersection of his “naked lines” continue to vie for the perceiver’s attention.

The Ukrainian poet Mykhail Semenko allegedly wrote to his father, “When I became a Futurist, everyone jumped on me. That is a guarantee of success.”⁶³ Markish was developing a persona that matched the performativity of contemporaries like Semenko, Mayakovsky, and even Marinetti. Moy-she Shulshteyn recalls, “At the time Markish’s lines sounded like a byword for incoherence and even nonsense [*vi a shemdover fun umfarshendlekh-kayt un afilu umzinikayt*].” Shulshteyn goes on to describe a caricature of Markish, painted by the well-known artist Hartske Goldshlog, which hung on the wall of the Jewish Writer’s Union at 13 Tłomatskie Street in Warsaw, and featured the poet sporting top hats on his feet and a boot “upon his pretty, wild shock of hair [*af zayn sheyner vilder tshuprine*].”⁶⁴ The likeness, Shulshteyn writes, captured Markish’s flamboyant self-fashioning:

A pair of black top hats on my feet!
And on my head a boot with red spurs!

*A por tsilinders shvartse oyf di fis!
Un oyfn kop a shtivel mit a roytн shtern!*⁶⁵

With his chiseled features and shock of black hair, Markish had no trouble attracting the attention of his peers, particularly of women. A widely

held rumor maintains that while in Paris in the 1920s, Markish entered a male beauty contest on a dare and won (years later Markish's wife, Esther Markish, would dispute this).⁶⁶ Markish carefully cultivated his striking persona, borrowing elements of his gestalt from Mayakovsky's characteristic amplitude and penchant for dressing a poem's narrator to match its content. In his 1915 "Cloud in Trousers" ("Oblako v shtanakh"), Mayakovsky saw the coming year "1916 wearing the thorny crown of revolutions."⁶⁷ It would appear that in his self-presentation, as well as his verse, Markish was striving to become a Mayakovskian nihilist-prophet. And he was increasingly successful. Melech Ravitch recalls the critic Zalman Reisen calling Peretz Markish a "young prophet" and describes crowds gathering for literary events in Warsaw to hear the "new redemptive word."⁶⁸

Esther Markish recalls a conversation her husband had with the Russian writer and literary critic Ilia Ehrenburg in a Parisian café in 1924. Ehrenburg and Markish had just heard a Hasidic tale in which God forgives an unworthy community on Yom Kippur, thanks to a small boy who dared to play his penny flute. In Esther Markish's account, a teary-eyed Markish sighed, "Why, there you have the history of art . . . Only today it isn't a penny flute that's needed, but the trumpet of a Mayakovskiy!"⁶⁹ The Russian futurist's influence on the East European avant-garde could not have been greater. Marci Shore writes that for the poets of the Polish Marxist literary circles of the 1920s, "the Revolution spoke in the words neither of Marx nor of Lenin, but of Vladimir Mayakovsky."⁷⁰ Markish's emulation of Mayakovsky could only have been encouraged by the Russian poet's immense popularity in Warsaw, where he lived for a time, having moved there from Kiev in 1921. Gennady Estraikh writes that in the 1920s, "Markish lived in Poland and toured there and in other countries as a revolutionary firebrand, a Yiddish answer to the Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky."⁷¹

Markish's similarities to Mayakovsky did not end with the poets' striking good looks, loud declamatory style, and avant-garde beginnings. Both poets would move from experimentation toward more overtly political themes that served the Soviet state, though Mayakovsky would die in 1930, too soon to feel the full effect of institutionalized socialist realism.⁷² Markish retained his Mayakovskian glamour into the 1940s; Edward Stankiewicz recalls a 1941 gathering of Yiddish poets, where he met Markish, "who moved and talked like a movie actor":

No longer young, he paraded a mop of black hair and a beautiful Greek profile. He was certainly the most handsome and talented of the Soviet Yiddish poets, despite a rambunctious futurist phase and a readiness to serve the powers that be.⁷³

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What Markish gleaned from the futurists in his first years of writing—a model for disengaging words from their traditional meaning, a dismissal of past forms, the tools for embodying the avant-garde in his persona—appears to have served its purpose by the early 1920s. By then a well-established poet in his own right, Markish was free to make use of those experiments that were in keeping with his poetic system and to disregard others. Of course, Russian futurism itself had long been uncategorizable. Maxim Gorky, after praising a futurist performance in 1915, was compelled by the movement's critics to qualify his excitement, focusing on the poets as individuals:

There is no Russian futurism. There are simply Igor-Severyanin, Mayakovsky, Burluk, V. Kamensky. There are talented people among them, and in the future they will “cast aside the tares” and grow into a definite entity. They know little; they have seen little; but they will, no doubt, become wiser, will start working and learning.⁷⁴

The same could have been said about Peretz Markish a few years later, and in this the Yiddish poet was a product of his time and place. Far from congealing into a definite entity, futurism soon moved to the margins of Soviet literature, and died even before Mayakovsky's suicide in 1930. What Bergelson describes as an “empty cry” was in harmony, at least in 1919, with what Markish praised as “the trumpet of a Mayakovsky.” And what Bergelson calls Markish's cruciform “naked lines” may have been a rough sketch of a revolutionary crossroads that would soon be reinforced by more recognizable symbols of suffering and resurrection. The market vendor, whose ephemeral wares recall the expendability of life and the rapid overturn of the Revolution, would become an entire community of market vendors whose lives are as expendable as their products. By the time he wrote *The Mound*, publishing a Kiev edition in 1920 and a Warsaw edition in 1921, Markish's motifs comprised a language of their own and could be applied on a much grander scale.

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Before discussing Markish's virtuosic combination of commerce, death, and messianism in *The Mound*, let us briefly turn to two earlier works. The first is Chaim Nakhman Bialik's 1903 Hebrew pogrom poem, “In the City of Slaughter.” The second is Y. L. Peretz's expressionist meditation on the commercial landscape. Though neither work is based in the territory of Ukraine, both had profound influences on Markish, who would combine the horror

of a pogrom with the carnival of a fair to create the violent commercial landscape in which he would set *The Mound*.

Chaim Nakhman Bialik's 1903 Hebrew poem "In the City of Slaughter" ("Ba'Ir Ha-Haregah") was immediately canonized as the quintessential pogrom poem. Written after the 1903 Kishinev pogrom, it depicts a ravaged city landscape. "In the City of Slaughter" begins with the image of a square, which surely influenced Markish's market square setting. It opens with an address—"Arise and go now to the city of slaughter; into its court-yards wind thy way"—and continues with descriptions of fragmented holy and mundane objects: "There will thy feet in feathers sink, and stumble/On wreckage doubly wrecked, scroll heaped on manuscript./Fragments again fragmented."⁷⁵ A Zionist, Bialik harshly reprimands the Jews in his poem for their weakness, and urges a move to the desert and a strengthening of the Jewish body and spirit. Clearly under the strong influence of poets like Bialik and Grinberg, Markish places his poems of loss within a violent shtetl landscape. However, allied as he was with the Soviet project, Markish was concerned not with moving from the shtetl (as Zionists were), but with changing it. By placing his poem in an unmistakable commercial landscape, he blames the market economy, and not East Europeans as individuals, for the horrific pogroms that accompanied World War I. It is worth noting how, despite the enormous difference between communist and Zionist political sensibilities, the two ideologies could manifest in strikingly similar poetic imagery.

Yitshok Leybush Peretz (1852–1915), who dominated the Warsaw Yiddish literary circle from the 1890s through his death, had a strong impact on the Soviet Yiddish modernists. Peretz wrote *At Night on the Old Marketplace: The Dream of a Feverish Night* (*Bay nakht afn altn mark: Der troym fun a fibernakht*) in 1907 and 1908, just after the wave of pogroms in the Pale of Settlement between 1903 and 1906 and the failed Revolution of 1905. The play went through a series of published redactions from 1909 to a posthumous 1922 edition.⁷⁶ Although Peretz lived outside of the Ukrainian territories, his play, like his poetry and prose, bears the traces of the Russian symbolists as well as, to cite Bergelson, "all the treasures of the Hasidic-fantasy world, and through them [he] transformed the mystic sky into a stool at the materialistic world's feet."⁷⁷ In *At Night on the Old Marketplace*, the commercial landscape is a stage for dialogue between seemingly diametrically opposed sides; it is also a supernatural arena in which Jews and Christians (living and dead) witness the union of a bridegroom and his deceased bride. Politically, the play is a ruthless critique of the unfulfilled Jewish political and cultural aspirations of the early twentieth century in Eastern Europe.⁷⁸

Setting the play in a marketplace, Peretz juxtaposes the material and the spirit worlds.⁷⁹ In his stage directions he includes a diagram of a com-

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mercial landscape surrounded by a church, the synagogue and “synagogue street,” the “graveyard street,” and the magistrate. Peretz populates his stage with a bizarre combination of theatrical staff, characters from everyday Jewish and Christian (in this case Polish Catholic) reality, characters who are struggling at different stages of afterlife, and finally the inanimate figures of the gargoyle, statues, tin rooster, and church bell, all of which play significant roles in his drama. The Jewish and Christian sides of the marketplace are locked in a stalemate in what appears to be a competition for despair.⁸⁰ The synagogue, speaking to the church through the narrator, is given a sarcastic voice: “You—be big! Be shining and bright! Just take your shadow from my threshold, it’s pulling at my soul.”⁸¹ By synthesizing multiple voices, Peretz presents a polyphony that is in keeping both with the market setting and the fragmentation that was becoming popular in European modernism.⁸²

Language gains new meaning in Peretz's commercial landscape: amid the twilight closure of the marketplace, girls chant a nonsensical nursery rhyme, and the badkhen, a traditional Jewish wedding jester, enters the square from the shadow of the study house (*besmedresh*) in search of a lost word: “I seem to have forgotten a word [*kh'hob epes a vort fargesen*].” He comments that “there has to be a word/for remaking, for overturning everything.”⁸³ Unable to find a word powerful enough to cause revolution or bring about an apocalypse, and despite the warning of a passing priest, the badkhen seizes control of the marketplace by taking the watchman’s whistle. With it he wakens the dead spirits, urging them to quit their graves and join him in the open market:

All that is lying dead shall live . . .
Let us be healthy and strong!
Come to the old market, to the old market!
Come, I will be in command!

Alts, vos toyt un blaybt, es lebt . . .
Gezunt zayt mir un shtark!
Kumt tsum altn mark, tsum altn mark!
*Kumt, ikh vel komandirn!*⁸⁴

The closer the dead come to the marketplace, the more they begin to remember snatches of prayers and psalms. Their memory is scattered, however, and pieces of language return to them in fragments. Peretz dips into Christian mythology as a means of parodying any functional role assigned to the martyr figure in religious or national terms. In accordance with the instructions of Jesus to “turn the other cheek,” an Old Martyr (potentially a victim of the 1903–6 pogroms) has turned both cheeks to the enemy: “First the right one,

then the left, Just like a clock: Tick-tock, tick-tock.”⁸⁵ Time moves forward as history repeats itself. One dead man sings the Kol Nidre, and a dead boy responds with a Chanukah song.⁸⁶ In Peretz’s play, martyrs appear ridiculous, and the plight of the dead, including their loss of memory and meaning, reinforces the necessity of choosing life over the mystical spirit world.

Dawn breaks at the end of the play, and the badkhen informs the watchman, “someone died in the night [*es iz bay nakht geshtorbn ver*].”⁸⁷ It is, therefore, possible to interpret all that has transpired in this strange midnight market as the event of one man’s death. By this logic, it is Noson the Drunk (the only character with a name) whose experience is the play’s master-narrative. Even when he is alive, Noson is in a constant drunken stupor, moving between consciousness and unconsciousness: death has changed little for this and other apathetic characters.⁸⁸ Noson’s death coincides with his marriage to his dead bride. In a poignant reunion they acknowledge changes in one another: his age, her cold body, his red face, and the worm-hole in her cheek. A wedding is prepared, the consummation of the couple’s long-awaited union, and also of the badkhen’s true role as a wedding bard. The act closes as Noson slips from his bride’s arms. As Isaac Bashevis Singer would later pithily suggest: “Death is the messiah. That’s the real truth.”⁸⁹

The ensuing dance of the dead is a dance of forgetting. The arguments between the Hasidim and the Philosopher dissolve into a circle in which dead and living men and women join in a circle along with statues from the church. The scene recalls the tragic final episode in Gogol’s “Sorochintsy Fair,” in which everyone turns, “willfully or against their will, into unity, transformed into agreement,” including the old women “on whose ancient faces fluttered the indifference of the grave.”⁹⁰ Here too, the market has been a magical, penetrable landscape, where multiple peoples are united, and where the phenomenal realm of the everyday encounters the world beyond experience. Peretz’s marketplace, now full of dancing phantoms, fulfills Elias Canetti’s “double crowd,” where seeming opposites confront one another, usually in competition or threat:

Everything which happens in connection with the dying and the dead is colored by the image of the much larger number of beings on the other side whom the dead man will eventually join. The loss weakens the living and, if it is a man in his prime, is particularly painful for his people. They resist it as well as they can, but they know that their resistance is not much use. The crowd on the other side is larger and stronger than theirs and the dying man is dragged over to it.⁹¹

Throughout the dance, which further blurs the distinction between the living and the dead, the badkhen grows increasingly enraged at the inability of his

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subjects to break the barrier between life and death, to fight “If he doesn’t fill in your graves [zol er ayere keyvrim farshitn]/And give you new souls [naye neshomes aykh gebn]”.⁹² The badkhen’s indignation betrays Peretz’s own despair: the pogroms and lost revolutionary aspirations had rendered all ideologies ineffectual. With his last strength, the badkhen admonishes the characters for their futile messianic visions:

Hey, what’s happened to you all,
You Lightspreaders-and-Understanders,
You Messianic-Door-Bangers [*moshiyakhs toyern-klaper*],
You Head-Against-the-Wall-Bashers [*shleger kop-on-vant*],
You Futuristic-Flycatchers [*tsukunfts-flign-khaper*]!⁹³

Each of the names the badkhen calls out represents a radical messianic trend. In one breath, he ridicules the *maskilim*, the Zionists, assimilationists, and Bolsheviks. The badkhen’s revolutionary appeal, like Peretz’s own investment in Jewish Diaspora nationalism, is working against the dawn. For the badkhen, the market is less a bourgeois symbol to be repressed than a Rabelaisian public square—a forum where order can be overturned. However, although all traditions are overturned in the nighttime commercial landscape, by morning order is again restored and all hope of progress has been abandoned.

MURMURS FROM THE MOUND

For Markish too the marketplace is the locus of overturn. However, for Markish this overturn is violent and irreversible. A smattering of lines linking commerce to death appears in his verse as early as 1917: “What are you buying—corpses, rags?”⁹⁴ “Buy my head for a groschen.”⁹⁵ *The Mound* begins with a dedication to the victims of a pogrom that took place in 1920:

For you, martyrs of Ukraine,
where the earth is full of you,
and also for you, burrowed deep in the “Mound,”
in Horodishche the town by the Dnieper,
Kaddish!

Nokh aykh, harugim fun Ukraine,
vu ful mit aykh di erd iz,
un oykh nokh aykh, geshakhtene in “kupe,”
in Horodishch der shtot baym Dnieper,
*kadesh!*⁹⁶

The subject of *The Mound* is a pile of corpses at the center of a marketplace, victims of a pogrom. The poem is dated 11 Tishre, 5681, or September 23, 1920, the day after Yom Kippur. The mound will, in the course of the twenty-four-part *poema*, alternately be viewed in the Jewish liturgical tradition as a “new tabernacle” and placed on a cross, for Jews an ironic symbol of Jewish martyrdom and Christian pogrom violence. In the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Ukrainian Civil War, the landscape of the shtetl and its marketplace acquired new significance, as writers attempted to depict the violent interchange to which commercial marketplace exchange had given way. In *The Mound* dispersed products have become metonymies for a severed Jewish world. The Italian futurists, and to some extent the Russian and East European futurists, had welcomed Nietzsche’s “death of the gods,” but here Markish was encountering the death of a community of worshippers. While, as a revolutionary, Markish was in favor of annulling traditional religion, as a Jewish poet, he mourns this community with the full volume of his poetic voice.

Markish’s mound is at the center of a shtetl square, a square full of mundane marketplace dialogue but bereft of vendors. For this kind of landscape Markish did not need to visit Horodishche, the site of the pogrom he depicts. It was enough for him to be aware of a common market landscape: a center square and the typical dry goods and agricultural products of Ukraine. There are, even a century later, twenty-four towns with the name “Horodishche” in Ukraine. “Horodishche,” meaning “town,” renders the site of the pogrom an “everytown,” and it is fair to assume that Markish is referring not to a specific pogrom, but to all pogroms. However, brief mention of a pogrom in Horodishche, in the Cherkasy region, in an October 1919 Jewish Communist Party Section (Evsektsiia) report suggests that Markish may have been responding to an actual event.⁹⁷ Markish’s dedication of the poem to the victims of a pogrom is further evidence that a specific incident led Markish to write this particular poem.

Markish begins his long poem with an address to the “heavenly tallow” (*kheylev himlsher*): “Lick not, heavenly tallow, my matted beards” (*Lek nit kheylev himlsher, mayne farpapte berd*).⁹⁸ The narrator is the collective voice of the heap, sometimes speaking in chorus, other times quoting prayer or typical marketplace conversations. Like the buildings and statues that speak to one another in Y. L. Peretz’s *At Night*, the landscape, objects, and corpses on Markish’s square are engaged in a conversation. The image of a heavenly candle may refer to the stars—and indeed, Markish’s “heavenly tallow” (*kheylev himlsher*) alters the “heavenly stars” (*shtern himlshe*) that extinguish themselves (*leshn zikh oys*) in his 1919 cycle, *Nullity (Pust-un-pas)*. Night has fallen on the square after a pogrom. Stars, like candles, do little good for the corpses below.⁹⁹

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Markish describes the mound of bodies in gruesome detail. The dismembered bodies and body parts have merged to form a single individual:

From my mouths sob brown rivers of pitch,
Oh, brown leaven of blood and of departure,
No! Don't get your vomit on the earth's black thigh.

*Fun mayne mayler khlapen broyne ritshkes dziegekhts,
O, broyne roshtshine fun blut un fun gezegekhts,
nit! Rir nit dos gebrek oyf shvartser dikh fun dr'erd.*¹⁰⁰

That a heavenly ritual is juxtaposed with an image of slaughter and vomit suggests the merging of orthogonal lines, one leading from earth to heaven, and the other spreading across the dark ground, which has begun, Markish suggests in the dedication, to claim the corpses. The pile exists at the intersection of axes that, rather than connoting time and space (as his earlier poems do), represent earthly space and heavenly space. Katharina Hansen-Löve, in her study of space in Russian literature, calls this juxtaposition a modernist *dvoemirie* (double world), “according to which everything perceptible gains meaning and significance only in relation to the ‘other,’ ‘higher’ level of existence.”¹⁰¹ The verticality evoked by the actors in Markish’s dialogue, God, the ghostly voices of the dead, and biblical figures intersects, at the pile of corpses, with an earthly horizontality made up of decomposing body parts, market objects, and soiled artifacts from the Jewish community that once inhabited the shtetl.

The church—the earthly manifestation of Christianity—is compared to a skunk, and sits beside the *kupe* on the horizontal axis:

A mound of dirty laundry—from bottom to top!
Take it! Whatever you want, mad-wind, dig it out and take it!
Opposite sits the church, like a skunk, by the mound of strangled fowl.

*A kupe koytik gret—fun untn biz aroyf iz!
Na! Vos dir vilt zikh, dul-vint, krats aroys un nem dir!
Antkegn zitst der kloyster, vi a tkhoyr, bay kupe oysgeshtikte oyfes.*¹⁰²

Clothing and fowl—ordinary purchasable products—are conflated with the bodies that produce or consume them. “Take it! Whatever you want,” echoes a normal market interaction, but the fragmentation and reordering of products and speech has turned ordinary, earthly (horizontal) exchange on its side. The market square fulfills its commercial and community functions as the heap of victims is alternately portrayed as a grotesque form of capital

and a deity in its own right. Markish ends the first section with another utterance produced by geographic memory and addressed to God. “And wear in good health, with pleasure, all, all [*Un trogt gezunterheyt, in nakhes, ale, ale*.]”¹⁰³ “*Trogt gezunterheyt*” (Wear/take in good health) echoes a market vendor who has just sold an item of clothing. The bodies, including their voices, have replaced the products and are waiting to be transported by their new owner from the square.

Markish sets his Christian imagery against a backdrop of citations from the Jewish liturgical tradition, vulgarizing both Judaism and Christianity in the process.¹⁰⁴ Traditional dirges (*kinot* [sing. *kine* or *kinah*]), along with the book of Lamentations, provide the most canonical model for responding to catastrophe (particularly where it relates to a town or building), and Markish’s poem, as scholars have suggested, certainly conforms to the tradition of *Lamentations* and the *kinot*.¹⁰⁵ Both are recited on the ninth of Av and mourn the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. The marketplace mound, Markish suggests, towers over these past tragedies because of its immediacy and materiality.

The slaughtered subject is at the center of this work. Abraham Nowersztern has argued that Markish’s location of the poetic subject in *The Mound* at the center of the poetic landscape is one of the key tropes of his expressionism. “Through hyperbole typical of Markish as an expressionist, the pile becomes simultaneously a ‘picture of the world’ and ‘the center of the world.’”¹⁰⁶ Matthew Hoffman observes that “for both the German and the Yiddish expressionists the poetic ‘I’ was at the center of the universe and everything was refracted through it.”¹⁰⁷ In Markish’s war poetry, the commercial landscape becomes the grave of an entire community; the systems of religious imagery he employs, besides offering a wealth of time-honored metaphors, represent those archaic symbols that must be traded for a new order.

The Mound may be liturgical in tone and tradition, but it nonetheless remains thoroughly grounded in the transformation taking place in the Ukrainian borderlands and, more specifically, in the relationship between Jews and Ukrainians in the shtetl. In *The Mound*, the poet employs the materiality of the marketplace pogrom to link via synecdoche the pogrom victims and the roughly handled exchange of market products. A center for buying and selling products and parts, the market is the ideal frame for a work that exhibits the fragmentation of a god and a people. The unnaturally empty town is “like an overturned wagon in an empty swamp [*Vi in a zump a leydiker an iberkerter vogn*.]”¹⁰⁸ His overturned wagon recalls the wagon that crashes to the ground in Nikolai Gogol’s “Sorochintsy Fair”: “A wagon breaks, its iron rings out, boards thunder as they are thrown to the ground.”¹⁰⁹ The commercial landscape, by facilitating intertextuality, allows for the unsettling coexistence of both images. As if to summon literary mar-

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kets past, Markish writes, in the next line: “Oh, if only someone would come back with something, if only someone would come to say something.”¹¹⁰

The connection between lost words and lost merchandise combines the sacred and the mercantile. The poetic voice slips into prayer, then back into market-speak: “Oh, my prayed-out, outstretched hands/ten-times dishonored—/here you go, here you go [*O, mayne oysgedavnte gevendte hent/geshendt in tsentn—/na dir, na dir!*]!”¹¹¹ The prayed-out hands witness an end to prayer. Hands are handed over in a discombobulated sale, presumably to God, who is instructed in their use: “And caress them, and lick, like a dog, their scratched skin and infected wounds. I promise them to you! [*Un tsertl zey, un lek zey, vi a hunt/oyffel tsekretsikter—an eyterdike vund,/ikh bin zey dir menader!*]”¹¹²

As Seth Wolitz has convincingly argued, Markish evokes traditional form in part to demonstrate a uniquely modernist break from it.¹¹³ The speaker continues his conversation with God: “I’ve built for you in the middle of the marketplace a new tabernacle, God/a black mound [*Ikh hob dir ufgeshtelt in mitn mark a nayem mishkn, Got/a shwartse kupe*].”¹¹⁴ The image of the pile bears a striking resemblance to the “monument to red meat” [*pamiatnik krasnomu miasu*] in Mayakovsky’s 1913 play *Vladimir Mayakovsky: A Tragedy* (*Vladimir Maiakovskii: Tragediia*), which is erected “where for holiness they crucified the prophet [*gde za sviatost’ raspiali protoka*].”¹¹⁵ Markish repopulates the emptied-out market with the dispersed limbs of his heap, a new ark for the covenant with God, a wagon (covered in mud, with sleeping passengers inside), and new words. The repopulation depends on the memory of a normal market landscape, where goods are assigned value, and where items are often broken and sold piecemeal. Markish, through his depiction of fragmented objects, creates an abstract vision of a shtetl reminiscent of the visual art of El Lissitsky and Kazimir Malevich.¹¹⁶ Language undergoes a similar recombination: market speech is mixed up to create blasphemous combinations of bargaining and praying. Recall Mayakovsky’s play, in which a “thousand-year-old man” sees in the narrator “a tortured scream [*zamuchennyi krik*], crucified on a cross of laughter [*na kreste iz smekha*].”¹¹⁷ Similarly, the voices of the entire heap in *The Mound* are carnalized and refigured as a religious sacrifice on behalf of a new, still tenuous, era.

The combination of Judaism and Christianity in *The Mound* begins with physical violence and ends with a new covenant, or “promise.” In an exchange reminiscent of the betrayal of Christ, the heap is offered for money:

Come, cross yourself, and count them out!
A shekel for a head, a shekel for a head,
and push them, push

as always, out,
I promise them to you,
I promise them to you! . . .

*Nem, tselem iber zikh un tseyl zey oys!
a shekel fun a kop, a shekel fun a kop,
un shtoys zey, shtoys
vi shtendik op,
Ikh bin zey dir menader,
ikh bin zey dir menader! . . .¹¹⁸*

The speaker appears to be a Jewish vendor, driven mad by the sudden transformation of merchandise into dead bodies. Moreover, the substitution of biblical shekels for Ukrainian currency transfers the exchange to a timeless Jewish realm, in which the implied buyer may well be God. (We recall Markish's 1917 poem, in which the narrator declares, "Buy my head for a groschen! . . .") Jewish custom forbids the counting of heads, since the numbering of vital human body parts could lead to the confusion of humans with goods. The counting of heads in this section also recalls the biblical episode of the census and the plague, in which King David, having commanded Joab (Yoav) to count the people of Israel, is divinely punished with the loss of 70,000 Jewish lives.¹¹⁹ The problem of taking count of individuals has been much debated within Jewish law, but has most often been carried out through the counting of some non-vital body part, clothing, or half-shekels. Markish's mound, in a grotesque reversal of this solution, offers heads to God in exchange for shekels.

Markish's mixture of shekels and heads introduces a biblical precedent for a poetics that incorporates currency into language. Currency would become an increasingly confusing signifier following the Revolution. Consider May 1920, when the Poles entered and occupied Kiev for five weeks. The historian Aleksey Goldenveyzer, a Jewish resident of Kiev, writes in his memoirs of the complicated system of currency during the Polish occupation:

There circulated an endless quantity of kinds of money: Soviet, Russian, Ukrainian, Czarist, Kerensky bills, Polish marks . . . All kinds of change rang out at the bazaar, with different degrees of value: gold, silver rubles and change. For every one of these fourteen particular kinds of money was its own, changing rate of exchange. And the price of every item differed for every kind of currency . . . Coming up with the preferred kind of money was, of course, extraordinarily difficult.¹²⁰

For the market-going community familiar with the many languages of nineteenth-century trade, the confusion of the Revolution and Civil War

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came with the tangible confusion of perpetually changing units of currency. The untranslatable currency of the warring regimes threw the market into the kind of crisis of communication already taking place in the realm of politics.

Having cast the bodies that make up the mound as mundane products to be sold to the heavens, Markish disgraces them further by comparing the mound to a whorehouse. In Jewish liturgy, God is often viewed as the metaphorical bridegroom to the Jewish people. Here, the Jewish people are for sale, as prostitutes, to any god who will take them:

Allah! Christ! Almighty! Who else?—Come here, wanderer,
pilgrims led astray,
come here, lost ones, it's a whorehouse!
From the whole world, from earths and from heavens
as queen over all the mountains, Mound, I will crown you! . . .

Allah! Kristos! Shaday! Ver nokh?—Aher, *farbaygeyer,*
farfirte pilgrimen,
aher, farblondzhete, s'iz a beys-zoyne!
Fun gor der velt, fun erdn un fun himlen
far malke iber ale berg vel ikh dikh, kupe, kroynen! . . .¹²¹

Gods and humans are summoned to pay homage, and to further profane the victims. The mound, already the origin of Markish's cruciform vertical and horizontal axes, has become the ultimate sacrifice—an alternate deity (or anti-deity), which rivals all existing religious traditions. Having subjected the mound to various forms of profanation, the poet explicitly crucifies it:

Here I protect your crucified head
from dogs, from ravens
and from the grave! . . .
Not a step away . . .
on my eyes swim heavily
worms
and intestines . . .

Ikh hit do dayn gekreytstn kop
fun hint, fun robn
un bagrobn! . . .
Keyn trot . . .
oyf mayne oygn shvimen shver um
verim
un gederim . . .¹²²

As in Markish's earlier verse, the image at the center of the poem is frozen at a particular instant. The irregular meter is punctuated by Markish's enjambment, and his rhyming of Germanic and Hebraic roots: *shver um* (heavily across)/*verim* (worms)/*gederim* (intestines). With the intestines that swim "on my eyes," Markish evokes the Hellenic tradition of divining the future by reading the entrails of animals and the human victims of war. The instant of death gains further iconographic significance through the ironic crucifixion of East European Jews by Christians, a motif that, as we have seen, was becoming increasingly popular among Jewish modernists. The Christian notion of redemption through suffering has been supplanted by an eternal return of Jewish martyrdom: "Come down, come down/we want to crucify you again! [*arop, arop/mir viln nokh amol dikh kreytsn!*]"¹²³

Markish reverses the stereotyped Jewish vendor present in much of the Russian and Ukrainian literature of the nineteenth century by portraying Ukrainian vendors and their marketplace objects as the violators of Jewish prayer. Section 10 begins with commonly sold items: "At markets and fairs/see/fluttering ribbons, beads, buttons and tubs [*oyf markn un yaridn/zidn flaterdike, kreln/knep un tsibres*]." Markish goes on to describe the joy of a market day: "happiness flickers on everyone's faces." Halfway through the section, however, Markish reminds us that this particular Sunday market is taking place on Yom Kippur—both the market and the pogrom have desecrated this most holy of days.

It's *Neileh*-time.¹²⁵ Quick! Hand over a ducat!
The peddlers are praying for everyone on *banduras*,
and with false yardsticks they measure
soiled
Torah parchment to be torn and sold piecemeal.

S'iz neile-tsayt. Af gikh! Arop-aruf a rendl!
di betler davenen far yedn af bandures
un mit arshinen falshe af geris,
farshmirte,
*mest men sefer-toyreshe yeries.*¹²⁶

The scene is a desecrated version of Jewish prayer. Along with ribbons and tubs, Torah-parchment is not only soiled and sold by the yard; it is distributed by means of a false measuring device. All the while a characteristic Ukrainian folk instrument, the *bandura*, assumes the task of Jewish prayer—davening: "the peddlers pray on everyone's behalf on banduras." The sounds and language of the market pass to new speakers; Jewish prayer lingers in recent memory, but it has been exchanged for Ukrainian folk music. Peretz Markish's joyful fairs, ribbons, and tubs evoke a comic landscape in the read-

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er's memory—Gogol's aisles of ribbons in Sorochintsy. Written in the wake of a pogrom, however, *The Mound* describes a marketplace now marked by tragedy: Jews once existed and no longer are present.

In concluding the section, Markish returns to his refrain, then deepens the image of defilement:

“Hey, ribbons, beads, buttons and tubs!
Take them in good health!”
And somewhere in a culvert, a dull-witted pig
wets the ten commandments . . .

*“Hey, steynges, kreln, knep un tsibres! . . .
trogt gezunt!”
un ergets in a riv a khazer tamevate
netst oyf di esres heylike hadibres . . .*¹²⁷

The Torah has been broken into pieces, and the pig finds them as Gogol's pig demon found pieces of red sleeve in “The Sorochintsy Fair.” Markish's use of pigs and defilement exposes the somber side of Gogol's farce, and offers a counterpoint to the regenerative “slinging of dung” that Bakhtin would later emphasize in his reading of Rabelaisian carnival.¹²⁸ A center for the buying and selling not only of products but of parts of broken-down artifacts, the carnivalesque fair, with its pigs, ribbons, and broken wagons, is the appropriate setting for a poem that exhibits the fragmentation of a God and a people. The scene that Markish depicts is one of defilement through pogrom violence. Out of the destruction of the old comes the regeneration of a new, substitute law. This is, however, a grotesque version of a former order and a dying God.

In the second half of *The Mound*, Markish writes: “Twenty centuries to come, on the ark—the new cross/spit me out! [*Tsvantsik kumende yor hunderts/mikh oyf mishkn—tseylem nayem, /—geyt bashpayen!*]”¹²⁹ The act of spitting is reminiscent of the practice of spitting during the “*Aleynu*” section of the morning prayer service to symbolize distaste for idol worship. Indeed, the poem reveals a strong distaste for religion in all forms. That the ark of the Jewish covenant could be a “new cross” implies a decisive break from Jewish tradition. However, spitting is also regenerative. The voices from the heap, in asking to be “spat out,” are asking to be spat, like the biblical Jonah in his ingestion by a fish, through death and into rebirth, or like Jesus, through death to resurrection.¹³⁰

Markish's new ark distorts both traditional religion and traditional trade. Not only does the Yiddish poet mourn the loss of what is sacred, he mourns the loss of what once held value. In both of their places is a massive heap, a new Sinai and Torah. In the dramatic climax of the long poem the

mountains and markets are challenged to compare themselves to the new marketplace tabernacle: “Hey, mountains and markets! I summon you with my poem to take an oath,/The Mound is bleeding all over Mt. Sinai and the Ten Commandments. [Hey, *berg un markn!* *Oyf a shvue ruf ikh mit mayn lid aykh,*/Di kupe blutikt dem barg Sini op di tsen gebotn!]”¹³¹ The two centers of a rural town—the place of worship and the market—are thus reversed. Torah scrolls are commercial goods, and the bodies of the slain market vendors become a tabernacle.

Markish draws from a diverse cross-section of literary and liturgical traditions. He is conscious of the Ukrainian practice of depicting the commercial landscape as a site for popular festivity. At the same time, he builds upon the Jewish literature that had, since the 1880s, come to view this landscape as increasingly physically dangerous. Like the Zionists of his generation, he combines modernist formal experimentation with a tradition of Jewish mourning. However, as a revolutionary and anti-capitalist, he places much of the blame for the loss of Jewish lives on commerce. Gogol, Kvitka, and Sholem Aleichem had brought out the irony of a seemingly joyful and abundant commercial landscape that concealed dangerous threats to the soul, the arts, or the body. For Markish, writing in the heat of the Revolution, the mortal dangers of the marketplace had to be at the center of his poetries. By mixing secular and sacred places, objects, and utterances, Markish eliminates the power of each. What remains is empty space, bereft of worshippers and vendors. It is from this chaotic void that the heap addresses God in the last line of the *poema*. The closing stanza, echoing the end of the first section, is a return to prayer. Again, the mound declares, “we are all here,” followed by, once again, the date of the slaughter. “O heavenly tallow, we’re all here, we’re all here!/11 Tishre, 5681.”¹³² The date, falling in the holiest of months, Tishrei, appears to be included among the slaughtered: Jewish time has been massacred together with Jewish bodies. The verse ends as any prayer should end: “In God’s name. Amen.” The traditional echo of “Amen,” which is the response from a congregation after any prayer, but is particularly important when someone is reciting the mourner’s Kaddish, comes from the landscape of the market.

Chapter Six

Isaac Babel and the End of the Bazaar (1914–1929)

Here before me is the bazaar and the death of the bazaar. The fatty soul of abundance is slain. Mute locks hang on the market stalls and the granite highway is as clean as a corpse's bald spot.

—Isaac Babel¹

Zion's roads are in mourning, empty of festival pilgrims; all her gates are deserted.

—Lamentations, 1:3

IN GOGOL'S "Sorochintsy Fair," a fear of death lies latent beneath the gaiety. World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the Ukrainian Civil War brought death to the forefront of people's minds, especially at the market, which had become a frequent site of mass tragedy. The literature of the early Soviet period reflects this: the "mute locks" and the "slain abundance" of Isaac Babel's revolutionary bazaar come from the same war-torn commercial landscape as the voices that haggle "for beards and for bones" in Peretz Markish's *The Mound*. If in 1829, a time of relative stability, Gogol chose the fair as a site to introduce cultural and geographical diversity into the Russian canon, Babel was similarly introducing new realities into Russian prose by describing a rapidly transforming commercial landscape during the upheaval that tore apart the same region a century later.

Babel's life paralleled that of his Yiddish literary contemporary Peretz Markish in some of its details. He was born in the summer of 1894 in Odessa, a little over a year before Markish was born, in the autumn of 1895, in the Volhynian shtetl of Polonnoye. Markish served in the Russian Army during World War I, and Babel joined the Polish campaign of 1920 as a reporter and propaganda officer. Both writers were casualties of Stalin's purges: Babel was arrested in 1939 and killed in 1940, and Markish was executed in 1952. The bulk of both men's archives disappeared with their

arrests, probably to be destroyed in the Lubianka prison, where both writers met their deaths.

Both Babel and Markish drew readily from the writers who had come before them to describe a northern Ukrainian commercial landscape. Moreover, both were products of the East European modernist moment, and were active in the budding Soviet film industry. However, whereas his Yiddish contemporary embraced the avant-garde of the 1920s through expressionist poetry, Babel developed a Russian literary voice that combined the expressionism of his generation with a naturalistic prose redolent of Gogol, Kvitka, Abramovitsh, and Sholem Aleichem. In 1916 the twenty-two-year-old Babel, a budding writer and graduate of the Kiev Institute of Finance and Business, moved to St. Petersburg where he devoted himself to his literary career. Like Gogol, who gained literary fame by peddling his native Ukraine to a Russian readership, Babel wrote stories that showcased his Jewish background, his knowledge of Ukrainian, and his familiarity with Russia's southwestern territories. Babel chronicled a transforming commercial landscape throughout his work, but the complete overturn in Ukrainian trade is most apparent in his accounts of two distinct historical episodes, both of which he witnessed firsthand. The first was the 1920 Polish campaign, in which he participated as a war correspondent, and which inspired his *Red Cavalry* (*Konarmiia*) stories, which he wrote between 1923 and 1926. The second was Stalin's 1929 collectivization of Ukraine's agriculture, an event that Babel began to describe in a novel, of which only two chapters remain. These chapters are as full of Ukrainian dialogue and vocabulary as Nikolai Gogol's *Evenings* and they are set in the same region, but far from depicting the vibrant commercial landscape of Gogol's Sorochintsy, they narrate the Soviet project of dismantling Ukrainian private commerce.

As early as 1924 Victor Shklovsky recognized Babel's formal and thematic debts to Gogol. In an article following the publication of Babel's first *Red Cavalry* stories, Shklovsky writes of his contemporary:

A Romantic pathos. Obtained via the repetition of dressed-up words and the enumeration of dressed-up goods [*nariadnykh slov i perechisleniem nariadnykh predmetov*]. The introduction into literature of a series of forbidden themes and "lowly" images [*obrazov "nizkogo kharaktera"*]. The inclusion of these images in an emotional sequence, sometimes constructed on the model of the Romantic Gogol, and through this he achieves a differentiation of the meaningful and intoned segment within a sentence.²

The materially and culturally rich commercial landscape facilitates what Shklovsky refers to as "dressed-up" words and goods, not to mention the "lowly images" available in market scenes and street life. What is more pro-

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nounced for Babel than for any of the other writers discussed in this study, however, is a paradox that underlies all of his work: Babel writes as both a Romantic anti-capitalist and a natural salesman. As Alexander Zholkovsky and Mikhail Iampolski have demonstrated, equivalence [*ekvivalentost'*] and exchange that occurs within the very structure of a story are crucial to the fabric of Babel's fiction.³ Babel is more self-critical in his depictions of the commercial landscape than the writers I have analyzed in the previous chapters, for he recognizes in himself the system he seeks to dismantle. Babel constantly moves between two separate, but interconnected, marketplaces: on one level commercial exchange is a theme and setting for a work of literature, on another it defines the relationship between author and reader. Babel thematizes this second market often enough in his fiction to create a home within his commercial landscape for the narrator, who becomes a vendor in his own right. These author/vendor figures, as I shall refer to them, reflect the commercial landscape through their own economic behavior. The author/vendor is a refugee from the dying bazaar. As the marketplace is increasingly destroyed in Babel's texts, the author/vendor is cut free, transforming the commercial landscape into a purchasable narrative.

Babel's quintessential author/vendor narratives involve prostitution. Vera in "My First Fee" ("Moi pervyi gonorar"), a story written between 1922 and 1928, shares her services with an impoverished young writer who weaves a tale of woe in which he too had once sold himself to various men to survive.⁴ In the morning, over tea at the bazaar, Vera returns the two five-ruble coins that the young male Scheherazade has given her:

"So you want to argue, little sister?"

No, I did not want to argue. We agreed to meet in the evening, and I put back in my wallet the two gold coins—my first fee.⁵

That the protagonist's first patron, as it were, is named "Faith" (Vera) is a reminder that both business and fiction require convincible interlocutors, be they buyers or readers.⁶

A more sordid sexual business transaction takes place in Babel's 1918 story "Chinaman" ("Khodia"), set in Petrograd in the miserable winter following the Bolshevik Revolution.⁷ Glafira, a prostitute, through mild prevarication, bargains with a seemingly gullible Chinese client to earn a night's warmth for both herself and an older male acquaintance, Aristarkh, whose name suggests a suspect membership in the recently fallen aristocracy. When the Chinese patron insists on paying no more than one pound of bread for the woman's companionship, she counters, "I have my godfather with me . . . Will you let him sleep by the wall?"⁸ When in the middle of the night, however, the client offers Glafira to her "godfather," it becomes clear who is the

author of the exchange and who the gullible listener. The patron has earned a night's sleep for himself and Aristarkh for only one kilo of bread. Glafira, forced to serve both men, has been violated by the more skillful storytellers: the men emerge as the true author/vendor figures in the story.⁹

Babel's narrators' active engagement in market exchanges usually implicates them in promoting precisely the kind of market exchange that must be dismantled. Moreover, the author/vendor's (often false) presentation of his or her identity resembles the selling of a tale to a trusting customer. The marketplace of Petersburg, like that of Tashkent, is a natural cultural contact zone. However, Babel's characters use these commercial landscapes to exploit their cultural differences, inventing misleading narratives that can be used as currency: Vera is convinced by the tale of an enslaved male prostitute; Glafira presumes her Chinese client's naïveté only to be fooled by his cunning. These tales of dissimulation and exchange signal to the reader that Babel, like his market-going characters, is prepared to alter his own narrative identity to further his project.

THE POGROM AS REVOLUTIONARY CATHARSIS

As a child growing up in a middle-class Odessa Jewish family, Babel would have heard Yiddish spoken, and he spoke the language well enough to edit two volumes of Sholem Aleichem's stories in Russian and to translate a Yiddish story, "Dzhiro-Dzhiro," by Dovid Bergelson.¹⁰ Babel was not immersed in a Jewish textual paradigm. Nonetheless, he eagerly draws themes from his Jewish background. In his early writing Babel experimented with topics of Jewish interest and concern. His first story, "Staryi Shloime" (1913), presents the Jewish encounter with antisemitism through the eyes of an elderly Jew who kills himself when his children, faced with a tsarist edict for the eviction of Jews from their homes, choose baptism over eviction. His 1918 "Shabbos Nakhamu," which was part of an unfinished cycle about a folk hero of Jewish lore, the wise trickster Hershele of Ostropol, reveals Babel's fascination with the kinds of cultural prototypes appearing in the Yiddish of the turn of the century, especially in the works of Sholem Aleichem. After moving to Petrograd in 1916, Babel met Maxim Gorky, who became a life-long mentor for Babel. Gorky published two of the young writer's stories in his journal *Letopis*, and hired him to be a correspondent for the newspaper *Novaia zhizn'* in 1918.

As we have seen in chapter 4, Gorky's meeting in 1904 with Sholem Aleichem had a profound effect on the Yiddish writer.¹¹ Gorky actively sought Jewish writers in Russia who were aligned with the revolutionary project and had witnessed the worst of antisemitism.¹² In 1901 Maxim

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Gorky had come out with a strong statement against anti-Jewish violence. His essay, “Pogrom,” is a firsthand account of a pogrom he had witnessed outside of Nizhny Novgorod fourteen years earlier, in 1887. He describes watching the entire pogrom from the sidelines; he neither credits himself with an intervention nor claims any level of victimization. In later essays he expressed his outrage over what he called “animalistic” (*zoologicheskii*) ethnic, as well as anti-Jewish, sentiments in Russian literature.¹³ Gorky recognized that a literature that could truly speak for Russia’s Jews had to come from a Jewish writer.

Gorky, fifteen years earlier, had sought out Sholem Aleichem to help him introduce Yiddish literature to a Russian readership. He sought out Babel to tell the story of a prerevolutionary Russia from the perspective of a marginalized Jewish subject. However, whereas Sholem Aleichem had seen, in Gorky, a new model to help develop his own image as a writer of the people, Babel saw an opportunity to surpass his older Russian colleague. Babel, a promising young writer who had explored Jewish topics, could do what Gorky could not—educate his readers about, among other things, the backwardness of antisemitism from the perspective of an enlightened secular Jew. In a brazen 1918 essay, “Odessa,” Babel hints at his literary superiority over his mentor Gorky, a superiority that, Babel suggests, is due in part to his Odessa origins. “Gorky is a precursor [*predtecha*], the strongest of our times. But he is not a singer of sun, but rather a herald of truth. [No on ne pevets solntsa, a glashatai istiny.]” The essay’s brazen coup de grace may attest as much to Babel’s trust in Gorky’s humor as to his confidence: “The Literary Messiah, for whom they have waited for so long and so fruitlessly, will come from there—from the sunny steppes, washed by the sea.”¹⁴ Of this passage Gregory Freidin remarks, “Fashioning himself with unreflective panache as the ‘literary Messiah from Odessa,’ the future author of ‘The King’ wished to supersede the ‘precursor,’ to reach the world where art—free of any tendency—could reign supreme and be unqualifiedly true.”¹⁵ Babel does qualify his claim to literary superiority by crediting his ethnic identity, geography, and experience. The empathetic Gorky would appreciate that Babel, a Jew from Odessa, a city that saw the worst of the 1905 pogroms, could experience a brand of violence that he, a Russian, could only experience vicariously.

In 1925, almost a decade after he first met Gorky, Babel published his own pogrom narrative, “The Story of My Dovecote,” in the Leningrad *Krasnaja gazeta* (*Red Gazette*). The story appears with a rare dedication, and it is to Maxim Gorky. It was as though, having prophesied that he would supplant Gorky as “literature’s messiah” in “Odessa,” it was time to make good on his promise to shed literary light from the actual city of Odessa. Like Gorky’s “Pogrom,” which is witnessed by a child narrator, Babel’s story is presented

as a childhood memory of a pogrom, which occurred in Nikolaev in the fall of 1905. The story depicts a victorious struggle to pass a school entrance exam in the face of strict quotas limiting Jewish enrollment. However, the hero's true education comes afterwards, when he experiences the cruelty and violence of the pogrom firsthand. When the child passes the exam after a year of obsessive memorization, his academic success is viewed as a Jewish victory. At the celebratory dinner, the child's Hebrew teacher raises a glass: "The old man congratulated my parents in this toast, and said that I had triumphed in the exam over all of my enemies, I had triumphed over the Russian boys with chubby cheeks and the sons of our own crude rich folk [*synovei grubykh nashikh bogachei*]."¹⁶ The suggestion of ongoing battles between Jews and Russians, middle- and upper-class Jews, battles in which the young protagonist is himself a soldier, foreshadows the protagonist's loss of innocence during the subsequent pogrom.

Soon after the exam the protagonist sets out for the game market to purchase pigeons for his new dovecote—the hard-earned reward for passing the exam—when a pogrom breaks out. The market empties and the boy, in the midst of arguing over the price of two prize doves, overhears as someone urges the vendor to hurry and pack up, adding "In the fish market they treated old Babel to a portion of death [*Na Rybnoi babelevskogo deda nasmert' ugostili*]."¹⁷ The narrator had already introduced the reader to his grand-uncle Shoil: "I loved that blustery old man because he sold fish at the market . . . Shoil also distinguished himself from ordinary people with the fabricated stories he would tell about the Polish uprising of 1861."¹⁸ Although the news about his grand-uncle certainly registers with the young protagonist, he continues to negotiate with the birdcatcher before fleeing the market: "A waste [*naprasno*], muttered Ivan Nikodimych after him, 'a waste,' he shouted more firmly and began to gather his rabbits and peacock and shoved the doves at me for forty kopeks."¹⁹ It is unclear whether by "waste" he is referring to Shoil's death or the necessity of capitulating to the boy's price of forty kopeks for the doves.

The narrator flees the market, and is relieved to reach a street corner where he finds Makarenko, an amputee who sells cigarettes from his wheelchair: "The boys from our street would buy cigarettes from him, kids loved him, I flung myself toward him at the corner. 'Makarenko,' I said, out of breath from running, and stroked the shoulder of the legless man [*i pogladil plecho beznogogo*], 'you haven't seen Shoil, have you?'"²⁰

The protagonist has chosen the wrong informant. Makarenko, who, alongside his wife, is busy appraising the objects they have managed to pilfer in the upheaval, notices the doves and smashes one of them against the boy's forehead. Blocking out the curses of Makarenko and his wife, who looks up from her pile of looted bonnets to say, "Their seed has to be destroyed

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[*Semia ikhnee razorit' nado*],”²¹ the protagonist focuses on the dove entrails that trickle past his eye.

I lay on the ground, and the entrails of the squashed bird trickled from my temple. They dripped across my cheek, twisting, sprinkling and blinding me. [*Ia lezhal na zemle, i vnutrennosti razdavlennoi ptitsy stekali s moego viska. Oni tekli vdol' shchek, izvivaias', bryzgaia i oslepliaia menia.*]²²

The young hero, slain in effigy, through his dove, is symbolically resurrected as a prophet amidst the disordered commercial landscape of Makarenko's looted goods. The disemboweled bird, like the intestines and worms in Peretz Markish's *The Mound*, suggests the Hellenic gods' divination of the future by looking at entrails. Looking through the dove's entrails, the child glimpses the end of a Christian era: the dove of peace is headed toward an apocalyptic end.

Maxim Gorky, in his 1901 “Pogrom,” observes a girl in a white dress emerge from the crowd, “like a dove in a cloud of smoke [*kak golub v tuche dyma*].” The girl disappears to the sounds of “Beat the Yid girl [*Bei zhidovku!*]!” She is swallowed up in the horrific carnival. The narrator in Gorky's story returns to his bird metaphor when he describes a young, newly homeless boy who “jumps up and down, wanting to capture a feather that has flown away on the wind” [*podprygivaet, zhelaia poimat' letaiushchee v vozdukh pero*].²³ A passing police officer taunts the boy.

Babel may or may not have had Gorky's images of a dove, a feather, and a taunted child in mind when he composed his own story about doves. Loose feathers (usually from ransacked Jewish homes) are a common metonymy for a pogrom. In both Gorky's and Babel's stories, a dove begs attention for its religious symbolism. In the Hebrew Bible, the dove serves as a messenger of peace, starting with the dove that returns to Noah's ark with an olive branch—God's promise of a new world. In Leviticus it is specified that he who cannot afford a sacrificial offering of cattle “shall bring his offering of turtle doves, or of young pigeons.”²⁴ For Christians, the dove transforms from a sacramental offering to a symbol of divine affirmation. The dove is a sign from God just after Jesus's baptism. Jesus casts the “sellers of doves,” along with moneychangers, from the temple. For Catholics the dove represents the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel according to John we find: “And John bare record, saying, I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.”²⁵ The dove that is maliciously smashed on the young protagonist's forehead is at once an heir to temple offerings and a designation of the child's chosen-ness. The crushed dove of peace marks the young protagonist, thereby hinting at his intimate connection, and even shared identity, with the symbol of Christ.

If Gorky watched the Nizhny Novgorod pogrom, and its dove-like victim, from a safe distance, Babel's observation of the violence at Nikolaev was so personal and close that it physically entered his narrator's eye. Dedicating "The Story of My Dovecote" to Gorky, Babel suggests that he is providing precisely the perspective that Gorky could not. Gorky may have paved the way for a pogrom narrative, but only someone with Babel's gaze could complete the assignment. Babel's young messiah figure, however, comes with a heavy dose of irony. Babel is willing to embody Gorky's oppressed Jewish subject to an extent. His young character must fight quotas in order to enroll in the imperial gymnasium. But unlike his acculturating father and grand-uncle, he is growing up with most of the advantages of Russian culture. He is, moreover, healthy and successful, unlike the legless Makarenko. Although the pogrom touches the child's life in very personal ways, the well-educated Russian-Jewish protagonist remains safe. And yet, by placing his character literally face to face with a pogrom, Babel is temporarily utilizing a new Soviet cliché. By the 1920s, the trope of the Jewish prodigy who has overcome his marketplace origins, learned the customs of the locals, and realized his intellectual potential was becoming an archetype in its own right. A phony biography of the satirist Ostap Vishnia in the Ukrainian literary journal *The Literary Fair* (*Literaturnii iarmarok*) plays upon this hallowed image of the self-made secular Jew, and pokes fun at readers' fascination with a writer's ethnicity:

Ostap Vishnia is a Jew by ethnicity. His hometown is in the Kiev district, the Koziatin Station, and his father was a dairyman. To earn a bit of bread for himself, Ostap Vishnia used to sell candy on the platform of the Koziatin Station and thus made a little money. Hanging around with the hoboes, he learned several hobo-songs, but was not inclined to the ways of hobo-hooligans, since he loved to work and to earn his own bit of bread.²⁶

Vishnia's playful representation of a Ukrainian Jew may be an exaggeration, but it rehearses the same Soviet Jewish narrative the protagonist in "Story of My Dovecote" blindly follows prior to the pogrom. The long buildup to the character's loss of innocence finds him religiously studying for his school exam. His ability to absorb Pushkin, the most canonical of Russian writers, is what admits him to the halls of Russian high culture. The protagonist's encounter with Makarenko in a commercial landscape completes a story that is shocking for its depiction of human cruelty, but not altogether unexpected within the narrative of the struggling Jewish intellectual from Russia's western borderlands. Like Gogol a century earlier, Babel willingly embodies a ready-made narrative by presenting himself as a Russian author with a marginalized background and a fresh, young gaze.

However, Babel's protagonist, although young, is not innocent. In this

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story, we clearly see Babel's two marketplaces. The marketplace where the pogrom breaks out (and, by extension, the crossroads where the boy meets Makarenko) is a classic literary commercial landscape, and is in keeping with Babel's practice of chronicling the transformation of commerce. In the ten-year-old protagonist, we see the classic Babelian author/vendor, a figure who has, if only out of paralyzing fear, temporarily profited from the tragic episode. Makarenko (who thrice refers to himself as "the chosen one") can therefore be read as an agent of divine vengeance, punishing the child for purchasing his coveted doves despite having already heard of Shoil's death. On his way home, the child witnesses another act of poetic justice: a peasant smashes the windows of Efrussi, a wealthy Jewish merchant who had used bribes to enroll his son in the gymnasium the year before. Gregory Freidin reads this brief passage, together with Makarenko's murder of the doves, as evidence that the pogrom has become "an all too visible hand of poetic justice. This hand not only punishes Jewish boys for playing successfully by the rules of the hated empire but also takes revenge on the Jewish merchant Efrussi who did not and used bribes."²⁷ The young protagonist has lost his grand-uncle, the storyteller Shoil (the pogrom's only human casualty), and his dove-cote, but the pogrom has proven cathartic. Walking home the narrator "cried more bitterly, fully and happily [*gor'ko, polno i schastliv*] than I've ever cried again in my life."²⁸ The child's confused mixture of happiness and mourning undercuts the melodramatic exchange with Makarenko, confirming that victimhood is never simple. At home the Ukrainian groundskeeper Kuz'ma is busy laying out the murdered Shoil, and says to the boy, "You ought to place fivers on his eyes [*Ty by emu piatakov na glaza nanes*]."²⁹ These five-kopek coins, fare for the dead man's passage across the Styx, could well be the difference between what the birdcatcher wanted to charge the narrator for the birds and the final purchase price—a price he has sealed because of Shoil's death. They are also the old man's commission for a story that (the adult Babel knew) would earn its author his rightful place as Russia's literary messiah from Odessa.³⁰ Kuz'ma's suggestion seems absurd to the young narrator: "But then, at ten years of age, I didn't know why dead people would have a use for five-kopek coins [*No togda, desiati let ot rodu, ia ne znal, zachen byvaiut nadobny piataki mertvym liudiam*]."³¹ The fact that the narrator—a young author/vendor—owed this money, and much more, to his grand-uncle would become clear later.

BABEL'S REVOLUTION

It was Gorky who arranged for Babel's post as a war correspondent with General Budenny's First Cavalry Army during the 1920 Polish campaign. In 1919 the Red Army had entered the Russo-Polish War, which intensified

in April 1920 when Simon Petlyura allied his Ukrainian troops with Piłsudski's Polish army in an attempt to push the Polish border east.³² A summer of brutal fighting drained the Red Army troops and Polish resources alike, leaving the newly formed Poland, which included most of Volhynia and all of Galicia, on one side of the border and Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus on the other.³³ The implementation of War Communism, in combination with the destruction and scarcity that came with war, exposed exchange in the provinces to total upheaval. In the countryside farmers' products were requisitioned from them, and they were no longer able to sell off excess supplies to support themselves. As we have seen in chapter 5 the commercial landscape, once the center of a town's livelihood, came to symbolize chaos and despoilment in the literature of the revolutionary period.

Babel conceived of his *Red Cavalry* stories while on the Polish front; he used the Russian pseudonym Kirill Vasil'evich Liutov, thus obscuring his Jewish identity.³⁴ Whereas Gogol, a century earlier, had brought the image of a life-giving Ukrainian landscape to his Petersburg readers, Babel returns to this commercial landscape to watch it fall apart. In "The Tachanka Theory" ("Uchenie o tachanke"), Babel associates the Tachanka machine-gun carriage with its obliteration of the landscape: "This word has transformed into the base of the triangle on which our method is founded: chop—tachanka—blood [Eto slovo sdelalos' osnovoi treugol'nika, na kotorom zizhdetsia nash obychai: rubit'—tachanka—krov']."³⁵ The story ends with a description of the lifeless shtetls left behind, the sobering casualties of war as well as metaphors for Jewish history, which was rapidly disappearing in the wake of the Revolution. Babel's protagonist Liutov enters Galicia as a liberator, but he is conscious of his role in the brutality that is wreaking havoc on its residents. He may be making history with his fellow Bolsheviks, but in the process he is leaving his own (albeit distant) Jewish ancestry behind him with a volley of machine-gun fire.

In his essay "Odessa," Babel writes, "Do you remember the fertile, bright sun in Gogol, a man who came from Ukraine?"³⁶ A close look at *Red Cavalry* suggests that Babel is consciously dismantling Gogol's fertile landscape. The first of his *Red Cavalry* stories, "Crossing the Zbrucz" ("Perek-hod cherez Zbruch"), describes no less than a decapitation of the Ukrainian sun: "An orange sun is rolling across the sky like a severed head."³⁷ The story begins with Liutov and his unit crossing from war-torn Volhynia toward Warsaw.³⁸ We recall that in "The Sorochintsy Fair," Gogol's characters are reflected in the waters of the Psel River; in the radically transformed Ukrainian landscape Liutov's company is not reflected in, but swallowed by, the river: "Someone sinks, and loudly curses the Mother of God." This violent entrance into Ukraine marks Liutov's absorption into the Dantesque inferno of the Russo-Polish War. The pathetic fallacy that opens this story describes

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a natural world that has gone mad: the circular orange sun conjures a “severed head,” and black squares, reminiscent of Malevich’s cubo-futurist creations, sink into the water: “The river is littered with the black squares of the carts.”³⁹ With this first story Babel suggests that the tools of the avant-garde are necessary to depict the war-torn world and to alter the viewer’s perspective. Amid the drowning shapes are signs of an apocalypse, one that is brought about by the collaborative efforts of the Cossack troops with whom Liutov is riding and city-dwelling intellectuals like him.

The aestheticized symbolic landscape stands in stark contrast to the individual stories Liutov hears when he is away from the rest of the troop. In the same short story, he stops to spend the night in a Jewish home in Novograd-Volynsk. The narrator is shown to identify with the Jewish victims of war as well as with his fellow army men, and this shift in perspectives adds to the chaotic atmosphere of the Civil War.

“Clean this up,” I said to the woman. “What filth you live in . . .” The two Jews get up from their seats . . . They jump about soundlessly, monkey-style, like Japanese at a circus [*kak iapontsy v tsirke*], their necks swell and gyrate.⁴⁰

Liutov approaches the Jewish home as someone from the outside, his descriptions leaning so far as to advertise bigotry toward both Jews and Japanese. He continues to change the timbre of his voice throughout the cycle, depending on his environment, sometimes playing the tough soldier, at other times blending in among the Jews he meets and expressing sympathy for them. In this first episode he observes the grotesquely accelerated turnover of generations, with the death of a pregnant woman’s father:

She raises from the ground her thin legs and rounded belly and removes the blanket from the sleeping man. A dead old man lies there, laid out on his back. His throat has been cut out, his face sliced down the middle, dark blue blood sits in his beard, like a lump of lead.⁴¹

The young woman exists between the promise of an unborn child, who may or may not have a world to enter, and a lost past, embodied by her slain father. Babel frequently uses pregnancy as a metaphor for the awaited Revolution. In his analysis of Babel’s 1935 play *Maria*, Gregory Freidin observes of the pregnant wife of a worker, “Babel has her worried that her hips might be too narrow for a healthy birth, leaving open the question whether the new world would actually issue from the loins of the Russian proletariat.”⁴² The reader has similar cause to worry about the Jewish woman in “Crossing the Zbrucz,” whose vulnerability to pogrom violence calls the likelihood of her surviving and carrying her child to term into question. In this story it is

not immediately clear that the older generation is dead, and it is uncertain whether the new one will truly be born. Liutov, like his hostess, is sandwiched between the past and the future, and must alternate the roles he fills as a Jew and a soldier in order to serve as intermediary between an old, dying order, and a new one.

Liutov's role as an intermediary comes in part from his belonging to the cosmopolitan, enlightened class, which affords him a certain freedom from national affiliation. This differentiates him from the smaller, more ethnically divided communities he encounters in the Polish-Ukrainian borderlands. Liutov likens his freedom, as well as his ideology, to that of the wandering Polish fresco artist Pan Apolek, who leaves his mark in both the mundane tavern and the holy cathedral. Everything about Apolek, from his drunkenness to Gottfried, the blind accordionist who accompanies him, to the long scarf, which is "endless as a magician's ribbon at a fair" [*neskonchaemyi, kak lenta iarmarochnogo fokusnika*], is redolent of the eclectic cultural overlap and the festivity of a fair.⁴³ The comparison of a scarf to the ribbons at a fair recalls the festive ribbons that appear throughout Gogol's multiple fairs, and the long, cranberry-colored scarf worn by Chichikov in *Dead Souls*. Strikingly, for Babel, as for Markish who juxtaposes festive ribbons with death in *The Mound*, the ribbons serve as memories of a former time, tying the present emptiness and destruction to past festivities.

Pan Apolek is a Babelian author/vendor, par excellence. He portrays the remnants of the dying rural and shtetl life on the walls of cathedrals and on icons, but he does this for a price. Members of the community eagerly pay him to immortalize their faces in Christian scenes. Fresco art often reflects the communities present in the city or town at the time it is painted, and this includes Jews as well as the Christians who attend the church. Whereas in the fresco discussed in chapter 1, which lines the entrance to Kiev's Trinity Church, Jesus expels moneychangers that resemble Ukrainian Jews, Pan Apolek uses poor Jews, along with other humble members of the local community, as models for holy figures from the New Testament. This subversive, humanistic gesture becomes Liutov's model for a new religion. Apolek's controversial depictions of the local downtrodden in Christian frescoes and icons suggests a promotion of the characters in *Red Cavalry* to biblical status.

The wondrous and wise life of Pan Apolek hit my head like an old wine. In Novograd-Volynsk, in the hastily crushed city amid the shriveled ruins, fate threw at my feet a gospel that had been hidden from the world. Surrounded by the ingenuous shine of halos I took an oath then and there to follow the example of Pan Apolek. And the sweetness of dreamy cruelty, the bitter scorn for the dogs and swine of mankind, the flame of silent and intoxicating vengeance—I gave them as a sacrifice to this new oath [*novyi obet*].⁴⁴

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The “new oath [*novyi obet*]” to which the narrator refers bears a strong phonetic resemblance to the “New Testament [*Novyi Zavet*.]” Apolek’s unorthodox approach to Catholicism is indeed a new version of the Christian scriptures. For both Liutov and Apolek, art is the highest form of truth. Amid the ruins of war, Liutov receives from Pan Apolek an aesthetic gospel that is not precisely the New Testament but which replaces the old religious content.

According to Gregory Freidin, the new God that emerges in the midst of war “is ‘life,’ in the Nietzschean, post-Darwinian understanding of the term.”⁴⁵ Liutov, convinced by Apolek’s subversive world of art, is ready to sacrifice even the “sweetness of malice [*sladost’ zloby*]” in order to fittingly represent, and thereby exalt, the humble of his own time. Artistic conversion to Apolek’s world offers Liutov, a cosmopolitan estranged from the Jews and Ukrainians of the polarized Polish front, an identity. A foreign artist-*luftmensch*, an author/vendor, and a master at embodying Dionysian formlessness within Apollonian structure, Apolek epitomizes the commercial landscape, thus carrying a pseudo-urban taste of commerce and cosmopolitanism to rural towns and villages. Commerce frees the painter to travel wherever he likes and to represent the world according to his own vision. He can paint anyone into an icon for a price, thereby immortalizing and redeeming him. Liutov would like for representation to be this simple. His desire for a unifying poetics through which to make artistic sense of the total devastation he sees compels him to follow the ways of the Polish artist.

As Apolek superimposes Christian and Jewish suffering onto a Christian landscape, Babel summons the reader to reconsider martyrdom in light of contemporary Jewish-Christian relations. Hence the suggestion that, in the throes of Jewish modernization, a new messianic age has come about—one that has done away with both Jewish and Christian content, but which has kept religious form intact to represent the revolutionizing of antiquated traditions, be they Jewish, Catholic, or Orthodox. As we have seen in chapter 5, in the early twentieth century an artistic space had been opened for simultaneously blaspheming all that religion had come to represent and proposing a new understanding of religion—and even a new God.

Liutov begins his dialogue about religion, time, and faith with Pan Apolek, but he continues it two stories later with the equally eccentric Gedali, an old Jew whom he meets in an empty market. An entry in Babel’s diary dated “Zhitomir, June 3, 1920,” leads us to presume that “Gedali” was inspired by an actual encounter.⁴⁶

Watch crystal 1200 rubles. Market. A little Jewish philosopher. An indescribable market stall [*nevoobrazimaia lavka*]—Dickens, brooms and golden slippers. His philosophy is that everyone says they are fighting for truth, and they all steal. If only some government were kind. Remarkable words, little beard, we talk, tea and three apple tarts—750 rubles.⁴⁷

In this short entry Babel acknowledges the importance of both the geography of the commercial landscape and accounting. In the old man Babel finds an author/vendor like himself. Rather than purchasing the golden slippers (*zolotye tufli*, which bear some resemblance to the royal slippers [*tsarskie chereviki*]) Vakula procures from Catherine II in exchange for the Cossacks' freedom in "Christmas Eve"), Babel pays 750 rubles for the old man's remarkable words (*zamechatel'nye slova*).

In the fictional "Gedali," there are no apple tarts. Liutov finds the old man alone in the commercial landscape: "Everyone had left the bazaar, Gedali remained [Vse ushli s bazara, Gedali ostalsia]."⁴⁸ Liutov has entered the marketplace in search of the last vestiges of material, emotional, and spiritual comfort. Exhausted by the war and longing for home, he remembers the Sabbath as a safe time-space in his childhood:

Once on those evenings my grandfather's beard caressed the volumes of Ibn-Ezra. The old woman, in a lace head covering, cast spells with her knotted fingers over the Sabbath candles and sweetly wept. [Kogda-to v eti vechera moi ded poglazhival zheltoi borodoi tomy Ibn-Ezra. Starukha v kruzhevnoi nakolke vorozhila uzlovatymi pal'tsami nad subbotnei svechoi i sladko ry-dala.]⁴⁹

Already two generations removed from traditional Judaism, Babel's protagonist is suddenly attracted by the idea of the Sabbath Queen, which might bring rest from the war, and perhaps from modern time as well.⁵⁰ "‘Gedali,’ I say, ‘today is Friday and the evening has already come in. Where can one find a Jewish biscuit, a Jewish cup of tea and a little bit of that retired God [*nemnozhko etogo otstavnogo boga*] in a teacup?’"⁵¹ Gedali, like God, is an anachronism: with his provincial market stand and his prayer book, he represents a world even older than that of Liutov's grandparents. If Pan Apolek, with his new religion of aesthetics, presents Liutov with a New Testament, Gedali represents the Old Testament. Moreover, in Liutov's Old/New Testament dichotomy, the commercial landscape represents the world in need of liberation and reconstruction.

Gedali, the last to leave the market, appears to Liutov to be a last fragile link to the old world. Liutov's relationship to Judaism is filled with Proustian nostalgia for a warm, family evening; the "retired God" is a taste and memory from childhood that, he hopes, might still exist in Gedali's world. However, when Liutov asks about a place to pass a Sabbath eve, Gedali tells him that these pleasures no longer exist. "Next door there is a tavern, and good people ran it, but people don't eat there anymore, they cry there . . . [Est' riadom kharchevnia, i khoroshie liudi torgovali v nei, no tam uzhe ne kushaiut, tam plachut . . .]."⁵² Liutov learns from Gedali that he cannot have both the old and new worlds.

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The star that signals the beginning of the Sabbath in “Gedali” is, like the lock that secures the old man’s market stand, a discreet barrier between the material world of Jewish trade and the spiritual world of Jewish prayer. Gedali lives in Jewish time, which determines when he should close his shop to pray. Liutov, in contrast, works according to the Revolution, and engages in religion on the model of Pan Apolek: through art. Slow and contemplative, as though time has stopped between episodes of war, Liutov’s conversation with the old man, as the latter closes up his market stand in preparation for the onset of the Sabbath, equates centuries of Jewish anticipation of the messiah with the expectation of the liberating revolution. The old man, after all, shares a name with Gedaliah, the Jewish martyr assassinated sometime after the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem around 586 B.C.E.⁵³ A more explicit reference to the destruction of the Temple comes in Babel’s diary on July 25, 1920, which coincided with the fast day of the ninth of Av, a day on which the destruction of both temples is traditionally mourned. Babel calls attention to the injustice of his fellow Red Cavalrymen who, before retreating from the town of Demidovka, force Jewish women to violate the solemn day. “They woke the Jewish women at 4 in the morning and made them prepare Russian meat, and it is the 9th of Av.”⁵⁴ That Babel would remember the destruction of the Temple, and equate it with the “tortuous two hours [*muchitel’nye dva chasa*]” before the troop left Demidovka, builds upon a metaphor already at work in his diary: the destruction of traditional Jewish life in Galicia was comparable to the greatest tragedies in Jewish history. In the fictional *Red Cavalry* stories, however, Babel introduces an element of salvation, in the form of revolutionary optimism, to the Jewish mourning that comes through in his diary.

Through the figure of Gedali, Babel juxtaposes the Jewish belief in an imminent messianic age with the Marxist idea of an approach toward communism. Both Gedali and Liutov are visionaries, Liutov in his promotion of the Revolution, Gedali as a champion of an imaginary “fourth international,” in which there are neither victims nor persecutors. Gedali’s vision, a naive version of Trotsky’s “perpetual revolution,” is in harmony with a cycle of time marked by both the marketplace and the Jewish calendar.⁵⁵ In Gedali’s Jewish lifestyle the weekly arrival of the Sabbath separates the holy from the mundane, and thus time is in perpetual renewal. Since the Revolution has effectively interrupted the cycle of time, both the commercial landscape and Jewish life as it had existed in the Pale of Settlement are nearing their end. The result looks like a bazaar, once full of generative impulses (including artistic catharsis, material prosperity, and sexuality) but now closed, not merely for the Sabbath, but indefinitely.⁵⁶

Babel’s identification with Gedali as a Jew and as a vendor is manifest in the Sabbath they spend together. Together, Liutov and Gedali mark what may be the last Sabbath, and the end of the market. In this moment of spiri-

tual and material loss, Babel looks to trade as a metonymy for dispersion, destruction, changes in value, and illusion. In his June 3, 1920, diary entry in Zhitomir, Babel reminds himself “to describe the bazaar, the baskets of cherries, the interior of a tavern [*opisat' bazar, korziny s fruktami vishen', vnutrennost' kharchevni*].”⁵⁷ From the diary, it appears as though the disappearing products needed to be gathered up and preserved in his writing for future literary customers. Babel, who held degrees from the Nicholas I Commercial School in Odessa and the Kiev Institute of Finance and Business Studies, knew trade from both a theoretical and a practical angle.⁵⁸

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

In Babel's early works he is still searching for an underlying poetics. He did not complete his cycle about the Jewish folk figure Hershele, and his “Old Shloyme” is thin and pitiful. As he suggests in “Pan Apolek,” the voice Babel eventually finds takes the form from religious tradition, both Jewish and Christian, and he uses that to portray a secular but messianic content. The Jewish identities of Babel's secular heroes, from Benya Krik of the “Odessa Stories” to Dymshits of his play *Maria*, are consumed by the modern world of trade.

In Babel's fictionalized Jewish Odessa, the degenerate realms of trade and religion are already mixed. In his 1927 play *Sunset (Zakat)*, the characters' prayers in the synagogue disintegrate into conversations about the prices of grain:

Arye-Leyb (*serenely*): *Lifnei adonai ki vo, ki vo . . . Oy, I am standing, oy,*
I am standing before God . . . where do oats stand [*Kak stoit oves?*]? . . .

Second Jew (*rocks back and forth bitterly*): It'll be a ruble-ten, it'll be a
ruble-ten [*budet rup' desiat'*]]!

Arye-Leyb: That's crazy [*Suma soiti!*]! *Lifnei adonai ki vo, ki vo . . .*⁵⁹

Meanwhile, off in a corner, the main character Benya discusses sales plans with Sen'ka. A stray rat in the synagogue distracts the worshippers; the cantor shoots it with a rifle he keeps, for some reason, in the synagogue and carries out the dead carcass wrapped in a prayer shawl, upon which Sen'ka shouts, “Be quiet! What a bunch! [*Pust' budet tikho! Nashli sebe tolchok!*]”⁶⁰

The play was a success in both Russian and Yiddish in Odessa, where Jewish humor that juxtaposed market values and religious life had long been integral to the city's culture.⁶¹ That Babel should return to the Jewish gangster characters from his Odessa stories, the first of which appeared as early as 1915, suggests that with his 1927 *Sunset* he is using familiar characters

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to develop some of the ideas of overturn he had conceived while in Budenny's cavalry unit. As in "Gedali," the sunset, which ought to represent a shift between the material and the spiritual worlds, takes on revolutionary significance. In both works, the suggestion of a sun that sets at the end of a week creates a spirit of temporal urgency: all must be completed before the Sabbath. However, for the Jewish gangsters, as for Liutov in *Red Cavalry*, this barrier is penetrable. The image of a setting sun is simultaneously an ironic allusion to the rush to close up shop (when the shop will never actually be closed up) and the suggestion of an end to time as we know it. As Freidin suggests, this setting sun also mirrored Babel's shift in role models from the Gogol of *Evenings* to the Gogol who had supplanted his Ukrainian pseudo-folk tales with darker episodes set in the imperial Russian capital: "The sun was dimmed for the first time in his movie script *Benya Krik* and it was nearly turned off in his play *Sunset* . . . [Babel's] literary exemplars were reshuffled accordingly: the early Gogol was now trumped by the Gogol of the *Petersburg Tales*."⁶² Like Gogol, Babel was leaving the Ukrainian fair for Russia's cultural capital, which in 1924 was rechristened Leningrad.

In "Gedali," Babel shows the end of both the commercial landscape and religion, which Gedali still attempts to keep separate in accordance with Jewish religious practice. In *Sunset*, Babel offers a comically corrupt combination of marketplace and synagogue. Both the pious Gedali and the blasphemous Benya will see their religious and commercial landscapes destroyed. Moreover, both the deserted marketplace in "Gedali" and the market-like synagogue in *Sunset* evoke, albeit on a smaller scale, the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. In Babel's modern version of the quintessential Jewish catastrophe, the social center of the old world—the world of *fathers*—is destined to be destroyed, just as Mendel Krik, a man whose name recalls Mendele Moykher-Sforim, the "grandfather" of Yiddish literature (and, by extension, of modern Jewish culture) in Odessa, is slowly driven to death by his sons.

TRADE AS THE NEW JUDEA

Trade, throughout Babel's oeuvre, is often an ironic synecdoche for "Judea," one that incorporates the Christian association of Jews with the money-changers of the Second Temple into Jews' role in the marketplaces of Eastern Europe. In likening trade to an old order awaiting reform, Babel, like his coeval Peretz Markish, cast his lots with the Romantic anti-capitalists. The proximity of the world of religion and the world of economics in Babel's Russian-language stories is complicated by antisemitic polemics, however, in which the "worldly Jew" was accused of replacing religion with trade.⁶³

This stereotype was widespread in Eastern Europe. Anti-Jewish articles, advertisements, and even poems appeared regularly in Russian journals, particularly after the failed 1905 revolution. Most of these used crimes of trade as the primary explanation for antisemitism, and many like the following 1907 piece equated trade directly with Judaism,

Faster, bolder, Chosen People,
Look in the pockets of the Goys!
O, predator, vengeful and insidious,
It's lying there, so finders-keepers.
Open a tavern and loan bureau,
And join the parliament, the bank management,
Cast that fishing line everywhere,
Don't forget your ideal!

*Skorei, smelei, Narod izbrannyi,
V karmany Goev zaglianii!
O, khishchnik, zlobnyi i kovarnyi,
Lezhit chto plokh-to voz'mi.
Kabak otkroi i kassu sudy,
I v Dume, v bankakh zasedai,
Zakin' vezde svoi ty udy,
Svoi ideal ne zabyvai!*⁶⁴

Antisemitic poems like this inspired hatred of Jews based on the myth that Jewish “ideals” were completely intertwined with making a profit. Marketplace antagonism was connected with paranoia that Jews controlled money on all levels, from the tavern to the parliament.

Mikhail Bulgakov incorporates the evolution from a crowded public gathering toward anti-Jewish violence into the climactic scene in *The White Guard* (*Belaia Gvardia*).

“There’s going to be a church procession [*krestnyi khod*]. Hurry, Mitka.”
“Calm down! Where are you going? Give the priests some room.”
“They have a path.”
“Christians [*Pravoslavnye*]!! You’re trampling the child . . .”
“I don’t understand what’s going on . . .”
“*If you don’t understand, then go home, you’re not doing anything here . . .*”
“Someone’s got into my purse!!!”
“Pardon me, but they’re a bunch of Socialists after all. What did I tell you?
What have the priests got to do with it?”

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“Well excuse me!”

“Give the priests a blue note [*sinenkaia*] and they’ll say mass for the devil.”⁶⁵

“We should go to the bazaar and beat some folks in the Jewish market stands [*po zhidovskim lavkam*].”⁶⁶

This scene, which takes place in Kiev outside the St. Sophia church, captures the linguistic, material, religious, and cultural upheaval of the Civil War years. Having exited the church for a procession, the crowd struggles to ascertain who is in control, what language to speak, and which flag to raise.

During the Civil War, as in the volatile 1880s, violence against Jews was often the natural impulse of an angry crowd. The general deficit of products, combined with the persistent notion that Jews were marketplace experts, further fueled this kind of mass unrest. Of the years 1917 to 1922 in Kherson, Viktor Shklovsky writes,

I lived on apricots and milk. Then there was trouble in the bazaar. Why are the Jews buying pork fat [*svinoe salo*]? They aren’t allowed, according to their laws, to buy pork fat. There isn’t enough for the Russians, and this is the Jewish religion. Why are they desecrating their own religion?⁶⁷

Rather than dispel the notion that Jews were active in the local and global marketplaces, Babel attempts to complete the picture of rural commerce, in which Jews are not the only victims of hunger but are certainly not survivors.

The degeneracy of the old world order in *Sunset* is linked in several ways to the *Red Cavalry* cycle, most notably to the death of a religious dynasty that we witness in “The Rebbe,” an episode where Liutov beholds the irreconcilable abyss separating Jewish fathers from their sons.⁶⁸ The old market vendor Gedali has led Liutov to the table of Rebbe Motale, the last rebbe of the Hasidic dynasty of Chernobyl.⁶⁹ In a brief interview, the rebbe asks Liutov his origin and occupation:

“From where does a Jew come?” he asked and raised his eyelids.

“From Odessa,” I answered.

“A holy city,” said the rabbi, “The star of our exile, the reluctant well of our afflictions! . . . How does a Jew make a living?”

“I am putting the adventures of Hershele Ostropoler into verse.”

“A great work,” whispered the rebbe and closed his eyelids. “The jackal moans when he is hungry and every fool has enough foolishness for despondency, and only the sage shreds the veil of existence with laughter . . . What did a Jew study?”

“Bible.”⁷⁰

“What does a Jew seek?”

“Merriment.”⁷¹

The Jewish sage appears at a critical point in Liutov’s part-mock, part-earnest personal odyssey, and he simultaneously gives Liutov his blessing and betrays his own powerlessness. The form this Russian conversation takes (From where does a Jew come? How does a Jew make a living? [*Otkuda priekhal evrei?* . . . *Chem zanimaetsia evrei?*]) calques the most common way to greet a stranger in Yiddish: *Fun vanen kumt a Yid?* Liutov knows how to answer these questions, and, judging from the Russian syntax, is answering in Yiddish. That the rebbe would accept Odessa as a town embodying all of the afflictions of exile attests to the role Odessa played in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewish imagination.⁷² Known for its secularism, its commercialism, and its prostitution, Odessa was summed up in Jewish folklore with Yiddish sayings such as “Seven versts around Odessa burn the fires of hell.” To the Chernobyl Hasidim, Odessa may represent vice, but it is also a vision of affluence and stability that stands in enviable contrast to the end that appears imminent in their own war-torn Zhitomir.

At the rabbi’s table Liutov briefly assumes the place of a Jew who has studied Torah, and who is fulfilling the seemingly ridiculous task of finding poetry in the comic Yiddish folk character Hershele.⁷³ What is actually taking place is the corollary to this task: Liutov is finding a narrative, and an occasionally comic narrative at that, in one of the most somber moments in Jewish history—the death of an entire dynasty and its people. For his efforts Liutov secures the rebbe’s blessing (“only the sage shreds the veil of existence with laughter”). The Jews at the table, no less literate for being doomed along with their world, laugh at Liutov and envy him. As one of the Hasidim, the cleverly oblique Mordkhe, seats Liutov, he alludes to the conspicuous absence of abundance. “Sit down at the table, young man, and drink the wine you won’t be given [*vino, kotorogo vam ne dadut*].”⁷⁴ The invitation to drink nonexistent wine is a challenge to Liutov to resurrect a dying world through his fiction.

Babel, like Pan Apolek, offers an image of Jews from an ancient time with his description of the broad-shouldered Hasidim, “who look like fishermen and apostles [*pokhozhie na rybakov i na apostolov*].” They stand in stark opposition to the rebbe’s “accursed [*prokliatyi*] son,” Ilia, who smokes “one cigarette after another between the silence and the prayers [*odnu papiroso za drugoi sredi molchaniia i molitvy*],” his cigarette not only a signal of a renegade generation, but a blatant desecration of the Sabbath.⁷⁵ However, Mordkhe, who follows Liutov on his way out, performs his own less overt desecration of the holy Sabbath by cryptically asking for money: “If there

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were no one in the world except for evil rich men and destitute tramps, how would holy men live? [*Esli by na svete ne bylo nikogo, krome zlykh bogachei i nishchikh brodiag, kak zhili by togda sviatye liudi?*]”⁷⁶ With this riddle, Mordkhe steps into the role of author/vendor, hinting that Liutov, a secular Jew from the unholy but affluent city of Odessa, has gained something—at the very least, the story “The Rebbe” itself—from the dwindling congregation. The image of Mordkhe handling money, which is strictly forbidden on the Sabbath, in the rebbe’s house suggests that at the dusk of Hasidism in Ukraine the market has penetrated the holiest of realms. Whereas for Benya Krik in Odessa the conflation of prayer and commerce is standard fare, in the court of the Chernobyl Hasidim it signals an end to both.

Liutov, bred in the cosmopolitan city of Odessa, is not bound to a Jewish legacy, but in the Ukrainian-Polish borderlands he finds Jews with little choice about their affiliation. At the end of the *Red Cavalry* cycle, Liutov describes how, while scattering Trotsky leaflets, he recognizes Ilia, the rebbe’s renegade son, who had “lost his trousers, his back snapped in two by the weight of this soldier’s rucksack [*poteriavshego shtany, perelomannogo nadvoe soldatskoi kotomkoi*].”⁷⁷ A sequel to the evening spent at the rebbe’s table, this story narrates the death of Ilia, who has carried with him a seemingly incompatible load, including the mandates of the political agitator, the mementos of a Jewish poet, the portraits of Lenin and Maimonides, a book of the resolutions of the Sixth Party Congress (marked with a lock of woman’s hair), the Song of Songs, and a revolver. The young man had carried this combination of a new order and an old order with him when his number came up, and he was sent to Kovel, where he “took over a mixed regiment” in a fight against the kulaks. Ilia, “who died, a last prince, amid poems, phylacteries, and foot bindings [*kotoryi umer, poslednyi prints, sredi stikhov, filakterii i portianok*],” is unable to completely tear himself away from his past but too weak to bear both the past and the future at once.⁷⁸ Lacking either the broad shoulders of the rebbe’s Hasidim or the world wisdom of Liutov, the rebbe’s son is unequipped to withstand the intersection of history and modernity.

Ilia is, quite literally, split in half under the weight of competing commodities—of those remnants of Jewish history (phylacteries), and of a revolutionary future (the portrait of Lenin). The literary scholar Simon Markish (the eldest son of Peretz Markish) has suggested that Babel bore a similar burden to his character Ilia:

The solitude and despair of the intellectual in the Revolution, a frequent literary conflict of the 1920s, are multiplied by the solitude of the Jew, especially of a particular sort of Jew split in half [*raskolotogo popolam*] in his relationship to Jewishness as the intellectual is split in half in his relationship to the Revolution.⁷⁹

Liutov and Ilia embody two very different Russian Jewish types at the dawn of the Soviet era. Like the narrator in “The Story of My Dovecote,” Liutov is a survivor, a trickster who manages to escape the death that befalls Ilia. The modern Odessa Jew (be it Liutov or Babel) can balance the lingering coexistence of multiple gods. Among these is the God of Jewish tradition, the Christian understanding of redemption through art, and the revolutionary god of the nascent world. Babel succeeds in assimilating competing versions of history. This cultural and historical flexibility is nowhere more apparent than when the narrator departs from descriptions of Jewish history to speak on behalf of Ukrainian history. Liutov’s odyssey through the war-torn commercial landscape reveals painful, overlapping historical associations with the region.

LIUTOV’S UKRAINIAN VOICE

Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi’s 1648 Cossack uprising spanned much of the same territory Budenny’s unit covered in the Polish campaign. In *Red Cavalry*, the event is recalled alternately through Jewish and Cossack national pride. At the cemetery in the town of Kozin the protagonist pauses before the vault of Rebbe Azriil, “killed by Bogdan Khmel’nytskyi’s Cossacks.”⁸⁰ In Berestechko, a town where Khmel’nytskyi met one of his few defeats:

We rode past the Cossack burial mounds and the dakhma [*vyshku*] of Bohdan Khmel’nyts’ky. From behind a gravestone crept an old man with a bandura, and with a child’s voice he sang us a song about the great deeds of the Cossacks. We listened to the song in silence, then unfurled our banners and to the sounds of a roaring march tore into Berestechko.⁸¹

By juxtaposing the Khmel’nyts’kyi of the Cossacks with that of the Jews, Babel places incompatible memories side by side, casting doubt as to how easily the nascent government might unite such disparate perspectives. He writes in his journal on August 10, 1920, “How is this different from the times of Bohdan Khmel’nyts’ky?”⁸² However, Babel takes care to balance his historical perspective in his published short stories. In “Berestechko” we find:

The seedlings that had survived for three centuries still sprouted in Volhynia’s warm rot of ages past [*teploi gnil’iu stariny*]. Jews baited and bound the Russian peasant to the Polish Lord, and the Czech settler to the Lodz factory. These were smugglers, the best in the borderlands [*luchshie na granitse*], and they were almost always soldiers of the faith.⁸³

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This caricatured combination of Jewish usury and religious Judaism might suggest that Babel is burying his own historical memory of the Khmel'nyts'kyi episode, instead viewing the Cossack hetman, even in his massacre of Jews and Poles, as an agent of history leading to a greater good. Babel's critique of Jewish economic practices in his published stories often replaces mournful comments expressed in his diary. However, if in Babel's retelling of history Jews are sometimes the agents of oppression, they are at least as often the victims of the same antagonistic relationship between the groups coexisting in the Pale of Settlement. In "Tachanka Theory" we find a more sympathetic description of Jews' commercial relationship to Ukrainians and Poles:

The movements of the Galician and the Volhynian Jew are unrestrained, jerky, insulting to taste, but the strength of their sorrow is filled with a dusky grandeur, and their secret disdain for the lords is boundless. Looking at them, I understood the burning history of this region [*zhguchuiu istoriu etoi okrainy*], the tales of Talmudists who supported themselves by leasing taverns, of rabbis who made their living as usurers, of girls raped by Polish soldiers and for the sake of whom Polish magnates shot themselves.⁸⁴

By calling attention to the historical horrors that multiple groups in the region suffered, Babel reinforces his model: the commercial relations in the Ukrainian borderlands represent an old order, which a new one must replace.

As he attempts to balance Jewish and Ukrainian narratives, Liutov cloaks himself in alternating historical memories. Liutov does not always admit to having Jewish origins. Some observant Jews guess that he is Jewish, but recognize that he is an outsider. Different characters address Liutov in different ways, often absorbing him into their own language and cultural code. Pan Apolek calls him "Pan Pisar," which, as Elif Batuman has observed, is usually translated "Mr. Clerk" based on the Russian, but might be better rendered "Mr. Writer," given the proximity of *pisar* and *pisarz* in Apolek's native Polish. "By showing us a *pisarz* and labeling him *pisar'*, Babel suggests a formal affinity between literary composition and bookkeeping."⁸⁵ There is, however, an additional Ukrainian meaning of the word "*pysar*," of which Babel would have been well aware: a Cossack "*pysar'*" was a "secretary general" or chancellor. Khmel'nyts'kyi was, himself, a *pysar*. Pan Apolek, therefore, is not only referring to Liutov as a writer and bookkeeper, but as a warrior capable of wreaking havoc on the Polish cities in the Ukrainian territories. Few writers would have Babel's sense of irony and respect for the unexpected linguistic coincidences that could unite the Russian Jewish intellectual, Polish artist, and Ukrainian Cossack hero.

Throughout the *Red Cavalry* cycle, Liutov's identity is recategorized depending on who his interlocutors are. Later redactions of the cycle pulled

Jews and Ukrainians in Russia's Literary Borderlands



Ilia Repin, *The Zaporozhian Cossacks Write to the Turkish Sultan (Zaporozhtsy pishut pis'mo turetskomu sultanu)*, 1891, oil on canvas, 137 x 234 cm.

Courtesy of the State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg

Babel further from an identification with his Jewish characters, and closer to his Ukrainian characters. In the 1932 edition of the cycle the new story “Argamak” replaces “The Rabbi’s Son” as the book’s conclusion. “Argamak” is the story of a horse that Liutov cannot handle, and of the Cossacks whose friendship he fails to win. Liutov eventually trades in the difficult horse, transfers to a new unit, and achieves relative peace: “My dream was fulfilled. The Cossacks stopped following me and my horse with their eyes.”⁸⁶ Freidin reads this as an assimilation narrative. “The author, it appears, was trading the Pegasus of his *Red Cavalry* inspiration for a tame mount—all for the sake of what sociologists call passing!”⁸⁷ We might also read this addition to the cycle as Babel’s effort to mythologize the powerful Cossacks at a time when the forced collectivization of 1929–30 was causing widespread famine in the Ukrainian territories.

VELIKAIA STARITSA

In 1930 and 1931 Babel made several trips to the Borispil region outside Kiev, where he witnessed the process of enforced agricultural collectivization. Only one of the stories that resulted from Babel’s trips was published during his lifetime. “Gapa Guzhva” appeared in *Novyi mir* in 1931, and was dated “Spring, 1930.” It included the note, “The first chapter from the book

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*Velikaia Krinitsa.*⁸⁸ A second story, “Kolyvushka,” is also dated “Spring, 1930,” and was found among Babel’s papers and published posthumously.⁸⁹ Babel’s projected novel was to be set in the town of Velikaia Staritsa (Babel renames the town “Velikaia Krinitsa”), a large village located about 50 kilometers east of Kiev, 30 kilometers north of Voron’kiv, where Sholem Aleichem was born, and 200 kilometers west of Sorochintsy, Gogol’s birthplace. In a letter of February 11, 1931, Babel wrote to his sister, “I want to spend more time in the unforgettable Velikaia Staritsa, which has remained one of the sharpest memories of my life.”⁹⁰ If Babel’s *Red Cavalry* borrows Gogolian motifs, his collectivization stories, geographically placed in the heart of the Ukrainian literary commercial landscape, pick up where Gogol left off. Whereas Gogol traveled to St. Petersburg in 1829 to display the rural Ukrainian fair, Babel traveled back to the same countryside in 1929 to watch the Soviet Union impose a new order on the commercial landscape.

As if to draw attention to his extension of Gogol’s work, Babel opens “Gapa Guzhva” with a scene that very much resembles the carnivalesque wedding that concludes “The Sorochintsy Fair.” Babel begins “Gapa Guzhva” with not one wedding, but six: “At Shrovetide in the year 1930 in Velikaia Krinitsa six weddings were held [*sygrali shest’ svadeb*].”⁹¹ Babel takes pains in his opening paragraphs to ensure that as many rules are broken as possible. Although fairs were common during Shrovetide, the very idea of holding a wedding during this period is, Carol Avins has pointed out, forbidden by the Orthodox Christian calendar.⁹² Babel, through these Shrovetide weddings, depicts a community that is rebellious to the point of barbarism (“Old traditions were reborn”) and elaborates by describing a father-in-law who demands his right to sleep with the bride. Of the six nuptial sheets hung out for the public to see, “only two were stained with virginal blood.”⁹³

Gapa Guzhva, the title character and the village whore, triumphs during the festivities. She jumps atop the roof to capture one of the two soiled wedding sheets and waves it for the crowd to see, while gulping down vodka. “Gapa tipped the bottle into her mouth; with her free hand she waved the sheet. Below the crowd roared and danced [*vnizu gremela i pliasala tolpa*].”⁹⁴ She rides off on her horse to replenish the wine supply when it runs low. Dancing with her lover, the married Hrishka Savchenko, she “bubbled over like they do in the cities [*razletalas’ po-gorodskomu*].”⁹⁵ When, on the third day of the celebration, the weddings descend into destruction and overturn, Gapa is the last to remain dancing in an empty shed.

She whirled around, her hair loose, with an oar in her hands [*s bagrom vrukakh*]. This cudgel of hers, covered in tar, pounded against the walls. The blows shook the structure and left sticky black wounds on the walls.

“We are deadly [*my smertel’nye*],” whispered Gapa, brandishing the oar.⁹⁶

Gapa's unchained sexuality, physical strength, and overflowing abundance (she later eats from a package of sunflower seeds stored in her cleavage) personifies the products, bustle, and even the danger of the commercial landscape. The town of Velikaia Krinitza is enacting a scene reminiscent of the end of days, and Gapa the prostitute is the author/vendor who controls the scene.

These weddings establish an atmosphere of exaggerated carnival that shares almost all of the elements of unofficial culture that Bakhtin recognizes in Rabelais's marketplace: "The marketplace was the center of all that is unofficial; it enjoyed a certain extraterritoriality in a world of official order and official ideology, it always remained 'with the people.'"⁹⁷ The debauchery at the wedding celebrations flies in the face of officialdom, which appears not in the form of a church authority, but in Ivashko, the representative of the Regional Commission for Collectivization.⁹⁸ Although Gapa invites Ivashko to share the traditional Ukrainian wedding loaf (*karavai*), he refuses to take part. "It wouldn't be appropriate [*netaktichno*] to break the *karavai* with you." He continues, "Are you really human beings [*razve zhe vy liudi?*]? . . . You bark like dogs, I've lost fifteen kilograms because of you . . ."⁹⁹ (Ironically, Ivashko, who has been unsuccessful at convincing the town to collectivize, foreshadows with his complaint of weight loss the starvation that, in actuality, soon set in with collectivization.)¹⁰⁰ Moreover, his comparison of the townspeople to dogs is in keeping with comparisons of characters to animals throughout the story. Gapa derogatorily compares her daughters to camels, and wonders "how I got them [*otkuda oni ko mne?*]."¹⁰¹ The short-legged Trofim has a moustache that "rises like a walrus'" (*podnialis'*, *kak u morzha*).¹⁰² The outsiders who have come to collectivize the countryside and Gapa, the most powerful resident of Velikaia Krinitza, view the villagers as animals, in need, perhaps, of taming. Even Ivashko's eyes have "the pupils of a sick cat [*zrachki bol'noi koshki*]," which might explain his inability to control the villagers, whom he takes for dogs.¹⁰³

The breaking of rules and the resistance to government-imposed order suggests an apocalypse; a pilgrim, who is staying in Gapa's home, confirms this by prophesying two imminent arrivals. The first arrival is that of forty Greek priests, dispatched by the patriarch of Antioch "to curse the churches from which the government has removed the bells [*dzvony*] . . . The Greek priests have already been through Kholodnyi Iar, people saw them in Ostrogradskii, by Forgiveness Sunday they will arrive in your Velikaia Krinitza."¹⁰⁴ The second arrival is that of the judge from Voron'kiv, who "in a single day transformed the Voron'kiv countryside into a collective farm [*v odnoi sutki proizvel v Voron'kove kolgosp*]."¹⁰⁵ When the judge from Voron'kiv does arrive, the soothsaying pilgrim is arrested for "spreading propaganda about the end of the world [*agitatsiiu razvodila pro konets sveta*]."¹⁰⁶

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The judge from Voron'kiv, however, does not appear to be evil, but is a figure of sanity and competence. Rather than giving speeches and holding meetings, he immediately “ordered up a list of debtors, former merchants, lists of their property, crops, and gardens.”¹⁰⁷ He sits late into the night reviewing the instructions of the District Committee (*Raikom*) published in *Pravda* and the summary of the People's Commissariat for Agriculture (*Narkomzem*).¹⁰⁸ Evdokim, the head of the village council, introduces Gapa to the judge by noting, “She was the first to enroll in the kolkhoz . . . but then the good people had a talk with her and she unenrolled.”¹⁰⁹ Gapa, sizing up the judge in her own manner, adds, “they say that in the kolkhoz everyone will have to sleep under the same blanket . . . and I am an opponent of sleeping together [*hurтом спат'*], we like to sleep in pairs, and, God damn it, we like our vodka [*horylku*].”¹¹⁰ If Gapa's words to the judge are a sexual advance, then his response might be read as acknowledgment of a challenger, if not acceptance of a proposition: “The judge raised his bloodshot eyes and nodded at her.”¹¹¹ When she enters his room late that night, however, wrapped in a shawl, she is the one who is transformed by the chaste encounter:

“Judge,” said Gapa, “what will become of the whores?” Osmolovskii raised his face, which shone with the slavish candlelight [*litso, obtianutoe riabovatym ognem*].

“They will disappear.”

“Will the whores be able to make a living or not?”

“They will,” said the judge, “but a different one, a better one.”

. . . “Thank you for your word [*Spasybi na vashem slove*].”¹¹²

Carol Avins convincingly reads Gapa's visit to the judge as an ironic acknowledgment of the ritual of apologizing to a priest on Forgiveness Sunday.¹¹³ Gapa's visit can also be read as an attempt to curry favor with him, to demonstrate her prowess in the community by bringing him to her level, much as she had tried to do with Ivashko. The judge, however, is the one who brings Gapa into his collective, and in doing so he fulfills his duty: Gapa, the strongest and most unruly of the collective, has been tamed. In this exchange, the former author/vendor of the story has given up her commercial agency in exchange for the promise of something better.

The pilgrim's apocalyptic vision of collectivization is more ominous in Babel's “Kolyvushka,” in which the title character is visited by the officials representing the new kolkhoz and learns that he may lose his house. The pride of ownership with which the family has cared for the home (“Flowers in glass jars, simple cupboards, sanded benches—it all sparkled with a fastidious cleanliness [*muchitel'nuiu chistotu*]”) transforms into blind outrage.¹¹⁴

Kolyvushka brutally destroys his soon-to-be requisitioned property. To the horrified cries of his wife and mother-in-law, he slays his mare (“forgive me, little daughter,” he says to the animal before killing her),¹¹⁵ and smashes his fanning machine [*veialka*]. To the gathering neighbors, Kolyvushka cries, “I am a human being [*Ia chelovek*], . . . I am a human being, villagers . . . What, have you never seen a human being before?”¹¹⁶ Kolyvushka, by repeatedly insisting upon his humanity, struggles to resist a government that has turned the villagers into animals.

“Kolyvushka” ends with a clear vision of the apocalypse. The protagonist, who has turned his keys over to the collective farm, marches toward the village heads and party organizers with a crowd of the wretched of the earth:

A wave swelled and splashed over Velikaia Staritsa. A mass of people stretched along the broken street. The legless crawled out in front. An invisible banner flew over the crowd. Having run all the way to the village council [*Selrada*], the people followed suit and stood in formation. A circle opened from their midst, a circle of piled-up snow, an empty spot, the kind they leave open for a priest during an icon procession. In the circle stood Kolyvushka, his shirttails hanging out from under his vest, with a completely white head of hair.¹¹⁷

It is unclear whether the crippled masses that follow Kolyvushka are, like the flag overhead, invisible. They appear from nowhere and seem to disappear just as quickly. Kolyvushka, the Moses of those disenfranchised souls, will soon be driven from the town alone.

There are a few motifs that repeat themselves in both “Gapa Guzhva” and “Kolyvushka.” Both Gapa and Kolyvushka’s mares are pregnant, a detail that, like the pregnancies in “Crossing the Zbrucz” and *Maria*, signifies revolutionary expectation. The protagonists’ treatment of their horses reflects their respective willingness to accept the revolutionary event of collectivization: whereas Gapa, even before the arrival of the judge from Voron’kiv, saddles her pregnant mare and rides her to buy wine for the community weddings, Kolyvushka kills his. Another striking parallel is the repetition of the number 216. We learn in “Gapa Guzhva” that the judge from Voron’kiv has been nicknamed “two-hundred-sixteen percent.” “This was the percentage of grain he’d managed to get out of the unruly villagers of Voron’kiv.”¹¹⁸ Before the village committee approaches Kolyvushka, we learn that he has paid exactly 216 rubles in taxes. “He couldn’t manage more [*Bil’sh ne sduzhyl*]?” asks Ivashko, the regional representative for collectivization. “Apparently he couldn’t [*Vydno, chto ne sduzhyl*],” responds Evdokim, the head of the village soviet.¹¹⁹ The nervously awaited judge is the author/vendor of collectivization, and he is exacting about his price. Unlike Gapa Guzhva, who

Isaac Babel and the End of the Bazaar (1914–1929)

leads the way in giving in to the Soviet will, Kolyvushka (the representative of the wretched masses) must pay for it.

The decade between 1920 and 1930 made the Ukrainian commercial landscape a stage for a revolutionary apocalypse. In *Red Cavalry*, at a moment when the war was destroying the region and the state was actively undermining religious practice, Babel revisits this territory, squinting to view its past as a site for Cossack rebellion, Polish Catholicism, Hasidic dynasties, and as a center of commerce that connected these communities. Out of this apocalyptic scene, Babel moreover reclaims Christianity as a familiar template to depict the martyrdom of those Jews and Ukrainians who have paid the price of revolution. This formal Christian model (which bears little resemblance to the spiritual one) allows for the ultimate exchange, and Babel, the messiah of Odessa, and the author/vendor of author/vendors, masterfully oversees the exchange of an old marketplace order for a new Soviet one. In his ongoing trade of victims for victors of the revolutionary process, Babel generated two sets of characters—those who profit from the events of the war and collectivization and those who pay for them. Kolyvushka, like Gedali, is a casualty of the revolutionary process. Each, in very different ways, disappears into history along with the commercial landscape. Even in the 1930s, it was unclear precisely what would replace the tradition and trade of the Pale of Settlement. However, at a time that the Revolution was deemed the dawn of a newly enlightened era, Isaac Babel mourned the loss of what was once sacred and what once held value.

Afterword

From the Fair

ISAAC BABEL'S TRIP to Ukraine to bear witness to Stalin's 1929 collectivization took place an even century after Gogol published "The Sorochintsy Fair." Collectivization marked a definitive end to the commercial landscape as it had existed before the Revolution and, albeit in an altered form, during the New Economic Policy (1921–28). Although unofficial commerce persisted in the Soviet Union, the centralization of farms and the government-regulated sale of produce irrevocably changed the markets and fairs of Ukraine. But if the free market ceased to exist in Russia's southwestern borderlands, the literary commercial landscape, a *topos* defined by the writers in this study, remained a vital memory space for Ukrainian, Russian, and Jewish writers in the early Soviet period.

The year 1929 also saw the publication of the short-lived Soviet Ukrainian journal *The Literary Fair* (*Literaturnyi iarmarok*) in Kharkiv.¹ In the first issue, the editors explain their choice of title with a humorous meditation on the meaning of the word "fair" (*iarmarok*) in Ukrainian culture:

Of course, "*iarmarok*" comes from the German, to be precise, from Berlin's annual fair; and of course, the word "*iarmarok*" stabs our musical sensibility. But surely you've noticed that this word has undergone what we might call a brilliant metamorphosis? Didn't this occur when the word came down to us and to the Viennese? Haven't you noticed that, for us, a "*iarmarok*" is an enormous (blinding!) red splotch on a blue backdrop; that it is a variegated swarm of happy, good-hearted people; that it is, if you will—the Sorochintsy invention of our tragic countryman, Nikolai Vasilevich Gogol?²

The authors subsequently set out in search of "that building where [Hryhorii] Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko once lived."³ For the founders of *The Literary Fair*, the commercial landscape is a synaesthetic metaphor for Ukrainian literature, inherited from Gogol and Kvitka and integrated, in fragments of color and sound, into the literature of their own era. The journal represented a late contribution to avant-garde literary aesthetics, and was dissolved in

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1930 in a climate of drastically increased literary censorship.⁴ Nonetheless, writers continued to exploit the artistic possibilities of the marketplace even as trade itself took on new forms.

A decade later, in 1939, Der Nister (Pinhas Kahanovich, 1884–1950), a Soviet Yiddish writer known for incorporating mystical elements into his prose, published the first volume of his novel *The Family Mashber* (*Di Mishpokhe Mashber*).⁵ The novel is set in the author's birthplace, Berdichev, at the end of the nineteenth century.⁶ The commercial landscape appears at the opening of the novel as a centripetal force, drawing new visitors toward the market at the core of the shtetl, and pulling the reader backward to an era of market trade and the injustices that went with it:

If a stranger found himself in the town of N for the first time, he would immediately, whether intentionally or in spite of himself, go to the middle of town, pulled to the center like a magnet. This is where the noise is, the stir, this is the purpose, the heart, the pulse of the town . . . Traders come to buy goods for cash or on credit. Some are decent and honorable—others are something else altogether: their scheme is to buy on credit, then sell at a profit, then buy on credit again—then declare themselves bankrupt.⁷

In his naturalistic portrait of a merchant family brought to ruins, Der Nister presents a commercial landscape that is the site of disaster. The Soviet literary market, however, proved itself to be the actual site of disaster for Der Nister. He was arrested in 1949, at the height of the campaign against Yiddish writers and artists, and died in a labor camp in 1950.⁸

Boris Iampol'skii (1912–1972), a Russian-language Jewish writer from Bila Tserkva, Ukraine, is perhaps best known for his 1960 novel *The Arbat, an Operational Street* (*Arbat, Rezhimnaia Ulitsa*), which was not published until 1988.⁹ He achieved literary recognition, however, in 1941 with his Russian-language novel *The Fair* (*Iarmarka*).¹⁰ The protagonist is an orphan whose aunt, unable to provide for him, attempts to find him a trade. The rejection of the child by each potential employer confirms the dearth of viable options for a Jew in the pre-Soviet Ukrainian shtetl economy. One wealthy woman expresses fear that the Yiddish language, which she associates with a lower class, might be spoken in her home: “In your Jewish language you can curse, bargain, pray, beat each other over the head [*vy mozhete po-evreiskii rugat'sia, torgovat'sia, Bogu molit'sia, drug drugu golovy razbivat'*], but, really, how can you speak Yiddish in a household like this?”¹¹ Butchers who bring the boy to tears by wiping pig’s blood on his face “were surprised that my Jewish face didn’t transform into the face of a pig [*oni udivliais’, otchego moe evreiskoe litso ne stalo svinym*].”¹² After each rejection, the boy returns to the commercial landscape, which recapitulates its desperate re-

frain: “‘Buy, buy!’ shouted the fair. ‘Buy! Oy, buy! Is there still God in your soul? Why don’t you want to buy [V vashei dushe est’ eshche Bog? Pochemu vy ne khotite kupit’]?’”¹³

Like the Ukrainian editors of *The Literary Fair*, Iampol’skii readily exposes his literary debts, and most are to the Ukrainian and Jewish writers who collectively defined the commercial landscape as a genre. His 1959 novella “The Boy from Dove Street” (“Mal’chik s golubinnoi ulitsy”) pays homage to Babel’s “Story of My Dovecote.”¹⁴ One chapter of *The Fair* is devoted to the stories of the well-traveled Uri, a character who might have come directly from Sholem Aleichem’s Kasrilevke. Uri tells of meeting Rothschild in Paris, and complaining to the wealthy man of the injustice that there are so many poor Jews in the world while he, Rothschild, has so much money. Rothschild responds, “I counted how much money I have and how many Jews there are in the whole world, and I divided it up, and here is what I owe you—one groschen, so go in good health!”¹⁵ Similar episodes appear throughout Sholem Aleichem’s stories: Tevye the dairyman dreams he meets Rothschild; Kasrilevkers scheme about ways of tricking Rothschild out of his money. In Iampol’skii’s novel, characters inspired by Sholem Aleichem mingle with Gogolian types. A description of the relationship between the town drunkard Bul’ba and the Jews forms a Gogolian medley: “Passing the synagogue and seeing through the windows large white Jewish faces [*bol’shie belye litsa evreev*] moving their lips, Bul’ba would lift half his overcoat and display a pig’s ear [*podnimal polu shineli i pokazyval stinoe ukho*].”¹⁶ Not only does Iampol’skii’s Ukrainian character bear the name of Gogol’s Cossack leader (who antagonized Jewish characters), but Bul’ba’s overcoat [*shinel’*] belongs to Gogol’s Akaky Akakievich, and his prank recalls the “pigs’ snouts poking in at every window” that startle the Jew in “The Sorochinsty Fair” as he is praying “in the Jewish fashion [*po-zhidovski molit’sia bogu*].”¹⁷

The Fair closes with a distorted echo of the final scene in Gogol’s *Dead Souls, Part I*, in which, as we recall from chapter 2, a troika carries the whole of Russia into the future:

Rus’, whither are you speeding [*Rus’, kuda zhe nesesh’sia ty?*]? Answer. She won’t answer. The carriage bells ring out with a wondrous pealing; the air, torn to bits, thunders and turns into wind [*gremit i stanovitsia vetrom razvannyi v kuski vozdukh*]; everything on earth flies by and, standing aside, the other nations and states [*drugie narody i gosudarstva*] will make way for her.¹⁸

Iampol’skii sends not Russia, but his fair—a microcosm of a Jewish childhood in prerevolutionary Ukraine—away on a market cart:

From the Fair

And the crazy cart speeds on [*i nesetsia sumasshedshaia koliaska*], full of tormented eyes—a frightful prison fit for a dog, and all that can be heard along the street is a howl, and teeth grinding at prison bars, and shreds of wool are caught in the wind [*da skrezhet zubov o reshetki, da kloki shersti podkhvatyvaet veter*]. Whither are you speeding, cart [*Kuda nesesh'sia ty, koliaska*]?¹⁹

Iampol'skii's commercial landscape is kosher by early Soviet standards: it reflects a socialist ideology that links ethnic discrimination to capitalism. Viewed through a child's eye, the adult world of trade appears absurd, and vendors' fear of hiring a Jewish child appears increasingly ridiculous. Vladimir Prikhod'ko reminds us in his introduction to the 1995 edition of the novel that its first publication, in 1941, fell between the initial release of Alexandrov's 1936 film *The Circus* (*Tsirk*), in which Solomon Mikhoels sings in Yiddish to an African American baby, and the decision to cut this section from the film after Mikhoels's assassination in 1948.²⁰ In the decades that followed *The Fair*, Soviet censors often rejected artistic, literary, and cinematic portrayals of individual ethnic groups as nationalist and therefore anti-Soviet. During the 1950s, when Der Nister died in a prison camp and his best-known Yiddish literary colleagues were killed in the Lubianka prison, Iampol'skii published revolutionary stories, relegating his Ukrainian Jewish themes to the drawer. Portrayals of the commercial landscape were also limited during the Stalin era. Mikhail Bakhtin, who completed his dissertation on Rabelais and popular festival in 1940, was unable to publish his work until 1965, and his chapter comparing Gogol to Rabelais was not included in this edition.²¹ Both individual national memory and the folk culture and heterogeneity of the commercial landscape were understood as threats to official Soviet culture.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, representatives of former Soviet minorities have emphasized ethnic particularism and national solidarity over hybridity, a tendency that is, in large part, a response to the institutionalized homogeneity of Soviet culture.²² Writers from newly independent states have sought to restore a national historical narrative that had been restricted throughout the twentieth century. Ukrainian writers and scholars have worked to counter a continued attempt on the part of twenty-first century Russia to claim Ukrainian history as a subset of its own. Jewish cultural institutions have cropped up throughout the former Soviet states, encouraging Jews from within and without Eastern Europe to study what is often seen as a lost history. These developments are playing an important role in the collective reexamination of Eastern Europe's cultural heritage. At the same time, the resulting views of literary history are often dangerously linear. The cultural fluidity that made Gogol an important writer to his self-appointed

heirs across languages and ethnicities has been partially obscured by debates over whether Gogol's allegiance was to Russia or Ukraine.

This study of the literature of two significant groups—Ukrainians and Jews—living in the Russian Empire's vast southwestern borderlands was inspired by a literary topos that connected them. The commercial landscape was a microcosm of the multiethnic Ukrainian territories during the century between the expansion of the Pale of Settlement under Nicholas I and the introduction of collectivization under Stalin. The fair, a temporary space filled with livestock, grain, and transient buyers and sellers, lay at the margins of Russian culture. But the literary commercial landscape brought the margins of an empire to its center: the exchanges that emerged from the Ukrainian fair made their way to the bookshops of Petersburg, as well as those of Warsaw, Kiev, Berlin, and New York.

Abram Terts may have exaggerated when he said, “There was no prose before Gogol [*Do Gogolia prozy ne bylo*].”²³ However, with “The Sorochintsy Fair,” Gogol created a literary address out of the Ukrainian commercial landscape. Gogol’s Ukrainian and Jewish followers found in his work a model for adapting a familiar Ukrainian geography to modern literary motifs that would transcend borders and languages. Kvitka made use of the same landscape to model the relationship between artists and their critics. Sholem Aleichem accessed this literary topos during a period when Jews were moving to the center of Russia’s cultural concerns. As in Ukrainian literature, the commercial landscape in nineteenth-century Yiddish fiction increasingly addressed the same market-goers it described. By the 1880s, a decade that saw a rapid increase in antisemitism in the Tsarist Empire, markets and fairs had become places of physical insecurity for Jews. These dangers mounted during the early years of the twentieth century with the continuing revolutionary ferment. As Peretz Markish demonstrates in his long Civil War poem, *The Mound*, the market, which once epitomized life, could become a metonymy for death. Isaac Babel, like Peretz Markish, wrote in the spirit of Bolshevik anti-capitalism, creating a commercial landscape in order to mourn it. All of these writers, to varying degrees, found danger in the commercial landscape, whether it came in the form of a threat to the human soul (Gogol), unjust imperialist criticism (Kvitka), an unstable environment for a Jewish community (Sholem Aleichem), physical violence (Markish), or dying cultural and commercial traditions (Babel). And yet all of them, through the commercial landscape, were writing within a literary tradition that could accommodate a polyphony of voices coming from overlapping languages and cultures.

Literary genealogies are built not only on commonalities and acknowledged influences, but also on intersections, accidents, and conflict. The Ukrainian and Jewish writers considered here, beyond defining an important

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literary topos, offer us an alternative definition for a cohesive literary culture. Despite differences in their ideologies, Gogol, Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, Sholem Aleichem, Markish, and Babel, through their thematic and spatial convergence, compel us to question the notion that a unified literary culture must respect neat ethnic and linguistic borders. The century that spanned the careers of these writers saw the rise and fall of the commercial landscape as a microcosm of Russia's multiethnic Ukrainian territories. Gogol was not, of course, the first to set a story at a Ukrainian fair; nor was Babel the last. The commercial landscape, then, points to an approach to East European literary history: the relationship between the writers discussed in this book approximates a fair in its own right. And as Vasilii Hohol'-Ianovskii wrote (unaware that his words would be carried to a new market by his son Nikolai), "Even with thirty rubles in your pocket, you couldn't buy up the whole fair."²⁴

Notes

CHAPTER ONE

1. A series of frescos in the Trinity (Troitska) church, including the Expulsion, was painted in the 1730s and '40s by a group of artists from the Kiev monastery's icon school, probably working under the masters I. Kodel'skii and A. Galik. Boris Vladimirovich Veimarn and Akademiiia khudozhestv SSSR, *Istoriia iskusstva narodov SSSR*, 9 vols. (Moscow: Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvom, 1967) 4: 200–202. See also F. S. Umantsev, *Troitska nadbramma tserkvi* (Kiev: Mysletstvo, 1970). For color reproductions of this fresco, see Alina Kondratiuk, Serhii Krolevets', and Valentyna Kolpakova, *Monumental'nyi zhivopys Troits'koi nadbramnoi tserkvi Kyevo-Pechers'koi lavry* (Kiev: Komp'iuterno-vydavnychiy informatsiyny tsentr, 2005), 150–52.

2. The term *Velikorossiia*, which stands in opposition to *Malorossiia*, should not necessarily be read to mean “great Russia,” as it often is, but rather “greater Russia,” which designates a wider, surrounding region. I am grateful to George Grabowicz for sharing this linguistic observation with me.

3. Israel Bartal points to two key issues that affected Jewish integration into the Tsarist Empire: the system of Jewish self-governance and the Jews' economic role as leaseholders within a Polish feudal system. “The various czars—beginning with Catherine II, who ruled at the time of the partitions, and ending with Nicholas I, who ruled until the second half of the nineteenth century—dealt with these two issues through legislation intended to transfer the large Jewish minority from the frameworks of the Polish republic of nobles to those of the Russian absolutist state.” Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772–1881*, trans. Chaya Naor (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 59.

4. Murray Jay Rosman, *The Lords' Jews* (Harvard University Press for the Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University and the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1990), 212.

5. Orest Subtelny, *Russocentrism, Regionalism, and the Political Culture of Ukraine* (Washington, D.C., and College Park: University of Maryland at College Park, 1994), 1.

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6. The years 1828–31 saw territorial treaties with Persia (1828) and the Ottoman Empire (1829). For a detailed analysis of Russia's territorial policy, see John Le Donne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire: 1650–1831* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 202.

7. This intellectual suppression of the Ukrainian community fueled tension among Russia's subcultures, paradoxically adding motivation to the nascent Ukrainian national movement across the western border in Habsburg Galicia.

8. Mikhail Krutikov reminds us that “Uvarov’s reform created a unique situation in which many *maskilim* received direct support from the Russian state, even though the government did not endorse the ideology of the Haskalah completely.” Mikhail Krutikov, *Yiddish Fiction and the Crisis of Modernity, 1905–1914* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 69.

9. As Olga Litvak has noted, “The meeting of the minds between Nicholaevan state officials and the founders of the Russian-Jewish Enlightenment has always been something of an embarrassment to Jewish historians, especially given the grim realities of child recruitment and rampant corruption.” Olga Litvak, *Conscription and the Search for Modern Russian Jewry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 6–12. On measures included in the government’s Enlightenment policies, see *ibid*. Kenneth Moss has shown that the measures to limit printing were short-lived and geographically scattered, so as to have made little actual impact on readers. See Kenneth B. Moss, “Printing and Publishing: Printing and Publishing After 1800,” in *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, accessed November 15, 2010, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Printing_and_Publishing/Printing_and_Publishing_after_1800.

10. Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *Jews in the Russian Army, 1827–1917* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 59.

11. Litvak, *Conscription and the Search for Modern Russian Jewry*, 7.

12. On the relationship of the late tsarist governments to Jewish cultural integration, see Hans Rogger, “Russian Ministers and the Jewish Question, 1881–1917,” in *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 56–112.

13. For a discussion of the pogroms of 1881 to 1882, and the effect they had on Jewish politics, see Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 49–132.

14. This period did see reforms at the level of peasant land tenure. For a good discussion of the Stolypin agrarian reforms, see Olga Crisp, “Peasant Land Tenure and Civil Rights Implications before 1906” in *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, ed. Olga Crisp and Linda Harriet Edmondson (Gloucestershire, Eng.: Clarendon, 1989), 33–64.

15. Slezkine is referring here to the 1934 Congress of Soviet Writers. Yuri

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Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994): 446.

16. With collectivization came much violence and resistance. The factors that led to the 1932–33 famine in Ukraine deserve further research. For a preliminary discussion of the collectivization process and its toll on the Ukrainian countryside, see Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

17. Valerii Kalugin, *Rynki Peterburga* (St. Petersburg: Kul’t Inform, 2000), 123.

18. This language shift occurred sometime before the Tatar-Mongols were expelled from Kievan Rus’ in 1480. For more on the etymology of this word, see A. P. Vlasto, *A Linguistic History of Russia to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986).

19. These distinctions between types of markets are not unlike the definitions Joan M. Frayn provides for the different kinds of marketplaces existing in ancient Rome. These include, namely, the *foro*, at which exchange took place (the *rynek*, in Russian); the *nundina*, which was, like a *iarmarka*, a “market-day” rather than a place where a market was held; the *macella*, which were temporary stands presumably similar to *lavki*; the *macellum*, a meat market or butcher; and a *taberna*, which was a more permanent stall or shop, “for in the ancient world we are not dealing with spacious shop premises capable of welcoming all comers into their inner recesses.” Joan Frayn, *Markets and Fairs in Roman Italy: Their Social and Economic Importance from the Second Century B.C. to the Third Century A.D.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 3–6.

20. In some documents from the nineteenth century, the second *r* in *iarmarka* becomes an *n*, yielding “*iarmonka*.”

21. Michael Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews: The Transformation of Jewish Society in Russia, 1825–1855* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1983), 174–75.

22. For a good overview of the economic conditions of Jews in late-nineteenth-century Eastern Europe, see Eli Lederhendler, *Jewish Immigrants and American Capitalism, 1880–1920: From Caste to Class* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1–29. For discussions of serfdom, including the role of state peasants in the Russian economy, see Olga Crisp, *Studies in the Russian Economy Before 1914* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 55–95.

23. As historian Steven Zipperstein writes, “In nineteenth-century Russia it came to be assumed that to the extent to which a *mestechko* was distinct from a rural settlement it was in the presence of Jews.” John Klier agrees with this assessment in “What Exactly Was a Shtetl?” in *The Shtetl Image and Reality: Papers of the Second Mendel Friedman International Conference on Yiddish*, ed. Gennady Estraikh and Mikhail Krutikov (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), 27; Ste-

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ven J. Zipperstein, “The Shtetl Revisited,” in *Shtetl Life*, ed. Florence B. Helzel (Berkeley: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1993), 18.

24. “Petition to the minister of internal affairs from Sarazhinka, Balta District, Podol Province, 28 April, 1886–21 August 1887,” 1886, 20, f. 1187, op. 7, RGA.

25. Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern offers the following statistics for the late nineteenth century: “Jews in general constituted 4 percent of the total population in the Russian Empire, 10 percent in the southwestern region, 14 percent in right-bank Ukraine, 32 percent in Ukrainian cities, and 53 percent of the Ukrainian shtetl population. At the same time, some 80 percent of seventeen million Ukrainians resided mostly in rural areas.” Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Anti-Imperial Choice: The Making of the Ukrainian Jew* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009), 18.

26. Viktor Lukin, Alla Sokolova, and V. N. Khaimovich, *100 evreiskikh mestechek Ukrayny: Istoricheskii putesvoditel* (St. Petersburg: Ezro, 1997), 269–70.

27. Ibid., 267–70.

28. Yekhezkel Kotik, *Journey to a Nineteenth-Century Shtetl: The Memoirs of Yekhezkel Kotik*, trans. David Assaf (Detroit: Wayne State University Press in cooperation with the Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, 2002), 111.

29. Memo to the governor-general of the Kiev, Podolia, Volhynia, Chernihiv, and Poltava provinces, July 29, 1883, 5, f. 442, op. 540, d. 155, TsDIAK.

30. For a further discussion of the conflict between church services and market days, see ch. 4 and my article, Amelia Glaser, “Sunday Morning in Balta,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 37, no. 3 (December 1, 2007): 299–317.

31. Petrovsky Shtern notes, “Although the word *promyshlennost* signified ‘industry’ in nineteenth-century Russia, for Nicholas it suggested a middleman’s manipulative way of earning money.” Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *Jews in the Russian Army, 1827–1917* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 33–34; Nicholas I, “Ezhenedel’nye otchety velikogo kniazia Nikolaia Pavlovicha o svoikh zaniatiakh,” 1810, 38, f. 726 t 8, GARF.

32. Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews*, 174.

33. The article expresses concern about the perceived lack of a distinction between men and women among Jewish vendors. “In this regard, the women in no way yield to the men: they buy and sell on their own, sit in the markets and drag themselves through the streets and homes with various goods or supplies.” Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews*, 174. Stanislawski cites *Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del*, 1844, 171–72.

34. Ivan Aksakov, *Izsledovanie o torgovle na ukrainskikh iarmarkakh* (St. Petersburg: V Tipografii imperatorskago akademii nauk, 1858), 36. Aksakov, later in life, would become an active member of the Russian Orthodox

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Church and, during the same period, a vocal antisemite. William L. Blackwell notes that “Aksakov’s observations and statistics pertain to the 1850s.” Blackwell, *The Beginnings of Russian Industrialization, 1800–1860* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968) I: 75

35. Nikolai Zakrevskii also published a report of the Ukrainian marketplace, focusing on the markets of Kiev. Nikolai Zakrevskii, *Opisanie Kieva* (Moscow: V. Grachev, 1868), 1:145; originally published as *Letopis i opisanie goroda Kieva* (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1858).

36. Aksakov, *Izsledovanie o torgovle na ukrainskikh iarmarkakh*, 327–28. The Il’inskii fair (Il’inskaia iarmarka) was held in the summer in the Poltava region.

37. Of Aksakov’s account Stanislawski writes, “What seemed exotic and rather quaint to a nostalgic noble like Aksakov was the beginning of a crisis of major proportions in Russian-Jewry: the emergence of an increasingly pauperized *lumpenproletariat*, unable to find work in commerce, banned from their traditional occupations in the countryside, gathering in the cities and town of the Pale desperately chasing after every kopek.” Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews*, 176.

38. “Sennovskie Evrei,” *Vedomosti Sankt-Peterburgskoi gorodskoi politsii*, October 7, 1848.

39. Ibid.

40. The “gleaming cover thrown over the abyss” (*blistatel’nyi pokrov, nakinutyi nad bezdnoi*) conjures the Russian poet Fiodor Tiutchev (1808–1873), an observation that Efraim Sicher has noted: “Pushkin’s ‘Feast During the Plague’ offers a model aesthetic conscience for dealing with a new winter of Russian history, and Kautsky and Tiutchev throw a cover over the ‘abyss.’” Osip Mandelstam, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Terra, 1991), 2:55; Efraim Sicher, *Jews in Russian Literature After the October Revolution: Writers and Artists Between Hope and Apostasy* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 115.

41. Vissarion Belinsky, *Sobranie sochinenii*, ed. Fedor Mikhailovich Golovenchenko (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1948), 2:571.

42. George S. Luckyj, *Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 9.

43. The fact that Gogol did not write in Ukrainian has seldom excluded him from the Ukrainian canon. Arthur Coleman began his brief 1936 survey of Ukrainian literature, which covers literature from Kievan Rus’ to the twentieth century, with Gogol’s *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*. Myroslav Shkandrij, who has discussed Gogol’s relationship to Ukraine in depth, attributes the first reference to Gogol’s Ukrainian/Russian dual identity to Iosif Mandelshtam. Arthur Coleman, *Brief Survey of Ukrainian Literature* (New York: Ukrainian University Society, 1936), 7; Myroslav Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine: Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times* (Montreal:

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McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 115; Iosif Mandelshtam, *O kharaktere Gogolevskogo stilia* (Helsinki: Huvudstadsbladet, 1902).

44. Judith Kornblatt, in her study of Cossacks in Russian literature, titles a section dealing with Isaac Babel “Dvoedushie” (“Two-Souledness”), a term borrowed from Gogol. Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, *The Cossack Hero in Russian Literature: A Study in Cultural Mythology* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 109. For more on the concept of “dvoedushie” among Ukrainian writers, see George S. Luckyj, *Panteleimon Kulish: A Sketch of His Life and Times*, East European Monographs (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 75.

45. According to Sophia Dubnov-Erlich, it was Sholem Aleichem’s influence that compelled her father Simon Dubnow to write an article for the Russian-Jewish journal *Voskhod* “in which he showed that the everyday language of the Jewish masses had an indisputable right to become an instrument of literature because trilingualism was imposed on Jews by history.” As Dan Miron states in his study of the rise of Yiddish fiction, “During the nineteenth century . . . almost all Yiddish writers wrote Hebrew as well. Significantly, this was not the case with most Hebrew writers, who would not ‘degrade’ their pens by writing Yiddish (although it was their major, and sometimes only, spoken language).” Sophia Dubnov-Erlich, *The Life and Work of S. M. Dubnov*, ed. Judith Vowles, trans. Jeffrey Shandler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 87; Dan Miron, *A Traveler Disguised: The Rise of Modern Yiddish Fiction in the Nineteenth Century* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 9.

46. Ken Moss has suggested that the failed Revolution of 1905 may have led to an increased cultural identification with Yiddish: “One of the hallmarks of post-1905 Yiddishism evident in the trajectories of young *inteligentn* such as Shmuel Niger, Nokhem Shtif, and a good many others is the intense concern to Yiddishize not only their cultural production but also their private lives.” Moreover, Moss notes, “figures like Sholem Aleichem or Peretz felt no compulsion to Yiddishize their private lives. It bears asking whether this type of personal Yiddishism reflects the revolutionary’s distinctive will to self-transformation in accordance with ideology.” Kenneth B. Moss, “1905 as a Jewish Cultural Revolution? Revolutionary and Evolutionary Dynamics in the East European Jewish Cultural Sphere, 1900–1914,” in *The Revolution of 1905 and Russia’s Jews*, ed. Stefani Hoffman and Ezra Mendelsohn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 195, 196.

47. Gippius discusses Russian writers’ general excitement over Maksimovich’s anthology, among other Ukrainian publications, in his biography of Gogol. See Vasili Vasilevich Gippius, *Gogol*, trans. Robert A. Maguire (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989), 28; Gippius is referring to M. Maksimovich, *Ukrains’ki pisni: Fotokopija z vyd. 1827 r.* (Kiev: Vyadvnytstvo akademii nauk URSR, 1962).

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48. For a broad discussion of representations of Mazeppa in nineteenth-century literature, see Hubert Babinsky, *The Mazeppa Legend in European Romanticism* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1974).
49. Gippius, *Gogol*, 28.
50. Georgii Fedotov, *Rossiia i svoboda: Sbornik statei* (New York: Chalidze, 1981), 213; cited in Luckyj, *Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine*, 45.
51. Lauren G. Leighton, ed. *Russian Romantic Criticism* (New York: Greenwood, 1987), 44.
52. Ibid., 31; Orest Somov and Z. V. Kiriliuk, *Kupalov vecher: Izbrannye proizvedeniia* (Kiev: Dnipro, 1991), 8.
53. Gippius notes that nineteenth-century writers and composers such as Polevoi and Markevych also used Ukrainian folklore in their work. John Mersereau Jr., “Orest Somov,” in *Russian Romantic Prose*, ed. Carl R. Proffer (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Translation, 1979), 210; Gippius, *Gogol*; Nikolai Polevoi, *Istoriia russkogo naroda: Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh, shesti knigakh* (Moscow: Veche, 1997); Mykola Markevych, *Ukrainskie melodii* (Moscow: Tipografia Avgusta Semena, 1831). See also David Saunders’s discussion of Ukrainian folk songs. David Saunders, *The Ukrainian Impact on Russian Culture, 1750–1850* (Edmonton, Alberta: The Canadian Library of Ukrainian Studies), 160–65.
54. Gippius, *Gogol*, 29.
55. Viktor Vinogradov, *Gogol and the Natural School*, trans. Debra Erickson and Ray Parrott (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ardis, 1987), 71.
56. As Jeffrey Brooks has written, with the increase in secular culture in Russia throughout the nineteenth century, “pride in the glory and breadth of the Russian lands [joined] loyalty to the tsar and confession as literary markers of Russianness.” Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2003), 241.
57. George Luckyj has also written about this passage by Belinsky. Myroslav Shkandrij has addressed Belinsky’s relationship to Ukraine in detail from a post-colonial angle. Vissarion Grigorevich Belinsky, *Sochineniia V. Belinskago*, (Moscow: Tipografia Gracheva, 1875), 5:308; George Luckyj, *Between Gogol’ and Ševčenko in the Literary Ukraine, 1798–1847* (Munich: W. Fink, 1971), 53; Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine*, 116–25.
58. In using the term “subaltern” I am referring to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s analysis of Marx’s claim that “the small peasant proprietors ‘cannot represent themselves; they must be represented,’” “Can the Subaltern Speak,” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 276–77.
59. I address this practice in greater detail in chapter 3. See Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko, “Letter to Pletnev,” October 4, 1839; cited in I. E. Verbytska, *Hryhorii Fedorovych Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko: Narys zhyytia i tvorchosti* (Kharkiv:

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Kharkivs'ke oblasne vydavnytstvo, 1957), 77; I. E. Andreevskii et al., *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar*, vol. 14, F. A. Brockhaus (St. Petersburg: I.A. Efron, 1895), 881.

60. As the French scholar Bernard Lazare put it in 1894, “The antisemites of to-day conceived a desire to explain their hatred, *i. e.*, they wanted to dignify it: anti-Judaism moulted into antisemitism.” *Antisemitism: Its History and Causes* (New York: The International Library Publishing Co., 1903), 209.

61. Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770–1870* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973).

62. Russian and Ukrainian writers in the nineteenth century were less likely to wage religious attacks on Judaism than their Polish neighbors. As Elena Katz has shown in the case of Gogol, even his familiarity with Christian anti-Judaism would have excluded the kind of anti-Judaic elaboration on the Talmud which was, at the time, common in Poland but not yet in Russia. Elena M. Katz, *Neither With Them, nor Without Them* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 49–52.

63. Hebrew literature and culture were fully suppressed during the Soviet period. Kenneth Moss writes that both Yiddish and Hebrew were banned during World War I: “During the war, Russian government and military leaders in the grip of wide-eyed fantasies about Jewish collective treason had outlawed all written expression in Yiddish and Hebrew (private letters included) in an expansively defined war zone.” Kenneth B. Moss, *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 26.

64. Robert Alter, in his discussion of the Hebrew movement, views Yiddish, along with assimilation, as a local alternative to Hebrew: “There were of course broader roads than Hebrew that Jews could take into modernity, whether by ridding themselves of most of the baggage, linguistic or otherwise, of Jewish tradition, or by embracing the Yiddish vernacular as the instrument of modern identity.” Robert Alter, *The Invention of Hebrew Prose: Modern Fiction and the Language of Realism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 94. For more on the attempts to build Hebrew literature in Russia, see David Patterson, *The Hebrew Novel in Czarist Russia: A Portrait of Jewish Life in the Nineteenth Century* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998).

65. Early Yiddish literary texts include translations of the Bible and psalms, and prayer books. In the seventeenth century, folk stories began to appear in their Yiddish originals. The 1602 *Mayse-bukh*, an anthology of folk stories printed in Basel, is considered the founding text for this genre. *Eyn shoyn mayse bukh* (Basel: Konrad Valdkirkh, 1602).

66. See Dan Miron's seminal study of folklore in Yiddish fiction, in *The Image of the Shtetl and Other Studies of Modern Jewish Literary Imagination* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 49–80.

67. Gennady Estraikh, *In Harness: Yiddish Writers' Romance with Communism* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 69.

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68. Agnew discusses the difference between the marketplace as a theatrical venue during the medieval and Renaissance periods: “Where publicity had distinguished the theatricality of the medieval marketplace, privacy became its animating principle in the marketplace of the Renaissance.” Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 60.
69. Ben Jonson, Charles Harold Herford, and Evelyn Mary Spearing Simpson, *Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 6:11.
70. David Riggs, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 13.
71. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 71.
72. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 153.
73. Patricia A. Parker, *Shakespeare from the Margins* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 56–82.
74. Seth Lerer, “‘A Scaffold in the Market Place’: Bad Hamlet, Good Romans, and the Shakespearean Idiom,” *Anglia-Zeitschrift für englische Philologie* 122, no. 3 (December 11, 2007): 374.
75. Ibid., 379.
76. *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. Charles Henry Wheeler (London: W. Baynes and Son, 1825), 477.
77. Ibid., 394.
78. Parker, *Shakespeare from the Margins*, 160.
79. Greenleaf demonstrates that Pushkin borrowed this device in his *Boris Godunov*: “The Russian language becomes contaminated with dialectal forms, shading eventually into the comical and mutually incomprehensible foreign languages (Polish, French, German) of Dmitry’s motley allies.” Monika Greenleaf, *Pushkin and Romantic Fashion: Fragment, Elegy, Orient, Irony* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 189.
80. As William Mills Todd III has remarked, “Russian writers of the early nineteenth century, unlike their French or English confreres, worked with a literary language that had but recently coalesced, a relatively minuscule reading public, and a native literary tradition scarcely a century old.” William Mills Todd, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 2; Todd cites Kozhinov, who connects Pushkin’s era to the Renaissance. Vadim Kozhinov, “K sotsiologii russkoi literatury XVIII–XIX vekov (problema literaturnykh napravlenii),” in *Literatura i sotsiologija: Sbornik statei*, ed. V. I. Kantorovich and I. V. Kuz’menko (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), 167. Michal Oklot discusses Gogol’s admiration of Renaissance Neoplatonism, particularly the works of Michelangelo and Fra Angelico. Michal Oklot, *Phantoms of Matter in Gogol (and Gombrowicz)* (Champaign, Ill.: Dalkey Archive Press, 2009), 56–65.

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81. Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 129.
82. Gary Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 8.
83. These have included such varied incarnations as the sixteenth-century polemical plays of Hans Folz, composed for the northern European *Fastnachtspiel*, in which Judaism and Christianity were set at odds, the outcome inevitably favoring Christianity. For more on the *Fastnachtspiel* tradition, see James R. Erb, “Fictions, Realities, and the Fifteenth-Century Nuremberg *Fastnachtspiel*” and Guy Borgnet, “Jeu de Carnaval et Antisémitisme: Pureté Théologique et Pureté Ethnique chez Hans Folz” in *Carnival and the Carnivalesque: The Fool, the Reformer, the Wildman, and Others in Early Modern Theater* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989), 89–116, 129–46.
84. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 154.
85. Mikhail Bakhtin, “Rabelais and Gogol: Verbal Art and Popular Humor,” trans. Michael O’Toole, *Australian Journal of Cultural Studies*, no. 3 (1985): 29; Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, “Rable i Gogol”, in *Voprosy literatury i estetiki: Issledovaniia raznykh let* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1975), 484.
86. Bakhtin was under the influence of Henri Bergson when he produced his work on Gogol and Rabelais, which represents a fascinating confluence of his own early ideas about carnival and Bergson’s writings on laughter, matter, and the flow of time. Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson have observed that Bakhtin’s interest in both Bergson and Kant was ephemeral. “Though important for understanding his development and thought, the early manuscripts are very much the product of influences Bakhtin soon outgrew (Bergson and neo-Kantianism) and are in large part the expression of formulations he abandoned.” In posing questions about the material objects involved in popular festival, however, it is worth considering Bakhtin’s early writings on Gogol, many of which were influenced by both Bergson and Kant, and which were developed in his doctoral dissertation in 1940. Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990), 7.
87. Katharina Hansen-Löve, in her study of Gogol, reminds us of an important difference between the two practices of carnival: “For a correct understanding of the nature of Gogol’s laughter, one must bear in mind the essential difference between Western-European and Russian-Orthodox ‘laughter culture.’ Whereas in the former, laughter is meant to abolish fear, in the latter laughter implies fear.” *The Evolution of Space in Russian Literature: A Spatial Reading of 19th and 20th Century Narrative Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 70.
88. N. A. Nekrasov, *Komu na Rusi zhit’ khorosho?* In *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, 12 vols. (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1948–53), 3:186.

CHAPTER TWO

1. Nikolai Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem* (Moscow: Nasledie, 2001), I:74. I'd like to thank Donald Fanger for his help with this translation.

2. *Ibid.*, 75.

3. Robert Maguire has taken a similar approach to Gogol's "A Terrible Vengeance," arguing that this story holds the key to much of Gogol's oeuvre. This story, Maguire argues, takes on the topic of "bounded space," which here is penetrated by an outsider, and eventually expands to encompass a far broader space than the town in which the story originates. "The Sorochintsy Fair" holds many of the same elements, but operates in a comic, rather than a tragic, mode. Robert A. Maguire, *Exploring Gogol* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 3–21.

4. Gogol never produced the plays of his father, Vasilii Panasovich Hohol'-Ianovskii, as he planned to do in St. Petersburg, but he did incorporate fragments of them into his epigraphs, thereby establishing a filial connection to the Ukraine of his early stories. See Gogol's letter of March 24, 1827, to his mother, in which he asks for copies of his father's plays. Nikolai Gogol, *Sobranie sochinenii v deviati tomakh* (Moscow: Russkaia kniga, 1994), 9:23.

5. Stephen Moeller-Sally demonstrates that this school of thought goes back to Gogol's contemporaries who were frustrated in their efforts to define Russian national identity. "Ukrainian language and folk culture appeared as a deeply rooted plant onto which a modern Russian identity could be grafted, and the vigorous efforts of Ukrainian writers to sustain a living connection with their origins were held in stark contrast to the superficial and derivative efforts of Russians in their own native field." Vladimir Nabokov rejects Gogol's most Ukrainian texts, the *Dikanka* tales and *Taras Bulba*, as early mistakes. "He almost became a writer of Ukrainian folk-lore tales and 'colorful romances.' We must thank fate (and the author's thirst for universal fame) for his not having turned to the Ukrainian dialect as a medium of expression, because then he would have been lost." See also George Luckyj's juxtaposition of the national ideas of Nikolai Gogol and Taras Shevchenko. Stephen Moeller-Sally, *Gogol's Afterlife: The Evolution of a Classic in Imperial and Soviet Russia* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 21; Vladimir Nabokov, *Nikolai Gogol* (New York: Penguin, 1959), 31–32; Luckyj, *Between Gogol' and Ševčenko in the Literary Ukraine, 1798–1847*.

6. Edyta Bojanowska explains Gogol's seeming pan-Slavicism by pointing to textual evidence of his own conflicted Ukrainian-Russian identity. One of the first scholars to express this viewpoint was Iosif Mandelshtam. George Luckyj gives a good review of the Ukrainian reclamations of Gogol in *The Anguish of Mykola Hohol*. Edyta Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Man-

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delshtam, *O kharaktere Gogolevskogo stilia*; George Luckyj, *The Anguish of Mykola Hohol, a.k.a. Nikolai Gogol* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1998).

7. Roman Koropeckyj and Robert Romanchuk convincingly argue that Gogol indeed had his Ukrainian readers in mind, citing a letter of July 20, 1832, from Gogol to Mikhail Pogodin. “Here Gogol’ complains that, try as they might, the local Little Russian gentry folk cannot buy a copy of *Dikan’ka*.” Roman Koropeckyj and Robert Romanchuk, “Ukraine in Blackface: Performance and Representation in Gogol’s ‘Dikan’ka Tales,’ Book 1,” *Slavic Review* 62, no. 3 (Autumn 2003): 525–47; Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 10:237–38.

8. Gogol writes, in a letter to A. O. Smirnova of December 24, 1844, “Not even I know what kind of a soul I have, Uke or Russian [*khokhlatskaia ili russkaia*].” In an act of self-effacement, he uses the Russian derogatory term for a Ukrainian. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 12:418–19; cited in Kornblatt, *The Cossack Hero*, 43.

9. John Kopper draws a strong parallel between Gogol’s otherworldly dimension and Kant’s “world beyond experience.” John Kopper, “The ‘Thing-in-Itself’ in Gogol’s Aesthetics: A Reading of the Dikanka Stories,” in *Essays on Gogol*, ed. Susanne Fusso and Priscilla Meyer (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2002), 40–62.

10. Gogol was born in the town of Velikie Sorochintsy (Ukrainian: Velyki Sorochyntsi), which was forty miles from the family’s home. See Galina Stilman and Leon Stilman, *Gogol* (Tenafly, N.J.: Hermitage, 1990), 24. Due to the fame of the Russian-language story, I refer to the town by its Russian name.

11. For a good discussion of Gogol and his critics, see Moeller-Sally, *Gogol’s Afterlife*, 15–33.

12. According to Richard Gregg, the surname was taken from a Ukrainian Cossack army officer named Ostap Hohol’, who was not related to the family. Gregg cites Veresaev and Stilman. Richard Gregg, “The Writer and His Quiff: How Young Gogol’ Sought to Shape His Public Image,” *Russian Review* 63, no. 1 (January 2004): 65; Vikenti Vikentevich Veresaev, “K biografi Gogolia,” *Zveniia* 2 (1933): 286–94; Vikenti Vikentevich Veresaev, *Gogol’ v zhizni* (Moscow: Academia, 1933).

13. As Richard Gregg recounts, “When, later, a Ukrainian cousin, calling himself ‘Gogol’-Ianovskii,’ surfaced in St. Petersburg and claimed kinship to the writer, Gogol’ objected, roundly declaring that only he had the right to be called ‘Gogol.’” Gregg, “The Writer and His Quiff,” 65; Veresaev, “K biografi Gogolia,” 90.

14. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 76.

15. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:80.

16. According to Karlinsky, Gogol was fascinated by embroidery, and even dressed in folk costume when he wrote. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, I:80; Simon Karlinsky, *The Sexual Labyrinth of Nikolai Gogol* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 206.

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17. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:82.
18. Ibid., 1:88.
19. Ibid., 1:88–89.
20. Ibid., 1:89–90.
21. Ibid., 1:88.
22. Ibid., 1:90.
23. Ukrainian folklore links Jews to pigs because of the strictures of Jewish dietary law: they must be somehow akin to pigs, since they refuse to eat pig flesh (presumed, by circular logic, to be the flesh of their kin). Fialkova and Yelenevskaya date this belief to the New Testament: “According to a widespread Slavic legend, Jews don’t eat pork because Christ transformed a Jewish woman into a pig.” Fialkova and Yelenevskaya cite Görög-Karady on a similar Hungarian folk belief. Mariia Davidova records that a popular *vertep* livestock scene involved a peasant giving a seminarian a pig as payment for teaching his son. “*Muzhik otdaet D’iaku svin’iu v kachestve platy za obuchenie svoego syna*.” Gavriel Shapiro refers to a similar theme, in which Klim offers a seminarian a pig in exchange for a religious song, commenting that “singing religious songs for reward was indeed customary in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ukraine.” Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:89; L. L. Fialkova and Maria N. Yelenevskaya, *Ex-Soviets in Israel: From Personal Narratives to a Group Portrait* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007), 92; Veronika Görög-Karady, “Ethnic Stereotypes and Folklore: The Jew in Hungarian Oral Literature,” in *Folklore Processed*, ed. Reimund Kvideland et al. (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1992), 122–23; Mariia Davidova, “*Vertepnyi teatr v russkoj traditsionnoi kul’ture*,” *Traditsionnaia kul’tura* 1 (2002): 20; Gavriel Shapiro, *Nikolai Gogol and the Baroque Cultural Heritage* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 54.
24. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:90.
25. Shabliovsky nuances the widely accepted categorization of Kotliarevs’kyi’s work as travesty, arguing that “in its character and manner of writing, however, it did not fit into the traditional frames of the burlesque, for it marked the beginning of a *new* creative trend in the Ukrainian letters—realism.” Ievhen Stepanovych Shabliovskyi, *Ukrainian Literature Through the Ages*, trans. Anatole Bilenko (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2001), 61.
26. Note that in his citation Gogol omits the subject: Einei (Aeneas). Ivan Kotliarevs’kyi, *Eneïda* (Kiev: Radians’ka shkola, 1989), 111; Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:90.
27. Gogol’s reference to Kotliarevs’kyi in a chapter that takes place in a tavern moreover suggests that he is acknowledging his own borrowings from the earlier writer. Karpuk concludes that Kotliarevs’kyi was the source for a number of Gogol’s food references, though the former is often unacknowledged for references to *kvasha* and *putria*, among other things. Paul Karpuk, “Gogol’s Research on Ukrainian Customs for the *Dikan’ka Tales*,” *Russian Review* 56 (April 1997): 214.

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28. Jan Kott and Martin Esslin, *The Theater of Essence and Other Essays* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 14; Gippius, *Gogol*, 16.

29. Kulish has written about V. Hohol'-Ianovskii's plays, *Prostak* and *Sobaka i ovtsa* (which have been lost). Vasili Panasovich Hohol'-Ianovskii, *Prostak, abo khytroschchi zhinky perekhytreni moskalem: Komediaia* (New York: Ukrainskoi knyharmi im. T. Shevchenka, 1918); Panteleimon Kulish and Nikolai Gogol, *Zapiski o zhizni Gogolia: sostavlennye iz vospominanii ego druzei i znakomykh i iz ego sobstvennykh pisem v dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Institut mirovoi literatury imeni A. M. Gorkogo, 2003), 1:13.

30. For a further discussion of Hohol'-Ianovskii, see N. Korobka, "Detstvo i iunost' Gogolia," *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniya*, Seventh Decade (n.d.): 255.

31. For a discussion of the characters in *Prostak*, see Mykola Zerov and Dorin V. Gorzlin, *Lektsii z istorii ukrainskoi literatury* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1977), 24.

32. Skurativs'kyi suggests that Gogol has taken Kotliarevs'kyi's literary achievements and turned them inside out (*navyvorit*). Vadym Skurativs'kyi, "Hohol' u stanovlenni novoukrains'koi literatury," ed. Pavel Mikhed, *Hoholez-navchi studii* 1 (1996): 12.

33. We must bear in mind the enormous difference between the reading habits of writers and those of the general public. Gary Marker has shown, through a statistical assessment of books published and copies printed, that in the late eighteenth century few people in Russia read, those who did read limited their reading to primarily religious texts and manuals, even fewer indulged in leisure reading ("romances, adventures, or moral stories"), and a tiny percentage read what we might now call classics or "Enlightenment" books. Iurii Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, trans. Ann Shukman (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 127; Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800*, 184.

34. "If [the author] does raise his eyes, it is only to look at the portraits of Shakespeare, Ariosto, Fielding, Cervantes and Pushkin that hang before him; they reflected nature as it was, and not as certain people wished it had been." Gippius reminds us of the equally important portraits of Petrarch, Tieck, and Aristophanes that hang in Gants Kiukhelgarten's library. Cited in Gippius, *Gogol*, 116; Iurii Mann and Nikolai Gogol, *V poiskakh zhivoi dushi: "Mertvye dushi," pisatel'—kritika—chitatel'* (Moscow: Kniga, 1984), 70.

35. Gippius, *Gogol*, 30.

36. Richard Peace suggests that "despite the fact that this play was not published until some four years after the first production of *The Government Inspector*, it is nevertheless difficult to escape the conclusion that Gogol knew the play in some detail (it was actually written in 1827 and copies were circulated in manuscript), and that Kvitska stands in the same relationship to Gogol's theater,

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as his other fellow countryman, Narezhny, stands in relation to *Mirgorod*.” Richard Peace, *The Enigma of Gogol: An Examination of the Writings of N. V. Gogol and Their Place in the Russian Literary Tradition* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 151.

37. Ronald LeBlanc comments that Narezhny was “re-evaluated during the nineteenth century by critics such as Nikolai Dobroliubov and by writers such as Ivan Goncharov, who now saw him not merely as a precursor of Gogol and the so-called Natural School, but also as a talented writer in his own right.” Ronald D. LeBlanc, *The Russianization of Gil Blas: A Study in Literary Appropriation* (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1986), 88–89.

38. Liane Teml includes a chapter on this novella in her German-language study of Narezhnyi. See Liane Teml, *Vasilii T. Nareznij's satirische Romane: ein Beitrag zur russischen Satire vor Gogol'* (Munich: Tuduv-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1979), 196–210.

39. Vasilii Trokhimovich Narezhnyi, *Romanii i povesti: Sochineniia* (St. Petersburg: Smirdin, 1836), 23.

40. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:80.

41. LeBlanc, *The Russianization of Gil Blas*, 88–89.

42. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:69.

43. I agree with Ronald LeBlanc’s assertion that “Belinsky’s sweeping claim that Gogol ‘had no model or precursors’ is . . . greatly exaggerated.” Ronald LeBlanc, “A la recherche du genre perdu: Fielding, Gogol, and Bakhtin’s Genre Memory,” in *Russian Subjects: Empire, Nation, and the Culture of the Golden Age*, ed. Monika Greenleaf and Stephen Moeller-Sally (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 109.

44. The term *balagan*, which literally means “fairground booth,” has taken on the colloquial connotation of “scandal,” or, more positively, “clownade.” J. Douglas Clayton, *Pierrot in Petrograd* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 54.

45. Peretc writes, “We do not have any information about the appearance of *vertep* in southern Russia, but in the sixteenth century it was in existence, and we have the first mention of it from around this time.” Michael F. Hamm adds to this, “Written accounts speak of *vertep* performances in Lviv in 1666, but the ethnographer Oleksa Voropai believes the tradition may have begun in Kiev during the time of the Cossack hetman Petro Sahaidachny early in the seventeenth century.” V. N. Peretc, *Kukol’nyi teatr na Rusi* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskikh Spb. Teatrov, 1895), 55–56; Peretc cites E. Izopolski, *Dramat wertepowy o smierci* (Warsaw: Ateneum, 1843), 3:60–68; Michael F. Hamm, *Kiev: A Portrait* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 146.

46. See Jean-Christophe Agnew on the emergence of Renaissance theater and the marketplace. Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750*.

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47. De Man connects the term *parabasis*, or the “self-conscious narrator,” with Schlegel’s understanding of irony. He notes that Schlegel defined *irony*, in a note from 1797, as “*ene permanente Parekbase*.” Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight*, trans. Wlad Godzich (Oxford: Routledge, 1983), 218; de Man cites Friedrich von Schlegel, *Kritische Ausgabe, Band 18: Philosophische Lehrjahre (1796–1806)*, ed. Ernst Behler (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1962), 85.
48. John Russell Brown, *Shakespeare and the Theatrical Event* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 19.
49. Valery Briusov, “Burnt to Ashes,” in *Gogol from the Twentieth Century*, ed. Robert A. Maguire (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 111; Briusov, *Sochneniia v dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1987), 2:131.
50. Victor Erlich writes of Gogol’s ability, in his Ukrainian stories, to strip the mask of triviality in order to reveal the underlying melancholy. “This act of puncturing the mask and thus giving the show away was to recur in his St. Petersburg stories, ‘A Madman’s Diary’ and ‘The Overcoat.’” Victor Erlich, *Gogol* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1969), 74.
51. For an in-depth discussion of Gogol and hyperbole, see Andrei Belyi, *Masterstvo Gogolia* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1969), 252–79.
52. Kott and Esslin observe the similarities between Khlestakov and Harlequin, a commedia dell’arte figure from the late eighteenth century: “This poor fellow, who wants to fill his empty stomach, who says whatever pops out of his mouth, mostly about the delights of eating, who lies, tenderly and with inspiration, who like a real Proteus can appear instantly in any role (‘there mustn’t be anything stiff about Khlestakov’) has, in his physique and gestures, much of Harlequin in him.” Kott and Esslin, *The Theater of Essence and Other Essays*, 16.
53. Madhu Malik, “Vertep and the Sacred/Profane Dichotomy in Gogol’s Dikan’ka Stories,” *Slavic and East European Journal* 34, no. 3 (Autumn 1990): 337. Malik notes that “A May Night” “has elements of tragedy in spite of its happy conclusion.”
54. Ibid., 340; Victor W. Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal, 1982), 24.
55. Birgit Beumers, *Pop Culture Russia! Media, Arts, and Lifestyle* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 161.
56. A. E. Molchanov, *Ezhegodnik imperatorskikh teatrov, 1894–1895*, 5th ed. (St. Petersburg: Direktsii Imperatorskikh teatrov, 1896), 163.
57. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 6:19.
58. Jeffrey Brooks writes, “Peasant communities were introduced into a new circle of legal and economic relations in which written documents gained increased importance.” Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, 4–5.
59. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 6:20.
60. That Gogol’s Petrushka, like the puppet, is a cruel parody of the reader/

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audience is supported by Anne Lounsbury's suggestion that Petrushka caricatures Gogol's yet unsophisticated reading public, a recurring device across Gogol's oeuvre. "Petrushka's reading habits recall those of Ivan Fedorovich Shponka in *Evenings*, who does not actually like to read but who does enjoy moving his eyes repeatedly over words on a printed page." Anne Lounsbury, *Thin Culture, High Art: Gogol, Hawthorne, and Authorship in Nineteenth-Century Russia and America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 131; Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:223.

61. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 6:152.

62. Gippius, *Gogol*, 172.

63. Although the naming is less obvious, we might also observe that both Bobchinsky and Dobchinsky in *The Government Inspector* are named Petr Ivanovich (reminiscent of both Petrushka and Van'ka Ratitui), and are characterized by their gesticulations: "both speak rapidly and exceedingly much, aiding their speech with gestures and with their hands" (*oba govoriat skorogovorkoiu i chrezvychaino mnogo pomogaiut zhestami i rukami*). Bobchinsky, at the end of act 2, walks into a door and injures his nose, perhaps subtly recalling, for the Russian audience, Petrushka with his red nose. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 4:34.

64. *Petrushka*, produced for the Ballets Russes, was a collaboration of Diaghilev, Stravinsky, Alexandre Benois, and Michel Fokine. Nijinsky danced the title role when the ballet opened in Paris in 1911. Andrew Wachtel writes, "It is a strong possibility that the Magician's infernal traits, and a number of other details in the ballet, derive from Gogol. Russians noticed something Gogolian about the ballet from the very beginning." Wachtel mentions "Nevsky Prospect," "The Portrait," and "The Overcoat," all of which were mentioned in contemporary reviews of *Petrushka*. As scholars of Gogol and *vertep* demonstrate, a far more likely connection would be with the *Dikanka* tales, in particular tales that explicitly evoke both the profane and sacred realms, such as "Strashnaia mest' [A Terrible Vengeance]." Andrew Wachtel, ed., *Petrushka* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 32.

65. In his study of puppetry and modernism, Herold Segal has noted, "Not only do Gogol's characters recall puppets and marionettes in their grotesque aspect, but their world is that of puppets manipulated by superior forces." Harold Segal, *Pinocchio's Progeny: Puppets, Marionettes, Automatons and Robots in Modernist and Avant-Garde Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 25. For a more extensive treatment of *vertep* figures in Gogol's work, see also Gavriel Shapiro, "The Hussar: A Few Observations on Gogol's Characters and Their Vertep Prototype," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 9 (1985): 133–38.

66. V. V. Gippius observes, "The ludicrous devil, the shrew, the boastful Pole and the brave Zaporozhian Cossack, the rascally Gypsy, the peasant simpleton, the lector with the highfalutin way of speaking—all these are characters

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out of the Ukrainian nativity play.” Gippius, *Gogol*, 31; Peretc, *Kukol’nyi teatr na Rusi*, 55–73; Malik, “Vertep and the Sacred/Profane Dichotomy in Gogol’s Dikan’ka Stories,” 334. Malik has convincingly argued that while Gogol is clearly borrowing stock figures and situations from folklore and *vertep*, he intentionally changes the structure of the narrative. “For this reason, they defy standard folklore analyses, for instance, a Proppian analysis by function.”

67. A goat is a standard *vertep* figure. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:80.

68. For an analysis of this trope in “The Sorochintsy Fair” and “Christmas Eve,” see Gippius, *Gogol*, 32; Malik, “Vertep and the Sacred/Profane Dichotomy in Gogol’s Dikan’ka Stories,” 336.

69. Madhu Malik, correctly perceiving Gogol’s use of *vertep*, makes a distinction between the evil of the “upper” and “lower” levels of Gogol’s theater: “The unrelenting, all pervasive evil and horror of [the upper level] are not to be connected with the antics of the minor devil of *vertep*’s lower-level plays, represented in Gogol’ by the comic-serious line.” This strict dichotomy, however, still leaves something to be desired, for the devils in Gogol’s “lower-level” comedy often serve as windows into the noumena, which is better developed in more serious stories, such as “A Terrible Vengeance.” Dmitri Merezhkovsky, “Gogol and the Devil,” in *Gogol from the Twentieth Century*, ed. Robert A. Maguire (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 55–102; original: Dmitri Merezhkovsky, *Gogol’ i chort* (Moscow: Skorpion, 1906), 340. See also Gavriel Shapiro, *Gogol and the Baroque*, 57; Malik, “Vertep and the Sacred/Profane Dichotomy in Gogol’s Dikan’ka Stories,” 340.

70. Mark 5:11–13, Authorized (King James) Version. This parable appears in the Gospels according to Matthew, Luke, and Mark. Dostoevsky would later draw upon this parable in *The Possessed (Besy)*.

71. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:141.

72. The description of the first scene reads: “A magnificent Temple, built of thigh-bones and death’s heads, and tiled with scalps. Over the altar the statue of Famine, veiled; a number of Boars, Sows, and Sucking Pigs, crowned with thistle, shamrock, and oak, sitting on the steps, and clinging round the altar of the Temple.” Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: John Slark, 1881), 2:277.

73. For an entertaining study of literary pigs, see Frederick Cameron Sillar, Ruth Mary Meyler, and Oliver Holt, *The Symbolic Pig: An Anthology of Pigs in Literature and Art* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961).

74. As Simon Karlinsky has observed, “Unlike his more innocuous dogs and horses, Gogol’s pigs accompany sex and violence, their snouts capable, as in Rabelais, of rooting through garbage, or probing human genitals.” Karlinsky, *The Sexual Labyrinth of Nikolai Gogol*, 89.

75. Iurii Lotman and Susan Toumanoff, *Yury Lotman’s Artistic Space in*

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Gogol's Prose: A Translation and Introduction (Stanford University, Dept. of Slavic Languages and Literatures, 1977), 55.

76. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:79–80.
77. Nabokov, *Nikolai Gogol*, 148.
78. Gogol, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 2:381.
79. Ibid., 2:361.
80. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 4:218. Ivanov discusses this passage at length. Vyacheslav Ivanov, “Gogol's Inspector General and the Comedy of Aristophanes,” in *Gogol from the Twentieth Century*, ed. Robert A. Maguire (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 207–8.
81. Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh* (Akademiiia Nauk, 1949), 8:39.
82. Gregg writes, “The years which saw the rise (and eventual fall) of the quiff were, then, the years during which Gogol' rose to eminence as Russia's greatest living writer.” Gregg, “The Writer and His Quiff,” 64.
83. Robert Maguire hypothesizes that for Gogol, “‘south’ stood for movement, warmth, wholeness, and life, whereas ‘north’ betokened immobility, coldness, fragmentation, and death.” Maguire, *Exploring Gogol*, 285.
84. Vladimir Denisov argues that Ukraine was a colorful antidote to Russian culture. “In Gogol's opinion, in the imagining of Little Russia the geographical factor played an important role . . . These places appeared to be deserted by the people, who 'stuffed themselves' [*stolplialsia*] into the uniformly dreary swampy Russian plains and here began to mix with the 'Finnish peoples,' thereby becoming as colorless as the landscape itself.” Vladimir Denisov, “Izobrazhenie kazachestva v rannem tvorchestve N. V. Gogolia i ego 'Vzgliad na sostavlenie Malorossii,’” *Hoholeznachi studii* 5 (2000): 48.
85. Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism*, 371.
86. Though Gogol had long entertained plans to become a historian, taught history in St. Petersburg from 1831 to 1834, and aspired to write a history of Ukraine, accounts of his lectures suggest that his understanding of world history was less than complete. Lavrin writes that “he ignored all epochs of human history except the Middle Ages on the one hand, and the picturesque Cossack-period of his native Ukraine on the other. The Greeks and Romans simply did not exist for him.” Turgenev, who as a university student was beginning to publish his own work, offers the following picture of Gogol as lecturer: “I was one of his students in 1835 when he lectured (!) on history to us at St. Petersburg University. His lecturing, to tell the truth, was highly original. In the first place, Gogol usually missed two lectures out of three; secondly, even when he appeared in the lecture room, he did not so much speak as whisper something incoherently and showed us small engravings of views of Palestine and other Eastern countries, looking terribly embarrassed all the time. We were all convinced

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that he knew nothing of history (and we were hardly wrong) and that Mr. Gogol-Janovsky, our professor (he appeared under that name in the list of lecturers) had nothing in common with the writer Gogol.” Janko Lavrin, *Gogol* (New York: Haskell House, 1973), 55; Nick Worrall, *Nikolai Gogol and Ivan Turgenev* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 188n2; Ivan Turgenev, *Literary Reminiscences*, trans. David Magarshack (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), 149; original Russian: Ivan Turgenev, *Literaturnye i zhiteiskie vospominaniia* (Leningrad: Izdat. Pisatelei, 1934), 149.

87. Letter of April 30, 1829, in Karpuk, “Gogol’s Research,” 210; Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:501–2, 10:141.

88. Panteleimon Kulish, “Gogol’, kak avtor povesti iz ukrainskoi zhizni,” *Osnova* 2 (1861): 79.

89. Ivan Sen’ko, “Hoholivs’kii Shpon’ka u konteksti istorii Ukraini,” *Hohol-eznavchi studii* 9 (2002): 16.

90. *Druzhky*—bridesmaids; *korovai*—Ukrainian wedding bread; *dyvich vechir*—“maiden evening” just before a woman is married.

91. Karpuk, “Gogol’s Research,” 231.

92. As Roman Koropeckyj and Robert Romanchuk have pointed out, “Ukrainian folklore, which had been appearing in Russian journals for about a quarter-century, together with the rediscovery of the region’s colorful history, generated a panoply of associations that served to define this at once exotic and familiar people for a Russian audience.” Koropeckyj and Romanchuk, “Ukraine in Blackface,” 542–43.

93. Cited in Luckyj, *Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine*, 107.

94. Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh* (Akademiiia Nauk, 1949), 11:216.

95. Vissarion Grigorovich Belinsky, “Literaturnyi razgovor, podslushannyi v knizhnoi lavke,” in V. G. Belinskii o Gogole, *stat’i, retsenzii, pis’ma* (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1949), 200; first published: “Literaturnyi razgovor, podslushannyi v knizhnoi lavke,” *Otechestvennykh zapiskakh* 24, no. 9 (1842): series 8, 33–43.

96. Belyi, *Masterstvo Gogolia*, 281.

97. Gogol was better able to create neologisms and use other forms of grammatical incorrectness in prose than he had been in poetry. This was, Gippius implies, one of the failures of the poetic genre for Gogol. “Sometimes we find a mixture of Russian and Ukrainian, and sometimes an out-and-out Ukrainian word. Generally speaking, for someone who had absorbed the style of the poets of Pushkin’s school, Gogol was sometimes capable of displaying stupendous ineptitude and bad taste.” Gippius, *Gogol*, 26.

98. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:74–75.

99. Nikolai Gnedich would publish his translation of *The Iliad*, a work admired by many, including Pushkin, into Russian in St. Petersburg in 1829, the same year in which Gogol began writing his *Dikanka* stories. See Marinus

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Antony Wes, *Classics in Russia 1700–1855: Between Two Bronze Horsemen* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 135.

100. Baehr writes of M. M. Kheraskov's eighteenth-century masonic versions of traditional European epics. Stephen Lessing Baehr, *The Paradise Myth in Eighteenth-Century Russia: Utopian Patterns in Early Secular Russian Literature and Culture* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991), 99–113.

101. Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel*, trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 35.

102. Coexisting epic and ethnographic literary trends in the 1820s and '30s reveal a tension about authenticity and mimesis in the empire's capital. Lotman, writing of Petersburg in the early nineteenth century, calls attention to this: "As the capital, the symbolic centre of Russia, the new Rome, Petersburg was to be an emblem of the country, an expression of it, but as the seat of government which was a kind of anti-Moscow, it became the antithesis of Russia. The complex interweaving of 'our own' and 'other people's' in the semiotics of Petersburg laid its mark on the self-assessment of the whole culture of this period." Lotman, *Universe of the Mind*, 201.

103. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:80.

104. Ibid., 1:181–82.

105. Karpuk, "Gogol's Research," 224; Afanasii Shafonskii, *Chernigovskago namestnichestva topograficheskoe opisanie* (Kiev: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1851), 33–34; See also Iakov Markovich, *Zapiski o Malorossii, ee zhiteliakh i proizvedeniakh* (St. Petersburg: Pri Gubernskom Pravlenii, 1798); Aleksandr Rigel'man, *Letopisnoe povestvovanie o Maloi Rossii i eia narode i kozakakh voobshche* (Moscow: Obshchestvo istorii i drevnostei Rossiiskikh, 1847). Karpuk suggests that Rigel'man, who compiled his collection of folklore in 1785–86, could have been one of Gogol's sources on women's hair.

106. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 6:19.

107. Victor Erlich writes, "If, in 'Two Ivans' the spatial metaphor for Gogol's emerging world view is provided by the unrelieved tedium of the Ukrainian backwater, in 'Nevsky Prospekt' and 'A Madman's Diary' the dreariness of it all is epitomized by the metropolitan vanity fair." Erlich, *Gogol*, 75.

108. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 3:127. *Griven*, Ukrainian term for a unit of currency; *grosny*, coins.

109. For studies of the origins of Russian and Ukrainian coinage, see George Vernadsky, *Kievan Russia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1973), 121–23; D. Prozorovskii, *Moneta i ves v Rossii do kontsa XVII stolietia: Izследovanie* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Imperatorskago arkheologicheskago ob-va, 1865).

110. Gogol's stories set on Nevsky capture a fear of crowds that brings to mind Elias Canetti's formulation that "The destruction of representational

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images is the destruction of a hierarchy which is no longer recognized.” The power of the uncivilized crowd threatens the tsarist capital, making its civilization and culture vulnerable. As Lotman reminds us, there was, in the nineteenth century, a growing fear of unintelligible language in open spaces. For example, in 1826 Prince P. Maksudov complained to the government that he had recently heard “a suspicious conversation in French” (*podozritel’nyi razgovor po-frantsuzski*). The transcription he then produced was a “nonsensical string of superficial impressions about Russia and its capital.” Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, 1st ed. (New York: Noonday, 1984), 19; Iurii Lotman, *Istoriia i tipologija Russkoi kul’tury* (St. Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPb, 2002), 333; Lotman cites Lev Tolstoy, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow, 1979), 22:195–98.

111. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 3:129.

112. Iurii Mann, *Postigaia Gogolia: Uchebnoe posobie dlja starsheklassnikov i studentov vuzov* (Moscow: Aspekt, 2005), 123.

113. Ibid., 124.

114. Lewis Bagby points out that the early 1830s were years in which Bestuzhev-Marlinsky was developing what would become, with the publication of his 1834 “The Sailor Nikitin” (“Morekhod Nikitin”), a prose style that reacted against Gogol’s popular comedy. Aleksandr Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, “On Romanticism and the Novel,” in *Russian Romantic Criticism*, ed. and trans. Lauren G. Leighton (New York: Greenwood, 1987), 137–38; original: Aleksandr Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, *Sochineniia* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1958), 559–612; Lewis Bagby, *Alexander Bestuzhev-Marlinsky and Russian Byronism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 292.

115. Nikolai Gogol, “Den’gi i money raz[nykh] gosudarst[v],” in *Neizdan-nyyj Gogol’*, ed. I. A. Vinogradov (Moscow: IMLI RAN, 2001), 134–46.

116. The troubled consumer culture we find in Gogol’s prose mirrors Gogol’s own notorious discomfort with the market. It has been suggested that even when Nikolai Gogol was growing up his family, though of the leisure class, had some difficulty with cash flow. Gippius writes, of Gogol’s family, “in general they were finding it difficult to adjust to the changeover from a barter to a money economy.” Gippius, *Gogol*, 14.

117. According to Gavriel Shapiro, “The image of the Gypsy appears only in Gogol’s early stories set in the Ukraine, and is always treated along the lines of the vertep tradition.” Gavriel Shapiro, *Gogol and the Baroque*, 52.

118. Although the word *zhid* (Jew) is derogatory in today’s Russian (something like “Yid” in English), when Gogol was writing in the first half of the nineteenth century, the word was not necessarily an ethnic slur. The term *evrei* (Hebrew) would become more widespread as the correct term for “Jew” during the second half of the nineteenth century. In Ukrainian, *zhid* remained unmarked into the twentieth century.

119. Gary Rosenshield offers a compelling reading of the Jew as the out-

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sider specifically to the Cossack brotherhood. See Gary Rosenfield, *The Ridiculous Jew: The Exploitation and Transformation of a Stereotype in Gogol, Turgenev, and Dostoevsky* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008), 43–49.

120. As George Grabowicz has pointed out, “even if they are simply go-betweens, with access to both sides, they are not to be trusted.” George Grabowicz, “The Jewish Theme in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Ukrainian Literature,” in *The Jewish Theme in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Ukrainian Literature*, ed. Howard Ater and Peter J. Potichnyj, 2nd ed. (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1990), 331.

121. Ivan Kotliarevs’kyi, *Tvori* (Kiev, 1969), 1:119.

122. A series of rebellions also took place under Catherine II, who increasingly limited the freedom of Ukrainian Cossacks and peasants, placing them under the control of nobles. The most important of these uprisings was the Pugachev Rebellion of the 1770s. P. V. Shein, *Materialy dlia Izucheniiia Byta i iazyka russkago naseleniiia severo-zapadnago kraia* (St. Petersburg: Tipografia imperatorskoi akademii nauk, 1902), 150.

123. Gogol, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 2:247.

124. Ibid., 2:249–50.

125. Ibid., 2:272.

126. Ibid., 2:302.

127. Ibid., 2:308.

128. This portrayal of Yankel as a cultural anachronism can be read in light of Hegel’s notion of the obsolete stages of human development. The Jews, representing an obsolete culture and language, are no longer fully participatory in the Hegelian “world historical nations,” or, in this case, in the pan-Slavic Russian Empire. Edward Said incorporates the marginalized viewpoint into Hegel’s nationalist hierarchy by demonstrating that the “Orient,” as viewed from the “Occident,” creates an important foil for progress by negating history. In Gogol’s novel Yankel plays the comic foil to Taras’s righteousness. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Penguin, 2003).

129. Radin is writing about the trickster in Native American oral literature. However, the figure is a highly useful reference point in East European literature, especially in the types borrowed from *vertep*. Radin notes, “Many of the Trickster’s traits were perpetuated in the figure of the mediaeval jester, and have survived right up to the present day in the Punch-and-Judy plays and in the clowns.” Paul Radin, *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Schocken, 1988), xxiii.

130. Nikolai Gogol, *Taras Bul’ba*, ed. E. I. Prokhorov and N. L. Stepanov (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1963), 124 (1835 redaction).

131. Ibid., 53 (1842 redaction).

132. As Yurii Mann has shown, Dikanka was the ideal setting for the sto-

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ries, given its vague surrounding of farms and villages. Robert Maguire has observed Gogol's works to reveal a deep skepticism about the effects of Western Enlightenment in Russia: "Gogol goes beyond skepticism to outright mistrust of the Enlightenment and all its manifestations, particularly order, symmetry, and reason, with the corresponding loss of intuition, vitality, emotion, and religion." Iurii Mann, *Gogol': Trudy i dni: 1809–1845* (Moscow: Aspekt, 2004), 30; Maguire, *Exploring Gogol*, 78.

133. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 8:283. (The essay was originally written as a letter addressed to "V. A. Zhukovskii.")

134. Of this passage, Dmitri Merezhkovsky writes, "European enlightenment only makes the Russian gentleman even more aware of the age-old gulf that separates him as an 'enlightened citizen' from the ignorant common folk." Merezhkovsky, "Gogol and the Devil," 83.

135. Gogol, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 3:78.

136. Petersburg, with its linear shape and European orientation, is more dangerous than Sorochintsy. As Robert Maguire observes, "[Petersburg] was not Russian . . . but having no real form, it could spread all the more easily to any corner of the country." Maguire, *Exploring Gogol*, 80.

137. Nikolai Gogol, "Vii," in *Sobranie sochinenii*, 2:355.

138. Paul Karpuk, citing the Ukrainian folklorist Markevich, writes that in Ukrainian folk stories, "witches cannot be distinguished from ordinary women, except that they can transform themselves into any creature they want, the creature of choice being a cat, and they have a small tail which 'moves just as quickly as that of a goat.'" Karpuk, "Gogol's Research," 222.

139. In his post-Soviet rendition of "The Portrait," Gary Shteyngart highlights the similarities between commodity culture in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. Gary Shteyngart, "Shylock on the Neva," *New Yorker*, September 2, 2002.

140. Vissarion Grigorevich Belinsky, *Sochineniia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo K. Soldatenkova i N. Shchepkina, 1860), 6:547.

141. Gogol, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 3:96.

142. Ibid., 3:90.

143. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 6:51.

144. Ibid., 6:54.

145. The name "Korobochka" further evokes imperial Russian multiethnicity through its similarity to the term *Korobka*, used to refer to a special tax on kosher meat, charged to Jews in the Pale of Settlement and used to fund Jewish community activities.

146. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 6:128.

147. Ibid., 6:72.

148. Gogol's virtual collection of objects, as well as his commercial characters, anticipates Walter Benjamin, who in his *Arcades Project* developed a ma-

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terialist phenomenology. In Benjamin's discussion of the flaneur and Baudelaire in *The Arcades Project*, we find "the bearing of the modern hero, as modeled on the ragpicker: his 'jerky gait,' the necessary isolation in which he goes about his business, the interest he takes in the refuse and detritus of the great city." However, whereas Gogol sees matter as antithetical to the human soul, Benjamin finds meaningful traces of history in physical objects. Susan Buck-Morss writes, of Benjamin, "If he rejected from the start the Hegelian affirmation of history itself as meaningful, he believed the meaning which lay within objects included their history most decisively." Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project, Part 2603*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 368; Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 13.

149. Weiskopf has convincingly argued that Gogol draws his troika directly from Plato's *Phaedrus*, which maintains that the soul is pulled by a white horse (of virtuous inclination) and a black horse of evil inclination. "In the *Phaedrus* the chariots of the gods rise to the vault of the heavens unhindered, perceiving what is beyond the boundary of the sky, 'while the others move with difficulty, because the horse disposed to evil pulls with his whole weight towards the earth and grieves his driver, if the latter is the one who trained him badly.'" (Weiskopf cites the *Phaedrus*, 247b.) Bojanowska calls this troika "a coach before which all nations stand aside and make way, when inside this triumphant carriage rides the prince of *poshlost'*, of mediocrity, of vulgarity and materialism, Chichikov himself." Mikhail Weiskopf, "The Bird-Troika and the Chariot of the Soul: Plato and Gogol," in *Essays on Gogol: Logos and the Russian Word*, ed. Susanne Fusso and Priscilla Meyer (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1994), 135; Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism*, 265; Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 6:247.

150. Abram Terts, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Start, 1992), 2:234.

151. N. V. Gogol', *Sobranie sochinenii* (St. Petersburg, 1898), I:135.

152. Nikolai Gogol, *Arabesques*, trans. Alexander R. Tulloch (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ardis, 1982), 196; Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 3:165.

153. Boris Eichenbaum, "How Gogol's Overcoat Was Made," in *Gogol from the Twentieth Century*, ed. Robert A. Maguire (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 270; Eichenbaum is citing P. V. Annenkov, *Literaturnye vospominaniia* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1960), 77.

154. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 6:110.

155. For a good discussion of Potemkin's "paradise topi" (*raiskie topiki*), see Andrei Zorin, *Kormia dvuglavogo orla . . . Literatura i gosudarstvennaya ideologiya v Rossii v poslednei treti XVIII–pervoi treti XIX veka* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001), 110–15.

156. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 3:94.

157. Ibid., 1:76.

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158. Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia*, ed. C. H. Grandgent, revised by Charles Southward Singleton, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), vol. 2, canto 31: 124–26.

159. The inversion helps us to understand the boundaries of what Victor Erlich sums up somewhat simplistically as “the topsy-turvy world of Gogol’s Ukrainian tales [in which] anything or almost anything can and does happen.” Erlich, *Gogol*, 30.

160. For discussions of Dante’s influence on Gogol, see Adam Aikovich Asoian, *Dante i russkaia literatura 1820–1950-kh godov: Posobie po spetskursu* (Sverdlovsk: Sverdl. ped. inst., 1986); Frederick T. Griffiths and Stanley J. Rabinowitz, “The Death of Gogolian Polyphony: Selected Comments on Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends,” in *Essays on Gogol: Logos and the Russian Word*, ed. Susanne Fusso and Priscilla Meyer (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1994).

161. Belyi, *Masterstvo Gogolia*, 206.

162. Another possible reason for Gogol’s word choice is that *chudnyi* more closely approximates the Ukrainian *chuzhii* (strange).

163. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:196.

164. Donald Fanger notes that the inadequacy of this hidden history to such a formally complex story “shows his work beginning to break free.” Donald Fanger, *The Creation of Nikolai Gogol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 238.

165. “The *Dikanka* stories . . . carefully delimit the spheres of natural and supernatural behavior and use their intersection to generate plot.” Kopper, “The ‘Thing-in-Itself’ in Gogol’s Aesthetics,” 41.

166. Ibid., 46–47.

167. Robert Maguire observes, of “A Terrible Vengeance,” “the last chapter, in which the blind bard explains the meaning of the events, contains not a single reference to water; he describes a *nature morte*, dominated by mountains. There is no longer a life-giving center.” Maguire, *Exploring Gogol*, 12.

168. As a window to “the world beyond” Gogol’s *Evenings* bears a striking resemblance to the theater in Edgar Allan Poe’s 1843 “The Conqueror Worm,” in which an audience full of angels watches with horror as the stage (the life of man) is devoured by something vast and unforeseeable: “The play is the tragedy, ‘Man,’/ And its hero the Conqueror Worm” (lines 39–40). I thank Afshan Usman for drawing my attention to this connection.

169. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:74. Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” in *Rethinking Architecture*, ed. Neil Leach (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 354.

170. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:96.

171. Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (Mineola: Courier Dover, 2004), 235.

172. By 1965, when Bakhtin published his study of Rabelais, he had dis-

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tanced himself from Bergson's philosophy (which was long since discredited in the Soviet Union) and ceased to write about Gogol. Whether this was for political reasons or for aesthetic simplification remains open to debate. Bakhtin seeks to differentiate his work from Bergson's theories of laughter, which, he notes, "bring out mostly its negative functions." M. Bakhtin, "K voprosam ob istoricheskoi traditsii i o narodnykh istochnikakh gogolevskogo smekha," in *Sobranie sochinenii*, ed. S. G. Bocharov, N. I. Nikolaev, and L. S. Popova (Moscow: Russkie slovari, 1996), 5:47; Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 71.

173. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:96.

174. Ibid., 1:74.

175. Ibid., 1:96.

176. Ibid.

177. Ibid., 1:97.

178. Ibid., 1:76.

179. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:97; I have taken this translation from John Kopper, "The 'Thing-in-Itself' in Gogol's Aesthetics," 48. It is worth noting that Dante, too, ends his *Divine Comedy* in festivity. Osip Mandelstam, in his "Conversations About Dante," writes, "In the third part of the 'Comedy' ('Paradiso') I see an authentic kinetic ballet. Here we see all possible shining figures and dances, to the kicking up of wedding heels." (V tret'ei chasti 'Komedi' ('Paradiso') ia vizhu nastoiazhchii kineticheskii balet. Zdes' vsevozmozhnye vidy svetovykh figure i pliasok, vplot' do pristukivan'ia svadebnykh kabluchkov.) Osip Mandelstam, *Izbrannoe*, ed. P. M. Nerler (Interprint, 1991), 2:266.

180. Here, Bergson is citing Sully-Prudhomme. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 79.

181. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:97.

182. Ibid.

183. Ibid., 1:97–98.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Pliny (the Elder), *Natural History, a Selection*, ed. John F. Healy (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 332.

2. Hryhorii Fedorovych Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Tvory u vosmy tomakh* (Kiev: Dnipro, 1968), 3:23.

3. Right-bank Ukraine represented the more recently annexed territories, coming under tsarist rule only in 1793. According to Paul Magosci, "the idea of a distinct Ukrainian people who might have a right to an independent state goes back at least to the early decades of the nineteenth century, during what has been prosaically called in east-central Europe the period of national awakening." Paul Robert Magosci, *The Roots of Ukrainian Nationalism: Galicia as Ukraine's Piedmont* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), ix–x.

4. According to George Luckyj, the modern Ukrainian literary language was

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born with Kotliarevs'kyi, Kvitka, and Taras Shevchenko. Luckyj, *Panteleimon Kulish*, 17.

5. Vadym Skurativs'kyi, “Hohol’ u stanovlenni novoukrains’koi literatury,” in *Hoholeznavchi studii* 1 (1996): 12.

6. Grabowicz writes, of Shevchenko, “Although the phenomenon of the writer as culture hero is found in many societies, no writer, in all probability, occupies that ‘office’ so firmly and with so fervent a consensus on the part of his countrymen as does Shevchenko.” Yekelchyk notes that the cult of Shevchenko grew during the Soviet period: “To all intents and purposes, Soviet ideologues and intellectuals co-opted the pantheon of national classics established by the Ukrainian prerevolutionary intelligentsia. Shevchenko topped this pantheon’s structure as the ‘nation’s father,’ while Franko implicitly occupied the role of a somewhat junior father figure specifically for Western Ukrainians.” George Grabowicz, *The Poet as Mythmaker: A Study of Symbolic Meaning in Taras Shevchenko* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 1; Serhy Yekelchyk, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Union* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 109.

7. Nikolai Fedorovich Sumtsov, *Sovremennaia malorusskaia etnografia* (Kiev: G. T. Korchak-Novitskii, 1893), 42:193.

8. I. E. Verbytska, *Hryhorii Fedorovych Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko*, 11–12.

9. Grigorii Danilevskii, *Osnov’ianenko (Sochinenie)* (St. Petersburg: Korol’eva i komp., 1856), 44.

10. Danilevskii writes, “A Cossack colony, Slobodskiaia [Ukrainian: Slobids’ka] Ukraine differentiated itself from the rest of Little Russia as the site of the first attempts at a national [Ukrainian] education.” Grigorii Danilevskii, *Ukrainskaia starina: Materialy dlja istorii ukrainskoi literatury i narodnago obrazovaniia* (Kharkov: Izdatel’stvo Zalenskago i Liubarskago, 1866), 287.

11. Richard Stites, *Serfdom, Society, and the Arts in Imperial Russia: The Pleasure and the Power* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005), 252.

12. Stites notes, “In the 1840s, Shakespeare, Schiller, Fonvizin, Griboedov, and Gogol shared the stage with local Ukrainian favorites I. P. Kotlyarevsky and Kvitka and French melodramas.” Ibid.

13. Gary Marker notes that under Catherine II a few secular presses opened. “Between 1765 and 1784 two more presses appeared in the provinces, one at the seminary in Kharkov and another at the Jesuit academy in Polotsk.” Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800*, 138.

14. V. P. Naumenko, “Kratkii ocherk zhizni i literaturnoi deiatel’nosti Grigoriia Fedorovicha Kvitki (Osnov’ianenko),” in *Chtenia v Istoricheskem obshchestve Nestora-letopistsa*, ed. V. S. Ikonnikov (Kiev: Universitetskaia tipografia, 1879), 1–2:85.

15. Aleksandr Nikolaevich Pypin and Vladimir Danilovich Spasovich, *Obzor istorii slavianskikh literatur* (St. Petersburg: Bakst, 1865), 223.

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16. Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine*, 126.
17. V. P. Karpov, “Iz vospominanii starozhila (1830–60),” *Kharkovskaia starina* (1900): 401; cited, in Ukrainian, in I. E. Verbytska, *Hryhorii Fedorovych Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko*, 71.
18. A. I. Beletskii, *Materialy do vyvchennia istorii ukrainskoi literatury: V piaty tomakh*, ed. I. P. Skrypnyk and P. M. Sirenko (Kiev: Radians'ka shkola, 1961), 2:221.
19. Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine*, 127. Shkandrij cites Ahapii Shamrai, “Shliakhy kvitchynoi tvorchosty,” in *H. Kvitka-Osnovianenko, Vybrani tvory*, 2nd ed. (Kharkiv, Kiev: Knyhosipilka, 1930) 1:iii–lviii.
20. H. F. Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, “Letter to the publishers of ‘Russkii vestrnik,’” in Beletskii, *Materialy do vyvchennia istorii ukrainskoi literatury*, 2:213–17; 217.
21. Dmytro Chalyi, *H. F. Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko (Tvorchist')* (Kiev: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo, 1962), 110–11; Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 5:147.
22. Shkandrij, citing Zerov, writes that the latter “in an article from 1929 revising his earlier harsh judgment of Kvitka, urged caution in reading the ‘naïve, simple words’ of the writer’s letters to Pletnev: ‘Behind them lay a whole set of tactics, more than one well-thought-out idea about his writing, its strengths and weaknesses.’” Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine*, 130; Mykola Zerov, “Literaturna postat Kvitky (do 150–kh rokov narodzhennia),” *Hlobus*, no. 3 (1929): 38.
23. Zerov credits S. Efremov with developing this term. Mykola Zerov, *Lektsii z istorii ukrainskoi literatury* (Kiev: KIUS, 1977), 28; Serhii O. Efremov, *Korotka istoriia ukrains'koho pys'mentsva* (State College, Penn.: Slavia Library, 1972). Ivan Kotliarevs'kyi (1769–1838) lived in Poltava, not far from Gogol's birthplace.
24. George Grabowicz, “Between Subversion and Self-Assertion: The Role of Kotliarevshchyna in Russian-Ukrainian Literary Relations,” in *Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter (1600–1945)*, ed. Andreas Kappeler et al. (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003), 226, 220.
25. Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 56–57.
26. Nikolai Petrovich Osipov and Aleksandr Kotel'nitsky, *Virgileva Eneida, vyvorochennaia na iznanku* (*Virgil's Aeneid Turned Inside Out*), 4 vols. (St. Petersburg: Izhdiveniem I. K. Shnora, 1794).
27. Kotliarevs'kyi, *Eneïda*, part 56: 60.
28. Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans. Cloutesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (London: Macmillan, 1911), 44–45.
29. Ironically, Gogol’s adaptation of *Kotliarevshchyna* evokes yearning for an afterlife through the conspicuous absence of ceremony.
30. Ivan Petrovych Kotliarevs'kyi, Petro Hulak-Artemovskyi, and Ievhen

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Pavlovych Hrebinka, *Tvory Ivana Kotliarevs'koho, Petra Artemovskoho-Hulaka, Eheniia Hrebinky*, ed. I. Romanchuk (Lvov: Prosvita, 1908), 8–9.

31. S. Steblin-Kaminskii, *Vospomynaniia ob I. P. Kotliarevskom (iz zapysok starozhyyla)* (Poltava, 1869); in Beletskii, *Materialy do vychchennia istorii ukrainskoï literatury*, 134.

32. Mykola Zerov, *Ukrainske pysmenstvo* (Kiev: Osnova), 67.

33. Hryhorii Fedorovych Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *20–40 rokiv v Ukrainskoi Literatury*, ed. Oleksandr Doroshkevych, Shkil'na biblioteka (Kiev: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo, 1924), 9.

34. George Luckyj also cites and discusses parts of this passage. Belinsky, *Sochineniia V. Belinskago*, 5:308–9; Luckyj, *Between Gogol' and Ševčenko in the Literary Ukraine, 1798–1847*, 53.

35. Sulyma-Blokhyn argues that what Kvitka's style borrows from Kotliarevskian travesty are not the earlier writer's broad burlesque images, but his “vulgarized, rhetorical question and exclamation [*vul'haryzovane, rytorychnye zapytannia i oklyk*]” and “vulgar turns of phrase [*vul'harnykh zvorotakh*.]” O. Sulyma-Blokhyn, *Kvitka i Kulish: Osnovopolozhnyky ukraїns'koi noveli* (Munich: Ukrains'kii tekhnichno-gospodars'kyi Instytut, 1969), 52.

36. Marker writes that “through the early 1780s provincial printing remained, for all practical purposes, the preserve of the Ukrainian monastic presses, and the rest of provincial Russia remained entirely dependent on Moscow and St. Petersburg for its books, a circumstance which placed the provincial readership at the mercy of an archaic and often barely extant distribution network and book trade, and which often left readers with little recourse but hand copying.” Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800*, 138.

37. Roman Koropeckyj has made the astute argument that “Marusia” is haunted by the figure of a father, present in Marusia’s father Naum Drot, in the God of Vasyl’s monastery, the religious law that condemns Marusia and Vasyl’s sexual transgression and the imbalanced imperial Russian patronage of Ukraine. Roman Koropeckyj, “Desire and Procreation in the Ukrainian Tales of Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko,” in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* (2002).

38. Hryhorii Fedorovych Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Povisti ta opovidannia: Dramatychni tvory*, ed. Igor Aleksandrovich Dzeverin and N. O. Ishyna (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1982), 62.

39. Ibid., 46.

40. Ibid.

41. An 1885 encyclopedia entry on Kvitka attests to his reputation for nurturing his ideal readers: “Kvitka had a beneficent influence on his readers, in the sense that he developed in them a humanistic sensibility [*Kvitka imel blagotvornoe vlianie na chitatelei, v smysle razvitiia v nikh gumannago chuvstva*.]” Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, “Letter to Pletnev”; cited in I. E. Verbytska,

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Hryhorii Fedorovych Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, 77; Andreevskii et al., *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar*, 14:881.

42. Verbitska writes, “Orienting himself by this new reader, Kvitka broadened his output to include folklore, wrote more works in Ukrainian, although he simultaneously avoided showing acute social conflicts, so that he would not spark a democratic revolution against the Tsar and his supporters.” I. E. Verbitska, *Hryhorii Fedorovych Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko*, 77.

43. Hryhorii Fedorovych Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Tvory u vosmy tomakh*, 3:7.

44. Pliny (the Elder), *Natural History, a Selection*, 330.

45. Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Tvory u vosmy tomakh*, 3:9.

46. Liptsy, a town of 5,000 by 1903, housed a number of stands year-round and hosted an annual fair. Veniamin Petrovich Semenov, *Rossiia: Malorossiia*, 1903 (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo A. F. Devriena, 1903), 250.

47. Sulyma-Blokhn, *Kvitka i Kulish*, 40.

48. Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Tvory u vosmy tomakh*, 8:96; cited, and translated, in George Grabowicz, “Ukrainian-Russian Literary Relations in the Nineteenth Century: A Formulation of a Problem,” in *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*, ed. Peter J. Potichnyj et al. (Hamilton, Ontario: CIUS, 1992), 242.

49. Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Tvory u vosmy tomakh*, 3:14.

50. Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, 20.

51. Ibid., 24.

52. Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Tvory u vosmy tomakh*, 3:15.

53. Zerov, *Ukrainske pysmenstvo* (Kiev: Vydavnytstvo Solomii Pavlychko “Osnovy,” 2003), 68.

54. Cited in Aleksei Miller and Oksana Ostapchuk, “The Latin and Cyrillic Alphabets in Ukrainian National Discourse,” in *A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography*, ed. Georgiy Kasianov and Philipp Ther (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 176–77. In writing about the orthography issue, Miller and Ostapchuk note that most early nineteenth-century Ukrainian texts conformed to the patterns Kotliarevs'kyi modeled in *Eneïda*: “First, it allowed the link with tradition (all-Russian tradition first and foremost) to be maintained . . . Second, an etymological orthography made it possible to avoid copying regional speech.”

55. Mykhailo Vozniak, *Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, Zhyttia i tvorchist'* (Kiev: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo, 1946), 93.

56. Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Tvory u vosmy tomakh*, 3:17–18.

57. Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, 58.

58. Aleksei Miller distinguishes between the concept of a *moskal* in Polish and Ukrainian: “Unlike the Polish *moskal*, which denoted all Great Russians, the Little Russian *moskal* referred only to the bureaucrats, officers and soldiers, i.e.,

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to ‘state servants.’ The most typical trait of the *moskal* in Little Russian adages is the tendency to cheat and general rascality.” Aleksei I. Miller, *The Ukrainian Question: The Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003), 46.

59. Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko, *Tvory u vosmy tomakh*, 3:21.

60. For a good discussion of the relevance of this story to Ukrainian history, see Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism*, 71.

61. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:184. This and other quotes in the story are uttered in Ukrainian.

62. Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, 66.

63. Kvitka, *Tvory*, 3:458. On Kvitka’s Muscovite characters, see Sulyma-Blokhy, *Kvitka i Kulish*, 42–43.

64. Chyzhevs’kyi has compared this story to Schiller’s “The Cranes of Ibycus.” Dmitrii Chyzhevs’kyi, *Istoriia ukraïnskoi literatury* (New York: Ukrains’ka vîlna akademii nauk u SShA, 1956), 364; in Sulyma-Blokhy, *Kvitka i Kulish*, 40.

65. Kvitka, *Tvory*, 3:480

66. A panoramic description of a marketplace in an early draft is labeled, “This section put in a different place.” Hryhorii Fedorovich Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko, *Zibrannia tvoriv* (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1978), 4:540.

67. Ivan Nekrashevych, *Tvory Ivana Nekrashevycha, Ukrainskoho pysmenyka XVIII viku: Rozvidka i teksty*, ed. Natalia Kistiakivs’ka (Kiev: Vseukrain-skoi adademii nauk, 1929), 9–10.

68. We find a similar allusion to the high stakes in market relations in Krylov’s 1812 “Gusy” (“The Geese”) (an important observation for a writer distinguished for his animal fables): “For profits he hurried to the market day/(But when it comes to profit,/not only the geese get skinned, but people too.) [Na baryshi speshil k bazarnomu on dniu/(A gde do pribyli kosnetsia,/Ne tol’ko tam gusiam, i liudiam dostaetsia).]” Ivan Krylov, *Izbrannoe* (Moscow: Terra, 1997), 165.

69. Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, 50–51.

70. Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko, *Zibrannia tvoriv*, 4:386. For a discussion of Russian textile trade with Asia in the early nineteenth century, see Anne Lincoln Fitzpatrick, *The Great Russian Fair: Nizhnii Novgorod, 1840–90* (Oxford: Macmillan, 1990), 81–82.

71. Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko, *Zibrannia tvoriv*, 4:427.

72. Of this passage Dmytro Chalyi writes, “The parallelism creates a particularly acute sense of the power of speech, which also possesses a form of demasking [*Vykorystannia paralelizmu robyt’ osoblyvo vidchutnoiu dumku pro vladu rechei, shcho tezh e svoeridnym zasobom demaskuvannia*.]” Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko, *Zibrannia tvoriv*, 4:428; Chalyi, *Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko*, 70–71.

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73. *The Jewish Tavern* was first produced in 1818. Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Zibrannia tvoriv*, 4:541.
74. Erazm Ivanovich Stogov, “Ocherki, razskazy i vospominaniia, glavy VI–VIII: P. N. Semenov i A. P. Bunina,” *Russkaia starina* 55, no. 24 (1879): 50.
75. Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Zibrannia tvoriv*, 4:399–400.
76. *Liza*: a three-act drama written in 1803. Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Zibrannia tvoriv*, 4:541; N. I. Il'in, *Liza, ili, Torzhestvo blagodarnosti* (Moscow: Tipografiia N. S. Vsevolozhskogo, 1817).
77. Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Zibrannia tvoriv*, 4:400.
78. Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Iarmarka, Sovremennik* 2, no. 4 (1840): 146–290.
79. Letter of August 21, 1840, in *Perepiska Ia. K. Grot s P. A. Pletnevym*, ed. Iakov Karlovich Grot and Petr Aleksandrovich Pletnev (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Ministerstva Putei Soobshcheniiia, 1896), 1:26.
80. Ibid., 1:102.
81. Ibid., 1:115.
82. It is clear that Pletnev felt particularly close to Kvitka. In a letter of May 16, 1841, Pletnev writes to Grot: “Would you believe that in Russia there are only three people who value me in something: that’s you, Aleksandra Osipovna, and Kvitka. For me that is plenty, and it has yet to enter my head to try and come up with a fourth!” Ibid., 1:352.
83. Ibid., 3:232.
84. Pletnev goes on to personally take the blame for Senkovsky’s venom. “After all, you know the reason Senkovsky attacked Kvitka with such rage. First of all, Kvitka is my friend. And that alone is enough to make Senkovsky curse the author.” Ibid., 1:246.
85. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 26.
86. I. I. Sreznevskii, “Letter to the editor of ‘Moskvitianin,’” *Moskvitianin* 4 (1843): 503.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, I:75; Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, *Zibrannia tvoriv*, 4:379.
2. Sholem Aleichem (Sholem Rabinovitsh), *Ale verk* (New York: Folksfond, 1917–23), 26:16 (the emphasis is his).
3. Voron'kiv (Ukrainian) is also known as Voronkov (Russian) and Voronke (Yiddish). According to V. Semenov's 1903 geographical survey, the shtetl had 6,500 residents, two Russian Orthodox churches, a synagogue, several permanent shops, and hosted two annual fairs. Semenov, *Rossiia*, 378.
4. In establishing 1881 as an important break in Russian-Jewish relations, I am aware that I am accepting a long-standing convention to group Russian-

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Jewish history into periods separated by crisis. Brian Horowitz has made the important suggestion that historical inquiry might be better served by allowing for history's unrealized potential trajectories: "A focus on potentiality mutes the crisis/continuity paradigm, which has been at the center of recent historiographical debates concerning how to regard the history of Russian Jewry in the periods before and after the pogroms of 1881–82." Brian Horowitz, *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 10–11.

5. For an analysis of Perl's novel, see Marc Caplan, "Science Fiction in the Age of Jewish Enlightenment: Joseph Perl's Revealer of Secrets: The First Yiddish Novel," *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History* 19, no. 1 (January 1999): 93–100.

6. *Maskilim*, Hebrew and Yiddish for Jewish enlighteners; sing. *maskil*. For a discussion of folklore in Osip Rabinovich's fiction, see Zsuzsa Hetényi, *In a Maelstrom: The History of Russian-Jewish Prose (1860–1940)* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), 47–50.

7. Litvak, *Conscription and the Search for Modern Russian Jewry*, 59. Litvak further points out that Rabinovitsh went on to name a physically strong Jewish hero "Khmel'nik," a surname that, through its connection to the seventeenth-century Cossack hetman Khmel'nyts'kyi, undermines assumptions about Jewish-Ukrainian animosity. "The figure of Khmel'nik incarnates a radically *secular* view of Jewish peoplehood (Rus. *Narodnost'*), here conceived as a Russian cultural style" (Litvak, *Conscription*, 63).

8. For a discussion of Aksenfeld's struggles with the tsarist publishing industry and censors, see Israel Zinberg, *A History of Jewish Literature: The Haskalah Movement in Russia* (New York: KTAV, 1978), 153–57.

9. Yisroel Aksenfeld, *Dos shtern-tikhl un der ershter yidisher rekrut*, ed. Shmuel Rozhanski (Buenos Aires: Ateneo Literario En El IWO, 1971), 112.

10. Ibid.

11. Miron, *A Traveler Disguised*, 55.

12. Aksenfeld, *Dos shtern-tikhl un der ershter yidisher rekrut*, 21.

13. Ibid., 91–92.

14. Ibid., 92.

15. Isaac Leib Peretz, *Di verk: Literatur un leben*, ed. Dovid Pinsky (New York: Jewish Book Agency, 1920), 10:126–27.

16. Born Sholem-Yankev Broido, the author changed his last name to Abramovitsh, and eventually became best known by his Yiddish readers as Mendele. The name Mendele Moykher-Sforim was first assigned to him by the editor Alexander Tsederboym. For good, short biographies of S. Y. Abramovitsh, see Israel Zinberg, *A History of Jewish Literature: Hasidism and Enlightenment (1780–1820)*, trans. Bernard Martin (New York: Ktav, 1978), 91–116, and Joachim Neugroschel, *No Star Too Beautiful: Yiddish Stories from 1382 to the Present*, ed. and trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Norton, 2002), 188–89.

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17. Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh, *Dos kleyne mentshele*, ed. Shalom Luria (Haifa: Haifa University Press, 1984), 46; translation consults Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh, “The Little Man, or The Life Story of Yitsik-Avrom, the Power Broker (1864–66),” in *No Star Too Beautiful: Yiddish Stories from 1382 to the Present*, ed. and trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Norton, 2002), 191.

18. *Kol-mevaser* (*The Voice That Brings News*) was published by Alexander Tsederboym as a Yiddish supplement to Tsederboym’s Hebrew *Hamelits*. Between 1869 and 1872, Tsederboym continued to publish *Kol-mevaser* as an independent journal.

19. For a discussion of several shared poetic motifs in the works of Gogol and Abramovitsh, see Harriet Murav, “Gogol, Abramovitsh, and the Question of National Literature,” *Essays in Poetics* 128 (Autumn 2003): 88–100; see also Rina Lapidus, *Between Snow and Desert Heat: Russian Influences on Hebrew Literature, 1870–1970* (Detroit: Hebrew Union College Press, 2003), 43–68; Lapidus references Joseph Klausner, *Yotsrim u-vonim* (Tel-Aviv: Devir, 1925).

20. According to Ruth Wisse, “the Mendele narrator seemed not only to unite but virtually to create a community of readers as he traveled through the Jewish Pale of Settlement, between cities, towns, and villages, among the learned and the simple Jews, bringing fresh reading material to men and women, old and young.” Ruth R. Wisse, *The Modern Jewish Canon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 33.

21. Steven Zipperstein, *Imagining Russian Jewry: Memory, History, Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 73.

22. Ruth Wisse has noted, “The book’s debt to Cervantes was so obvious that his Polish translator called it *The Jewish Don Quixote*, providing name recognition for a Christian readership.” Wisse, *The Modern Jewish Canon*, xxi.

23. Gogol’s *Dead Souls* is itself a picaresque masterpiece, with Chichikov as a Russian rogue, and the puppet-like Petrushka as Sancho Panza. As Ronald LeBlanc suggests, however, Gogol was more directly indebted to Fielding than to Cervantes. LeBlanc, “A la recherche du genre perdu,” 108.

24. Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev, *Sobranie sochinennii* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1962), 10:250.

25. Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh, *Ale verk fun Mendele Moykher Sforim* (Krakow: Ferlag “Mendele,” 1911), 10:5.

26. Ken Frieden observes further, “The very fact that Benjamin is ‘the Third’ suggests that he is intended as a parodic recycling of earlier heroes and anti-heroes.” Ken Frieden, *Classic Yiddish Fiction: Abramovitsh, Sholem Aleichem, and Peretz* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1995), 81–82.

27. Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi writes, “The diasporic itinerary is reduced in this narrative to its basic elements: the figure of the Jew as solitary soul lost in mythic space and the topos of a journey authorized by both aggadic sources and medieval conventions of pilgrimage.” Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, *Booking Passage: Exile*

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and Homecoming in the Modern Jewish Imagination (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 53.

28. Abramovitsh, *Ale verk fun Mendele Moykher Sforim*, 10:19.

29. Ibid., 10:20.

30. Ibid., 10:21.

31. Ibid., 10:22.

32. Ibid., 10:45.

33. Sander Gilman reads this mock marital relationship as a master-slave narrative, typical of Western patriarchal domination and symbolic of a Russian-Jewish power dynamic. Sander L. Gilman, *Inscribing the Other* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 67.

34. As Olga Litvak has observed, “The town responds in alarm at Benjamin’s attempt to depart from the enchanted circle of collective inertia and mutual responsibility, a system based on the much-deplored fact of life in pre-reform Russia known suggestively as ‘circular guilt’ [krugovaia poruka].” Litvak, *Conscription and the Search for Modern Russian Jewry*, 116.

35. Mikhail Evgrafovich Saltykov-Schedryn had written an earlier cycle of stories, titled “O Glupove i Glupovtsakh” (“On Foolsville and Foolsvillites”), in 1861–62.

36. Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh, *Oysgeveylte shriftn*, ed. Meir Rispler (Bucharest: Melukhe-farlag far Literatur un Kunst, 1957), 221. This translation is based on Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh, “The Travels of Benjamin the Third,” in *The Shtetl: A Creative Anthology of Jewish Life in Eastern Europe*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (Woodstock, N.Y.; London: Overlook; Turnaround, 2002), 234.

37. For discussions of the history of Jewish conscription under the tsars, see Litvak, *Conscription and the Search for Modern Russian Jewry*; and Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *Jews in the Russian Army, 1827–1917* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

38. Abramovitsh, *Ale verk fun Mendele Moykher Sforim*, 10:20.

39. Ibid., 10:117.

40. Alexander Orbach and John Klier, *Perspectives on the 1881–1882 Pogroms in Russia*, Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies, paper no. 308 (Pittsburgh: Russian and East European Studies Program, University of Pittsburgh, 1984), 1.

41. I. Michael Aronson, tracing each of the popular theories linking the government to the pogroms, concludes, “By its very nature, the Russian government in 1881 could not have even begun to consider, much less execute, a policy of popular violence against the Jews as a means of promoting the government’s ends.” Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 176.

42. Although the anti-tsarist revolutionaries did not encourage antisemitic acts, they sometimes excused the pogroms as a necessary evil that would train

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peasants to rebel against authority. Zvi Gitelman remarks that “in pogromizing the Jews, the theory went, the peasantry was learning to assert itself, to strike out against its oppressors.” On the revolutionaries’ response to the pogroms, see Erich Haberer, “Cosmopolitanism, Antisemitism and Populism: A Reappraisal of the Russian and Jewish Response to the Pogroms of 1881–1882,” in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 120; Haberer cites Deich’s postscript to Lavrov’s letter of April 14, 1882, in Pavel Aksel’rod, *Iz arkhiva P. B. Aksel’roda* (microfiche edition) (Berlin: Vorwärts, 1924), 31; Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the Present*, 1st ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), 13.

43. Although historians have since disproved Dubnow’s claim that major government officials took part in organizing in the pogroms, his characterization of the May Laws as “legislative pogroms” accurately sums up their effects on the Jews of the Pale of Settlement. Simon Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland from the Earliest Times Until the Present Day* (New York: KTAV, 1975), 2:309.

44. N. Bunge, *The Years 1881–1894 in Russia—A Memorandum Found in the Papers of N. Kh. Bunge: A Translation and Commentary*, trans. George E. Snow (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1981), 27–28; see also Dubnow, *History of the Jews*, 2:312.

45. Pauline Wengeroff, *Rememberings: The World of a Russian-Jewish Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Henny Wenkart (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2000), 222.

46. As John Klier has observed, “the real significance of the May Laws in practice was the scope which they gave to the arbitrariness of local officials, especially the police, who were free to interpret them as they chose.” Klier and Lambroza, *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, 40.

47. “Petition regarding the shtetl Kopil’nia, Poltava province,” July 29, 1883, 9 (front and back), f. 442, op. 536, d. 66, TsDIAK.

48. “Memo of Chief Procurator,” 5; Avgustin Levitskii, “Letter to the Holy Synod for help changing market days from Sundays and holidays to weekdays in Dashev and Kitaigorod, having failed to convince the local government,” August 1887, 20, otdel 1, stol 2, n. 5469, TsDIAK.

49. Konstantin Pobedonostsev, *Velikaia lozh’ nashego vremeni* (Moscow: Russkaia kniga, 1993), 372.

50. TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 536, d. 66, 5–6.

51. Konstantin Pobedonostsev, “Response to Dashev Petition,” February 5, 1900, F. 442, op. 629, d. 538, TsDIAK.

52. Henrietta Mondry writes, of 1881 to 1882, “Jews as a racial Other, whose physical differences were engraved by nature on their bodies and faces and whose psychological and moral characteristics were tattooed on their inner

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‘soul,’ became a stable stereotype of Russian society and culture.” Henrietta Mondry, *Exemplary Bodies: Constructing the Jew in Russian Culture, Since the 1880s* (Brighton, Mass.: Academic Studies, 2009), 30.

53. See Salo Wittmayer Baron, *The Russian Jew Under Tsars and Soviets* (New York: Macmillan, 1976), 51.

54. Vladimir Korolenko, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1954), 2:291.

55. B. Brondt, “Tsaytn baytn zikh,” in *Yidische folks-bibliotek* 2 (1889): 17–18; cited in Meir Wiener, *Etyudn vegn Mendelen: In di zekhtsiker un zibetsiker yorn* (Moscow: Emes, 1935), 108.

56. Ibid., 111. Mikhail Krutikov, in his recent study of Meir Wiener, sums up Wiener’s criticism of Mendele’s style as follows: “He is good with stylization, satire, and parody, as long as those devices serve the purpose of social critique; but when he tries to serve the ‘national’ purpose, his style turns ‘ornamental,’ imitative, bombastic, and verbose.” Krutikov, *From Kabbalah to Class Struggle: Expressionism, Marxism, and Yiddish Literature in the Life and Work of Meir Wiener* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011), 235.

57. As Miron puts it, “The novel was to survey methodically the typical units of Jewish society inside Russia (the shtetl, the new commercial center within the Jewish pale, and probably also the typical modern community of the big city) and perhaps even outside it.” Miron, *A Traveler Disguised*, 97.

58. For a good overview of the town of Berdichev in Yiddish literature, see Mikhail Krutikov, “Berdichev in Russian-Jewish Literary Imagination: From Israel Aksenfeld to Friedrich Gorenstein,” in *The Shtetl Image and Reality: Papers of the Second Mendel Friedman International Conference on Yiddish* (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), 91–114.

59. This translation consults that of Michael Wex. Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh, *Geklibene verk* (New York: YKUF, 1946), 4:128–29; Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh, *The Wishing-Ring*, trans. Michael Wex (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 100.

60. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:80.

61. For an excellent discussion of Yiddish narrative fiction, see Krutikov, *Yiddish Fiction and the Crisis of Modernity*, 22–56.

62. Abramovitsh, “The Little Man,” 212.

63. Ibid., 214.

64. This last quote alludes to the practice of many modernizing Jews of shaving their beards, as well as to the violence wrought by anti-Jewish pogroms, including the pulling of Jews’ beards. Ibid., 216.

65. Miron, *A Traveler Disguised*, 113.

66. This important reading of Mendele as a disguise is Dan Miron’s. See *ibid.*, 123.

67. Dan Miron writes, of this passage: “The ‘poverty’ and modest scale of

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Yiddish literature notwithstanding, it was pronounced a literature comparable to great literatures and susceptible to aesthetic and literary categorizations.” Sholem Rabinovitsh and Yitzhak Dov Berkowitz, *Dos Sholem-Aleichem-bukh* (New York: YKUF, 1958), 326, cited and translated in Miron, *A Traveler Disguised*, 28.

68. Frieden, *Classic Yiddish Fiction*, 103.

69. According to Ken Frieden, he did this for about a year, beginning in 1908, after which he would generally write “Solomon” or “Solomon Rabino-vitsh.” Frieden, *Classic Yiddish Fiction*, 105.

70. David Roskies notes that Rabinovitsh “kept a box marked ‘Gogol’ on his desk for work in progress, often quoted Gogol in private correspondence, and even wore his hair as Gogol did.” Roskies, *A Bridge of Longing*, 154. On the Gogol-box (Gogol-kestl), see also Asher Beilin, *Shalom-Alekhem* (Merkhavyah: Ha-Kibuts ha-artsi ha-Shomer ha-tsa’ir, 1959), 55.

71. Gregg, “The Writer and His Quiff,” 63. Ruth Wisse, in passing, refers to Sholem Aleichem as the “Jewish Gogol.” Wisse, *The Modern Jewish Canon*, 48.

72. David Roskies, borrowing Pierre Nora’s concept of a *lieu de memoire*, or “memory space,” has discussed the function of Eastern Europe as a memory space for American Jews. David G. Roskies, *The Jewish Search for a Usable Past* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 12.

73. I differ from authors like Harold Klepfisz, who claims that “it is not possible to really understand and empathize with Tevyeh the Dairyman unless one has at least some knowledge of Ukrainian Jewish history.” Rather, by bringing Ukrainian Jews, within his fiction, into ever larger, cosmopolitan spheres, Rabinovitsh is allowing his descriptions of Ukrainian shtetl life to stand in for a universal experience of Jewish life. Harold Klepfisz, *Inexhaustible Wellspring: Reaping the Rewards of Shtetl Life* (Jerusalem: Devora, 2003), 209.

74. An earlier version calls the city Berdichev. This is the first of two volumes Sholem Aleichem devotes entirely to Kazrilevka. Sholem Aleichem, *Oysgeveylte verk* (New York: Tog-Morgen Zshurnal, 1959), 2:63; Sholem Aleichem, *Inside Kasrilevke*, trans. Izidore Goldstick and Ben Shahn (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), 7.

75. As Sol Gittleman puts it, the elder Rabinovitsh, “besides enjoying the status which his erudition gave him, was also the *nogid*, the town’s rich man, which in the financially hazardous world of the permanently depressed shtetl, meant a great deal.” Sol Gittleman, *Sholom Aleichem: A Non-Critical Introduction* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 23.

76. Sholem Aleichem, “Letter to Ravnitsky,” no. 5 (December 30, 1887); cited in Roskies, *A Bridge of Longing*, 148.

77. Frieden, *Classic Yiddish Fiction*, 98–101.

78. Sholem Aleichem, *Oysgeveylte verk*, 4:14; translation: Sholem Aleichem, *Some Laughter, Some Tears: Tales from the Old World and the New*, trans. Curt Leviant (New York: Putnam, 1968), 116.

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79. Sholem Aleichem, *Oysgeveylte verk*, 4:27; Sholem Aleichem, *Some Laughter, Some Tears*, 125.
80. Sholem Aleichem, *Oysgeveylte verk*, 4:7; Sholem Aleichem, *Some Laughter, Some Tears*, 113.
81. Sholem Aleichem, *Oysgeveylte verk*, 4:10. For a study of double-ledger bookkeeping in fiction, see Elif Batuman, “The Windmill and the Giant: Double-Entry Bookkeeping in the Novel” (Ph.D. thesis, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif., 2007).
82. Sholem Aleichem, *Menachem-Mendl* (Buenos Aires: Ateneo Literario En El IWO, 1972), 34; Sholem Aleichem, *The Letters of Menakhem-Mendl and Sheyne-Sheyndl*, trans. Hillel Halkin (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002), 3.
83. According to David Roskies, “In his first *Menakhem-Mendl* series (1892), Rabinovich revived the whole *brivn-shteler* (letter writer) tradition, with its archaic formulas at beginning and end and its inflated diction throughout.” Roskies, *A Bridge of Longing*, 154.
84. As Dan Miron writes, Menachem-Mendl “found, in Odessa, every business deal ‘a mouth can pronounce’; because the deals have mostly to do with food, one can even imagine the mouth chewing on them.” Dan Miron, *The Image of the Shtetl and Other Studies of Modern Jewish Literary Imagination* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 167.
85. Sholem Aleichem, *Menachem-Mendl*, 122; Sholem Aleichem, *The Adventures of Menahem-Mendl*, trans. Tamara Kahana (New York: Putnam, 1969), 106.
86. Marie Waife-Goldberg, *My Father, Sholom Aleichem* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), 102.
87. Sholem Aleichem, *Menachem-Mendl*, 70; Sholem Aleichem, *The Letters of Menakhem-Mendl and Sheyne-Sheyndl*, 52–53.
88. Sholem Aleichem, *Menachem-Mendl*, 39; Sholem Aleichem, *The Adventures of Menahem-Mendl*, 22.
89. Sholem Aleichem, *Menachem-Mendl*, 136; translation based on Sholem Aleichem, *The Adventures of Menahem-Mendl*, 120.
90. Sholem Aleichem, *Ale verk*, 16:82; translation consults Neugroschel, *No Star Too Beautiful*, 364.
91. Sholem Aleichem, *Menachem-Mendl*, 71; Sholem Aleichem, *The Adventures of Menahem-Mendl*, 54.
92. Sholem Aleichem, *The Further Adventures of Menachem-Mendl*, trans. Aliza Shevrin (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 73.
93. Sholem Aleichem, *Ale verk*, 27:11.
94. Ibid., 27:12–13.
95. Tevye the Dairyman, for example, has become a classic literary figure for his constant citations and bungled intertextual references to the Torah in

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Hebrew and Aramaic. Ken Frieden, *A Century in the Life of Sholem Aleichem's Tevye* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 11.

96. Peretz, *Di verk*, 10:128.

97. Naomi Seidman has likened this bifurcation of Jewish languages and spaces to gender, with Yiddish representing the familiar and functional and Hebrew representing the idealized. Naomi Seidman, *A Marriage Made in Heaven: The Sexual Politics of Hebrew and Yiddish* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Frieden, *A Century*, 10.

98. David Yakovlevich Ayzman was a Russian writer and philologist who helped to translate Sholem Aleichem's work into Russian.

99. Sholem Aleichem, "Postcard from Cavi di Lavagna, Nervi, Italy to Signora R. Eisman," March 8, 1909, f. 189, n. 9, Vernadsky Manuscript Collection, Kiev, Ukraine.

100. Sholem Aleichem's sanctification of Yiddish proved prophetic: within a century in religious circles Yiddish would be integrated into men's religious learning, and women would speak a Judaized language of the country, be it English, French, or Modern Hebrew. See Bruce Mitchell, *Language Politics and Language Survival: Yiddish Among the Haredim in Post-War Britain* (Paris: Peeters, 2006).

101. This story was first titled "A Tale Without an End." For a discussion of the publication history of this story, and an excellent analysis of the story, see Roskies, *A Bridge of Longing*, 160, 377n34.

102. David Roskies observes, of this passage, "How . . . can one expect to find a nanny goat in a town where peasant women in the market confuse a rooster with a hen and where people's nicknames mask what they really are?" Roskies, *A Bridge of Longing*, 163; Sholem Aleichem, *Ale verk*, 16:22–3.

103. Sholem Aleichem, *Ale verk*, 16:23.

104. Ibid., 16:61.

105. Ibid., 16:66.

106. Donald Fanger writes, of Gorky, "Here was a writer who had actually emerged from 'the people,' who wrote of and for them with none of that pious sympathy for suffering traditional among the intelligentsia; a hater of the very Russian peasant whom Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky had sanctified; a Nietzschean autodidact, energetic, rebellious, impossible to pigeonhole." Maxim Gorky and Donald Fanger, *Gorky's Tolstoy and Other Reminiscences: Key Writings by and About Maxim Gorky* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008), 2.

107. Indeed, Serge Persky calls Gorky "the continuator of the work of Gogol; this is especially noticeable in 'The Fair at Goltva.'" Serge Persky, *Contemporary Russian Novelists* (Boston: J. W. Luce, 1913), 158.

108. Maxim Gorky, *Ocherki i razskazy* (St. Petersburg: Narodnaia pol'za, 1898), 137.

109. Ibid., 138.

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110. Ibid., 139.
111. Asher Beilin, *Shalom-Alekhem* (Merkhavyah: Ha-Kibuts ha-artsi ha-Shomer ha-tsa'ir, 1959), 55; cited in Nachman Meisel, *Kegnzaytike hashpoes in velt-shafn* (Warsaw: YKUF, 1965), 195.
112. Wolf Rabinovitsh, Sholem Aleichem's brother, devotes a chapter to Sholem Aleichem and Gorky in his memoir. Meisel, *Kegnzaytike hashpoes in velt-shafn*, 196; Wolf Rabinovitsh, *Mayn Bruder Sholem Aleykhem: Zikhroynes* (Kiev: Melukhe farlag far di Natsyonale minderhaytn in USSR, 1939), 131–40.
113. Sholem Aleichem, *Ale Verk*, 5:124.
114. According to Meisel the project was never completed. Meisel, *Kegnzaytike hashpoes in velt-shafn*, 197.
115. Gorky, *Ocherki i razskazy*, 146.
116. Vladimir Botsianovskii, *Maksim Gorkii: Kritiko-biograficheskii etiud s portretami i faksimile M. Gorkago* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. S. Suvorina, 1901), 38.
117. Gorky, *Ocherki i razskazy*, 147.
118. Kotliarev's'kyi, *Eneida*, 111; Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:90.
119. N. I. Stechkin, *M. Gorkii, Ego tvorchestvo i ego znachenie v istorii russkoi slovesnosti i v zhizni russkago obshchestva* (St. Petersburg: V. V. Komarova, 1904), 91.
120. In *Kleyne mentshelekh mit kleyne hasoges*, Sholem Aleichem, *Ale verk*, 6:205.
121. Dan Miron exaggerates in stating that Sholem Aleichem created a world entirely bereft of Christians; one need look no further than the Tevye stories to find the integral role of priests in Jewish communities. However, the world that Sholem Aleichem presents to us is indeed a primarily Jewish world. Miron, *The Image of the Shtetl*, 2.
122. Miron writes, for example, of *From the Fair*, “Indeed, no one could imagine [Rabinovitsh's] town as having a church, a priest, a church warden, or any other vestige of organized Christianity.” Ibid.
123. Menachem-Mendl deals in stocks because, according to Dan Miron, “dealing with them does not involve coming into contact with the materiality, the heaviness, the very reality of the goods he enumerates—all of which come from the earth or from the bodies of animals.” Ibid., 157–78, 166.
124. Moeller-Sally, *Gogol's Afterlife*, 87–95.
125. Sholem Aleichem, *Ale verk*, 16:68.
126. The image is not unique to Gogol. Aristotle's famous claim that “no man but man ever laughs” reemerged in Rabelais' epigraph to *Gargantua*: “Better to write about laughter than tears,/For laughter is inherent to man [Mieux est de ris que de larmes escrire./Par ce que rire est le proper de l'homme].” Bergson cites this in his book on laughter: “Now step aside, look upon life as a disinterested spectator: many a drama will turn into a comedy. It is enough for us to stop our ears to the sound of music in a room, where dancing is going on, for the

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dancers at once to appear ridiculous.” “Parts of Animals,” in Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1:1049 (673a); cited in Alexander Leggatt, *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 5; Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 68–69nn13–14; Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, 5; Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 6:134.

127. Yitzhak Berkowitz, ed., *Dos Sholem-Aleykhem bukh: Oytobiografishe fartseykhungen fun Sholem-Aleykhem*, 2nd ed. (New York: YKUF, 1958), 188–89.

128. Sholem Aleichem, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 6 vols. (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1959).

129. Dovid Bergelson, *Ale verk* (Buenos Aires: Farlag Ikuf, 1961), 51.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. “Hey, kumt oyf baynakhtishn mark do fun shtilkayt,/oyf nakhtishn handl mit berd un mit beyner!” Peretz Markish, *Di kupe* (Kiev: Kultur-Liege, 1922), sec. 16. Markish first published this poem in Warsaw in 1921.

2. Chone Shmeruk, ed., *A shpigel oyf a shteyn: Antologye: poezye un proze fun tsvel farshnitene Yidishe shraybers in Ratn-Farband* (Tel-Aviv: Farlag di Goldene Keyt; Farlag Y. L. Perets, 1964), 383.

3. Vladimir Mayakovsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 13 tomakh*. (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1955), 1:62.

4. Seth Wolitz, “A Yiddish Modernist Dirge: *Di kupe* of Perets Markish,” ed. Joseph C. Landis, *Yiddish: A Quarterly Journal Devoted to Yiddish and Yiddish Literature* 6, no. 4 (n.d.): 56–67.

5. Markish, *Di kupe*, sec. 1.

6. There is some debate as to the exact number of casualties. The escalation of pogroms from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century has been treated at length in Klier and Lambroza, *Pogroms*; see also Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press for the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and Center for Jewish Studies, 1999).

7. Rubenstein and Naumov adduce evidence that Markish perceived himself as an outsider to Soviet literature, citing, inter alia, a 1926 letter he wrote to Moshe Litvakov. In it he writes, “They nearly put me outside the camp of the organized Yiddish literary society of the Soviet Union.” Joshua Rubenstein and Vladimir Pavlovich Naumov, eds., *Stalin’s Secret Pogrom: The Postwar Inquisition of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee*, trans. Laura Esther Wolfson (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2001), 109; Peretz Markish, “Letter to Moshe Litvakov,” *Der emes*, December 23, 1926.

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8. August 12, 1952, has come to be known as the “night of the murdered poets.” Thirteen Jewish scholars, artists, writers, and translators were put to death. These included Markish, Bergelson, Dovid Hofshteyn, Itsik Fefer, and Leyb Kvitko. Documentation from trials leading up to this tragic death sentence, as well as a discussion of the case against Markish, can be found in Rubenstein and Naumov, *Stalin’s Secret Pogrom*.

9. Dovid Bergelson, “Dikhtung un Gezelshaftlekhhkayt,” *Bikher-velt* 4–5, Kiever Farlag (1919): 15.

10. As Chone Shmeruk has noted, “It is generally agreed that these collections were the outstanding literary phenomenon in the first years after the Revolution, and perhaps even until the middle of the 1920s. They can be seen as the truest and most characteristic expression of the ‘Kiev group.’” C. Shmeruk, “Yiddish Literature in the USSR,” in *The Jews in Soviet Russia Since 1917*, ed. Lionel Kochan (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 232–68, 238.

11. Bergelson, “Dikhtung un Gezelshaftlekhhkayt,” 11.

12. Vladimir Markov devotes the first chapter of his study of futurism to explaining the relationship between futurism and impressionism. Vladimir Markov, *Russian Futurism: A History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 1–28.

13. Also in 1919, a group of Yiddish poets and artists known as *Yung-yidish* would develop an aesthetic that would bear a striking resemblance to futurism and dada. See Seth Wolitz, “Between Folk and Freedom: The Failure of the Yiddish Modernist Movement in Poland,” *Yiddish* 8, no. 1 (1991): 26–51.

14. Kenneth Moss points out that 1917 did not represent a radical break in Jewish cultural politics, but that, rather, “the Jewish intelligentsia almost unanimously (if separately) seized this moment to reassert, expand, and realize cultural agendas long in the making.” Kenneth B. Moss, “Not the Dybbuk but Don Quixote: Translation, Deparochialization, and Nationalism in Jewish Culture, 1917–1919,” in *Culture Front: Representing Jews in Eastern Europe*, ed. Benjamin Nathans and Gabriella Safran (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 198.

15. Shmeruk, *A shpigl oyf a shteyn*, 375.

16. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature” (originally printed on leaflets in French and Italian and distributed on May 11, 1912, and August 11, 1912. This was also used as the introduction to *The Futurist Poets [I poeti futuristi]*, Milan, 1912]). In Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, trans. Günter Berghaus (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006), 107.

17. The “Futurist Manifesto” appeared, most famously, in *Le Figaro*. This translation is taken from the “official” version printed in Italian, also in 1909. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, “Manifeste initial du futurisme,” *Le Figaro*, February 20, 1909; Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, “Fondazione e manifesto del futurismo,” *Poesia* 5, no. 1 (March 1909); Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 13.

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18. D. Burliuk et al., “Poshchechina obshchestvennomu vkusu” (“A Slap in the Face of Public Taste”), in *Manifesty i programmy russkikh futuristov*, ed. Vladimir Markov (Munich: Fink, 1967), 50–51.
19. Shmeruk, *A shpigl oyf a shteyn*, 375.
20. Burliuk et al., “Poshchechina,” 50.
21. Shmeruk, *A shpigl oyf a shteyn*, 375.
22. Ibid.
23. Chana Kronfeld, *On the Margins of Modernism: Decentering Literary Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 208.
24. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 110.
25. The importance of Whitman to Markish in particular, and to the Yiddish expressionists in general, deserves further attention. Kornei Chukovsky has written of the connection between the futurists and Walt Whitman. More recently, Gennady Estraikh has remarked that “[Markish’s] poetry to a much lesser extent developed under the influence of Russian and Ukrainian symbolism, which was characteristic of the Kiev poets. Rather, Markish was more influenced by Emile Verhaeren and Walt Whitman.” Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself* (Mineola: Courier Dover, 2001), 54; Kornei Chukovskii, *Uot Utmen: poeziia griaduschei demokrati* (Moscow: I. D. Sytin, 1914); Estraikh, *In Harness*, 34.
26. Kenneth Moss, borrowing from Moyshe Litvakov, interprets the term “stam in velt arayn” to mean “simply out in the world; out in the world without pretense of identifying mark.” Moss, “Not the Dybbuk but Don Quixote,” 215–16; Moyshe Litvakov, “Kritik un bibliografye: Eygns,” *Bikher-velt* 1, no. 1 (January 1919): 24.
27. Tristan Tzara, “Dada Manifesto,” in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910–1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács, trans. Ralph Manheim (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2002), 313; original: Tristan Tzara, “Manifest Dada,” *Dada* 3 (1918).
28. Shulshteyn continues, “He calls [the dark songs] closer to him and they will be his guests of honor [*Er farbet zey neenter tsu zikh un zey veln zayn zayne ongeleygte orkhim*.]” Moses Schulstein, *Geshtaltn far mayne oygn: Eseyen, portretn, dermonungen* (Paris: Bukh-komisyey baym fareyniktn sotsyaln fond in Pariz, 1971), 276.
29. Shmeruk, *A shpigl oyf a shteyn*, 375–76.
30. Bergelson, “Dikhtung un Gezelshaftlekhhkayt,” 14.
31. Nakhman Mayzil, *Perets Markish: Der Dikhter un prozaiker (25 yor shafn)* (New York: YKUF, 1942), 11.
32. Shmeruk, *A shpigl oyf a shteyn*, 382.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 375.
36. Markov, *Russian Futurism*, 208; Markov cites Aleksandr Blok, *Zapisnye knizhki, 1901–1920* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1965), 206.

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37. Mayakovsky attempted to enlist, but was turned down because of his police record. Markov, *Russian Futurism*, 307. David Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Harvard, 1984), 98.
38. Bakhtin calls Rabelais's marketplace genres "deeply traditional and popular, bringing an atmosphere of freedom, frankness, and familiarity." Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 195.
39. Katerina Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 3.
40. Vladimir Mayakovsky, *Izbrannye sochineniia: V dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1981), 1:47.
41. Viktor Shklovsky, *Mayakovsky and His Circle* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1972), 36.
42. Ibid., 38.
43. Lamed Shapiro, "Der tseylem," *Dos naye lebn* 1 (May 1909): 15–30.
44. Sholem Asch, "In a karnival nakht," *Dos naye lebn* 1 (June 1909): 8–16.
45. Chaim Zhitlovsky, "Sholem Ashs 'In a karnival nakht' un L. Shapiros 'Der tseylem,'" *Dos naye lebn* 1 (June 1909): 36–45.
46. S. Ansky, "Di tseylem frage," *Dos naye lebn* 1 (September–October 1909). For an excellent discussion of this debate, see Gabriella Safran, *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk's Creator, S. An-sky* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2010), 159–64.
47. S. Ansky, "Appeal to Collect Materials About the World War," in *The Literature of Destruction*, trans. David G. Roskies (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1992), 109–210.
48. S. Ansky, *The Enemy at His Pleasure: A Journey Through the Jewish Pale of Settlement During World War I*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2002), 8–9.
49. Uri Tsvi Grinberg: b. 1896, Bialy Kamien, Poland–d. 1981, Tel Aviv, Israel. Matthew Hoffman connects this issue of *Albatros* with Grinberg's move to Berlin: "The Polish censors banned this issue of *Albatros* (November 1922), which they deemed blasphemous, forcing Grinberg to relocate to Berlin, where he put out the last two volumes of the journal. Grinberg's poem, 'Uri Tsvi farn tseylem,' typeset in the shape of a cross, was chiefly responsible for this decision." Matthew B. Hoffman, *From Rebel to Rabbi: Reclaiming Jesus and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007), 272.
50. Benjamin Harshav, *The Meaning of Yiddish* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 180; Grinberg, "Proklamirung," *Albatros* (1922) 1:4.
51. Shmeruk, *A shpigl oyf a shteyn*, 407.
52. In a 1913 pamphlet, "Ego-Futurism," I. V. Ignatyev attempted to outline the major tenets of the short-lived movement, including individualism, urban-

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ism, and a syntactical defiance of logic. I. Ignatyev, “Ego-Futurism,” in *Words in Revolution*, ed. Anna Lawton and Herbert Eagle (Washington, D.C.: New Academia, 2004), 118–29; see also Markov, *Russian Futurism*, 86–87.

53. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 113.
54. El Lissitzky, “Overcoming Art,” in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910–1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), 184; originally published as “Die Überwindung der Kunst,” *Ringen*, no. 10 (1922).
55. Dziga Vertov, “We: Variant of a Manifesto (1922),” in *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O’Brien (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 9.
56. Clara Elizabeth Orban, *The Culture of Fragments: Words and Images in Futurism and Surrealism* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), 59.
57. Roman Jakobson, “On a Generation That Squandered Its Poets,” in *Language in Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 285.
58. Ibid.
59. Einstein became a household name following Arthur Eddington’s 1919 expedition to measure a solar eclipse, which corroborated the physicist’s general theory of relativity.
60. Peretz Markish, *Farbaygeyendik: Eseyen* (Vilna: Bikherlager bay der Tsentraler Yidisher shul-organizatsye, 1921), 7.
61. Ibid., 8.
62. Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher (Normal, Ill.: Dalkey Archive Press, 1991), 6.
63. Cited in Oleh Ilnytzkyj, *Ukrainian Futurism: A Historical and Critical Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: distributed by Harvard University Press for the Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1997), 29.
64. Schulstein, *Geshtaltn far mayne oygn: Eseyen, portretn, dermonungen*, 274.
65. Ibid.
66. Esther Markish qualifies this by saying that Markish could have won such a pageant had he entered. Personal interview with Esther Markish, Israel, January 2005.
67. Markov reminds us that “Khlebnikov made a more precise prophecy to this effect back in 1912.” It is worth noting that the Russian-Jewish poetic influence was not unidirectional. Greta Slobin has demonstrated the influence of Hebrew poetry on the Russian prophetic mode, calling particular attention to Mayakovsky’s homage to Bialik. Markov, *Russian Futurism*, 310; Greta Slobin, “Heroic Poetry and Revolutionary Prophecy: Russian Symbolists Translate the Hebrew Poets,” *Judaism* 51, no. 4 (2002): 408.
68. Hoffman comments, “With this anecdote Ravitsh imparts just how much modernist Yiddish literature—especially poetry—functioned as a type of secu-

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lar scripture.” Hoffman, *From Rebel to Rabbi*, 147; Hoffman cites Melech Ravitch, *Dos mayse-bukh fun mayn lebn* (Tel Aviv: Farlag Y. L. Perets, 1975), 90.

69. Esther Markish, *The Long Return* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1978), 83.

70. Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation’s Life and Death in Marxism, 1918–1968* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006), 58.

71. Estraikh, *In Harness*, 70.

72. Chone Shmeruk warns that “it is quite impossible to equate the confused acceptance of the Revolution in their poetry of the early 1920s with the declarative poetry which later translated into verse the political announcements of the party. Markish, Kvitsko, and Hofshteyn, who in time became the outstanding representatives of Yiddish literature in the Soviet Union, left the country in the early 1920s and returned only in the second half of the decade.” Shmeruk, “Yiddish Literature in the USSR,” 240.

73. Edward Stankiewicz, *My War: Memoir of a Young Jewish Poet* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 27.

74. Vladimir Markov, *Russian Futurism*, 282.

75. Hayyim Nahman Bialik, *Complete Poetic Works, Translated from the Hebrew*, trans. Israel Efros (New York: Histadruth Ivrit of America, 1948), 1:129; Hebrew original: Hayyim Nahman Bialik, *Shirim 659–694*, ed. Dan Miron (Tel-Aviv: Makhon Kats le-heker ha-sifrut ha-Ivrit Universitat Tel-Aviv; Devir, 1990), 168.

76. Peretz wrote in Polish and Hebrew before shifting to Yiddish. This play was likely inspired by Stanisław Wyspiański’s immensely popular 1901 Polish drama, *Wesele* (*The Wedding*), which represents a merging of national ideology with a more universal history of literature and myth. As Stanisław Eile has written in his study of the literature of partitioned Poland, “Wyspiański’s interest in history and politics is always placed in the grand plane of Polish and human mythology, where the national fate often blends with that of ancient Greeks, Romans and Biblical figures.” Stanisław Eile, *Literature and Nationalism in Partitioned Poland, 1795–1918* (Hounds Mills: St. Martin’s Press, in association with School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 2000), 165.

77. Dovid Bergelson, “Y. L. Peretz,” in *Leksikon fun der yidisher literature: Prese un filologiye*, ed. Zalman Rayzin (Vilna: Kletskin, 1926), 7:257–58.

78. As Kenneth Moss has observed, Peretz includes explicit references to the 1905 Revolution as well as to the pogroms, “with his ‘*dergreykhers*’ in the ‘*hoykhe fenster*’ [high windows] confronted by the workers on the street and the mock-hero with the martyred pogrom victims in tow.” The *dergreykhers* (attainers) is a reference to the Jewish liberal, and liberal Zionist, politicians in Petersburg. Moss, “1905 as a Jewish Cultural Revolution?” 193, 291n37; Moss references Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 161–63.

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79. Abraham Nowersztern, “Between Dust and Dance: Peretz’s Drama and the Rise of Yiddish Modernism,” *Prooftexts* 12, no. 1 (January 1992): 85.

80. As Kenneth Moss puts it, “Peretz represented his beloved religious and ‘folk’ past . . . as a realm of worthless decay, while the vicious ‘medieval’ stance of the symbolically charged Polish nationalist characters, knights and churchmen, suggests despair about the Polish Jewish future.” Moss, “1905 as a Jewish Cultural Revolution?” 193.

81. Isaac Leib Peretz, *Bay nakht afn altn mark (a troym fun a fibernakht)*, in *Peretses yiesh-vizye: Interpretatsye fun Y.L. Peretses Bay nakht afn altn mark un kritishe oysgabe fun der drame*, ed. Chone Shmeruk (New York: Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut–YIVO, 1971), 233.

82. Furthermore, as Mikhail Krutikov has observed, “Peretz represents reality through a set of selected oppositions, which provides a mechanism for incorporating any new phenomenon into the established pattern.” Krutikov, *Yiddish Fiction and the Crisis of Modernity*, 207.

83. Peretz, *Bay nakht*, 242; Isaac Leib Peretz, *At Night on the Old Marketplace*, trans. Hillel Halkin, in *The I. L. Peretz Reader*, ed. Ruth R. Wisse (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002), 376.

84. Peretz, *Bay nakht*, 258.

85. Matthew 5:39, Authorized (King James) Version.

86. Kol Nidre: the service on the eve of Yom Kippur.

87. Peretz, *Bay nakht*, 316.

88. Shmuel Niger interprets the entire play as a poetic demonstration of the tragedy of life and death. See Shmuel Niger, *Y. L. Perets* (Buenos Aires: Al-veltekhn yidishn kultur-kongres, 1952), 437–40.

89. Isaac Bashevis Singer, *The Family Moskat* (New York: Macmillan, 2007), 611.

90. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:97–98.

91. Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, 63, 66.

92. Peretz, *Bay nakht*, 308; translation consults Peretz, *At Night on the Old Marketplace*, 424.

93. Peretz, *Bay nakht*, 310; Peretz, *At Night on the Old Marketplace*, 426.

94. Shmeruk, *A shpigl oyf a shteyn*, 382.

95. Ibid., 383.

96. Markish, *Di kupe*, epigraph.

97. The pogrom in Horodishche (Cherkasy region) was recorded on October 1, 1919. Eight fatalities were reported. “Documents and materials on the pogroms in Ukraine,” f. 1, op. 20, d. 126, pg. 59, TsDAHO. Another possible source for Markish’s Horodishche is the town of Gadiach (Ukr. Hadiach), which has sometimes been called Gorodishche as an alternate (Polish) name, and also experienced a pogrom in 1919.

98. Markish, *Di kupe*, sec. 1.

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99. David Roskies suggests that the “tallow” may also refer to a candle lit in heaven in memory of the dead. “Candles, lit perhaps in memory of the dead, burn in heaven while the pasted beards of dead Jews lie in heaps below.” Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse*, 99.
100. Markish, *Di kupe*, sec. 1.
101. Hansen-Löve writes, “The axis of verticality is one of the ways in which this idea is structured in space.” Katharina Hansen-Löve, *The Evolution of Space in Russian Literature: A Spatial Reading of 19th and 20th Century Narrative Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 165.
102. Markish, *Di kupe*, sec. 1.
103. Ibid.
104. For an excellent discussion of the liturgical tradition in modern Jewish literature, see David Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse*.
105. Seth Wolitz has gone so far as to consider Markish’s poem a *kine*, a prayer of lament recited on the Ninth of Av: “As juxtaposition deflated secular Western genres of their integrity, so the ironic mode decants sacral forms of traditional content in order to subvert the *kine* as prayer, the liturgical mediation between man and God.” Wolitz, “A Yiddish Modernist Dirge,” 57.
106. Abraham Nowersztern, *Kesem ha dimdumim: Apokalipsah umeshihiyut besifrut Yidish* (Jerusalem: Hotsaat sefarim a. sh. Y.L. Magnes ha-Universitah ha-Ivrit, 2003), 147.
107. Hoffman, *From Rebel to Rabbi*, 142.
108. Markish, *Di kupe*, sec. 3.
109. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:80.
110. Markish, *Di kupe*, sec. 3.
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid.
113. Wolitz, “A Yiddish Modernist Dirge.”
114. Markish, *Di kupe*, sec. 3.
115. Vladimir Mayakovsky, “Vladimir Maiakovskii, Tragediia,” in *Sochineniya v dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Pravda, 1987), 2:444, 443.
116. My thanks to Roy Greenwald for helping to illuminate this point.
117. Mayakovsky, “Vladimir Maiakovskii, Tragediia,” 438.
118. Markish, *Di kupe*, sec. 3.
119. 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles 21, 29.
120. Aleksandr Goldenveizer, *Dnevnik: Pervaia tetrad'* (Moscow: Tortuga, 1995), 62–63. My thanks to Victoria Khiterer for calling this work to my attention. Kerensky bills: emergency currency issued during the Revolution.
121. Markish, *Di kupe*, sec. 8
122. Ibid., sec. 11.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid., sec. 10.

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125. *Neileh* (Heb. *Neilah*): the closing prayer on Yom Kippur.
126. Markish, *Di kupe*, sec. 10.
127. Ibid.
128. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*.
129. Markish, *Di kupe*, sec. 19.
130. I thank Gregory Freidin for helping to illuminate this point.
131. Markish, *Di kupe*, sec. 22.
132. Ibid., sec. 24.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Isaac Babel, *Sochineniia v 2-kh tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1991), 2:29.
2. Viktor Shklovsky, *Gamburgskii schet: Stat'i, vospominaniia, esse, 1914–1933*, ed. Aleksandr Chudakov (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990), 525; first published in Viktor Shklovsky, “Isaak Babel,” *Lef*, no. 2 (1924): 152–55.
3. Alexander Zholkovsky and Mikhail Iampolski, *Babel/Babel* (Moscow: Carte Blanche, 1994).
4. The story was first published in a New York-based Russian-language journal after the writer’s death. As Zholkovsky and Iampolski have shown, Babel wrote two variants of this story, the other being “Spravka,” a much shorter story, which, they argue, is likely the more carefully edited of the two. Neither story appeared in Russian during Babel’s lifetime. Isaac Babel, “Moi pervyi gonorar,” in *Vozdushnye puti: Al’manakh*, no. 3 (New York, 1963); Zholkovsky and Iampolski, *Babel/Babel*, chap. 1.
5. Isaac Babel, *Sochineniia v 2-kh tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1991), 2:253.
6. Alexander Zholkovsky has observed, moreover, that “the ‘documentary’ account of the hero’s first literary earnings turns upon a daringly implausible and thickly stylized literary tale of an unhappy childhood, which wins the full confidence of his listener—a prostitute, i.e., someone steeped, it would seem, in life’s most genuine ‘reality.’” Alexander Zholkovsky, “How a Russian Maupassant was Made in Odessa and Yasnaya Polyana: Isaak Babel’ and the Tolstoy Legacy,” *Slavic Review* 53, no. 3 (Autumn 1994): 675.
7. Peter Constantine, in his translation of “Khodia,” renders the title “Chink,” which conveys the derogatory nature of the epithet. Isaac Babel, *The Complete Works of Isaac Babel*, ed. Nathalie Babel, trans. Peter Constantine (New York: Norton, 2002), 112–13.
8. Babel, *Sochinenia*, 1:98.
9. Ibid., 1:99.
10. Bergelson, “Dzhiro-Dzhiro, dertseylung” *Frayhayt* (October 20 and 27, 1929), 5; Bergelson, “Dzhiro-Dzhiro,” trans. by I. Babel, in Bergelson, *Iz-*

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brannoe (Moscow: Sovetskii Pisatel', 1957), 296–310. Simon Markish notes that Babel also voiced an interest in translating Sholem Aleichem's *Tevye the Dairyman* into Russian, though no such translation exists today. See Simon Markish, *Babel i drugie*, second reprint (Moscow: Personalnaia tvorcheskaia masterskaia "Mikhail Shchigol," 1997), 12.

11. As we recall from chapter 4, Gorky had hoped to collaborate with Sholem Aleichem on a collection of Yiddish writings in Russian for *Znanie*. Meisel, *Kegnaytike hashpoes in velt-shafn*, 197.

12. Gabriella Safran has made a similar argument about Gorky's search for a Jewish literary hero. Safran writes, "In the years immediately before he met Babel', Gor'kii devoted a part of his remarkable organizational energy and abilities to the Jewish question." Gabriella Safran, "Isaak Babel's El'ia Isaakovich as a New Jewish Type," *Slavic Review* 61, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 255.

13. Maxim Gorky, "Ob antisemitizme," *Pravda*, September 26, 1929, 3. Here Gorky is particularly concerned with antisemitism in the literary world.

14. Babel, *Sochineniia*, 1:64.

15. Gregory Freidin, "Two Babels—Two Aphrodites: Autobiography in Maria and Babel's Petersburg Myth," in *The Enigma of Isaac Babel: Biography, History, Context*, ed. Gregory Freidin (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 18.

16. Babel, *Sochineniia*, 2:146.

17. Ibid., 2:148.

18. Ibid., 2:145.

19. Ibid., 2:148.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., 2:149.

23. Maxim Gorky, *Polnoe sobranie sochineneii: Khudozhestvennye proizvedeniia v dvadtsati piati tomakh* (Moscow: Nauka, 1968), 288.

24. Leviticus 1:14, Authorized (King James) Version.

25. John 1:32, Authorized (King James) Version.

26. Ostap Vishnia, "Ostap Vishnia—Khai iasne imia ioho!" *Literaturnii iarmarok* 2 (1929): 204–6.

27. Gregory Freidin, "Isaak Babel," *Gregory Freidin's Selected Publications*, 1990, 12, accessed May 16, 2011, <http://www.stanford.edu/~gfreidin/Publications/index.htm>; a version of this article appears as Gregory Freidin, "Isaac Babel," in *European Writers: The Twentieth Century*, ed. George Stade (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990), 11:1885–1914.

28. Babel, *Sochineniia*, 2:150.

29. Ibid.

30. Elif Batuman has shown that the story is structured around the number five. "The story is set in 1905. The narrator must score two fives (*piaterki*) on the

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entrance exam for the Odessa Gymnasium, in order to break the 5 percent quota for Jewish students. The narrator duly impresses the examiners—particularly, a warden called Piatnitskii (whose name contains *piat-*, five) . . . The narrator is taken to see Shoil's corpse, and instructed to place two 5-kopek coins (*piataki*) on the dead man's eyes. The story that began with two *piaterki* ends with two *piataki*.” Elif Batuman, “Pan Pisar’: Clerkship in Babel’s First-Person Narrative,” in *The Enigma of Isaac Babel: Biography, History, Context*, ed. Gregory Freidin (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 169.

31. Babel, *Sochineniya*, 2:152.
32. Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 139.
33. Ibid., 140.
34. Freidin, “Isaak Babel.”
35. Babel, *Sochineniya*, 2:41.
36. Ibid., 1:64.
37. Ibid., 2:6.
38. Based on the geography of the story, this river would actually have been the Slucz. However, the actual river Zbrucz was one of the dividers of Habsburg Galicia, and it is possible that in calling his story “Crossing the River Zbrucz,” Babel was evoking a passage into historical Galicia. Yaroslav Hrytsak, writing of the 1772 agreement among Austria, Prussia, and Russia, describes the origins of this border: “The Austrian military command received orders to stop its troops at the river Podhorce. But there was no such river—most probably, the river Seret was intended. Unable to find the Podhorce, the officers stopped, exhausted, at a river called the Zbruch. Little did they know that by mistake they created one of the most enduring lines of cultural division in east-central Europe, one which has survived until our own times.” Yaroslav Hrytsak, “Historical Memory and Regional Identity among Galicia’s Ukrainians,” in C. M. Hann and Paul R. Magocsi, *Galicia: A Multicultural Land* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 185.
39. Babel, *Sochineniya*, 2:6.
40. Ibid., 2:6–7.
41. Ibid.
42. Freidin, “Two Babels—Two Aphrodites,” 44.
43. Babel, *Sochineniya*, 2:19.
44. Ibid., 2:18; translation consults Babel, *Complete Works*, 216.
45. Gregory Freidin, “Nietzschean Motifs in the Reception of Isaac Babel (1923–32),” in *Nietzsche and Soviet Culture*, ed. Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 164.
46. Norman Davies points out that there must be an error in Babel’s date, as the Poles still occupied Zhitomir on June 3, 1920. Davies, Efraim Sicher, and Carol Avins all suggest that Babel may have meant to write “July.” When

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“Gedali” first appeared in 1924, it too was dated “Zhitomir, June 1920.” Norman Davies, “Izaak Babel’s ‘Konarmiya’ Stories and the Polish-Soviet War,” *Modern Language Review* 67, no. 4 (1972): 847; Efraim Sicher, “The Jewish Cossack: Isaac Babel in the First Red Cavalry,” *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 4 (1988): 113–34; Isaac Babel, *1920 Diary*, ed. Carol J. Avins, trans. H. T. Willetts (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002), 110; Isaac Babel, “Gedali,” *Krasnaya nov'*, 1924.

47. Babel, *Sochinenia*, 1:362; translation consults Babel, *1920 Diary*, 3–4.

48. Babel, *Sochinenia*, 2:29.

49. *Ibid.*

50. The Sabbath Queen (Hebrew: Shabat-hamalka) is a metaphor for the spirit which rules over the day of rest.

51. Babel, *Sochinenia*, 2:31.

52. *Ibid.*, 2:29.

53. Efraim Sicher makes this point in “Text, Intertext, Context,” in *The Enigma of Isaac Babel*, ed. Gregory Freidin (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 199.

54. Babel, *Sochinenia*, 2:388.

55. J. J. Van Baak refers to cyclical time in his treatment of Cossack and Jewish time. “There is not only the Cossacks’ nomadic cyclicity, but the sedentary, concentric cultures have their cyclic patterns too; not only implicitly, as in the case of the peasants in *Konarmija*, but particularly in the case of Jews, presented in their marked rituality.” J. J. Van Baak, *The Place of Space in Narration: A Semiotic Approach to the Problem of Literary Space, with an Analysis of the Role of Space in I.E. Babel’s Konarmija* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1983), 161.

56. Simon Markish reads in Gedali a subtle skepticism of the Revolution. Markish, *Babel’ i drugie*, 45.

57. Babel, *Sochinenia*, 1:363.

58. Gregory Freidin, “Isaac Emanuelovich Babel, a Chronology,” in Babel, *Complete Works*, 1053.

59. Babel, *Sochinenia*, 1:297.

60. *Ibid.*, 1:299.

61. For a discussion of Babel’s plays, see Gregory Freidin, “Two Babels—Two Aphrodites: Autobiography in Maria and Babel’s Petersburg Myth,” in *The Enigma of Isaac Babel*, ed. Gregory Freidin (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 16–56.

62. *Ibid.*, 20.

63. Jean-Christophe Agnew has compared the ritual of money to religion: “When freed of ritual, religious, or juridical restraints, a money medium can imbue life itself with a pervasive and ongoing sense of risk, a recurrent anticipation of gain and loss that lends to all social intercourse a pointed, transactional quality.” Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750*, 4.

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64. “Pokhvala izbrannomu narodu” (“Glory to the Chosen People”), *Kievskaiia Dubinka*, August 23, 1907, 3.
65. *Sinenkaia*: a blue-colored bill, a unit of currency used briefly in Ukraine.
66. Mikhail Bulgakov, *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1990), 1:382–83 (italicized lines were originally in Ukrainian).
67. Viktor Shklovsky, *Sentimental’noe puteshestvie: Vospominaniia, 1917–1922* (Moscow and Berlin: Gelikon, 1923), 1923; my translation consults Viktor Shklovsky, *A Sentimental Journey: Memoirs, 1917–1922*, trans. Richard Sheldon (Normal, Ill.: Dalkey Archive Press, 2004), 215–16.
68. For an account of Rebbe Tverski, the actual last rebbe of the Chernobyl dynasty, see Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 76–80.
69. Given the apocalyptic setting for Liutov’s relationship with Gedali, it is fitting that the rebbe should be the leader of a well-known Hasidic group, since apocalyptic ideas have commonly, if often erroneously, been attributed to Hasidism. See Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974); for a complication of this belief see John J. Collins, “Apocalyptic Literature,” in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Robert A. Kraft and George W. E. Nickelsburg (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1986), 345–61.
70. Here we can assume a direct translation from what would in Yiddish be called simply “Torah,” the study of the Bible and all of its many religious commentaries.
71. Babel, *Sochineniia*, 1:36; translation consults Babel, *Complete Works*, 235.
72. For a good discussion of the place of Odessa in modern Jewish culture, see Zipperstein, *Imagining Russian Jewry*, 63–86.
73. Sasha Senderovich, in an excellent reading of the Hershele cycle, questions the standard reading of this story as a fascination with folklore, instead placing Hershele in the context of Babel’s oeuvre. Sasha Senderovich, “The Hershele Maze: Isaac Babel and His Ghost Reader,” in *Arguing the Modern Jewish Canon: Essays in Literature and Culture in Honor of Ruth Wisse* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 25–94.
74. Babel, *Sochineniia*, 2:36.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid., 2:38.
77. Ibid., 2:129.
78. Ibid.
79. Simon Markish, *Babel’ i drugie*, 19.
80. Babel, *Sochineniia*, 2:60.
81. Ibid., 2:69.

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82. Ibid., 1:408.
83. Ibid., 2:70.
84. Ibid., 2:43.
85. Batuman, “Pan Pisar’,” 157.
86. Babel, *Sochineniia*, 2:135.
87. Freidin, “Two Babels—Two Aphrodites,” 37.
88. Babel, *Sochineniia*, 2:563.
89. Isaac Babel, “Kolyvushka,” *Vozdushnye puti: Al’manakh*, no. 3 (New York, 1963).
90. Babel, *Sochineniia*, 1:313.
91. Ibid., 2:187.
92. Avins writes, “It is unclear whether Babel’, aware of the ban on weddings between the beginning of maslenitsa and Easter, intends to suggest that in this time of upheaval an attempted revival of tradition may entail a break of tradition.” In my reading, this immediate establishment of the breaking of rules is one of the keys to the story. Carol J. Avins, “Isaak Babel’s Tales of Collectivization: Rites of Transition in the New Soviet Village,” *Slavic Review* 64, no. 3 (Autumn 2005): 566.
93. Babel, *Sochineniia*, 2:187.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid., 2:188.
96. Ibid.
97. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 153–54.
98. As Carol Avins has observed, “In both stories the climactic encounter with officialdom brings into view the state’s campaign against the church and shows how vestiges of religious ritual become improvised rites of transition, religious in form but political in content.” Avins, “Isaak Babel’s Tales of Collectivization,” 561.
99. Babel, *Sochineniia*, 2:189.
100. Ibid., 2:188.
101. Ibid., 2:190.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid., 2:188.
104. Ibid., 2:190.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid., 2:191.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid., 2:192.
109. Ibid., 2:191.
110. Ibid., 2:192.
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid.

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113. Avins, “Isaak Babel’s Tales of Collectivization,” 568.
114. Babel, *Sochineniia*, 2:270.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid., 2:271.
117. Ibid., 2:273.
118. Ibid., 2:192.
119. Ibid., 2:269.

AFTERWORD

1. *Literaturnyi iarmarok* began publication in December 1928 and produced a total of twelve issues. *Literaturnyi iarmarok: Al’manakh misiachnyk* (Kharkiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukrayiny, 1928).
2. Ibid., 5–6.
3. Ibid., 6.
4. For an in-depth study of this group, see Halyna Hryni, “Literaturnyi Iarmarok: Ukrainian Modernism’s Defining Moment” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, Toronto, 2005).
5. The word “*mashber*” comes from the Hebrew, and means “crisis.” Der Nister, *Di Mishpokhe Mashber: Roman* (Moscow: Emes, 1939).
6. Nora Levin, *The Jews in the Soviet Union Since 1917: Paradox of Survival* (New York: NYU Press, 1990), 213.
7. Der Nister, *Di Mishpokhe Mashber*, 23–24; translation based on Der Nister, *The Family Mashber: A Novel*, trans. Leonard Wolf (New York: Summit Books, 1987), 36.
8. Peter B. Maggs, *The Mandelstam and “Der Nister” Files: An Introduction to Stalin-Era Prison and Labor Camp Records* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 6.
9. For an introduction to Iampol’skii (sometimes spelled Yampolsky), and Richard Sheldon’s excellent translation of a section from *The Fair* (there translated *Country Fair*), see Maxim Shrayer, *An Anthology of Jewish-Russian Literature: Two Centuries of Dual Identity in Prose and Poetry* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2007), 1:515–28.
10. The novel first appeared in the journal *Krasnaia nov’*, no. 3 (1941) and was published in book form in 1942.
11. Boris Iampol’skii, *Iarmarka* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1995), 103–4.
12. Ibid., 129–30.
13. Ibid.
14. In a short story, “The Students” (“Studenty”), the narrator notes, “In the evenings we read Bagritskii and Babel aloud.” Ibid., 229.
15. Ibid., 166.
16. Ibid., 123.

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17. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:89.
18. Ibid., 6:247.
19. Iampol'skii, *Iarmarka*, 173.
20. Ibid., 6.
21. Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 305.
22. As Ronald Grigor Suny has demonstrated, the Soviet policy toward national minorities combined the limitation of national expression with the granting of rights that proved to aid in the national “revolutions from below” that undermined the Soviet Union. “In the 74 years of Soviet power, the Kremlin had practiced a deeply contradictory policy toward its non-Russian subjects: on the one hand, eliminating real sovereignty and (in the decades of Stalinism) any semblance of political autonomy; on the other, fostering the development in many republics of native cultures, encouraging education in the local languages, and promoting, through a peculiar form of affirmative action, cadres from the dominant nationality.” Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), 155.
23. Terts, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 2:195.
24. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:79.

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