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ARTICLES

EXPERIMENTS WITH AUDIENCES: THE UKRAINIAN AND RUSSIAN PROSE OF KVITKA-OSNOVIANENKO

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Since the earliest accounts of Ukrainian literature in the vernacular, Hryhory Kvitka-Osnovianenko (1778–1843) has been viewed by most as the initiator of modern Ukrainian literary prose and, in that prose, of the theme of the dignity of ordinary people.[1] Yet his Ukrainian writing constitutes only one fifth of his total output,[2] most of which was in Russian. Kvitka published drama and prose in Russian, his Russian-language plays enjoyed a certain popularity, and his works in both Ukrainian and Russian received a moderate amount of mainly favorable attention in Moscow and Saint Petersburg journals.[3] Yet already in the nineteenth century Kvitka disappeared from the narrative of Russian literary history and was ceded wholly to the Ukrainian canon.[4]

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1. This perspective was no less characteristic of such nineteenth-century figures as Kostomarov (382) and Kulish (496) than it was of Soviet Ukrainian literary scholarship of the 1960s (Chalyi 1962, 437).

2. In *Zibrannia tvoriv*, Kvitka-Osnovianenko's Ukrainian-language works, or works where Ukrainian is the main language, occupy almost exactly 20% of the total number of pages dedicated to Kvitka's published writings.

3. Of 130 reviews, 90 were favourable (Tarnavs'kyi 45).

4. His name did not rate a mention, for example, in Pypin's four-volume history of Russian literature, and in Sumtsov's encyclopaedia entry of 1895 he figured as a "well-known Ukrainian writer [*izvestnyi malorossiiskii pisatel'*]" whose Russian-language prose was of little significance and whose Russian-language dramas did not rate a mention. In Soviet handbooks and encyclopaedias of various periods he was identified exclusively as a Ukrainian writer (see, e.g., Aizenshtok's article of the early 1930s in *Literaturnaia entsiklopediia* and Zubkov's in the 1970s edition of *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*).

Ukrainian criticism, for its part, had no quibble with the waning of Kvitka's reputation in Russia. In 1858 Panteleimon Kulish asserted that Kvitka's work falls into two categories depending on the language in which it is written: Kvitka became "an elevated poet for his native world after being a minor writer in the literature of a foreign tongue" (Kulish 499),[5] and his Ukrainian-language work achieved significance through its exceptional capacity to affect a nascent national audience, while the Russian-language work was derivative, aesthetically uninteresting—"a momentary diversion for gentlefolk" (495)—and even linguistically deficient (490). This view was then more or less silently accepted by the critical tradition.[6]

Traditional histories of national literatures have, by and large, focused on the development of literary writing in particular languages and in relation to particular national projects, not uncommonly understating the complexity of cultural interactions that attend the emergence of new national literatures and the often plural, uncertain and ambiguous cultural identities of their creators. Thus, for example, the question of the disposition and cultural experience of educated people, including those responsible for the beginnings of modern Ukrainian letters, in the Ukrainian part of the Russian Empire in the first half of the nineteenth century remains open and continues to invite examination.[7] In the following discussion I revisit certain of Kvitka's works to seek clarity on how he—more precisely, the structuring logic that may be inferred to inform his texts—conceives of his audiences. I hope to suggest how these texts may be interpreted as tending to influence or change those audiences. The received view of Kvitka as a literary reformer is justified in the sense that, as Kvitka himself often claimed, he expanded the stylistic and emotive range of Ukrainian literary prose by adding the sentimental mode where previously the burlesque had been dominant. My contention is that, perhaps more importantly, some of Kvitka's prose works also implicitly advocate for a new audience united by a culture imagined as transcending social difference—an audience in which, therefore, might be discerned some national (or, as I suggest below, pre-national) features. This innovation notwithstanding, the worldview implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) articulated in Kvitka's works was conservative, conceiving of society as naturally stratified, each stratum manifesting a distinctive style of life and set of values.

5. This and all subsequent translations are mine.

6. See Iefremov 328. Critics of the early Soviet decades were, perhaps, the most explicit in their articulation of such opinions (Aizenshtok 1929, 6, and, especially, Shamrai xviii–xxi).

7. Pavlo Fylypovych's 1930 study, based on subscription lists of Ukrainian-language and Ukrainian-themed publications of the 1830s and 1840s, remains a useful guide to the social profile of the Ukrainian readership of the time. In a much later inquiry informed by Hans Robert Jauss's reception aesthetics, Hryhorii Hrabovych (George Grabowicz) examines the expectations and prejudices that confronted the nascent Ukrainian literature of the time in the Russian Empire (73–136).

Kvitka's works, whether in Ukrainian or in Russian, may be viewed as embodying four types of experiment in authorial attitude toward imagined audiences. 1) In certain texts of the Russian-language corpus, including his longest work, the novel *Zhizn' i pokhozhdeniia Petra Stepanovicha Stolbikova* [The Life and Adventures of Petr Stepanovich Stolbikov, 1841], the implied audience is a general, empire-wide one, with author and readers participating in an undifferentiated "Russian" literary field. 2) In several wholly or mainly Russian-language works the audience is still empire-wide, but part of it is characterized by attachment through location, ethno-cultural heritage, or disposition to Ukrainian ("Little Russian") realia. In works where this view of audience prevails, the mode of audience address acknowledges differences in cultural competence between the general imperial readership and the Ukrainian readership, and makes accommodations for the former. The oft-republished novel *Pan Khaliavskii* [Khaliavsky, Esquire, 1839] belongs to this category, as does Kvitka's trilogy of Russian-language plays featuring the Ukrainophone trickster Shel'menko: *Dvorianskie vybory: chast' vtoraia, ili Vybor ispravnika* [The Nobility's Elections: Part Two, or the Election of the Chief of Police, 1830], *Shel'menko, volostnoi pisar'* [Shel'menko, the District Secretary, 1831], and a comedy of enduring popularity in Ukrainian theaters, *Shel'menko—denshchik* [Shel'menko, the Orderly, 1840]. 3) The more comic Ukrainian-language works construe their audience as a Ukrainian-speaking "public": it is part of the educated and culturally experienced empire-wide readership, but differs from the general Russian readership through its competence in the Ukrainian language in addition to the Russian. (This general imperial readership is envisaged not as a direct addressee of these works but, if at all, as a kind of onlooker. Nonetheless, the unitary structure of the imperial literary discursive field meant that this audience, represented by reviewers of the Moscow and St. Petersburg journals did, in fact, become involved in the reception of Kvitka's Ukrainian writings. At the turn of the 1830s and 1840s Kvitka made much of the impropriety of this Russian-language readership's offering opinions about Ukrainian literature, given its lack of linguistic and cultural expertise.)[8] The

8. In his letter of April 26, 1839, to Petr Pletnev, Kvitka referred to such self-important but poorly informed critics as a "guild of scoffers [*tsekhovykh skalozubov*]" (7: 217). The following year, writing to Mykhailo Maksymovych, he decried the presumption of "the great pundits who preach that there is no such language [as the Ukrainian] and that we twist Russian words and forms around into our own tufted [*khokhlatye*; the reference is to the *khokhol* or forelock characteristic of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, but also to the derogatory Russian term for Ukrainians] and bearded ones" (7: 259). Kvitka's letter of October 25, 1841, to Aleksei Kraevsky, editor and publisher of *Otechestvennye zapiski*, contains the most extensive such complaint and the radical demand that Ukrainian works be off limits for Russian reviewers (7: 323). Finally, in 1842 Kvitka berated the critic Nikolai Tikhorsky, who was of Ukrainian origin, for siding with Russian critics in their dismissive attitude toward Ukrainian letters, linking their condescension for the first time to the broader issue of the diminished status of the once flourishing Ukrainian language and culture in the Russian Empire (Kvitka-Osnovianenko 1843, 54).

stories "Saldats'kyi patret" [The Soldier's Portrait, 1833], "Mertvets'kyi velykden'" [Easter of the Revenants, 1834], "Konotops'ka vid'ma" [The Witch of Konotop, 1836] and other Ukrainian-language works in a comic vein belong to this category, as does "Suplika do Pana Izdatelia" [A Request to Mr. Editor, 1833], Kvitka's contribution to the comic genre of the Ukrainian-language foreword or afterword to the literary and folkloric collection or almanac. 4) The category that proved from the point of view of a national narrative of Ukrainian literature to be the most significant imagines as its audience the sum of all Ukrainian speakers, including the untutored peasant majority (but not excluding the educated readership); members of this audience are conceived of as not even necessarily literate, but as able to apprehend Kvitka's texts as listeners.[9] This category includes the most frequently interpreted of Kvitka's texts, the story "Marusia" [1834], as well as a number of lesser stories, plays and didactic texts.

Together, these modes of audience address, even taking account of the fourth, reflected a pre-national, indeed pre-modern, value system. It was pre-national because the worth that it placed on cultural distinctiveness and the appeal of territorial specificity was independent of any explicit project for the consolidation of this large group of human beings comprising diverse social layers into a cultural, let alone political unit. It was pre-modern because it apprehended this cultural and linguistic distinctiveness as part of an essentially static order of things in which the hierarchy of tsar, landowner and peasant was as immutable and divinely ordained as patriarchal authority was within the family. The existing state of affairs, from this vantage point, was justifiably supported by church and priesthood, by those servants of the tsar who were not corrupt but fulfilled their duties conscientiously, by inherited customs that regulated social life in the uncorrupted lower orders of society, and by common sense. In the world-view endorsed by Kvitka's stories such common sense was more characteristic of untutored folk endowed with natural intelligence than of educated people subject to intellectual and lifestyle fads.

The four categories of audience address in Kvitka's works do not manifest themselves in any evolutionary order. Works reflecting any one of the four appear randomly throughout his oeuvre. The story "Voiazhery" [Voyagers, 1842], which Kvitka labeled a "fantasy," for example, was written in 1841–42 and published in the St. Petersburg newspaper *Literaturnaia gazeta*.[10] Thus,

9. In "The Soldier's Portrait" the narrator addresses his audience as "you, brothers, who are reading or listening to this book" (3: 7). Writing in 1841 to Kraevsky, Kvitka insisted on the importance of the lower social orders [*chern'*] as an audience. Among them, he believed, were "many literate people and many readers and avid listeners who understand what is read to them" (7: 322).

10. Kvitka's play of the same name and similar content was written in 1843 and published in 1845, after the author's death, but was not performed.

the work belongs to the final years of Kvitka's life and postdates his period of writing in Ukrainian. Yet, as far as the author-audience relationship is concerned, it clearly belongs to Category 1 and shows evidence of an intention to avoid any specific references to Ukraine.

One of Kvitka's many satires directed at some aspect of imperial Russia's social or cultural life, "Voiazhery" criticizes the fashion for foreign travel that Kvitka, who lived in the Kharkiv suburb of Osnova and scarcely moved beyond the environs of Kharkiv, regarded as pointless and even unpatriotic. Sending the piece to the editor of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Fedor Koni, Kvitka claimed that he had written it in response to the sight of "crowds rushing abroad with identical presuppositions and later returning with identical judgments" (7: 348).

"Voyagers" comprises a series of episodes set in motion by a "fantastic" event: a swarm of microorganisms infects the narrator, a member of the gentry, with a restlessness that compels him to travel. He begins a journey through Russia, but is cured of his wanderlust well before reaching its frontiers, whereupon he returns home. The journey brings him in touch with a sequence of eccentric, indeed grotesque personages, all of whom, likewise infected, are either about to travel or have recently returned from abroad. (The compositional similarity to Gogol's *Mertvye dushi* [Dead Souls], also published in 1842, appears to be accidental.) The narrative's satire is directed against the travelers' pretentious and self-deluding expressions of intent: except for one, who openly relishes the prospect of "enjoying celebrity and renown" (6: 257), they promise to utilize the insights gained during their sojourns in Paris and other foreign parts for the benevolent transformation of Russia.

The basis for this transformative determination, always represented ironically by the socially, politically and religiously conservative Kvitka, is a vision of Russia as backward and barbaric. Disdain for Russia on the part of characters whom the text presents as self-important and superficial becomes a satirical topos: they scoff at "our barbarous Russia" (6: 257), "miserable, backward Russia" (6: 258), "that contemptible Russia" (6: 264), "our Russia, verily pitiful, ignorant, coarse, and stale in its ideas" (6: 264), and "the wretched lump that you refer to as 'Russia'" (6: 284). Naturally, the satirist's point is that "Russia" (by which he means the East Slavic core of the Russian Empire—he does not differentiate it here into Great and Little Russia, as in other places he does) is none of these things, and that its critics' inane speeches discredit not "Russia," but themselves. Furthermore, the narrator identifies himself, following his recovery from the restlessness bug, with "us, the Russians" (6: 287), thus recruiting for "Russia" the virtues of good sense and critical reason that he represents himself as manifesting. In the confrontation with the "abroad" the distinctions between the various nuances of "Russianness," Kvitka seems to argue, disappear: the significant differ-

ence is between plain "Russians" and Russian imitators of a Europe that is represented for them chiefly by France and England.[11]

Yet for Kvitka who, in contrast to almost all contemporary Ukrainian writers, never spent a moment of his life outside of Ukrainian ethno-linguistic territory, the invocation of concrete and positive images of common-Russianness proved difficult, and the temptation to specify (and perhaps Ukrainianize) the locale is manifest. One of the several arguments tributary to Kvitka's main thesis is that the narrator's travelling compatriots marvel at foreign antiquities, while monuments of the native past lie forgotten and ignored. To illustrate this Kvitka constructs a scene in which the narrator confronts a peasant near a field of grain where hummocks and depressions suggest the remains of what the narrator conjectures must have been the buildings and streets of a magnificent city.

From the last quarter of the eighteenth century onward, archaeologists had given attention to Greek and other antiquities on the territories near the Black Sea that had recently been annexed to the Russian Empire (Formozov 35, 40–56). In the 1830s burial mounds in the steppes, considered by many contemporaries, including, most memorably, Shevchenko, to be relics of the Cossack past, were excavated.[12] But in Kvitka's text the nature of the ruin and its intended meaning in the text remain unclear. The peasant, too, is somewhat mysterious. He is discovered "singing a song of his nation" [*zapevshego svoiu, natsional'nuiu pesniu*]. Asked by the narrator whether he is one of the local people [*iz zdeshnikh*], he replies that he is, without the reader being able to discern where *zdes'* might be and from which particular cultural community the *natsional'naia* song might stem. The narrator then offers a complex interpretation of the manner of the peasant's reply: "in the tone of his voice there was a harmony, a full consonance, that clearly said to me, 'I am a descendant of a once great people [*narod*] that, though free of any guilt, was destroyed by a villainous enemy envious of its grandeur, glory and might'" (6: 260).

What could Kvitka have in mind here? Who are these historical victims? Who is their enemy? Things become even more obscure when the peasant responds evasively to the narrator's questions about the ruined city, leading the narrator to conjecture that "clearly here some important secret lay hidden that the peasant knew, but evidently, in the present circumstances, or out of distrust toward a stranger, did not wish to reveal." The narrator does not press the point, and they part, seemingly without emotion—"and yet, in the course of that apparently indifferent parting, what looks we exchanged! We understood one another!" (6: 260).

The two men are representatives of the educated elite and of the "people," groups whose trans-class alliance is essential for the invention of that psycho-

11. On the fashion for anti-French sentiment in Russian literature of the 1820s and 1830s, see Petrenko 10–14.

12. See the notes to Shevchenko's poem "Rozryta mohyla" (693).

logical entity, the nation. Is the knowledge that they share analogous to that which is referred to in the Russian-language poem "Kurgan" [The Burial Mound, 1833] by Kvitka's younger contemporary Ievhen Hrebinka (1812–48)—historical knowledge, that is, of the depredations of the "treacherous Pole" or the Tatar (Hrebinka 1: 126–28)? But if that is the case, why is the adversary unnamable? Expressions of animosity toward Tatars after the Russian Empire's annexation of the Crimean Khanate, and toward Poles after their uprising of 1830–31, were as legitimate at the time of the composition of "Voyagers" as they had been for Hrebinka almost a decade earlier. Or is the knowledge that cannot be articulated (in the represented meeting, but perhaps also on the pages of a censored St. Petersburg periodical) the knowledge of some atrocity committed by the Empire-as-conqueror—such as, for example, the 1708 sack of the Cossack capital Baturyn as related in *Istoriia rusov* [History of the Rus'][13] and other Cossackophile texts familiar to historically interested readers of the early decades of the nineteenth century? Or is the scene, finally, the rather awkward and unspecific outcome of an intention to construct a patriotic parable of common-Russian historical grandeur thoughtlessly overlooked by a Europe-obsessed aristocracy, but secretly cherished by the guardians of common-Russian authenticity, the common-Russian people, the specificity of whose *natsional'nost'* does not affect the generality of their common-Russianness? Neither conclusive clues internal to the story, nor any external hints, help choose among these alternatives. The facility with which Kvitka wrote, combined with his reluctance to revise or re-read his manuscripts, even when their composition had been interrupted—something that he commented on specifically in relation to the writing of "Voyagers" (7: 348)—often made for texts that were structurally or conceptually disjointed, even if, paragraph by paragraph, they were fluent and engaging. Thus, the encounter with the peasant can be read either as a confirmation, or a contradiction, of an idea that, however, unquestionably prevails in the rest of the text: that of an all-Russian historical and cultural space demarcated against the false idol of Europe.

Category 2 in our classification of author-audience relations encompasses Russian-language texts which, however, signal emphatically the Ukrainianness of the social and cultural milieu that they depict and foreground the fact that writing about such things for the imperial audience at large requires interpretive commentary and cultural translation. One such text is "Panna sotnikovna: Istoricheskoe proisshestvie" [The Captain's Daughter: A Historical Event]. The story appeared in 1840 in *Sovremennik*, the journal initiated by Pushkin and continued after his death by Petr Pletnev, with whom Kvitka conducted a rich correspondence. Evidently based on a brief entry in the chronicle of the Kvitka family under the year 1732 (4: 537), it tells of the

13. For a discussion of the depiction of this atrocity in *Istoriia rusov*, see Plokhy (563–64).

daughter of a Cossack notable who, raped by a Russian official, commits suicide rather than live with dishonor.

The text contains many localizing stratagems. Kvitka frequently uses Ukrainian words, often following them with a Russian gloss. Sometimes these refer to specifically Ukrainian realia,[14] at other times they are ordinary terms that appear in dialogue, often with a Russian gloss, and remind the reader that the "original" language of the "reported" communication was Ukrainian.[15] Occasionally such Ukrainian terms are simply incorporated as loanwords into the Russian text,[16] and sometimes full sentences appear without translation in Ukrainian or a Ukrainian slightly altered for comprehension by speakers of Russian.[17] Ukrainian forms of address (*pan* and *panna* [Mr. and Miss]) are used (the title of the story is a case in point), often with the distinctively Ukrainian vocative case.[18] The text dedicates space to describing local customs of various social estates and other ethnographic realia pertinent to the Christmas cycle, often employing Ukrainian vocabulary to name them and once even elucidating them further with a footnote (4: 307). These descriptions are ends in themselves: their relative weight in the text suggests that they were a significant part of the content intended to be transmitted to the reader. For members of the Ukrainian reading elite such passages could serve as reminders and even as celebrations of the cultural practices of their untutored compatriots. For the non-Ukrainian imperial public the ethnographic passages provided information that was interesting for its own sake and could be adduced as evidence of the cultural distinctiveness of Ukrainian society (at least, Ukrainian society as it was one hundred years prior to the time of Kvitka's writing).

Thus, the text clearly identifies as an important subgroup of its addressees the general Russian-speaking audience that is taken to be uninformed about Ukrainian ways and that does not know the Ukrainian language. Furthermore, it can be inferred from the very fact that the text is in Russian that Kvitka was vying for approval from this public. It comes as a surprise, then, that Kvitka should have chosen for this particular work what today we would identify as

14. E.g., "*Zavtra 'sviatvecher'* [It's Christmas Eve tomorrow]" (4: 293); "*sest' za 'uzvar i kut'iu'* [to sit down to *uzvar* and *kutia* (traditional Ukrainian Christmas dishes)]" (4: 293).

15. E.g., "*ranok (utro)* [morning]" (4: 292); "*'pozatorik' (tret'ego goda)* [the year before last]" (4: 293); "*ona vstala 'vdosveta'* [she got up at dawn]" (4: 296); "*Poturat' vam (dat' voliu)* [If one were to grant your wish]" (4: 297).

16. E.g., "*blizko ikh prokhodiat krasivye*, cherniavye *i razriazhennye devki*, *bystro smotriat v glaza molodym*, *chernousym*, garnym *kazachen'kam* [beautiful, *dark-haired* and elaborately dressed wenches walk close by them, darting glances into the eyes of the young, black-moustachioed, *handsome* Cossacks]" (4: 303; emphases in the original).

17. "*Se tak spervu; vybachaite, pane sotniku; dali navchimos' shche i ne ts'ogo* [That's just for starters; pardon us, Mr Captain; in future we'll learn even more than this]" (4: 303).

18. E.g., "*Pozdravliaemo, pane sotniku, po starovine!* [Greetings, Mr. Captain, according to the old ways!]" (4: 303).

an emphatically anti-colonial plot. Furthermore, the argument of the plot is integrated with the rhetoric of the work as a whole, which articulates, and invokes on the reader's part, resentment against the (ethnically Russian) representatives of the empire, depicting them as domineering and exploitative of their power vis-à-vis the Ukrainians with whom they interact. The topos of anti-Russian exasperation—Mykhailo Drahomanov remarked on its presence in Ivan Kotliarevsky, Kvitka, Taras Shevchenko and even the early Gogol (333)—is occasionally encountered in others of Kvitka's texts, especially those that refer to lower social strata. Generally, though not here, this topos contributes to the comedy of such texts and is part of an, apparently, tolerated convention of the negative but (at least superficially) "playful" mutual representation of Ukrainians and Russians as *khokhly* and *moskali* (respectively, pejorative ethnonyms for the two peoples).[19]

In "The Captain's Daughter" this negative portrayal takes an altogether more serious turn. On the one hand, the representatives of imperial officialdom—two cadets attached to a lieutenant-general stationed in Kharkiv, small fry in the imperial scheme of things—behave with the arrogant self-confidence of a colonial elite, immune to the sanctions of ordinary morality or local custom and *a priori* overriding any local structures of authority. On the other hand, the majority of the natives, instinctively sensing the power of the newcomers, accommodate themselves to it through subordination. Thus young Cossacks, though not formally incorporated into the tsar's regular army, are naively happy to imitate it: "'Oho, your lordship,' replied [the field officer] with a certain swagger, 'our boys are exceedingly fond of drill; they saw their fill of the Russian troops [*moskalei*] when they went to Persia with them, so now they want to salute you according to the new regimen" (4: 303). Literal readers (and censors) could read such lines as approving the Cossacks' laudable willingness to adopt imperial norms; others might detect irony in this depiction of the Cossacks enthusiastically embracing a discipline antithetical to

19. Some early Soviet critics were happy to label these descriptions as reflexes of "nationalism," by which, the context suggests, they meant primarily a negative attitude to nationally conceived Others (Aizenshtok 1929, 56; Iosypchuk 73). This feature of Kvitka's prose, not easily reconciled with the idea of the rapprochement of the non-Russian peoples of the USSR with their Russian compatriots, ceased to be addressed in Soviet Ukrainian literary histories after the Second World War. Kvitka's letters to his Russian friends in Moscow and St. Petersburg often—half-jokingly but also half-seriously—slip into a Ukrainian-language lower-estate discourse to express impatience or dissatisfaction with the way he himself is treated by his Russian partners. A typical example is a sentence in one of Kivtka's letters to his friend, the historian, writer and publisher Mikhail Pogodin, expressing anxiety lest the typesetting of some of his, Kvitka's, Ukrainian-language works be botched by Moscow printers: "*Boius', chto bez moiei korrektury nabreshut' bahats'ko moskali!* [I fear that without my proofreading [here Kvitka's Russian gives way to Ukrainian] the Russians will tell lots of fibs]" (7: 297). The code-switch from neutral Russian into mildly low-style Ukrainian occurs at the point when Kvitka is about to express a negative opinion about the treatment that he expects his Ukrainian project will receive at the hands of Russian service providers.

their fabled freedom-loving anarchism, and of their ready collaboration in the Russian Empire's military adventures.

But it is on the sexual stage that the colonial drama plays itself out most vividly. The arrival of the cadets in the small town disrupts existing socio-sexual hierarchies. The young men of the local gentry are sidelined—in effect, emasculated—and reduced to whispering among themselves, "There you see the Russian [*moskalia*] already: he takes over straight away. Our young ladies don't even look our way anymore" (4: 309). When the captain's daughter declines the early advances of one of the cadets, he expresses his exasperation in a crescendo of contempt for her, Ukrainian women, and Ukraine generally: "that *khokhlushka* dares to give herself airs [...] I'll make her fall in love with me, then I'll discard her. Let her suffer. I've tamed more than one of her kind in that dull-witted *khokhol* country of theirs, where, truth to tell, the only good things are the girls and the cherry brandy" (4: 311). Sexual power in his worldview goes hand in hand with political power; resistance calls for violent repression. There are no sanctions against the cadets' indifference to local mores: "insofar as they were Russians [*liudi moskovskie*], it followed that their innovations were met without protest" (4: 311). Even when the captain's daughter has been raped in her father's home—a mortal affront to her as a human being, but also to the local patriarchal order—the response of the indigenous authority structures is to protect the miscreants from the anger of the Cossacks and common people. The field officer who had boasted of his troops' embrace of the new Russian military ways arranges for the cadets to be spirited away secretly to Kharkiv—"for a just trial and punishment" (4: 320), as the text puts it. But the laconic and general nature of this statement sheds doubt on the likelihood of such justice prevailing.

How audible the tone of anticolonial resentment was to Kvitka's audiences of the time is not clear. One contemporary Russian reviewer either saw or chose to see nothing of the sort, deeming "The Captain's Daughter" merely one of several works with a didactic purpose, intended in this instance "to prove that for a virgin and a woman death is preferable to dishonor" (Mentsov 159). Of the structure of the text itself it can be said that "The Captain's Daughter" shares with certain others of Kvitka's works an ambivalence with regard to the cultural and ideological identification of its audience. It addressed, and vies for visibility to, an audience conceived of as empire-wide. Yet it takes as its theme—with history playing the role of a distancing device—acute divisions between the powerful and the disempowered in the imperial world. These divisions, what is more, correspond to ethnic and cultural divides. Kvitka does not as a rule conceptualize the imperial audience as divisible into "national" parts, but at times, as in "The Captain's Daughter," he is willing, like the author of *Istoriia rusov*, to construct the image of a Ukrainian elite identity based on anti-imperial and, not to put too fine a point upon it, anti-Russian grievance.

Elements of the Ukrainian-Russian cultural divide invoked in "The Captain's Daughter" had been anticipated, albeit in a different social key, in Kvitka's "Saldats'kyi patret: Latyns'ka pobrekhen'ka, po-nashomu rozkazana" [The Soldier's Portrait: A Latin Fable, Told in Our Language], a Ukrainian-language work representative of our third category. First published in the Kharkiv almanac *Utrenniaia zvezda* [Morning Star] in 1833, it appeared in an expanded Ukrainian version in Kvitka's collection *Malorossiiskie povesti, rasskazyvaemye Grits'kom Osnov'ianenkom* [Ukrainian Tales Told by Hrytsko Osnovianenko, Moscow, 1834], then in a Russian translation by the linguist Vladimir Dal [1837] and, finally, in Kvitka's autotranslation [1842].

The initial implied audience, then, was limited to readers competent in Ukrainian, a group more intimate than the empire-wide audience and comprising the educated part of Ukrainian society in the Russian Empire, predominantly landowners and descendants of the old Cossack elite. Yet, writing for this group, Kvitka followed the tradition, established by Ivan Kotliarevsky (1798–1842) in *Eneida*, his travesty of Virgil's *Aeneid*, of securing legitimacy for the literary use of Ukrainian by taking subject matter from the plebeian social stratum that spoke this language and adopting the burlesque tone that, according to classicist poetics, matched this social setting. The narrator, Hrytsko Osnovianenko, involves himself in the narrated milieu and identifies with it socially through his repeated references to "our people" [*nashi*] and "our boys" [*nashi khloptsi*]. The "real" narrator, controller of the logic of the story and master of its satirical argument, stands "above" Hrytsko and offers Hrytsko to the elite reader for entertainment and amusement. The elite reader is invited to laugh, not so much *with* Hrytsko as *at* him and his cultural surrounds.[20] Thus, "The Soldier's Portrait" does not offer its readership the image of a Ukrainian-language discursive field in which the author, the reading public, and society as represented in the text are united by a shared language; it stops well short of providing such a blueprint for a national literary public, policing with its satire the boundary between the elite consumer of literature and "the people" as subject matter from which entertainment may be drawn.

The plot of "The Soldier's Portrait" is an expansion of the Latin tag "ne sutor ultra crepidam" [let the shoemaker not (judge) higher than the shoes]. A folk painter renowned for the veracity of his representations, commissioned

20. In 1929 Yury Savchenko offered a persuasive description of the mechanics of this audience effect: "Kvitka's favourite form of narration built upon the [narrator's] subjective expectation of being apprehended by people of a particular circle—his friends and acquaintances—while the text was objectively to be received by disinterested parties: the readers. Sharply comical effects, reflected in language, result from this non-correspondence between the actual and the represented levels of reception. Insofar as this non-correspondence has no compositional motivation—for the reader can see that the narrator has no interlocutors but the readers themselves—the reader's attention focuses not on the narrator's psychology or experience, but on the comedy of his language" (294).

by a landlord to devise a scarecrow to protect his garden, paints the portrait of a soldier so convincing that, placed in the local marketplace, it deceives a succession of vendors and visitors into treating the representation as a real soldier. Kvitka mocks this level of realism through Osnovianenko's praise for the artist's capacity to do lifelike portrayals of "a bucket or a pig" and to require no caption to identify the object represented as "not a melon, but a plum" (3: 7).

What is offered to the Ukrainian elite audience is the carnivalesque, variegated and vital image of people from the lower orders of Ukrainian society, both rural and urban; their behavior and speech; and the material objects, both durable and comestible, that fill their rich and picturesque lives. This picture is offered to genteel readers to use at will: they have a choice between the enjoyment of observation from an anthropologist's distance or, if they prefer, the equal pleasure of recognizing or, perhaps, even identifying with the represented world.

A significant component of this empirical reality is the taut relationship in it between the indigenes and representatives of imperial authority. As in "The Captain's Daughter," the parties to this relationship are divided by an ethnic boundary. A factor common to all of the comic representatives of "our people" who come to voice in the story is their deprecation, suspicion and resentment of most things Russian that they confront in their day-to-day experience. Hrytsko's reflections on the trade practices of a tavern run by a Russian lead to a gloomy generalization: "It's their Russian [*moskovs'ka*] religion: to rob you of whatever you've got" (3: 10); women selling doughnuts apprehend a Russian pancake seller who sets up a stall beside them as "begotten by the devil" and are reduced to taking their appeal against "that rabid, Catholic, Muslim Russian" to the painted soldier, whom as a *moskal'* they also abhor (3: 12–13). And yet, the authority that the painted soldier represents tames these antagonistic sentiments and compels submissive, subservient (subaltern, one is tempted by postcolonial convention to say) behavior, including comically unsuccessful attempts at linguistic accommodation to Russian. "Your Excellency, Mr. Soldier [*vashe blahorodiie*, *hospoda saldatstvo*]" (3: 13), cringes Iavdokha, the doughnut seller who among her own people is a power-broker and something of a tyrant. A group of youthful tradesmen who throw their weight around the marketplace, pester young women, and generally misbehave, become respectful and polite when they approach the soldier (3: 19). "The Great-Russian elements figure as marginal or barbaric in this half-ethnography, half auto-ethnography," Taras Koznarsky has written in his superb reading of the story (198). On this point, however, it is necessary to voice a note of friendly difference. "Barbaric"—surely, and how! But "marginal"? No, for the imperial nation and its minions, however barbaric, are by definition at the center, and the margin is reserved for the weaker partner in the colonial bond. The laughter with which the story ends, Koznarsky sug-

gests, is released by the realization that the soldier is a painted sham, a harmless illusion. But there are two instances and forms of laughter here, and each is darker than that. First comes the laughter of those indigenes who have already recognized *this* soldier as a mere counterfeit, at their compatriots, who continue to fear him as though he were one of the *real* soldiers that rob and humiliate them as a matter of course and with impunity (the story provides a fine description of such a uniformed thief and extortionist). This is a laughter of relief at a single instance of reprieve from what is otherwise the ubiquity of colonial domination. Then, at the very end, comes the community's laughter at the expense of Tereshko. The young cobbler has mistaken the portrait for a real soldier. He tries to recover his dented dignity by critiquing the painter's representation of the soldier's boots. The artist accepts this correction from an expert, but responds to Tereshko's endeavor further to extend his criticism to cover the whole of the painted uniform with the put-down phrase, "Cobbler, know your craft, but don't meddle with tailoring!" (3: 21). The marketplace roars with laughter, and Tereshko loses his status "on the street, at parties, and in the tavern" (3: 21). All it takes to crush the vitality and self-respect of a cocky local boy is the collective self-deluding laughter of a colonial community that rejoices in the fact that, just once, the *image* of colonial authority has proven to be illusory. The authority itself, of course, persists, oblivious of their merriment; in defeating the spirited cobbler, the community has become its unwitting collaborator.

There is a similarly melancholic twist in the authorial address to the story's elite audience. The genteel readership is invited to laugh at the comical but endearing "otherness" of the ordinary people; identification with them is limited by the distancing effect of irony. But do the differences that separate the Ukrainian elite audience from the comically represented Ukrainian plebeian social milieu include a difference between their attitudes to the fact of empire and, more specifically, to Russians? Prior to answering this by no means simple question it is useful first to note a satirical device that Kvitka sometimes uses: the exposure of the vices and follies of the "enlightened" and socially advantaged elite by establishing an analogy between their actions and simpler and crasser examples of the same behavior in the lower classes. In the Russian-language story "Lozhnye poniatiia" [Wrong Ideas, 1840], for example, Kvitka uses this device to mock the gentrifying modification of surnames to fit Russian patterns: "Attention to such trivia is characteristic only of people of low estate; in higher social spheres changes of surnames, or the addition to them of such sonorous endings as 'ov' or 'sky,' do not occur" (4: 323). To ensure that the satire is recognized for what it is, Kvitka employs this ironic construction repeatedly (4: 329, 331, 334 and 336).

Similarly, in "The Soldier's Portrait" the description of plebeian anti-Russian animus may well have been a veiled reference to analogous resentments in elite social spheres and, more to the point, in Kvitka's own personal

case. Certainly, six years later Kvitka would repeatedly express such disgruntlement in his correspondence. "The Soldier's Portrait" was written, he claimed, in anticipation of criticism of his story "Marusia" by Russian critics who did not understand Ukrainians (cobblers who did not understand the tailor's craft).[21]

This makes for an interesting case of audience construction: on the one hand, the audience is the general "Little Russian" elite, in most respects part of the empire-wide elite. The text acquiesces in this group consciousness, which is also a gentry-consciousness, and flatters this audience by elevating it through comedy above the socially distant "other." But at the same time this imperial gentry solidarity is undermined, and a trans-class ethnic solidarity is invoked: Kvitka's exasperation with the Moscow and St. Petersburg publishers and know-it-all reviewers is of a piece with the exasperation and grievance felt in the market place by Ukrainian traders who are powerless to confront the abuses of the Russian soldier and have no choice but to endure them. Thus Kvitka articulates an "othering" of the Russian that is in transition from a merely comical convention to an expression of solidarity—pre-national in the terms defined at the beginning of this discussion—arising from grievances shared across class boundaries.

This solidarity comes closest to the surface in works that comprise our fourth category, Kvitka's Ukrainian-language tales about ordinary people, most notably "Marusia," the work that elicited the most comment and praise from Kvitka's nineteenth-century readers.[22] A fragment of "Marusia" appeared in *Utrenniaia zvezda* in 1833, and the story was published in full in *Malorossiiskie povesti* the following year. Set in a well-to-do peasant milieu, the story was simple. A father, Naum Drot, presented as remarkable for his wisdom and his love for his family, forbids his virtuous daughter Marusia to marry her beloved, Vasyl, a young man suitable in every respect except that he may be conscripted into the army. Vasyl earns the means to employ a sub-

21. This retrospective self-explanation appeared for the first time in Kvitka's letter of March 15, 1839, to Pletnev (7: 215). Kvitka repeated it in a further letter to Pletnev on April 26, 1839 (7: 217), then in a letter to Kraevsky on October 26, 1841 (7: 323). But these later explanations appear to respond to negative criticism of Kvitka—and of Ukrainian writing in general—which appeared *after* the 1833 and 1834 publications of "The Soldier's Portrait." The review of *Malorossiiskie povesti* in *Severnaia pchela* for 1834 was an example of such unflattering critiques (Honchar 43). Kvitka expected such negative responses to Ukrainian-language publications. His letter of June 2,1834, to Pogodin, written just before the almanac *Utrenniaia zvezda* became available in Moscow, makes this quite clear. "Don't whip us too painfully," Kvitka wrote; "we collected what we were able to, and we put it together as best we could" (7: 206).

22. Vissarion Belinsky, later no friend of Ukrainian literature (see, e.g., his dismissal of a Ukrainian literature in principle in his review of Kvitka's "Svatan'e. Malorossiiskaia opera v trekh deistviiakh" [The Courtship: A Little Russian Opera in Three Acts] (5: 176–79)), wrote in 1839 of his approval of Dal's translation of "Marusia" and of the story having excited "the general enthusiasm of the public and the unanimous praise of all the journals" (3: 52).

stitute to serve on his behalf, but in the interim Marusia catches a chill and dies, and a heartbroken Vasyl pines away to an early death in a monastery.

It is not easy today, given the stylistics and ideology of this work, to enter into the frame of mind that found "Marusia" and Kvitka's stories on similar themes admirable. Even among early critics there were voices that commented on the plots of these narratives as weak and the characters as unindividualized, implausible, and constructed to illustrate didactic moral points.[23] Their moral temperament is that of enlightened Christian humanism at the level of individual behavior, which, however—more so in "Shchyra liubov" [Sincere Love, 1839] and "Bozhi dity" [God's Children, 1840] than in "Marusia"—coexists with acceptance of, and in some instances direct propaganda for, tsarism and the prevailing social organization, serfdom included.[24]

It is possibly because of a sense that "Marusia" and similarly lachrymose tales were the most closely related of Kvitka's works to Romantic and populist projects for national consolidation that they received the most press. The historian Mykola Kostomarov, himself engaged prior to his 1847 arrest and exile in a highly deliberate project for constructing a national literary audience, remarked favorably (if laconically) on "The Soldier's Portrait" as a work excellent in its representation of an aspect of the ordinary people's everyday life. But in his 1843 overview of Ukrainian-language writing Kostomarov paid more attention to "Marusia" and three other Ukrainian-language works, all with women as main characters. Marusia for Kostomarov was the ideal representative of a Ukrainian woman: she embodied Christian and natural virtues, upheld the traditional norms of her society, and manifested remarkable depth and purity of feeling. At the same time she was a contemporary and, to Kostomarov's mind, plausible embodiment of that ideal. Kostomarov found in Marusia a suspension of polarities reminiscent in structure of Schelling's philosophy of identity:[25] in her character he saw the ideal as identical with the real, the past as identical with the present, natural virtue as identical with the moral precepts of the Church, the values of a social class as identical with the ideal values of, first, a people and, second, humanity as a whole. In Kostomarov's reading, Marusia was a symbolic figure capable of modeling in the audience's mind a unified and positive image of the Ukrainian nation. The story

23. Kostomarov, despite his high regard for "Marusia" as a culturally significant phenomenon, criticized the work's sketchy characterization, its poorly motivated action, and its excessive length (386).

24. Such politically conservative messages are even more clearly in evidence in Kvitka's non-fictional "Lysty do liubeznykh zemliakiv" [Letters to My Beloved Compatriots, 1839], which were written for readers (or listeners) without a deep formal education (or, perhaps, were stylized as having been written for such an audience).

25. While the significance of Friedrich Schelling's thought for Kostomarov's studies of mythology has been noted (Iatsenko 12, 20), the echoes in his work of Schelling's philosophy of identity as set out, for example, in his "System der gesammten Philosophie und der Naturphilosophie insbesondere" [1804] (6: 131–576) await examination.

"Marusia," as well as Marusia the character, became "a true representation of what is one's own, what is native to one, bearing the full imprint of the national character" (382–83).

In addition to the Schellingian identities that Kostomarov observed as the core argument of the story, we can detect a further one: the intended identity between the constructed reader (or listener) "from the ordinary people"—the direct implicit addressee of Hrytsko Osnovianenko's narrative and part of the community that this narrator invokes when using the first person plural[26]—and the empirical buyer and reader of Mr. Kvitka's book, *Malorossiiskie povesti*.[27]

Unlike "The Soldier's Portrait" and Kvitka's other humorous tales, "Marusia" renders almost invisible the "civilized" persona of the author—the persona for whom the narrator Hrytsko is part of the narrated world, one character among others. Hrytsko's perspective becomes almost indistinguishable from that of the "author." There are but two mentions in "Marusia" of educated people who might be the social equals of Kvitka's actual readers, and neither of them is favorable. On the first occasion members of the gentry figure as bad moral examples for ordinary people: Marusia's modest apparel stands in contrast to the more provocative dress of "town girls, who have been learning from the gentlefolk: the pests!" (3: 24). In the second instance, a few curious genteel outsiders turn up unbidden at Marusia's funeral, detached and somewhat contemptuous of the procedure: "there were even some gentlemen who came to see how a peasant woman [*divka*, unmarried young woman; the word bears a connotation of coarseness absent from its synonym *divchyna*] is buried in the old manner that is going out of fashion now" (3: 81). The authorial empathy is with the community that comprises Marusia, her family, and her social ambience, including the narrator Hrytsko, and that excludes the enlightened gentry, carriers of the deplorable "fashion" that has begun to gnaw at the moral fabric even of the common folk.

Thus the audience-construction strategy of "Marusia" (and Kvitka's other "serious" Ukrainian-language works) is quite distinct not only from that of his Russian-language prose, but also from that of his Ukrainian-language works of satirical or comic intent. In "Marusia" the moral criterion that is offered to the public at large is not that of universalist, enlightenment-authorized humanism, which is the benchmark for Kvitka's plays against corruption

26. In such passages as the following: "Listen to what our reverend priest reads to us in church: that the heavenly Lord is to us as a father is to his children" (3: 22).

27. Volodymyr Naumenko dismissed as implausible the notion, canvassed by the philologist Izmail Sreznevsky and by Kulish, that the actual addressee of Kvitka's Ukrainian stories could have included the peasantry: Kvitka's assertions about a plebeian audience of readers and auditors notwithstanding, peasants in the 1830s simply did not have the literacy, or the money, to be an audience for works of literature (253). Naumenko's study incorporated the posthumous publication of a manuscript of 1861 by Mykhailo Maksymovych, "Trezvon o Kvitkinoi Maruse" [A Peal of Bells for Kvitka's Marusia], where the same arguments had already been made (256–64).

in public life and his prose about the greed, vapidity, folly and petty immorality of the privileged classes, but the life practice of an idealized peasantry. Much has been written in an essentially populist critical tradition about whether this peasantry is portrayed in a way that does, or does not, generate some persuasively typical image of a dignified peasantry and whether the story does, or does not, express proper social solidarity with it.[28] From a perspective not beholden to the notion that realism is a supreme value, the answers to these questions seem obvious: of course the image of the respectable peasantry in Kvitka's Ukrainian tales is idealized, and of course the ideological content of this image is the opposite of egalitarian, secularist or modern. What is of interest about "Marusia" from the perspective of the present discussion is not the content of the text, but the tenor of its address. "Marusia" told its audience (the reading, privileged public) that the true moral compass of society was in the hands not of a rationalist, universalizing Minerva inspired by the European Enlightenment, but of a Marusia, in whom were distilled the ethical intuitions, religious beliefs and social behaviors of the ordinary people.

The thrust of this argument is, on the one hand, critical of the educated elite: in the spirit of Rousseau and Herder, the natural and the autochthonous in human affairs are to be preferred over the civilized and the cosmopolitan. On the other hand, this argument is also affirmative of a new kind of community: one that includes the privileged and the plebeian, with the privileged conceding moral ascendancy to the plebeian. Insofar as this unity can be enacted only if the privileged and the plebeians speak the same language (in both a literal and symbolic sense: if they speak Ukrainian, but also if they are able to understand each other at some deeper level, as do the traveler and the peasant in "Voyagers"), it is the unity of the nation. The symbol of such empathy and emotive unity in "Marusia," and in the critical reception of it, is the act of weeping. If laughter signaled distance and separation, weeping represented empathy and community. It was not because Marusia's fate was sad that we wept, claimed Kulish, but because "we saw ourselves in that girl, exquisite in her beauty and pure at heart" (497); and the "we" that he invoked, the perceivers of that ideal communal self, was the first-person plural of a community linked by culture and not divided by estate.

It is another question to what extent a readership even lightly touched by modernity could endorse the details of Kvitka's social and national ideal as he delineated it in "Marusia" and his other "serious" Ukrainian-language

28. Dmytro Chaly, true to the demands of a literary criticism focused on class struggle as the motive force of history, claimed that Kvitka, beholden to the tastes of landowners and officials, "was unable to create entirely real peasant types" (1967, 450). He excused Kvitka for his all-too-favourable representations of well-to-do peasants on the grounds that these were balanced by negative portrayals (437) and explained these "contradictions" as consequences of the "struggle" of "realistic and critical tendencies with conservative ones" (450).

prose works. Kvitka's ideal society was marked by the immutable stability of its social hierarchies, by spiritual piety with respect to God, political loyalty with respect to the Tsar, and familial obedience toward the father. "Obedience" and "submission" were unrelentingly positive values in Kvitka's Ukrainian tales, though they figure not at all in his works whose milieu is the social elite.[29]

Undoubtedly, Kvitka was no friend of secular modernity, explicitly in his didactic texts and implicitly in all of his Ukrainian-language writing. A separate case can be made to show that the style even of his "serious" Ukrainian prose, drawing attention as it does to embellishment rather than substance, did less to modernize Ukrainian literary prose than is usually supposed. A literary language, to function in a modern way, must have at its disposal the register of neutrality: it must be able to function as a relatively transparent medium for the communication of meaning. Kvitka could use Russian in this way, but never showed how it could be done in Ukrainian—a breakthrough for which the next generation thanked Marko Vovchok. But if Kvitka did not blaze trails to a modern society, or to a modern literary language, he did show the way to a modern national audience—an audience unified by solidarity grounded in empathy and cultural proximity, and transcending social distinctions. As the observant Kostomarov put it, he earned "the love of his compatriots, who for the first time espied in literature what was their own, represented in their own way, in their own tone. The finest compliment paid by them to Osnovianenko was the fact that even those who read nothing have taken to his tales with delight" (382).

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29. Kvitka's religiosity and conservatism have been variously criticized (e.g., Drahomanov 359, Iefremov 338–40, and Petrenko 16–17) or apologized for (e.g., Chalyi 1962, 142–46, Honchar 30, and Shubravs'kyi 401) in Ukrainian literary history and criticism. That Iaroslava Vil'na's study of 2005 sets out to rehabilitate them bespeaks the recovered legitimacy of religion in the Ukrainian intellectual sphere in the early twenty-first century.

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Резюме

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Експерименти з публікою: Українська та російська проза Квітки-Основ'яненка

Григорій Квітка-Основ'яненко (1778–1843) в історії української літератури зазвичай уважається піонером: він першим писав художню прозу українською народною мовою і першим зображував селян персонажами гідними, а не комічними. Стаття розглядає окремі Квітчині україномовні та російськомовні тексти з метою з'ясування одного виміру риторики цих творів: способу, як вони уявляють собі свою публіку, звертаються до неї та намагаються її змінити.

Для прози Квітки характерні чотири види уявного адресата: 1) загальноімперська російськомовна освічена публіка, спроектована як культурно гомогенна, хоч враження гомогенності не раз важко підтримувати, як, наприклад, в оповіданні «Вояжери» (1842); 2) загальноімперська російськомовна публіка, частина якої, однак, чимось прив'язана до території, історії чи культури України, як у випадку повісті «Панна Сотниківна» (1840); 3) підмножина загальноімперської публіки, відмежована від цілості освічених верств Імперії володінням українською мовою, але водночас віддалена від неосвіченої більшості українського населення; до цієї публіки промовляють Квітчині комічні твори українською мовою, зокрема—«Салдацький патрет» (1833); і, вкінці, 4) всі, хто розмовляють українською мовою, як освічені, так і неосвічені. Остання група—авдиторія, до якої звертається сентиментальна повість «Маруся» (1834)—в дечому співпадає з проектом модерної нації, оскільки вона є уявною позакласовою спільнотою, солідарність якої ґрунтується на основі як культурній (спільна мова), так і психологічній (інтуїтивне усвідомлення етнічного «Іншого»). Кардинальна новизна творчості Квітки-Основ'яненка полягає саме в тому, що в ній цю крипто-національну авдиторію для української прози змодельовано вперше.