Insight and Blindness in the Reception of Ševčenko: The Case of Kostomarov

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And ye shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free
John 8.32

Weh dem, der zu der Wahrheit geht durch Schuld,
Sie wird ihm nimmermehr erfreulich sein.
Friedrich Schiller
"Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais"

In the broad and formal sense, the reception of Ševčenko began with the reviews in the Russian press of his first slim volume of poetry, the *Kobzar* of 1840.[1] While at times positive (and once or twice even enthusiastic), their basic imperial perspective allowed them to see only an instance of talented regional writing, highlighted by a rare lyrical sensibility; the qualities, themes and *topoi* that became touchstones in the subsequent understanding of the poet went largely unnoticed. (At the same time, one recurring leitmotif in these reviews—"Why write in Ukrainian?" or, more pointedly, "Is it not a shame for a talented writer to waste his talent writing in Ukrainian?"—did become in the course of the nineteenth century a major issue in Ukrainian-Russian literary relations.[2]) In a narrower and more essential sense the

1. Cf. T. H. Ševčenko, *Bibliohrafija literatury pro žyttja i tvorčist', 1839–1959*, ed. Je. P. Kyryljuk (Kyiv, 1963), vol. 1 (1839–1916), pp. 8–9. In all there were nine, and they appeared in virtually all the major journals of the time: *Otečestvennye zapiski, Syn otečestva, Literaturnaja gazeta, Severnaja pčela, Majak, Žurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveščenija, Xudožestvennaja gazeta, Sovremennik,* and *Biblioteka dlja čtenija*. The same pattern obtained in the following few years; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 9–13.

2. Thus, for example, in the very first of these reviews (*Otečestvennye zapiski*, May, 1840, pt. 6, pp. 23–24) the anonymous reviewer, after briefly commenting in a favorable, but altogether superficial way on the closeness of Ševčenko's poetry to folk songs, goes on to ask, "But why does Mr. Ševčenko write in Ukrainian and not in Russian? If he has a poetic soul—many will say—why does he not convey its feelings in the Russian language?" His liberal answer to this not altogether rhetorical question is that if Mr. Ševčenko cannot express himself in Russian he should do so in "the southern dialect," and moreover since these writings, like other Ukrainian (Little Russian) writings have "a moral goal," they will be of use to the peasant reader.

Some Soviet critics have argued that the anonymous reviewer was Vissarion Belinskij. Given the fact that in his later reviews and comments on Ševčenko Belinskij was unqualifiedly negative (cf. especially his review of "Hajdamaky" in *Otečestvennye zapiski,* 1842, vol. 22, no. 5, pt. 6, pp. 12–14), the argument is not very plausible; cf. Victor Swoboda, "Shevchenko and Belinsky," in *Shevchenko and the Critics*, ed. George S. N.

reception of Ševčenko, in effect the recognition of the immense impact of the poet and his poetry, began, still during his lifetime, among his fellow Ukrainian writers, first through the rudimentary responses of such as Hryhorij Kvitka-Osnov'janenko and Jevhen Hrebinka, and then, with unexpected power and depth, through the analytical overviews of Pantelejmon Kuliš.[3] Kuliš's response to Ševčenko, covering the gamut from apologia and paean to diatribe and parody, is in fact *sui generis*, but at the same time highly indicative of (and still fundamentally unexamined in) the context and the polarities of nineteenth-century Ukrainian literature.

If one looks at the mainstream of the Ševčenko reception, however, its essential wellspring can be located most persuasively in the writings of Mykola (Nikolaj) Kostomarov. This seems particularly true if we see an inner core in that reception which conflates the roles of genius and prophet, highlights the *narod,* its implicit perspective and its virtually metaphysical value, and upon this basis proceeds to postulate a new canon of Ukrainian literature. Kostomarov's leading role in formulating this canon can already be argued on the basis of several extrinsic factors: he was one of the very first among Ukrainian writers to respond to the appearance of Ševčenko, and was the author of the first overview of nineteenth century Ukrainian literature; he indeed was the first to read Ševčenko in the context of the system of Ukrainian writing—now perceived as a new literature.[4] Along with Kuliš, he was a friend and colleague of Ševčenko in the period 1846–47 when the three

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Luckyj (Toronto, 1980), pp. 303–23. At the same time, the endorsement of Ukrainian as a language of poetry is hardly ringing.

For his part, Kostomarov turns the question around: Ukrainian writers, he says, turn to Ukrainian precisely because they can say in it what cannot be said in Russian, cf. his "Obzor sočinenij pisannyx na malorossijskom jazyke" (1842), M. I. Kostomarov, *Tvory v dvox tomax* (Kyiv, 1967), vol. 2, p. 378.

3. Cf. Kvitka's letter of October 23, 1840, in Hryhorij Kvitka-Osnov'janenko, *Tvory u vos'my tomax* (Kyiv, 1970), vol. 8, pp. 198–200; cf. also Hrebinka's footnote (in the style of *kotljarevščyna*) to Ševčenko's "Hajdamaky" in the journal *Lastivka: Lastôvka. Sočinenija na malorossijskom jazyke*. Sobral E. Grebenka (St. Petersburg, 1841), p. 371; cited as "vidzyv pro 'Hajdamaky' T. H. Ševčenka" in *Svitova velyč Ševčenka* (Kyiv, 1964), vol. 1, p. 48. See especially Kuliš's "Ob otnošenii malorossijskoj slovestnosti k obščerusskoj. Epilog k 'Černoj rade'" (1857), "Perednje slovo do hromady" (Pantelejmon Kuliš, *Tvory v dvox tomax* [Kyiv, 1989], vol. 2, pp. 504–512), "Čoho stojit' Ševčenko jako poet narodnyj" and "Slovo nad hrobom Ševčenka," in *Tvory Pantelejmona Kuliša* (L'viv, 1910), vol. 6, pp. 486–97.

4. More accurately, perhaps, a literature with a new vernacular articulation, for Kostomarov is clear on the fact that a Ukrainian (Ruthenian) literature written in a bookish language existed much earlier (he specifically speaks of Meletij Smotryc'kyj) and in fact had a major impact on the formation of Great Russian literature. Cf. his "Obzor sočinenij pisannyx na malorossijskom jazyke," in Ijeremija Halka, *Molodyk na 1844 god* (Xarkiv), no. 3, 1842 [1843], pp. 157–85; cf. also *Naukovo-publicystyčni i polemični pysannja Kostomarova*, Kyiv, 1928, pp. 41–52.

of them, in the loose structure of the so called Brotherhood of SS. Cyril and Methodius, formed the core of a Ukrainian revival that was as far reaching in its cultural and political implications as it was short lived. He was, in fact, the main theorist and spokesman of the Brotherhood and upon its suppression and the arrest of its members, the one who as a highly promising assistant professor of Russian history at Kiev University, suffered, as many then saw it, the greatest damage to his budding career.[5] After his exile in Saratov (1848–55), during which he continued his historical, literary and ethnographic research (he also perfected his Greek, learned Spanish and expanded his interests to include physics, astronomy, and archeology), served as managing editor of the *Saratovskie gubernskie vedomosti*, and established close contacts with the critic M. G. Černyševskij and the future scholar A. N. Pypin, he returned to St. Petersburg. There he soon published such major historical studies as the multivolume *Bogdan Xmelnickij i vozvraščenije Južnoj Rusi k Rossii* (the first volume of which appeared in 1857) and *Bunt Stenki Razina* (1858), and the following year was appointed associate professor of Russian history at the university of St. Petersburg. In the 1860s and 1870s, Kostomarov was perhaps the most influential and popular historian in Russia.

Within the nascent Ukrainian movement Kostomarov's role was no less prominent. Myxajlo Hruševs'kyj, himself a direct ideological and intellectual descendant, forcefully argues this in a lead article on "Kostomarov and Modern Ukraine" in the first issue of his newly established journal *Ukrajina*:

> May 20 of this year marks forty years since the death of Mykola Kostomarov, who died in 1885, on May 7 of the old calendar. This chronological date must remind today's generations of their unpaid debt before one of the most effective fighters against the feudal, bureaucratic, and autocratic regime of old Russia, the ideologue of Ukrainian revival and liberation—and about the unfilled gap in the history of our community movement, at the head of which the late historian, publicist, ethnographer and poet stood for several decades. For despite the great significance of his activities and his individuality, Kostomarov was much less fortunate than other Ukrainian activists of such caliber.

Hrushevs'kyj recounts how relatively little was done to collect and publish Kostomarov's works, and expresses his own sense of guilt for not being able to duly commemorate him. (As he tells it, his efforts to do so on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Kostomarov's death were curtailed by official censorship.) "And meanwhile," he continues,

> already in the period of the Cyrilo-Methodians, Kostomarov was undoubtedly the ideological leader of Ukraine. This became quite clear when *The Books of Genesis*

5. For a contemporary perspective see the letter of M. A. Rigelman to H. P. Halahan (*Ševčenko v epistolariji* [Kyiv, 1966], pp. 15–16).

of the Ukrainian People were published; before that it was felt only intuitively. Later, after a ten-year-long "absence" and existence "under a lid," Kostomarov, from the moment of the appearance of his *Bogdan Xmel'nickij* (1857), again became the generally acknowledged ideologue of the Ukrainian cause [*ukrajinstvo*], almost until his death, and at the very least until the appearance of his "Zadači ukrajinofil'stva" (1882) through which he cut himself off from the leaders of the Ukrainian movement of that time. What he was for a full quarter of a century, 1857–1882, can be deduced from the assessment of him made by Drahomanov, who, despite cardinal differences in views, acknowledged in him a man who was a truly worthy authority for Ukrainian society—"who was most like a Ukrainian god."[6]

As such an authority, Kostomarov would repeatedly turn in his writings to Ševčenko, and his legacy, and his impact on the present state and the future prospects of the Ukrainian people. Arguably, his authority also drew its strength from his closeness to the poet-Prophet and the persuasiveness of his vision of him. For all that, the nuances of his reception of Ševčenko, and his role in codifying its populist cast, have not really been examined; and while as a result of the recent "rehabilitation" of many erstwhile "blank spots" (in effect areas of putative "nationalism") he is now discussed, the complexities of his stance remain as unknown as he himself was until recently.[7]

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Kostomarov's reception of Ševčenko is seminal in both a historical and a theoretical sense. On the manifest level it encapsulates, and disseminates, both the several key topoi—of martyr, genius and prophet—and the ambivalently cojoined attitudes of overt hero worship and covert resistance to it. While highlighting the relationship between two major figures in the Ukrainian national pantheon, this reception also delineates the complex interrelation of the *biographical* and the *autobiographical* modes, specifically of the way in which the former is continually informed by the latter, of how

6. M. Hruševs'kyj, "Kostomarov i novitnja Ukrajina," *Ukrajina* 1–2 (Kyiv, 1925), p. 3.

7. This is as true of recent studies (cf., e.g., Ju. A. Pinčuk's, *Mykola Ivanovyč Kostomarov* [Kyiv, 1992], or the insightful essay by Vadym Skurativs'kyj "Mykola Kostomarov (1817–1885)," in *Sučasnist,* no. 9, 1992, pp. 152–56), as of the older ones (e.g., Je. S. Šabliovs'kyj, "Ševčenko i Kostomarov," *Zbirnyk prac' p'jatnadcjatoji naukovoji ševčenkivs'koji konferenciji* (Kyiv, 1968), pp. 23–50, or his various earlier variants: "M. I. Kostomarov—pys'mennyk i literaturnyj dijač," *Radjans'ke literaturoznavstvo*, 1967, no. 1, pp. 45–57; "Spravžnij Kostomarov," *Vitčyzna*, 1967, pp. 182–92; and "Mykola Kostomarov i Ukrajina," *Žovten',* 1967, no. 4, pp. 123–38. Cf. also I. I. Pil'huk's "M. I. Kostomarov," *Ukrajins'ka mova i literatura v školi*, 1967, no. 1, pp. 92–94 and M. Macapura, "Ševčenko i Kostomarov," *Ukrajina,* 1963, no. 6, pp. 18–19). Throughout, Kostomarov's reception of Ševčenko is depicted without reference to the problems or "contradictions" that will be raised here.

both writers present themselves according to large, collective, and ultimately transrational paradigms, above all of the *narod*, and particularly how Kostomarov determines his sense of self through his interpretation of Ševčenko.

Although the central notions of blindness and insight are articulated in Kostomarov's own writings on Ševčenko, and are themselves part of the overarching Romantic discourse, they also resonate, of course, with well-known deconstructive formulations. For Paul de Man, the basic idea that each illumination, or method of reading, is fated to generate its own shadow, its area of unseeing, is rooted in his particular insight on the nature of literary, i.e., critical, language.[8] These insights, particularly the notion that "error" of perception (as in the Freudian notion of revealing slips of the tongue) can itself cast valuable light on the process of reading, of establishing meaning, are particularly relevant here. But I also use the metaphor of insight and blindness in a broader (and less metacritical, less self-consciously theoretical) way to signify not just the medium or ontology of the critical judgment, its fatedness—by the very nature of language—to conceal-as-it-reveals, but the existential predicament of the critic/reader as well. The paradigm, therefore, is also rooted in the psychological and in the historical scene. For the former it designates the state of perceiving and misperceiving across a gamut of psychological forces and fault lines, and as for the latter, no less universally, it marks the temporal, socio-cultural contingencies inherent in all reception. It goes without saying that each of these dimensions projects a certain relativism and calls for a certain suspension of judgement. And yet, it is not a total suspension of judgement;[9] our examination of the reception, be it Kostomarov's or of any of his successors, is not totally value-free, for there is always the question of degree and nuance, particularly in the deviation from conventional wisdom and openness to the totality of the evidence, and just as the insight has value, the blindness, in its negativity, also has it. And it goes

8. "All these critics [Lukacs, Blanchot, Poulet, the American New Critics] seem curiously doomed to say something quite different from what they meant to say. Their critical stance—Lukacs's propheticism, Poulet's belief in the power of an original *cogito*, Blanchot's claim of meta-Mallarmean impersonality—is defeated by their own critical results. A penetrating but difficult insight into the nature of literary language ensues. It seems, however, that this insight could only be gained because the critics were in the grip of this peculiar blindness: their language could grope toward a certain degree of insight only because their method remained oblivious to the perception of this insight. The insight exists only for a reader in the privileged position of being able to observe the blindness as a phenomenon in its own right—the question of his own blindness being one which he is by definition incompetent to ask—and so being able to distinguish between statement and meaning." Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight. Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (New York, 1971), pp. 105–106.

9. I would not be as categorical, in short, as is de Man when he asserts that "'blindness' implies no literary value-judgment." Ibid., p. 141.

without saying that charting these states once again reconfirms the value and need of revisionist readings: the "errors," "inconsistencies," and "contradictions" that Soviet criticism was so set on identifying and bemoaning are in fact the very stuff of the reception, its privileged space, as it were.

The history of Ševčenko's reception, to be sure, provides more than one illustration of conjoined insight and blindness. The major extrinsic cause for this is surely the fact that Ševčenko touched upon and was central to so many aspects of Ukrainian collective life; the intersection of the different roles that he played and that were ascribed to him, the pull of the antithetical modes in which his meaning and "essence" were couched could, and easily did lead to confusion and distortion. A striking early instance of this is the interpretation of Ševčenko's legacy by the foremost nineteenth century Ukrainian thinker, Myxajlo Drahomanov. His fundamental study on the topic of "Ševčenko, ukrajinofily i socializm," combines acute insights into the poet's social and political resonance with a systemic inability to see the poetic text in its own right, as a non-rationalistic, non-political, but at the same time integral and multi-valent code.[10] In short, Drahomanov consistently confuses the poetic with the political, and his positivism, his activist stance, and his reliance on an altogether normative literary criticism simply obscures what most would now consider the essential Ševčenko. At the same time, along with his characteristically honest and in many ways profound assessment of that larger social frame in which Ševčenko functions, Drahomanov also provides—and the true value of this was hardly perceived in his time—a dispassionate *demystification* of Ševčenko and his role. Some forty years later, speaking of the cult of Mickiewicz in Polish society and scholarship, the critic Tadeusz Boy Żelenski coined the term "de-bronzing" for the process of finding the man behind the façade of society's monument.[11] It was not the least of Drahomanov's achievements that he initiated this process in Ukrainian culture.

The other major example, Dmytro Doncov's, is even more striking in its evocation of insight and blindness, especially of the latter. As the premier publicist and ideologue of integral Ukrainian nationalism in the period between the two world wars, Doncov frequently turns to Ševčenko to illustrate and legitimize his own theses, and to arm himself with Ševčenko's

10. M. P. Drahomanov, *Literaturno-publicystyčni praci* (Kyiv, 1970), vol. 2, pp. 7–133.

11. Cf. Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy), "Mickiewicz a my," in *Reflektorem w mrok* (Warsaw, 1984), pp. 459–84; cf. also my "Ševčenko jakoho ne znajemo," *Sučasnist'*, 1993, no. 11, pp. 100–112.

aura.[12] Specifically, Doncov proceeds to cast the poet as a touchstone and precursor for his own radical voluntarism: perhaps more than anyone before him, he perceives Ševčenko's fiery emotional core and his great power of will. Extrapolating from this, he configures Ševčenko as a nationalist ideologue *avant la lettre.*[13] Apart from the wholly unjustified and unsubstantiated imputation of political activism, this picture of Ševčenko is also thoroughly one-sided: quite absent from this ideological reconstruction is any sense of the poet's duality and doubt, of his profound scepsis and irony. While turning, to be sure, around the poet's own persona and self, these states of mind are in effect pantopic, and they radiate out to Ševčenko's multiform social and collective projections. What ultimately characterizes Doncov's method, and qualifies (or rather disqualifies) his partial and intuitive insights, however, is his all but total disregard for the evidence, indeed for the text itself. In him, in short, we see not so much a misreading of Ševčenko as a projection of self through a highly stylized set of props (which includes not only Ševčenko but such figures as Franko, Lesja Ukrajinka, Drahomanov and others) which bear only a nominal relation to their historical and existential designatum.

In the Ševčenko reception, however, Kostomarov provides not only the first, but perhaps also the most telling, the paradigmatic instance of both seeing and not seeing. The writer (and reader) who so plausibly enters history as prime interpreter and first cartographer, is also the first obfuscator, a latter-day, and almost certainly unconscious and unintentional Susanin leading the quest for the "true Ševčenko." The paradox of the blind leader of a national quest, of Moses and Susanin rolled into one, is actually intrinsic, and generic: such is perhaps the very nature of the hybrid function of poet-as-literary-historian, and misprision appears to be the inevitable outcome when a greater poet is read by a lesser one.[14]

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12. Cf., for example, his *Pravda pradidiv velykyx* (Philadelphia 1952); *Tuha za herojičnym* (London, 1953); or *Dvi literatury našoji doby* (Toronto, 1958).

13. His main contention is that Ševčenko articulates a *national,* and specifically statist program, *and* that he sees the implementation of this program (and here Doncov, albeit within a different frame, is echoing the interpretations of the Bolsheviks) as being carried out by revolutionary force. While this interpretation was peculiar to the militant nationalists, the idea of Ševčenko's national program and putative statism was quite widespread in non-Soviet Ukrainian society and appeared in the writings of such as E. Malanjuk, R. Smal'-Stoc'kyj, O. Lotoc'kyj and others. It became a staple of emigré Ševčenko scholarship and commentaries, and has now been broadly revived in independent Ukraine.

14. Cf. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence. A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford, 1973). It is ironic, perhaps, that Kostomarov devoted a major article to debunking the legend of Susanin in official Rusian historiography; cf. "Ivan Susanin. Istoričeskoe isledovanie," *Istoričeskija monografii i isledovanija Nikolaja Kostomarova,* vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1872), pp. 429–53. Cf. also his *Autobiography,* pp. 261–63.

In fact, the paradoxes of Kostomarov's reception of Ševčenko resonate within a larger and no less contradictory frame—that is, his formulation of, and his role in, Ukrainian literary history. For while even the well-informed student of Ukrainian literature is hardly attuned to the range of contradictions in Kostomarov's reading of Ševčenko, he is surely aware of the historian's ambivalent role in the large scheme of mid-nineteenth-century Ukrainian literary and indeed political history. That ambivalence, as noted by Hruševs'kyj and many others, flows from two significant historico-literary events which between them provide the antipodes of national assertiveness and (to all appearances) self-abnegation. The first, as already noted, is Kostomarov's authorship of the *Books of Genesis of the Ukrainian People* [*Knyhy bytija ukrajins'koho narodu*], which in its time, that is, in the small circle of intellectuals and students that constituted the Brotherhood of SS. Cyril and Methodius in the course of its brief existence (1846–47), was known simply as the "Zakon božyj" and served as their bible and program.[15] The text itself, an inspired reworking of Adam Mickiewicz's biblically cadenced "gospel for the refugees" and "manual for martyrs," the *Księgi narodu i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* (1832),[16] is Kostomarov's formulation of a transhistorical, indeed millenarian vision of Ukraine as the key to a revived Slavic community, precisely in the spirit of the Gospels: "the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner" (Luke 20.17). In the wider context of the Ukrainian national revival of the nineteenth century, the *Knyhy bytija* are no less a cornerstone. By linking the poetics of Romanticism and a religiously tinged Slavophilism to autonomist sentiments that harken back to the *hetmanščyna,* they become the first modern Ukrainian political or protopolitical program after the *Istorija Rusov.*[17] It is almost certain that the text of the *Knyhy bytija* was not read outside the small circle of "brothers"—and the police officials involved in their suppression; the full

15. Cf. *Kyrylo Mefodijivs'ke Tovarystvo* (Kyiv, 1990), vol. 1, pp. 152–69. This three-volume publication of the complete police (Third Department) archives on the Brotherhood, its investigation and trial is an invaluable and still hardly exhausted resource. Cf. also P. A. Zajončkovskij, *Kirillo-Mefodievskoe Obščestvo (1846–1847)* (Moscow, 1959). In his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Orest Pelech stresses the informal and loose nature of the group and argues that at the time of the arrests it had, for all practical purposes, ceased functioning: *Toward a Historical Sociology of the Ukrainian Ideologues in the Russian Empire of the 1830's and 1840's*, Princeton University, 1976, pp. 206–13 and passim.

16. Cf. Wiktor Weintraub, *The Poetry of Adam Mickiewicz* (The Hague, 1954), pp. 194–207.

17. *Исторія Русовъ или Малой Россіи, сочиненіе Георгія Конискаго, Архіепископа Бѣлорускаго* was published in Moscow in 1846. It was written sometime at the turn of the century and was widely circulated in manuscript form in the first decades of the 19th century.

text was published only in 1918.[18] But with a twist of poetic justice, its prepolitical, millenarian message regarding Ukraine's past, present and future was reformulated and given the broadest possible dissemination—precisely in the poetry of Ševčenko. And Kostomarov—whether as author of the *Knyhy bytija*, or as contributor to Ševčenko's broadly resonant message of national reassertion and revival—seemed to have his role in that revival permanently assured.

Or, perhaps, not altogether permanently. In his later years Kostomarov comes to be identified with a defensive reading of Ukrainian literary, and by extension political life, that in the eyes of succeeding generations, and especially in the light of nationalist thinking, appears as nothing less than a betrayal of the nation's cause. At issue is his formulation, and espousal, of Ukrainian literature as a literature "for home use," as a literature expressly intended for and focused on "the people," the *narod*, as an addendum to the imperial or "high" Russian literature, an addendum not in a regional, but in a "class" sense, so to speak. Kostomarov's movement towards this reading is already clearly visible in his 1871 article in Gerbel's well-known anthology, *Poezija slavjan,* in which he speaks, on the one hand, of the best in Ukrainian literature—Ševčenko—as intrinsically and exclusively the voice of the common folk (in all their dignity, authenticity, beauty and pathos, to be sure), and on the other of the impossibility, the artificiality of trying to raise the Ukrainian language, and hence, too, works written in it, to the level of normal, that is, educated and sophisticated discourse.[19] Concomitant with

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18. Cf. Pavlo Zajcev's publication of M. Kostomarov, "Knyhy bytija ukrajins'koho narodu", *Naše mynule*, 1918, no. 1, pp. 7–35, cf. also *Kyrylo-Mefodijivs'ke Tovarystvo*, vol. 1, pp. 12–14.

19. N. V. Gerbel', *Poèzija slavjan, Sbornik poetičeskix proizvedenij slavjanskix narodov v perevodax russkix pisatelej, izdannyj pod redakcieju Nik. Vas. Gerbelja* (St. Petersburg, 1871), pp. 160–2. Kostomarov is much more categorical about this in "Zadači ukrainofil'stva" (*Vestnik Evropy,* 1882, vol. 1, bk. 2), the article which, as Hruševs'kyj notes, signalled his final break with the Ukrainian movement. To be sure, in principle, he does see a purpose in translating world literature into Ukrainian, but with qualifications:

> We fully share the desire to see the Ukrainian language developed to the degree that one can, without straining, convey everything which constitutes the achievements of cultured language, but this requires time and a considerable improvement in the intellectual horizon of the *narod*.

His conclusion, however, is harsh:

> Better leave the Byrons, Mickiewiczes etc. in peace and not attempt forcefully to forge words and expressions which are not understood by the *narod*; and indeed the works themselves for which these things are crafted are not comprehensible to the common man and at the present are not called for. As to the class of the intelligentsia in Little Russia, such translations are even more unnecessary, since they can become acquainted with all of this either in the original or in translations into the all-Russian language, which they know as well as their native Ukrainian dialect.

Naukovo-publicystyčni i polemični pysannja Kostomarova, pp. 296–97 and 298.

this is his claim (rooted in the loyalist attitudes of the eighteenth-century Cossack *staršyna,* and animating nineteenth-century Ukrainian federalist thinking, particularly in Drahomanov) that the Russian language (he uses the key nineteenth-century term: *obščerusskij*) is the common product and patrimony of both the Great Russian and the Ukrainian people.[20] But the concluding note in that article, the reference to the Valuev circular of 1863, which began the official Russian campaign against the Ukrainian printed word, is most telling as it throws light on the external circumstances—the atmosphere of growing repression and fear of even harsher measures. Kostomarov's later writings clearly reflect the impact of further official sanctions against the Ukrainian movement, particularly the Ems ukaz of 1876, as well as the officially sanctioned ukrainophobia in the Russian press.[21] His entire discussion of Ukrainian literature, and Ukrainophilism, as the Ukrainian national movement was then known, is couched largely in defensive terms—the need for popular education, support for the disenfranchised peasantry, and so on.[22] The notion of a "literature for home use," a literature implicitly confined to peasant themes and a popular (or populist) audience, a literature in which translations from Byron or Mickiewicz have no *raison d'être*, is a logical construct of this defensiveness, and even more so an inevitable end product of the logic of his own fundamental populism. Even if we understand his motivation, however, we cannot be blind to his denial of full or normal stature to Ukrainian literature, and the nation that stands behind it.[23] And the fact remains that the historian and writer who more than any other figure in Russia in the third quarter of the nineteenth century represented and defended the Ukrainian cause, was also the one who for all practical purposes condemned it to essential secondariness.[24]

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20. Thus in Gerbel: "Кроме того сознавалось что общерусский язык никак не исключительно великорусский, а в равной степени и малорусский." Gerbel', *Poezija slavjan*, p. 163. Cf. also Semen Divovyč, "Razhovor Velykorossii s Malorossijeju" (1762) and M. Drahomanov, "Literatura rosijs'ka, velykorus'ka, ukrajins'ka i halyc'ka," *Literaturno-publicystyčni praci u dvox tomax* (Kyiv, 1970), vol. 1, pp. 80–220.

21. Regarding the Ems ukaz and the political and intellectual atrmosphere of the time, cf. Fedir Savčenko, *The Suppression of the Ukrainian Activities in 1876* (Munich, 1970).

22. Cf. also my "Russian-Ukrainian Literary Relations: A Formulation of the Problem," in Peter J. Potichnyj et al., eds., *Ukraine and Russia in their Historical Encounter* (Edmonton, Alberta, 1992), pp. 214–44.

23. Halyna Mukhina in her "Teorija 'xatn'oho vžytku'. Do stolittja smerty Mykoly Kostomarova," *Sučasnist'*, Feb. 1986, no. 2 (298), pp. 31–41, defends Kostomarov as purportedly not really meaning it. Her argument is unpersuasive and at variance with the published record.

24. One should note that the notion of a literature "for home use" had in fact already been laid down by Belinskij, who in his various writings on Ukrainian topics, but particularly in his review of the almanac "Lastivka" and Kvitka's "Svatannja na Hončarivci," categorically answered his own question of "должно ли и можно ли писать по-малороссийски?" by

Somehow he was both a beacon and an obstacle on the path of national revival, both a source of light and a distorting presence for the national perspective. Indeed because of him, and his experience, we are forced to ask ourselves as to the real content of the idea of "national perspective." How is it possible, in other words, that someone of his centrality and stature could go so "wrong?"

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Kostomarov's reading and reconstruction of Ševčenko can be captured in several keys or *topoi*, each of which projects a contradiction, a self-deconstruction, and also an (apparently unconscious) assertion-*cum*-negation of the object of his depiction. They are presented here in an order of ascending complexity, both in the psychological and the historical sense: Ševčenko as (1) a man, (2) a historical and (3) a universal phenomenon, and (4) as a poet. The first and the fourth keys are personal and turn specifically on Kostomarov's relation to Ševčenko. The second and the third relate to Ševčenko's collective resonance. In large measure, the latter two aspects, of poet and of universal phenomenon, continue to inform the ongoing, popular reception of Ševčenko, and thus illustrate Kostomarov's exceptional role in shaping Ševčenko's collective image and mythical presence.

1. ŠEVČENKO THE MAN

In late 1875 Kostomarov wrote a brief piece entitled "Vospominanija o Ševčenko," which in the following year became one of two short introductory articles to volume I of the Prague edition of Ševčenko's poetry.[25] He begins

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saying that the higher strata of Ukrainian society had long outgrown Ukrainian ("это общество выражает свои чувства и понятия не на малороссийском, а на русском и даже на французском языках") and that whatever will be written in Ukrainian will invariably be confined by peasant topics and peasant perspectives. And that, to him, is hardly an alluring prospect: "Хороша литература, которая только и дышит, что простоватостию крестьянского языка и дубоватостию крестьянского ума!"; cf. V. G. Belinskij, *Polnoe Sobranie Sočinenij* (Moscow, 1954), vol. 5, pp. 176–79; here: pp. 177 and 179.

The contiguities notwithstanding, Kostomarov's attitude toward this general position, and specifically to Belinskij, still needs to be examined. At the same time, in the overall process of Ukrainian literature, above all the multifaceted *kotljarevščyna* and the general *narodnyctvo* with which he clearly resonated, the ground had already been laid for reconsidering (decentering) the relationship between "the principal" and "the secondary." For an interesting metathematic elaboration of this relationship see Virgil Nemoianu, *A Theory of the Secondary. Literature, Progress, and Reaction* (Baltimore and London, 1989). Cf. also my forthcoming study, *The Meanings of "Kotljarevščyna."*

25. T. Ševčenko, *Kobzar, z dodatkom spomynok pro Ševčenka Kostomarova i Mykešyna*, 2 vols., ed. F. Vovk and O. Rusiv (Prague, 1876), pp. vi–xii. This, it should be noted, was the first uncensored edition of Ševčenko's poetry.

his recollection with a disclaimer that to anyone acquainted with the biographies of these two men would appear somewhat overstated. "Although in many respects my fate was the same as Ševčenko's," he says,

> I cannot really boast of any particular closeness to him, and in this respect I knew people who had much closer spiritual ties to him than I, and who were much better acquainted than I with the details of his life.[26]

If not hyperbole, it would seem to be a classical modesty topos. It is not a solitary instance, however. Four years later, in a letter to M. I. Semevskij, editor and publisher of *Russkaja starina*, Kostomarov again returns to it in describing his relationship to Ševčenko:

> You asked me to comment on my acquaintance with T. H. Ševčenko, assuming, on your part, my closeness to the late poet. Although I already have had occasion to speak of him in print, I will again, by your leave, recount the honest and true story [*iskrennjuju i pravdivuju istoriju*] of my acquaintance with that personality, on the understanding that you will use what I write in a manner you find most suitable. In general, it would be a mistake to think that I was particularly close and friendly to him; on the contrary, my friendship with him occupied only an insignificant part of our lives, and, as later became apparent, I was unaware of much of what happened with him, and I learned of it from his other friends: with me he was much less friendly and open than he was with many others. My closeness to him was almost exclusively literary, whereas some others were close to him not as to a Ukrainian poet, but simply as to a man.[27]

Again, perhaps, a modesty topos, but with striking undertones: the allegation (with more than a hint of hurt) that other friends were allowed to become closer to him ("with me he was much less friendly and open than he was with many others"), the opposition of the literary and the personal, and with it the veiled suggestion that the literary association that fell upon him was somehow part of the public domain, and even superficial, and the wholly unexpected, indeed egregious assertion that "my friendship with him occupied only an insignificant part of our lives." To anyone attuned to Ukrainian history, and the Ukrainian national revival, and the role of the individual ("Genius") within both—and Kostomarov was quintessentially so attuned—this last assertion is stunning. For to suggest that their friendship, the first part of which was coterminous with their admittedly short,[28] but

26. Ibid., p. vi; cf. also *Spohady pro Tarasa Ševčenka* (Kyiv, 1982), p. 145.

27. "Pis'mo N. I. Kostomarova k izdatelju-redaktoru 'Russkoj stariny' M. I. Semevskomu," *Russkaja starina* 1880, bk. 3, March, pp. 597–610; cited in *T. G. Ševčenko v vospominanijax sovremennikov* (Moscow, 1962), p. 154.

28. By his own account, in the "Vospominanija o Ševčenko" that appeared in the Prague edition (cf. n. 33), this was a matter of slightly less than a year, from May of 1846 to late March, 1847, when all the members of the Brotherhood were arrested by the police. In his

unquestionably formative participation in the Brotherhood of SS. Cyril and Methodius, was somehow an "insignificant" part of their lives is to deny meaning to both the history and the revival—and to what was central in the lives of both individuals. In light of the known facts, however, all of Kostomarov's self-deprecations, and not just the last denial, appear to be wide of the mark.

Evidence of a relationship that must have been much closer and certainly more intense than what these disclaimers suggest comes in various forms. One source is Kostomarov's own *Autobiography*, beginning with an early variant published in 1885.[29] His first mention of Ševčenko stresses the speed and ease with which they established rapport. "On the very next day," he says, "we were using the familiar form of address [*govorili drug drugu 'ty'*]."[30] And both in this, and in the later, more extensive authorized version, he speaks of the depth of the bond between them:

> This was the most active period for his talent, the apogee of his spiritual strength. I saw him frequently and was thrilled by his works, many of which, still unpublished, he let me see in manuscript. Frequently we would spend long evenings together, long into the night, and with the coming of spring we would frequently meet in the small orchard of the Suxostavskij's, which had a purely Ukrainian character...[31]

The relationship was resumed more than ten years later—after Kostomarov's altogether lenient and productive administrative exile in Saratov and Ševčenko's incomparably harsher sentence as a front-line soldier (officially forbidden to write or paint) in the steppes of Orenburg and on the shores of the Aral and Caspian Seas. During his exile Ševčenko corresponded with Kostomarov and on his way back to St. Petersburg, in the summer of 1857, stopped to visit Kostomarov's mother in Saratov. He stayed a few hours and left with her a poem dedicated to her son, "N. Kostomarovu" ("Vesele sonečko xovalos'...") from the superb cycle of poems "V kazemati"

Autobiography Kostomarov suggests that they met shortly after his mother arrived in Kyiv on February 1, 1846; cf. N. I. Kostomarov, *Avtobiografija; Bunt Stenki Razina* (Kyiv, 1992), p. 133. This is but one of many factual inconsistencies, however.

29. An abbreviated "Avtobiografija Nikolaja Ivanoviča Kostomarova" was published in *Russkaja mysl'*, May, no. 5–6, 1885. It was dictated by Kostomarov to N. A. Bilozers'ka, but apparently not verified by him, and thus it has been questioned as an "objective source" (cf. N. I. Kostomarov, *Istoričeskie proizvedenija. Avtobiografija* [Kyiv, 1990], p. 706). In spite of that, it is often cited, and its references to the topic at hand seem more forthcoming; cf. below.

30. *T. G. Ševčenko v vospominanijax sovremennikov* (Kyiv, 1962), p. 149. In the later, authorized version Kostomarov says much the same, if more drily: "Uznavši o nem [Ševčenko] ja poznakomilsja s nim i s pervogo že raza sblizilsja." *Istoričeskie proizvedenija. Avtobiografija,* p. 475.

31. Ibid., p. 475.

depicting the time of their mutual imprisonment in St. Petersburg in 1847. In this poem, which Kostomarov later quite accurately describes as one of Ševčenko's best,[32] he addresses Kostomarov as "brother," evokes in his (Kostomarov's) grieving mother an image that foreshadows the universal grieving mother in "Neofity" and later (as Mary, the Mother of God) in "Marija," and finds a new level in his treatment of the perennial themes of solitude and expiation:

...І батько й мати в домовині
І жалем серце запеклось,
Що нікому мене згадати!
Дивлюсь—твоя, мій брате, мати,
Чорніше чорної землі,
Іде, з хреста неначе знята...
Молюся! Господи молюсь!
Хвалить тебе не перестану!
Що я ні з ким не поділю
Мою тюрму, мої кайдани!

A year after that the two finally met again. As Kostomarov describes it in his "Vospominanija":

In the summer of 1858, while in St. Petersburg, I looked up Ševčenko and saw him for the first time after a separation of many years. I found him in the Academy of Arts, where he had received a studio. Taras Hryhorovyč did not recognize me, and looking at me from head to toes shrugged his shoulders and said decisively that he cannot guess the name of the person before him. When I gave him my name he threw himself on my neck and cried for a long time.[33]

Their contacts during the next two and a half years were, with but a few hiatuses, regular and frequent: when at the end they were meeting once or twice a week, Kostomarov characterizes this as "not so frequently." He was one of the last to see Ševčenko before his death:

Hearing that Ševčenko was sick I visited him twice, and on the second time in February, a few days before his death, I heard from him that he was fully recovered; in the course of this he showed me a new gold watch he had just bought—the first in his life. He promised to drop in on me soon.[34]

32. Cf. his letter to M. I. Semevskij, *T. G. Ševčenko v vospominanijax sovremennikov* (Kyiv, 1962), p. 159.
33. "Vospominanija o Ševčenko," in *T.G. Ševčenko v vospominanijax sovremennikov* (Kyiv, 1962), p. 145.
34. Ibid., p. 146.

The account concludes with Ševčenko's death, his funeral, and the efforts of the Ukrainian community of St. Petersburg to transfer his remains to a final resting place on the Dnieper. Kostomarov makes no mention of his own role in these events, or of the feelings they evoked in him. There is, however, a nuanced discordant note that runs through the restrained tone and somewhat dry diction of this piece—Ševčenko's apparent reluctance, as Kostomarov sees it, to bare his soul, to discuss his poetry, to speak of his exile, or of his ill-fated attempt at marriage (to Lykeria Polusmakova), or to discuss the "unpleasant history" (i.e., his arrest) during his 1859 trip to Ukraine.

The version of their relationship in the subsequent letter to Semevskij is considerably richer in detail and mellower in tone, and in its overall effect it confirms a sense of genuine depth to their friendship while at the same time throwing into sharper relief the initial disclaimer which seems to cast doubt as to whether there was a close friendship at all. In addition to expanding on such key moments as their first meeting, or their reunion after a decade of exile, it brings to light events which further illuminate both their relationship and the character of Ševčenko (and, obliquely, that of Kostomarov as well), events and details which we find in no other sources. The particular key into which they tend to fall is that of Ševčenko's "*čudačestvo*." Thus when Kostomarov learns (in early June of 1846) that he was unanimously elected to the Chair of Russian history at the University of St. Vladimir in Kiev he first shares the news with Ševčenko, whom he had just met in the street. Overjoyed at his friend's good fortune Ševčenko starts singing a Ukrainian folk song:

> People were passing us by and Ševčenko, paying no attention to what was occurring around us, was belting out his song virtually at the top of his voice. It was a paroxysm of eccentricity [*čudačestva*] reminding one of the ancient Zaporozhian Cossacks, something which showed through in our poet, albeit rather infrequently.[35]

On another occasion (just after their reunion in St. Petersburg, when the two, as Kostomarov notes, were meeting every day) they agree to go to a bookstore to search for rare books. "Ševčenko appeared," Kostomarov writes,

> and proceeded to walk with me along the Nevsky Prospekt dressed in a white jacket, tattered and covered in paint, in bad shoes, in a worn and torn cap on his head, his appearance reminding one of Kozak Holota from the Ukrainian *duma* or a *činovnik* drunk and expelled from work turning to passers-by with the cry: "please help a poor nobleman." That this was a rather unique eccentricity was reflected in the fact that neither before or after did Ševčenko go out in such a fashion.[36]

35. Ibid., p. 156.
36. Ibid., p. 161.

Still again, there is the time when Kostomarov asks the visiting Ševčenko to leave so he can prepare his lectures for the next day; Ševčenko leaves, but goes to the inn next door and pays the musicians there to loudly play precisely those arias which Kostomarov had told him he hates.[37] Clearly, the "*čudačestvo*" expresses unconventionality and personal freedom, and, not least of all, *épatage* of the straight-laced professor.

We also see from this account that Ševčenko was hardly as reticent about his poems as Kostomarov suggested in the "Vospominanija": as described here, he "frequently" and "gladly" showed them in manuscript form and allowed Kostomarov to see (or, as he later put it, "to peer into") the very process of their creation.[38] The degree to which this access actually shaped Kostomarov's understanding of the poetry is a separate matter.

Finally, there is the revealing hint of a trait (and a modality) which while muted in Kostomarov's discussion of the man and the friend, becomes central in his consideration of the poet. It is the quality of prescience, *proročestvo*.[39] Apart from the defining role that it will play in his understanding of poetry-as-inspiration (a formulation which, like the political and historiosophic notion of messianism, Kostomarov is most likely to have absorbed from his reading of Mickiewicz), this quality of *proročestvo* clearly resonates with those features of openness, spontaneity, and "eccentricity" which Kostomarov is quick to perceive (if not unequivocally applaud) in Ševčenko. Along with

37. "Часа два сряду," Kostomarov continues, "мучила меня эта музыка, наконец не стало терпения: понимая, что это Шевченко нарочно дразнит меня я вбежал в трактир и умолял его, ради человеколюбия, перестать терзать меня такою пыткою." Ibid., p. 162.

38. "В разговорах о своих литературных занятиях, он был со мною сообщательнее, чем о своих прошлых житейских приключениях; он часто и охотно делился своими стихотворениями, еще не видавшими света, иное произносил на память, другое читал по собственноручной рукописи, и самую рукопись, по моему желанию, оставлял у меня на время."

These manuscripts also included that most precious of Ševčenko's autographs, and now a virtual relic of Ševčenkiana, the "Mala knyžka," in which he wrote down his "bootleg poetry" of 1847–1850. As Kostomarov describes it:

Между прочим, показывал он мне тогда маленькую переплетенную книжечку, в которой написаны были произведения того горького времени, когда он находился в военной службе. Ему тогда было запрещено писать, и он держал эту книжечку не иначе как в сапоге на своей ноге, и, по собственным словам его, если бы у него нашли эту книжечку, то подвергся бы он жесточайшей ответственности уже за одно то, что осмелился писать, вопреки высочайшему запрещению, не говоря о том, что большая половина стихотворений, написанных его рукою в этой книжечке, была по содержанию нецензурного свойства. Ibid., pp. 162–63.

39. Thus, their last prison meeting after interrogation and before exile: "После допроса, возвращаясь в свой номер и идя рядом со мною, Тарас Григорьевич происнес мне по-малорусски: 'Не журися Миколо; доведеться ще нам укупі жити'. (Не унывай, Николай, еще доведется нам жить вместе). Эти последние слова, слышанные тогда от Шевченко, оказались впоследствии по отношению к нам обоим пророческими." Ibid., p. 158.

the qualities of strength and resiliency[40] these traits coalesce into an image of Ševčenko as a quintessential natural man. And again, the question is precisely the degree to which this paradigm facilitates or impedes a better understanding of both man and poet.

The nature of the relationship between Ševčenko and Kostomarov is also illuminated by a variety of external evidence. The extant epistolary legacy between them is rather meager—five letters by Kostomarov and one by Ševčenko—and the small output most probably caused by the inadvisability of two political offenders maintaining a correspondence.[41] In these letters, however, there is a real warmth of feeling—which is maintained throughout and which contrasts in no small measure with the hot and cold cast of the correspondence between Ševčenko and Kuliš.[42] A telling instance of this warmth (which Kostomarov, however, does not bring out in his recollections) is the fact that he asked Ševčenko to be best man at his wedding; indeed Ševčenko was arrested dressed in formal tails and on his way to the ceremony.[43] For his part, too, Ševčenko reciprocated this warmth, as we see

40. There is ample evidence, particularly in the official transcripts of the inquest (cf. *Kyrylo-Mefodijivs'ke Tovarystvo*, passim), that of all the accused, Ševčenko was by far the least apologetic and most self-possessed in the course of the trial; cf. below. Kostomorov's recollections fully bear this out: "Во все время производства следствия Тарас Григорьевич был неизменно бодр, казался спокойним и даже веселым. Перед допросом какой-то жандармский офицер сказал ему: 'Бог милостив, Тарас Григорьевич: вы оправдаетесь, и вот тогда-то запоет ваша муза'. Шевченко отвечал по-малорусски: "Не який чорт нас усіх сюди заніс, коли не ся бісова муза!' (Не какой черт нас всех сюда занес, как не эта проклятая муза!)." Ibid., p. 158.

41. Cf. Ševčenko, *Povne zibrannja tvoriv u šesty tomax*, vol. 6 (Kyiv, 1964) and *Lysty do T.H. Ševčenka, 1840–1861* (Kyiv, 1962). The hypothesis of political expediency is supported by the fact that Ševčenko's correspondence with Kuliš, for example, picks up only when he (Ševčenko) is released from exile. Thus Kuliš's first letter to Ševčenko after their arrest is dated Nov. 26, 1857 (Ševčenko received word of his impending release on April 7, 1857); however, on June 17 he writes in his *Diary* that he had already received some books from Kuliš, particularly the first volume of his *Zapiski o Južnoj Rusi*.

42. Telling in this respect is the first letter Kostomarov wrote to Ševčenko after the latter was released from exile and in Nižnyj Novgorod, on his way to St. Petersburg (October 28, 1857; cf. *Lysty do Ševčenka.* p. 107. Ševčenko's response is also revealing in its mixture of irony, good humor and genuine concern:

..получил письмо от Костомарова из Саратова. Ученый чудак пишет, что напрасно прождал меня две недели в Петербурге и не хотел сделать ста верста кругу, чтобы посетить меня в Нижнем. А сколько бы радости привез своим внезапным появлением. Ничего не пишет мне о своих глазах и вообще о своем здоровьи.

Diary, Nov. 5, 1857; *Povne zibrannja tvoriv*, vol. 5, p. 162.

43. Kostomarov, by this time, was already in jail in St. Petersburg. The circumstances of Ševčenko's arrest led to Funduklej's (the Kyivan governor's) witticism—"Где жених там и боярин..."; cf. Pavlo Zajcev, *Žyttja Tarasa Ševčenka* (New York, 1955), pp. 168–69.

from the poem, from his letter, and the various references to Kostomarov in his Diary.[44] This, of course, was also evident to various contemporaries.[45]

Ševčenko's death, as we learn from various sources, had a devastating effect on Kostomarov. The account by S. N. Terpigorov of Kostomarov's appearance at Ševčenko's graveside is particularly moving:

> Kostomarov stood without a hat, in a raccoon coat that had slipped off one shoulder, looking lost and as if he had been weeping. At the time he seemed unspeakably grief stricken and orphaned. Someone, I think it was Kuliš, was standing next to him and saying something to him, but he did not hear him and was continually turning his head this way and that, waiting for something: for the moment when they would bring in, in order to lower into the grave, his bosom friend [*ego zakadyčnogo druga*] Ševčenko, or for something else, but standing as if weighed down by some burden, he was continually turning his head, getting caught up in his coat until at the end he suddenly stumbled and fell. I rushed to him and along with some others who had run up helped him get up and in some way clean himself from the mud, sand and earth that clung to him. "Thank you, thank you, I am grateful"—he mumbled through his tears, catching those who helped him and squeezing their hand—"Oh Lord, Lord, what a loss!" he kept repeating...[46]

From that time on, the memory of Ševčenko continued as a major focus for Kostomarov's activities. On April 14, 1861, at a literary evening dedicated to Ševčenko that was held at the University, Kostomarov read his memoiristic essay "Vospominanie o dvux maljarax," which he also published that month in *Osnova*. At the end of April he again spoke to those assembled at the transhumation of Ševčenko's remains from St. Petersburg to Ukraine, urging them to continue the cause begun by Ševčenko, and, as later reported in police sources, casting himself as executor of his will.[47] In the months and years that followed Kostomarov repeatedly wrote about Ševčenko, was co-editor of the 1867 St. Petersburg edition of his poetry, helped organize annual celebrations devoted to his memory, and, despite growing official repression, would even read at such celebrations Ševčenko's proscribed works.[48] As recounted by his widow, Kostomarov, in the last days of his

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44. Cf., e.g., the entries for September 22 and 23, and for October 16, 1857.

45. Cf., e.g., the memoirs of E. F. Tolstaja-Junge, "Vospominanija o Ševčenko," *T.G.Ševčenko v vospominanijax sovremennikov* (Moscow, 1962), pp. 279–80 and 457.

46. S. N. Terpigorov, "Vospominanija," *Istoričeskij vestnik*, 1896, no. 4, pp. 57–58, cited in Je. Šabliovs'kyj, "Ševčenko i Kostomarov," *Zbirnyk prac' p'jatnadcjatoji naukovoji Ševčenkivs'koji konferenciji* (Kyiv, 1968), pp. 42–43.

47. Cf. Je. Šabliovs'kyj, "Ševčenko i Kostomarov," p. 44.

48. Ibid., p. 46. The climate of these years (particularly the 1870s) is best conveyed by Kostomarov himself: "К большому сожалению, в последнее время мы замечаем такое явление: чуть только появится в свет малороссийская книжка—в газете считают обязанностью говорить не о том, хороша ли она или дурна, а начинают толковать, что писать по-малорусски отнюдь не следует. Недоброжелательство ко всему

life, pushed about in his wheelchair, would turn to speak to the bust of his long-dead friend.[49] And characteristically, after his death, Kostomarov was remembered, among other things, as one of Ševčenko's closest friends.[50]

How, then, is one to reconcile this evidence with his disclaimers—that he was not really close to Ševčenko, that he did not really know him very well? Are they not a denial of a major facet of his life, and, to the extent that he saw himself as an apostle of a new cause, a distant echo of Peter denying Christ (with the denial made all the more puzzling in that it comes not at the beginning but at the end of a fruitful apostolic career)? At the very least, do they not appear to be a remarkable contradiction of the evidence, a willful and apparently self-abasing blindness to the objective existence and import of this relationship?

The nature of this problem—Kostomarov's psychology, his possible motivation—does not allow for definitive answers. As in any such case we can only postulate hypotheses, and perhaps also pose some further questions. We can also take note of a few salient points. The first stems from the narrative momentum of the autobiographic mode. It is evident, for example, that for Kostomarov the treatment of "Ševčenko-the-man" invariably becomes that of "Ševčenko-the-friend." Perhaps it is precisely here that he finds something lacking, an absence of sorts. Somehow, in the secondary elaboration of his recollections this friendship was not all it could have been, or all that he wanted it to be. Just as the somewhat staid professor, as we see from his own account, is at times the foil for, or, as we could now say, is deconstructed by the poet's blithe spirit, so Kostomarov's version of Ševčenko-the-man, which is indeed the attempt to reconstruct Ševčenko-as-friend, is overshadowed (more accurately perhaps: overexposed) by his awareness of Ševčenko-the-Poet. Significantly, in the *Autobiography* which he wrote in the last years of his life, the first mention of Ševčenko, and of their first meeting and quick friendship is further qualified as "this was the most active period for his talent, the apogee of his spiritual strength."[51] It would seem that poetry, whose power he can evoke with high Romantic eloquence, and specifically Ševčenko's poetry, into which he has

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малорусскому доходит до того, что, кажется, скоро станут признавать непреличным в порядочном обществе заводить речь о малороссийском народе и его языке. Пора бы хотя людям здравомыслящим, оставить такой фальшивый путь и начать обращаться с произведениями малорусского слова так же, как и с происведениями на каждом другом языке." "Zadači ukrainofil'stva," *Vestnik Evropy*, 1882, vol. 1, bk. 2; cf. also *Naukovo-publicystyčni i polemični pysannja Kostomarova*, p. 293.

49. A. Kostomarova, "Poslednie dni žizni N. I. Kostomarova," *Kievskaja starina*, 1895, vol. 4, pp. 13–14. Cited in Šabliovs'kyj, p. 50.

50. Cf. A. N. Pypin's necrology in *Vestnik Evropy*, 1885, no. 5, pp. 411–26, here p. 417.

51. N. I. Kostomarov, *Istoričeskie proizvedenija. Avtobiografija* (Kyiv, 1990), p. 475.

demonstrably unique insights, becomes the agency which blinds him to the values and reality of his own human experience—the friendship that was really there, but which his high standards led him to doubt and deny—or, perhaps, not so much standards as a very human hurt (evident also in analogous responses by Kuliš) that his special insight into the value of Ševčenko's muse was not rewarded (as he saw it) with commensurate attention (from the poet above all, but from others as well). Whatever the reason, the opposition between the poet-as-man and the poet-as-Genius will become an essential structure in his overall understanding of Ševčenko. From it, too, flows the further epistemological tension (which is only implicit in his biographical and autobiographical accounts) that "knowledge of Ševčenko" has various levels of meaning, and that there may be a great divide between knowing him and truly knowing him.

2. ŠEVČENKO, HISTORY, AND RUSSIA

Kostomarov's conception of the context in which Ševčenko appears, the historical as well as the implicitly political frame for his life and work, is fully consistent with his understanding of the role of Ukrainian literature within the larger Imperial Russian context and, beyond that, with his general federalist and basically conservative perception of Ukrainian-Russian literary, cultural, and political relations. What is consistent and plausible on the level of ideas, however, can become dissonant and false in the reading of the poet.

At its most concrete, this is a matter of recurring formulations. Thus, Kostomarov concludes his "Vospominanija o Ševčenko" in the Prague *Kobzar* with "[Of Ševčenko] as a man I can say that I know him to have been an impeccably honest personality, deeply loving his nation and his language, but without fanatical hostility to everything foreign."[52] One must, of course, accept the statement at face value; and the ideas contained in each of its clauses—love of one's own and lack of hostility to others—are both commendable. The juxtaposition, however, especially the implication of having to make it, is troubling, and tellingly defensive. And one cannot but hear a foreshadowing of Tyčyna's "Poete ljubyty svij kraj ne je zločyn—koly ce dlja vsix." Much earlier, this leitmotif also sounded in Kostomarov's graveside oration, where he stressed that Ševčenko's grave is not surrounded by foreigners, that he had become native to the Great Russians as well, and that the power of poetry transcends local origins and is imbued with universal

52. "Vospominanija o Ševčenko," in *T.G. Ševčenko v vospominanijax sovremennikov*, p. 147.

meaning.[53] And here, too, the claim and value of universal significance is unimpeachable. But the clearest articulation of this line of reasoning appears in his "Vospominanie o dvux maljarax," a text which Kostomarov wrote soon after Ševčenko's death, and which he read, as noted above, at the commemorative evening for Ševčenko on April 14, 1861. It also contains this note:

> Having suffered all his life, Ševčenko at the end of his days was surrounded by well-earned fame. His native land, Ukraine, saw in him her national poet; the Great Russians and the Poles acknowledged in him a great poetic gift. He was not a poet of a narrow, exclusive nationality: his poetry took higher flight. He was an all-Russian poet, a poet not of the Ukrainian people, but of the Russian nation generally, even though he wrote in one of the two historically existing dialects of that nation, the one which had remained within the folk sphere, and had not been subjected to enforced changes in school, and was therefore more suitable for giving Russia a poet truly of the people.[54]

Kostomarov's goal, of course, is to argue Ševčenko's universality, and this, especially when contrasted with narrow, ethnic parochialism (*tesnoj isključitel'noj narodnosti*), cannot but appear—then as now—as an

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53. "Поэт не остался чуждым и для Великорусского племени, которое воспитало его, оценило и приютило в последнии дни его, после долгих житейских страданий...

Такова сила поэзии! В какой-бы исключительной форме ни проявлялась она, как-бы тесно ни соединялась она с народностью и местностью,—ее общечеловеческий смысл не может укрыться и сделятся общим достоянием."

Naukovo-publičystycni i polemični pysannja Kostomarova, "Slovo nad hrobom Ševčenka," p. 85. Understandably, the first part of this passage became a major topos in Soviet treatments of the subject (cf. Šabliovs'kyj: "...Костомаров не тільки не протиставляє Шевченка Росії, а навпаки трактує провідні ідеї творчості Кобзаря в світлі єдності й нерозривності українського й російського народів, їх історичного співробітництва й рівноправності." Šabliovs'kyj, "Ševčenko i Kostomarov," p. 48. The last word here is also an echo of the relatively liberal mid-1960s).

54. Since in this passage Kostomarov uses the term *narod* and its cognates in at least three or four different senses (as nation/ethnos, people/population, folk/common people, etc.), it is essential to also look at the original formulation:

Пострадавши всю жизнь, Шевченко, пред концом дней своих, был облечен заслуженной славою. Его родина—Малороссия—видела в нем своего народного поэта; Великороссияне и Поляки признавали в нем великое поетическое дарование. Он не был поэтом тесной исключительной народности; его поэзия приняла более высокий полет. Это был поэт общерусский, поэт народа не малорусского, а вобще русского народа, хотя и писал на одном из двух искони существовавших наречий этого народа, оставшемся внутри народной сферы, не испытавшем школьных изменений и потому-то более способном для того, чтоб дать России истинно народного поэта. "Vospominanie o dvux maljarax," *Naukovo-publicystyčni i polemični pysannja Kostomarova,* p. 89.

It is also clear that the term "russkij" is used basically synonymously with "East Slavic" or "Rusian," what in Ukrainian would be "rus'kyj." For its part, this is also consonant with Kostomarov's ideological reading of the nature and future of Ukraine within Russia; cf. below.

unassailable value. The fact—supported by massive biographical evidence and clear literary resonance—that Ševčenko spoke with seemingly equal power to his Russian and Polish as well as to his Ukrainian readers, needed to be perceived, articulated and inscribed into the emerging canon; and it is to Kostomarov's credit that he was the first to do so. But he also does more, or indeed—in a manner quite specific to his time, and his own ideology and temperament—less. For the universality that is postulated in the first part of the quoted passage ("...the Great Russians and the Poles acknowledged in him a great poetic gift. He was not a poet of a narrow, exclusive nationality: his poetry took higher flight") is redefined, or concretized in mid-passage as the (official, political) goal and value of "all-Russianness" (*Èto byl poèt obščerusskij, poèt naroda ne malorusskogo a voobšče russkogo naroda...*). That this is not a rhetorical flourish nor a casual aside is made clear somewhat further in the essay when Kostomarov returns to this idea and provides an extensive elaboration. "We have said," he reminds us,

> that being a Ukrainian poet in form and language, Ševčenko was at the same time an all-Russian poet. This is precisely because he is the articulator of national song [*narodnyx dum*], the representative of national will [*narodnoj voli*], the exegete of national feeling [*narodnogo čuvstva*].[55]

The *narod*, and the manner in which the poet articulates, represents and illuminates its essence (*narodnost'*) is, as we shall see directly, the central and certainly the most influential and long-lived paradigm in Kostomarov's reception of Ševčenko. And it is precisely the transcendence of the *narod*, its ontological superiority, so to say, to the very process of history that allows Kostomarov to so elide the question of identity.[56] The way in which this is effected, however, the contextualization of the poet's role in society and history, is also highly instructive. In the passage that follows, Kostomarov provides a remarkable gamut of motifs which meld insight and personal conviction, or indeed bias, and tread, as Hrushevs'kyj pointed out, a thin line between official (and rather pragmatic) patriotism and barely concealed anti-bureaucratic, anti-centralist, and basically oppositionist populism.[57] The central thesis regarding the interrelation between the Ukrainian and the Russian peoples is one that Kostomarov was then working on with particular intensity: a month earlier he had published in *Osnova* a major article on "Dve russkie narodnosti," in which the national, and historically conditioned,

55. Ibid., p. 91.

56. The prioritizaion of ethnography over history is characteristic not only of Kostomarov; cf. below.

57. Myxajlo Hruševs'kyj, "Z publicystyčnyx pysan' Kostomarova," introduction to *Naukovo-publicystyčni i polemični praci.* pp. [iii]–iv.

character of each of the "Russian" (i.e., Rusian) nations/peoples (*narody*) is anatomized, and their essentially complementary profiles are presented as historical inevitability, as fate.[58] Here the motif, and the essence of the argument, is reiterated—succinctly and more eloquently:

> Fate has united the Ukrainian and the Great Russian peoples with unbreakable bonds. Only a casual [*legkomyslennoe*] skating along the surface of political events would lead one to conclude that there is only a state connection between these two peoples, and look at Ukraine as nothing more than a country annexed to the Russian Empire; although, on the other hand, only forceful centralization which kills every human freedom and every form of spiritual development of a thinking being can, with shut eyes, claim the total selfsameness of the Russian people. An understanding that is based on studying Russian history and ethnography will always admit that the Russian nation [*russkij narod*] should be understood in the sense of two nationalities; between these nationalities lies a deep, unbreakable, spiritual bond of kinship which will never allow them to question their political and social unity—that bond which was not destroyed under the weight of historical circumstances that sought forcefully to sunder these nationalities, that bond which was not torn either by internal strife, or by the Tatars, or Lithuania, or the Poles, that bond which to this day inclines Galicia, which several centuries ago had strayed into another sphere, toward the Russian horizon. Neither the Great Russians without the Ukrainians, nor the latter without the former, can complete their development. The one people is indispensable for the other; the one nationality complements the other; and the more orderly, equitable, reciprocal is the complementary nature of this relationship, the more normal will be Russian life.

And this becomes the large purpose of Ševčenko's historical role:

> Ševčenko, as a poet of the people [*poèt narodnyj*], felt this and understood it, and therefore his ideas and his feelings were never, not even in the most difficult moments of his life, besmirched either by hostility towards the Great Russian nationality or by quixotic dreams of local political independence: not the smallest shadow of anything like this could be found in his poetic works. And this, among other things, reaffirms the high virtue of his talent...[59]

The ultimate proof for this rests in the *narod*, in Ševčenko's multiform openness to it, and specifically in the fact—as Kostomarov sees it—that his poetry is perfectly intelligible to, and is appreciated by, the Great Russians.[60]

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58. Cf. N. I. Kostomarov, *Dve russkie narodnosti* (Kyiv, 1991).

59. "Vospominanija o dvux maljarax," p. 91.

60. "Поэт истинно народный, он естественно должен был выражать то, что, будучи достоянием малорусского элемента, имело в то же время и общерусское значение. Оттого поэзия Шевченка понятна и родственна Великоруссам. Для того, чтоб сочувствовать ему и уразуметь его достоинство, не нужно быть исключительно Малороссом, не нужно даже глубоко в подробностях изучить малорусскую этнографию... Шевченкову поэзию поймет и оценит всякий, кто только близок вообще

Kostomarov's conception of Ševčenko's "national" (political) role, his "all-Russian" resonance, draws on several motifs—and contains an essential circularity. Historically, as Hrushevsky notes, it articulates the then current Ukrainian stance of dual loyalty and faith in federalism, of rejecting any claim to political separatism while appealing for equality and legitimacy on the historical *and* ethnographic level: "Ukrainian patriotism [at that time] does not contradict all-Russian state nationalism."[61] As pragmatic as it may have been, it reflected the consensus of patriotic thought, and to see it as a hedging on one's Ukrainianness would be quite ahistorical.[62]

At the same time, this conception articulates a deeply held and genuinely non-pragmatic belief in the priority of the ethnographic over the historical, in effect, the primacy of the *narod* with respect to any and all cultural institutions. Now the historical experience that shaped the cultural, and consequently also the ethnic separateness of the Ukrainian *vis à vis* the Russian (Great Russian) people was the centuries-long existence of the former within the political and cultural structures of first the Lithuanian state and then the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The whole thrust of Kostomarov's writings, however, beginning with his *Bogdan Xmel'nickij* and extending to numerous shorter and polemical works, and echoing the theses of official Russian historiography, is to cast this experience as largely a Babylonian captivity, an aberration, or simply a detour from the broad track of the "all-Russian" unity that existed in the Kyivan period and has now been

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к народу,—кто способен помимать народные требования и способ народного выражения." Ibid.

Or, again: "В сочинениях его так много общерусского, что Великоруссы читают его даже в чрезвычайно плохих стихотворных переводах: как ни искажали его переводчики все-таки не могли испортить до того, чтоб первородная поэзия не высказывалась наружу. По нашему мнению, переводить Шевченка отнюдь не следует: достаточно будет напечатать его с объяснениями слов, непонятных для Великорусса,—да и слов такух будет совсем не много." Ibid., p. 92.

61. "This," he goes on to say, "was the task of Ukrainian tactics of the 1860s." As for Kostomarov, he "never ceased asserting and proclaiming that for the Ukrainian people their attachment to their way of life and their language did not prevent full loyalty towards the Russian state and the Great Russian people, and the Ukrainian intelligentsia, with Kostomarov at their head, while adhering to Ukrainian culture, and developing it as best they can, sees itself nonetheless as "Russian" [rus'koju], state-patriotic, and so on. The article ["Knjaz' Vladimir Monomax i kazak Bogdan Xmel'nickij," in which this is first argued] found sympathetic resonance in Ukrainian circles and Drahomanov strongly urges his Galician correspondents to study it so that they understand this dual nationalism of contemporary Ukrainians—one of whom at that time was Drahomanov himself." Myxajlo Hruševs'kyj, "Z publicystyčnyx pysan' Kostomarova," Introduction to *Naukovo-publicystyčni i polemični pysannja Kostomarova*, p. xvi.

62. In its own right it also echoes historical attitudes, i.e., the dual loyalty of the Cossack elite (*staršyna*) of the 18th century; cf., e.g., Semen Divovyč's "Razhovor Velikorossii z Malorossijeju."

reestablished in post-Petrine imperial Russia. Kostomarov's stance, however, goes beyond the official statist historiography of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century in that his focus, in self-avowed opposition to the Karamzinist tradition, is not on the state, but on the *narod*. And this provides a two-fold, augmented reason for seeing a basic similarity in the two "Rusian" peoples: the objectively existing ethnographic and linguistic similarities and contiguities between them, on the one hand, and, on the other, the devaluation or simply the bracketing out of the state, here the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and its role in shaping the historically, structurally conditioned distinctness, indeed separateness, of Ukrainian culture.[63] This also, however, establishes an essential circularity—in order for the Ukrainian *narod* to be close to the Great Russian it must be seen in ethnographic terms, and in large measure its historical experience (not to say its elites) must be edited out of the picture. For all the explicit claims of equality between Great and Little Russia, the price of "all-Russianness" is dear—it is the role of the "younger brother," and with it the path for eventually seeing Ukrainian literature as a literature for "home use" is already marked out.

Ultimately, the mesmerizing hold of the *narod*, and the search for an overarching all-Russianness in Kostomarov's writings, should perhaps be sought in his roots and in the innermost layers (and traumas) of his psyche: in the fact that his father was a Great Russian nobleman and his mother a Ukrainian peasant, indeed his father's serf, whom he married three months after Nikolaj was born; in the fact that while she was thus freed from serfdom he was not; in the fact that when Nikolaj was ten, and attending a pension in Moscow, his father (whom Kostomarov later described in his *Autobiography* as guided by a "liberalism and democratism" commingled with a "*pradedovsk[oe] barstvo*") was murdered by his serfs, for motives, as the sources say, of both revenge and robbery; in the telling circumstance that his mother, after long negotiations, had to cede the bulk of her widow's estate to his two uncles in order to buy Nikolaj out of serfdom. Or, as he later describes it, in his intellectual discovery that the true fabric of history was to be found not in the chronicles and documents, but in the pulsing life of the masses—which pulsation, quintessentially the oral literature, came totally to captivate him.[64]

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63. In principle, of course, this must also be applied to Muscovy—for the question of distinctness/separateness is determined by the actions, cultural policies, and so on of the states on both sides of the border.

64. Thus in his *Autobiography*: "Скоро я пришел к убеждению, что историю нужно изучать не только по мертвым летописям и запискам, а и в живом народе. Не может быть чтобы века прошедшей жизни не отпечатались в жизни и воспоминаниях потомков: нужно только приняться поискать–и, верно, найдетсь многое, что до сих пор

Whatever the intellectual and emotional origins of Kostomarov's paradigm, and desideratum, of "all-Russianness," its application to Ševčenko is more false than true. The question of the accessibility and intelligibility of his poetry for the Great Russian reader is the least of the problems. For one thing, it is clear that to claim this is to skate (to use Kostomarov's own image) along the lexical-semantic and socio-thematic surface of the poetry and hardly confront its profound cultural and symbolic and indeed historical resonance. How can one assume that the Cossack past, the *dumy*, the gamut of Ukrainian folkloric motifs, and indeed the reliance on the stylistic devices of the nascent Ukrainian literature, particularly the legacy of Kotljerevs'kyj, and above all a syncretic and mythical sense of Ukrainian victimization, can be intelligible to those who are not attuned to this code? (And the existence of the code is rooted not only in language—which is, of course, a given that immediately establishes limits to accessibility outside of itself—but even more in the fact that the formal medium, the literature, is then still largely undifferentiated and still highly dependent on its implicit generating principles and values of intimacy, familiarity and privity; in fact, it is precisely at that formative stage of language- and literature- and self-assertion where it is most hermetic and most resistant to extrapolation into other codes or contexts. Thus, too, intertextuality, specifically with reference to the context that is beyond or outside the ethnic realm, is highly circumscribed at this stage of Ukrainian literature.) In fact, already in Kostomarov's time, the story of Ševčenko's reception—which for our purpose here must be strictly defined as the considered response to his poetry, and not, for example, the general and all but openly "dissident" adulation that was showered upon him in St. Petersburg after his return from exile—illustrates the difference between his Ukrainian and his Russian readers. For even if one excludes from among the latter those like Belinskij and Senkovskij who were unabashedly hostile,[65] the response from those who were supportive—which includes

упущено наукою. Но с чего начать? Конечно, с изучения своего русского народа; а как я жил тогда в Малороссии, то и начать с его малорусской ветви. Эта мысль обратила меня к чтению народных памятников. Первый раз в жизни добыл я малорусские песни издания Максимовича 1827 года, великорусские песни Сахарова и принялся читать их. Меня поразила и увлекла неподдельная прелесть малорусской народной поэзии; я никак не подозревал, чтобы такое изящество, такая глубина и свежость чувства была в произведениях народа, столько близкого ко мне и о котором я, как увидел, ничего не знал. Малорусские песни до того охватили все мое чувство и воображение, что в какой-нибудь месяц я уже знал наизусть сборник Максимовича, потом принялся за другой сборник его же, познакомился з историческими думами и еще более пристрастился к поэзии этого народа." Pp. 446–47. The same is asserted by Kuliš in his "Vospominanije o Nikolaje Ivanoviče Kostomarove," *Nov'*, 1885, vol. 4, no. 13, p. 63.

65. Cf. Victor Svoboda's "Shevchenko and Belinsky," in *Shevchenko and the Critics 1861–1980*, ed. George S. N. Luckyj (Toronto, 1980), pp. 303–323.

such disparate people as Turgenev, whose well-intentioned, but ultimately rather limited memoirs served as an introduction to one volume of the Prague edition of Ševčenko's poetry, or Černyševkij, or Dobroljubov, or Princess Barbara Repnina, who continued to hold a special affection for Ševčenko—also shows that for them, large, indeed defining aspects of his poetry and his thought remained invisible.

The real problem, however, is simply whether the idea of all-Russianness can be reconciled with the meaning, particularly the overarching symbolic meaning, of Ševčenko's poetry, *and* the new social and political, in a word *national* reality that that poetry started to generate from the moment it appeared and, as Kostomarov was one of the first to see, began to irrevocably reshape its readers. Much depends, of course, on the meaning Kostomarov places on "all-Russian." On the level that he himself stresses first—the absence of hostility or rancor towards the Great Russians—his claim is surely true, though with some qualifications. In Ševčenko's prose, in his Diary, his letters and the cumulative evidence of his everyday life, enmity towards other groups, specifically the Great Russians among whom he counts so many friends and benefactors, beginning with Žukovskij and Brjulov, is simply not a factor. His poetry is also remarkably free of ethnic or group bias, but at the same time it is deeply informed by collective representations and animated by a profound sense of collective victimization. It is within this frame that what might seem a hypersensitivity to what is native and what is foreign asserts itself; and it is in this key that he merges his voice with the *kobzar* (minstrel) and enjoins the seduced and abandoned village girls to make love, but not with Russian soldiers:

Кохайтеся чорнобриві,
Та не з москалями...

("Kateryna," ll. 1–2)[66]

A rather different angle on this aspect of Ševčenko (and on the relationship between him and Kostomarov) is provided by the ever acerbic and unpredictable Kuliš. After describing how Ševčenko (in 1846) charmed his fresh acquaintance, the learned Kostomarov, and his doting mother, and their servant Thomka with his irrepressible humor, and song, and readiness to

66. The term *moskal'*, as has so often been pointed out, referred in Ševčenko's time to both "soldier" and "[Great] Russian." Ševčenko at times (e.g, in "Moskaleva krynycja" [The Soldier's Well]) uses it explicitly in the former sense; in one exile poem, "Xiba samomu napysať..." , he in fact speaks of himself as a *moskal'*: "Та, мабуть, в яму перейду/ Із москалів, а не діждусь! ... In "Kateryna" and the broad context of victimization the *moskal'* is unequivocally the Russian. Ultimately, of course, the two are coterminous: to be made a soldier, a *moskal'*, is to be made alien.

imbibe, and after "thus leaving the last Ukrainian minstrel on Kostomarov's hands in Kiev and departing for the St. Petersburg that seemed so mysterious and attractive for a provincial," Kuliš notes:

> ... I must hasten to add that under those external clothes that Taras loved to show off before the people he wore a different set—of a black color. Like Byron, our Ukrainian *kobzar* was at times a "grim martyr" who
>
> Suffered, loved and cursed.
>
> From this side, his language acted upon both of us as a disease [*kak zaraza*]. In our youthful heart, blissful and peaceful under the influence of all-Russian learning and poetry, a wound was made by the unknown authors of those paradoxes that fill Konys'kyj's chronicle, the outstanding *History of the Russes* [*Istoriija Rusov*]. Ševčenko, brought up on his reading of the pseudo-Konys'kyj exacerbated this wound, and we became haters not only of those who, in our childish views, were guilty of the miserable state of our native Ukraine, but of the Great Russians themselves [*samyx moskalej*], a coarse people, who in our opinion at the time, were incapable of anything elevated and whom we called *kacapy*. Ševčenko was inexhaustible in his sarcasm, anecdotes and sayings regarding the poor Great Russians whom we so severely deprived of a legacy in the *votčina* of the Rurikovids and the Romanovs. In much he must certainly have given way to Kostomarov, but Kostomarov, too, could not be free of his influence. In his recollection of Ševčenko he speaks evasively that he purportedly did not know him very well. I have the basis to think that in my absence they became as close as could be expected of two people who were so generously endowed by nature, who were so young, and who lived under the circumstances of the just but severe reign of Nikolaj Pavlovič.[67]

Kuliš's reminiscence—for all its levels of irony, his sarcastic variations on the theme of his, and Kostomarov's, and Ševčenko's, youthful (indeed, as he says, "childish") naiveté, his (altogether characteristic) melding of an encomium to and a debunking of Kostomarov (in what is, after all, an obituary), his all but unseemly dismissal of the Brotherhood of SS. Cyril and Methodius (also as "childish"), and his overall tone of somehow ambiguous loyalty—still has the ring of truth, perhaps precisely because different motifs and feelings clash in dissonance rather than rising in some orchestrated harmony. Thus, in contrast to the tone of tolerant condescension and patience, there is a certain dissonance in the phrase "in my absence"—with its implication of being somehow left out, of being supplanted in the relationship of true friendship with "the last Ukrainian minstrel." Such, too, is the apparent *volte-face* in his discussion of Pletnev. As Kuliš describes it,

67. P. Kuliš, "Vospominanija o Nikolaje Ivanoviče Kostomarove," pp. 64–65. The quote is from Puškin's "Kto znaet kraj, gde nebo bleščet." I am grateful to Professor William Mills Todd III for bringing this to my attention.

he abandons under Pletnev's magisterial influence the utopian political ideas that he had been sharing with Kostomarov, and retreats into an "ethnographic patriotism." But it is also on this very ground that he refuses to accommodate his mentor's goal of "Russian cosmopolitanism" and proceeds not only to assert his unprestigious "local" patriotism, but to redefine "Russianness" as something altogether incomplete without the Ukrainian component.[68]

If Kuliš's version of Ševčenko's attitudes is true, however, what light does it shed on Kostomarov's construction of Ševčenko's all-Russianness, and particularly his claim that with regard to the Great Russians the poet never evinced even a shadow of hostility? The simplest answer—adumbrated by what we have already seen of Kostomarov's tendency to reconfigure the past—is that it is questionable, perhaps even false. A more qualified response would distinguish here at least two levels of response or discourse. The one to which Kostomarov is implicitly attuned is the ethical or moral level, and his judgment is true: Ševčenko not only was not bigoted, but his creativity, above all his poetry, moves toward an ever more assertive universalism.[69] But there is also a contingent, non-idealistic, emotional and concretely human level to which Kostomarov, who shrinks from spontaneity and "eccentricity" and who even doubts (or evades, as Kuliš charges) his own friendship with Ševčenko, is not attuned. He does not see it, or if he does he glosses it over in order to further his larger scheme, to frame his idea. For his part, Ševčenko, whose sensitivity to injustice is exceeded only by an honesty that seems to shrink from nothing, and particularly not his emotions, cannot but express his feelings—especially if it is impolitic to do so. In a word, as much as he is part of all-Russian society, as close as he is to a great number of

68. "Из безбрежно широкой области политики я, не смущая моего почтенного друга никакими признаниями, мало-по-малу вошел в узкую сравнительно область этнографического патриотизма: я сделался киевским русичем, не исключавшим уже из общого наследства прочих русичей—клязьменских, московских, новгородских и проч. В этом областном патриотизме я был вполне откровенен с Петром Александровичем; иногда своими парадоксами выводил его даже из терпения. Он смотрел на мое украинствование, как на один из моих недостатков, пожалуй—как на главный из них, и, без сомнения клонил свое влияние на меня к тому, чтобы я сделался русским космополитом. Но тут он встретил во мне украинскую молчаливую оппозицию, чему доказательством служит между прочим "Черная рада", которую в Киеве начал я писать на языке Пушкина, а в Петербурге написал на языке Шевченка.

... Что касается Плетнева, то полному нашему сближению мешала только моя малорусская национальность. За его незнание малорусского языка, я смотрел на него как на человека, не получившаго *вполне русского* литературного образования. За мое пристрастие к украинщине, он смотрел на меня как на полуурода. Посылая в его библиотеку мои украинские сочинения впоследствии, я надписывал, что настанет просвещенное время, когда потомок Плетнева этими книгами воспользуется для истории русской народности" (emphasis in the original). Ibid., pp. 65–66.

69. Cf. my *The Poet as Mythmaker: A Study of Symbolic Meaning in Taras Ševčenko* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), especially chapter 4, "The Millennarian Vision."

Great Russian friends, as free as his poetry is of ethnic animosity, the sarcasm, the anecdotes, the sayings that Kuliš speaks of and which cumulatively articulate a rebellion against, or a subversion of the canonic role of the "older brother," are entirely in character.[70]

Kostomarov's general claim is more plausible if it is taken not in the sense of a mutual Russian/Ukrainian linguistic and cultural intelligibility, and not as an articulation of fraternal affection (this metaphor, with its odious foreshadowing of much later Soviet dogmas, should not really be laid at his door), but as historical, social, and intellectual common space. A sense of Russia as something that contains (not to say dominates or "owns") Ukraine is ever-present in Ševčenko's prose, his Diary, his letters, and so on;[71] in and of itself it is nothing more than a basic reality principle, and as such (somewhat tautologously) it is the defining feature of what I have called Ševčenko's "adjusted personality."[72] It is much less pronounced, but still in evidence in his poetry, most prominently as an ominous presence in his so-called political poems ("Son," "Poslanije" ["I Žyvym i mertvym i nenarožděnnym"], and most directly perhaps in "Kavkaz"), or in such late poems as "Neofity" (where Imperial Rome seems to blend with Imperial Russia), "Jurodyvyj," and "Saul" (another meditation on the meaning and origins of "Tsars," in which an implied Russia ["*u nas*"], like China, Egypt, Babylon, or biblical Israel, is taken to exemplify universally repressive, self-aggrandizing, and essentially evil state power).

But the essential space and modality of Ševčenko's poetic world is not intellectual (i.e., historicist, or social, or political), but symbolic and mythical, and the question that must be put is: How does Kostomarov's paradigm of all-Russianness correlate with *this* poetic reality, which, after all, was then, and remains now the core of the significance and meaning of Ševčenko? The answer must surely be—hardly at all. Indeed, in light of the poetry, Kostomarov's basic political claim that Ševčenko's "ideas and his feelings were never, not even in the most difficult moments of his life, besmirched by... quixotic dreams of local political independence," appears as

70. Ševčenko's early letters are particularly interesting in this regard. On the one hand, he speaks of writing poetry in Russian to prove to the Russians that he can master their language ("Щоб на казали москалі, що я їх язика не знаю"; letter to H. S. Tarnovs'kyj, 25 January 1843); on the other hand, not infrequently, he complains of not hearing Ukrainian spoken, of missing "normal" (i.e., Ukrainian) speech, and, most tellingly, berates himself for trying to write in Russian: "...який мене чорт спіткав і за який гріх, що я оце сповідаюся кацапам, черствим кацапським словом"; letter to Ja. H. Kuxarenko, 30 September, 1842.

71. And this is augmented by (and contingent on) the fact that the prose, the *Diary* and a large portion of the letters are written in Russian. Cf. my "The Nexus of the Wake: Ševčenko's 'Trizna'," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3–4 (1979–80), pp. 320–47.

72. Cf. *Poet as Mythmaker*, pp. 8–9 and passim.

a serious distortion—or a remarkable blind spot. For even if we allow that the poet's thought, and the Ukraine that he conjures up, are defined by mythic, not historicist structures, that the state and indeed the whole political realm are basically rejected in favor of a millenarian vision, it is clear that in those structures and in that vision Ukraine is seen as fully separate and autonomous. In Ševčenko's poetry Ukraine is characterized precisely by the fact that in its *raison d'être* and mode of existence—symbolic, emotional, experiential—it is *conceived quite without Russia*. His focus, in short, is on Ukraine not as part of the Russian empire but as Ukraine *tout court*. Even in the benighted present where (as he sees more sharply than any of his compatriots, with the only possible exception of Gogol) it is only a somnolent and victimized province, it is still nothing less than a transcendent value, as he says in his "Epistle,"

Нема на світі України,
немає другого Дніпра...[73]

or, even more directly, in "Son" ("Hory moji vysokiji..."):

Я так її, я так люблю
Мою Україну убогу
Що проклену святого Бога
За неї душу погублю

In the concluding poem (No. 12) of the cycle "V kazemati," which begins Ševčenko's exile poetry (as noted above, the seventh poem of this cycle, "Vesele sonečko xovalos'," is dedicated to Kostomarov), Ukraine is both an object of prayer and a legacy:

Чи ми ще зійдемося знову?
Чи вже навіки розійшлись?
І слово правди і любові
В степи і дебрі рознесли!
Нехай і так. Не наша мати,
А довелося поважати.
То воля Господа. Годіть!
Смирітеся, молітесь Богу
І згадуйте один другого.
Свою Україну любіть.

73. The statement "nema na sviti Ukrajiny" is subtly ambiguous, for it can be taken as literal negation—"there is *no* Ukraine in the world out there"—or, anticipating the following line, can simply mean "there is *no other* Ukraine in the world." The oscillation between the two is semantically significant and subliminally disorienting. Cf. also the occultist reading that L. Pljušč gives this and similar passages in his *Eksod Ševčenka. Navkolo "Moskalevoji krynyci"* (Edmonton, Alberta, 1986), pp. 277–78 and passim.

Любіть її... Во время люте,
В остатню тяжкую минуту
За неї Господа моліть.

Such examples could be adduced at will, since this stance is essentially coterminous with the poetry: Ukraine, throughout, is a separate and uniquely privileged entity. And it is only stating the obvious to say that since she is above all an emotional and moral category—symbolizing, in the recent past and in the present, the status of victimization, and in the future universal human rebirth[74]—there is no common ground with Kostomarov's historical and political paradigm. In Ševčenko's poetic vision, Russia and all-Russianness simply do not determine Ukraine, and Kostomarov's, and his contemporaries', implicit belief that Ukraine is "inconceivable without Russia" stands revealed as an extrinsic, imperial mindset.

As one who was deeply moved by the power of Ševčenko's poetry (and, as Kuliš reminds us, knew so much of it by heart),[75] there is little doubt that Kostomarov was aware of this essential distinction, between (to put it most basically) a Ukraine "within" and a Ukraine "without" Russia. From all we know, he could not but know. How then should one read his classical misprision?

Its mechanics or rhetoric are fairly clear. Treading on the already slippery surface of an argument from absence, Kostomarov subtly identifies modality with logical conclusion: the fact that Ševčenko's poetry is simply directed beyond political considerations, that it does not have an immanent political articulation, serves as evidence that he does not support or value "quixotic dreams of local patriotism," in effect, political separatism. (This inference may well be furthered by Kostomarov implicitly "pooling" the evidence of the poetry with that of the prose—even though his subsequent judgements will show that he is eminently aware of their essentially different perspectives.) But even without the political articulation, and indeed precisely because the mythic code that stood in its place was so much more powerful and resonant, Ševčenko's message was as separatist, as non- or indeed anti-all-Russian as was humanly possible in his time and setting. It is couched in pre-political, millennarian-prophetic, and in some measure even in nativist terms, and it bypasses the various questions (of historical lineage and of equal

74. Cf., therefore, his quintessential millennarian statement:

І на оновленій землі
Врага не буде супостата
А буде син і буде мати
І будуть люде на землі. ("І Arximed і Halilej...")

75. "Костомарову не нужно было их [его киевские стихотворения] списывать: высоко оригинальные поэмы и кобзарские плачи Тараса он знал от слова до слова на память." "Vospominanija o Nikolaje Ivanoviče Kostomarove," p. 67.

right to the Rus′ legacy, of social underpinnings and institutions, and ultimately of federalism) that so occupied Kostomarov and Kuliš and later Drahomanov, but it constitutes a watershed: it cracks the hegemony of the all-Russian model in Ukrainian thought and in so doing prepares the ground for modern Ukrainian national consciousness. It must seem highly ironic that the premier Ukrainian historian, author of the text—the *Knyhy bytija ukrajins'koho narodu*—that forshadowed this break, was somehow impervious to this sea change in Ukrainian history. Kostomarov, the historian, was seemingly condemned to seeing only the past.

As his other responses will show, however, it was not so much a case of not seeing as of seeing and not wishing to see, of repressing the knowledge. To this, and especially the question of motivation, we shall return. The idea that enables him to thwart this insight is one that was destined to be the largest in his and his contemporaries' intellectual life, and one which—in historical perspective—offered up the most slippery surface of all: the *narod.*

3. ŠEVČENKO AND THE *NAROD*

Kostomarov's focus on the *narod* as *the* essential paradigm for conceptualizing Ukrainian (and Russian) history, and the nation's collective existence as such, dates from his earliest writings and resonates fully with the hegemony of this idea in the formative stage of modern Ukrainian national consciousness. Already in his "Obzor sočinenij, pisannyx na malorossijkom jazyke," published a full three years before he met Ševčenko, he speaks of the idea of the *narod* as nothing less than a prime cause: "When the idea of turning to the *narod (ideja narodnosti)* appeared in Europe, imitation gave way to originality and bookishness to talent...", or "Now the idea of turning to the *narod* has revitalized our literature: both the reading public and the writers consider a turning to the *narod* the main virtue of every belletristic work," or, finally,

> And so the idea of turning to the *narod*, which had animated Russian literature, brought forth within it a separate subset [*otdel*]—Ukrainian literature, which in its direction is purely Russian, and authentically ethnic [*svoenarodnaja*]. Many contemporary reviewers call this tendency to write in Ukrainian an incomprehensible whim, but their thinking is without basis, for this is a need of the times, since it stems from that source which vitalizes contemporary society.
>
> The Ukrainian vernacular language [*narodnyj jazyk*]—like every vernacular language prior to the appearance of the idea of turning to the *narod*—practically did not have until now any written works, but instead this language secretly contained rich treasures of poetry—folk songs and tales. For a long time no one

had any interest in this, and only recently have people turned their attention to them.[76]

When Kostomarov for his part turns his attention to Ševčenko in this, the first historical overview of modern Ukrainian literature, the key in which he reads him, and the very formulations he uses, are those he will return to again and again. At their core is the idea of a perfect consonance between the voice of the poet and that of the people:

> The works of Ševčenko, which have been published in a separate book under the title of *Kobzar*, show the author to be uniquely gifted. He is not only brought up on Ukrainian folk poetry, but he has fully mastered it, he has subordinated it to himself and he gives it an elegant, educated form. The features of the characters he presents—Kateryna, the minstrel-kobzar, Perebendja—are the same that we know from nature; but along with that they contain a universal poetry, understood by everyone. The feelings of the poet are characterized by weariness and despondency; he takes to heart the fate of the people, but his grief is not something that has been learned—this is the entire people [*celyj narod*] speaking with the lips of its poet.

These insights are remarkable in their power and accuracy, and, it is hardly surprising (and poetically just) that they came to be deeply imprinted on the entire Ševčenko reception: to this day they are *the* major leitmotif in the popular or official societal response, and a major presence in the traditional scholarship. But Kostomarov goes beyond this. His idea of the poet speaking with the voice of the people (*eto celyj narod govorjaščyj ustami svoego poèta*) actually anticipates much later thinking, specifically Ševčenko's essential reliance on the archetypal and the mythical:

> His soul has actualized an empathy and a likeness between his state and the feelings of the entire people; along with the movement of the heart, which belongs to the poet, there is a vital confluence which is common to everyone who is able to respond emotionally. Because of this everyone—as long as he has the minimum of those feelings which fill the inner world of a Ukrainian—will be transfixed by Ševčenko's poetry to such an extent that he will forget whether it is external to him, taken from outside, or entirely his own, something that has appeared in the realm of the heart, from time immemorial, like the first ideas of childhood.[77]

Some twenty years later, in his "Vospominanie o dvux maljarax," Kostomarov returns to his central thesis of the consonance between poet and people. He does so immediately after asserting (as we have already seen)

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76. Cf. Ieremija Halka, "Obzor sočinenij pisannyx na malorossijskom jazyke," *Molodyk na 1844 hod* (Xarkiv, 1843) and in M. I. Kostomarov, *Tvory v dvox tomax* (Kyiv, 1967), vol. 2, pp. 377–78.

77. Ibid., pp. 388–89.

Ševčenko's role as an "all-Russian" poet, as one who speaks to and for the primal, trans-historical and trans-political community that is formed by the "*dve russkie narodnosti*." And it is in this connection that he contrasts him with the poet who in the Russian society of the time was most often identified as a *narodnyj poèt*:

> Some myopic judges of literature have compared him [Ševčenko] with Kol'cov, and have even formed a higher opinion of the latter. This came as a result of the fact that they did not understand what is a poet of the people [*narodnyj poet*], and could not raise themselves to an understanding of his qualities and significance. According to their concept, the poet of the people is the one who can successfully depict the *narod* and speak in its tonality. And such indeed was Kol'cov; in some of his works he performed this task excellently, and his name shines honorably among the outstanding figures of Russian literature. Ševčenko was not such a poet and such was not his task. Ševčenko did not imitate folk songs; Ševčenko did not have as his goal either to describe his people or to copy the folk tone: he had nothing to copy, since by his very nature he did not speak in any other way. As a poet Ševčenko was the *narod* itself continuing its poetic creativity. Ševčenko's song was by itself a song of the people, but a new one, the kind of song that could now be sung by the entire people... Ševčenko was chosen by the people in the direct sense of the word; it is as if the *narod* chose him to sing in its place. The forms of folk song entered Ševčenko's verse not through learning, not by deliberation—where to use what, where this or that expression is best put—but by the natural development in his soul of the whole limitless thread of folk poetry... Ševčenko said what every man from the people would say if his folk essence [*narodnoe suščestvo*] could rise to the task of expressing that which is at the bottom of his soul. A holy treasure, it was hidden there under the weight of life's prose, and was invisible, unnoticed even by the common man himself until the moment that the life-creating sounds of a genius would touch the soul's concealed mysteries and with their entrancing melody jolt the muteness of his thought, and reveal to his senses that which was his property, but of which he was still unaware. Waked from his prosaic apathy by the voice of such poetry the common man is ready to cry out with trembling and delight: "I was just now ready to say the same thing, precisely the way it was said by the poet." This was not granted either to Kol'cov or to any other Russian poet, with the only exception of Puškin (though he spoke not for the common man, but for the higher Russian class). Kol'cov would speak in the tone of the people; Ševčenko speaks in the way the *narod* does not yet speak, but how it was already prepared to speak, and was only waiting for a singer to be found within its ranks who would master its language and its tone. And following such a creator so also will speak the whole *narod,* and it will say in one voice: this is mine...[78]

The poetic eloquence that so moved his audience on that commemorative evening in 1861 is still audible in these lines, and its source is the author's

78. "Vospominanie o dvux maljarax," *Naukovo-publicystyčni i polemični pysannja Kostomarova,* pp. 89–90.

unmistakable and unalloyed empathy for his subject—both the poet and the *narod* with which he so firmly identifies him. In terms of the argument itself, the intellectual, logical means for linking the seemingly totally disparate realms of the collective and the individual is the notion of Genius, which, as we shall see directly, is one of the poles and touchstones of this essay. A further animating moment, conjoining the intellectual and the emotional, is Kostomarov's sense of the impending demise of Ukrainian folk culture (which for him, we should remember, is coterminous with Ukrainian culture as such). "Народная украинская поэзия видимо приблизается к угасанию," he says and goes on to project this onto a broad gamut, of performance and repertoire, quality and content, and of the pure and archaic folk consciousness itself. Ultimately, of course, the death of Ševčenko is a synecdoche for the passing of a whole way of life.[79]

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79. This idea was also voiced, virtually at the same time, by Apollon Grigor'ev in his obituary, "Taras Ševčenko," published in *Vremja* (1861, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 634–40). His seemingly boundless estimation of Ševčenko, whom he brackets along with Puškin and Mickiewicz, is still qualified, however, by what Grigor'ev takes to be Ševčenko's wholly *local* (i.e., Ukrainian) resonance as well as by his exclusive identification with the *narod*:

Значение утраты, которую славянские литературы понесли в Тарасе Григорьевиче Шевченке–если не равносильно з утратами, понесенными ими в Пушкине и Мицкевиче–представителях славянства перед целым человечеством,—то во всяком случае нисколько не меньше значения утраты Гоголя и Кольцова.*

(And here Grigor'ev provides his footnote: Так-как у нас во всем и всегда нужно оговариваться, то и спешим сказать, что равносильность этой утраты мы признаем только относительно малороссийской литературы, в которой Тарас Шевченко занимал огромное место.) And then he continues,

Что Тарас Шевченко был великий поэт, в этом сомневаться может только газета "Век"—на столь же *разумных* основаниях, на каких не сочуствует она Шиллеру. Но что с другой стороны Тарас Шевченко был только заря, великий поэт только что начинающейся литературы поэт исключительно народный, поэт о котором трудно сказать—последний ли это из слепых кобзарей или первый из мастеров и художников, так наивна его красота и вместе так уже артистична,—это тоже не подлежит спору. По красоте и силе, многие поставляли его наравне с Пушкиным и Мицкевичем: мы готовы идти даже дальше в этом—у Тараса Шевченки есть та нагая красота выражения народной поэзии, которая на каждой странице "Кобзаря" поразит вас у Шевченки... Шевченко еще ничего условного не боится; нужны ему младенческий лепет, народный юмор, страстное воркованье, он ни перед чем не остановится, и все это у него выйдет свежо, наивно, могуче, страстно или жартливо как самое дело. У него действительно есть и уносящая, часто необузданная страстность Мицкевича, есть и прелесть пушкинской ясности—так что действительно, по данным, по силам своего великого таланта, он стоит как бы в середине между двумя великими представителями славянского духа. Натура его поэтическая шире своею многосторонностью натуры нашего могучего, но односторонного как сама его родина—представителя русской Украины, Кольцова, светлее, проще и искренее натуры Гоголя, великого поэта Малороссии, поставившего себя в ложное положение быть поэтом совершено чуждого ему великорусского быта... Да! Шевченко—последний кобзарь и первый великий поэт новой великой литературы славянского мира.

Apollon Grigor'ev, *Sočinenija, I. Kritika* (Villanova, 1970), pp. 386–87.

For all the formal and psychological insights of this reading and with all due allowance for its emotional tone and elegiac mode, the interpretation of Ševčenko that emerges is still highly problematic. The first and basic reason is that the notion of the *narod* was and is profoundly ambiguous. On the one hand it refers to the total collective, "the people," indeed "the nation," and draws its cognitive and emotional power from this totalizing thrust. On the other hand—and this reflects convention, history and social reality—it refers to the "folk," "the common people," specifically the peasantry. Kostomarov, for whom the *narod* is *the* essential concept, the touchstone of his thought, also exemplifies the intermingling and frequent fusion of these two levels. In one passage, sometimes in one sentence, he will use it to refer to the peasant, the "*prostoljudin*," and to the "Ukrainian" or "Russian people," or indeed the totality of Rus'.[80] The problems that flow from this are several.

The fusion of the idea of the "folk" with that of the "nation" sharply narrows down, or even brackets out history; Kostomarov, the historian, finds himself in the odd position of suspecting, and suspending—by virtue of his populist paradigm—much of the content of what in his time is considered history, i.e., political history. The totalizing power of the idea of the *narod* necessarily leads to the further premise of its undifferentiated, "class-less," and ultimately "democratic" essence. This legacy of Romanticism, and particularly Herder, becomes the warp of Kostomarov's writings and in turn the enduring legacy of Ukrainian *narodnyctvo* or populism.

When applied to Ševčenko (and the *narod* and Ševčenko's *narodnist'* become central topoi in the subsequent reception), this paradigm cannot but obscure the overall historical, social and indeed political impact of his message. As much as Kostomarov is intuitively correct in stressing the "collective unconscious," in effect the mythical, transhistorical tenor of his poetry, Ševčenko's inclusion in his vision (albeit in the guise of the new secular religion of Romanticism and its cult of the *narod*) of the autonomist and corporate patriotism of the Cossack elite of the past century, and even more so his ability to identify and speak to precisely the different strata of

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The issue of Ševčenko's *narodnist'*, and his total identification with it, had been put as forcefully, and at greater length, only a few months earlier in N. Dobroljubov's review of the *Kobzar* of 1860 (*Sovremennik*, 1860, vol. 80, no. 3, pp. 99–109). The possibility that this perception of Ševčenko, and of all of Ukrainian literature, may have been not only a gross simplification, but also a strategic subordination to the authority of the all-Russian discourse, in effect a marginalization vis à vis the center, is something that could not be raised either in Stalinist or in post-Stalinist Soviet criticism. For an earlier treatment of this cf. M. Plevako's "Ševčenko j krytyka (Evoljucija pohljadiv na Ševčenka)," *Červonyj šljax*, 1924, no. 3, pp. 97–120 and nos. 4–5, pp. 108–142; reprinted in *Statti, rozvidky j bio-bibliohrafični materijaly* (New York-Paris, 1961), pp. 164–268, especially pp. 176–78 and passim.

80. Cf. n. 52 above.

Ukrainian society, and, most importantly, his ability to visualize a historical and, for all practical terms, national continuum of "the dead, the living and the yet unborn," remain something Kostomarov-the-historian cannot see. In fact, his inability to discern this turns into a principle, an unwillingness to countenance a new paradigm, and ultimately to accept a new historical reality. Its culmination is the theory of a "literature for home use" and the rather unseemly pose of chiding his colleague and erstwhile friend, Kuliš, for translating Shakespeare into Ukrainian—where it is plain to him (Kostomarov) that what the implied (in effect, peasant) reader of Ukrainian requires is simpler and more practical fare.[81]

The identification of Ševčenko as a poet of the *narod*, or a *narodnyj poèt*, also has the unavoidable consequence of downgrading his social and esthetic role. The comparison with Kol'cov, and then with Puškin, is indicative: while Ševčenko is judged superior to Kol'cov as a *narodnyj poèt*, he speaks to the common masses, while Puškin speaks to the upper classes. In a later article Kostomarov puts it much more directly:

> ...for Ševčenko there will always be a place in the pleiad of the great singers of the Slavic world. In artistic devices he gives way to such poets of our tribe as Puškin and Mickiewicz, as he indeed generally gave way to them in education—although this lack was strongly compensated by the strength of his creative genius. But in the vitality of his ideas, in the nobility and universality of his feelings, in his naturalness and simplicity, Ševčenko is superior to them. His significance in history is not in literature, not in society, but in the whole mass of the *narod*.[82]

This juxtaposition, or more precisely the terms in which it is made, points to the second major problem in the paradigm of the *narod*: how is individuality possible if it is literally the whole people (be it folk or nation) that is speaking through the poet's voice? Or, specifically, how can we discern the *poèt* in Kostomarov's Ševčenko? By all indications—only in dim

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81. Thus: "Нам казалось-бы, нет надобности переводить на южно-русское наречие Шекспира, так как всякий малорусс, получивший на столько развития, чтобы интересоваться чтением Шекспира, может прочитать его в русском переводе, да иногда даже с большим удобством, чем в южно-русском, потому что редкий сколько-нибудь образованый малорусс не знает русскаго книжнаго языка в равной степени с своим природным наречием, передавать-же по-русски Шекспира в настоящее время легче чем по-малорусски, даже и такому знатоку малорусскаго слова, как сам г. Кулиш." (Kostomarov goes on to say, however, that this does not apply to the Ukrainians living in Austria-Hungary: since both Polish and German are "foreign" languages, the need to make Ukrainian into a full-blown literary language ["...развивать родное наречие и преобразовать его в культурный язык"] is evident and justified.) "P. A. Kuliš i ego poslednjaja literaturnaja dejatel'nost'," *Kievskaja starina* 5, 1883, p. 223–24.

82. N. Kostomarov, "Malorusskaja literatura," *Poèzija slavjan*, p. 161. While sharing some basic assumptions with Grigor'ev (cf. n. 79, above), Kostomarov's formulation is still more analytical and more perspicacious.

outline. While seeing the creative role of Ševčenko's *narodnist',* his reliance on the folk idiom and the vernacular language, the gamut of emotional and expressive devices associated with the folkloric or oral modality, and most strikingly his resonance with the collective unconscious, Kostomarov simply does not see Ševčenko's manifest and complex individuality, his doubt and his irony, his experimentation with form and his subtle use of voice, his modulation of emotion and his variations on intellectual distancing. It would appear that even while Kostomarov is the first to speak of Ševčenko's genius—and all of the above would normally inhere in the idea of poetic genius—in actual fact, both the idea itself and its content are overshadowed by his supreme and ultimate reference point, the *narod.*

Despite this seeming reductiveness, it must be noted in Kostomarov's defense that the meaning that he ascribes to the *narod* appears at times to be nothing short of sublime: it is the essence of common humanity, the core of human values, virtually a religious or metaphysical category. This tendency to expand the meaning of the *narod* from a simple designation of the peasant masses to a vision of common humanity is most pronounced in Kostomarov's last extensive treatment of Ševčenko, his already mentioned introduction to the section on Ukrainian literature in N. V. Gerbel's anthology, *The Poetry of the Slavs.* Here he again stresses that Ševčenko, in contrast to the other writers creating the new Ukrainian literature, was a man literally of the common people, a "*prostoljudin,*"[83] and he repeats virtually word for word his earlier formulation that "Ševčenko's poetry is the poetry of the entire *narod,*" it is "that which the *narod* only felt in its sorrow, but could not yet clothe in clear consciousness," that "which the *narod* truly sang with the lips of its chosen one..."[84] But then he goes a step further:

> A poet like Ševčenko is not only a painter of the people's life [*narodnogo byta*], not only a singer of the people's feelings [*narodnogo čuvstva*], of the people's deeds—he is a national leader [*narodnyj vožd'*], one who awakens them to new life, a prophet.[85]

And from this he takes a still further step: "His poetry," he says, "is deeply Ukrainian, but at the same time its meaning is in no sense merely local: it continually carries a universal significance." Thus,

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83. Thus: "Народность Квитки, как и вообще тогдашних народо-изобразителей—это зеркало наведенное на народный быт... Но Шевченко был сам простолюдин, тогда-как другие более или менее были паны и паничи, любовавшиеся народом, иногда и дествительно и любившие его, но в сущности, по рождению, воспитанию и стремлениям житейским, не состовлявшие с народом одного целаго." "Maloruskaja literatura," *Poezija slavjan,* p. 160.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.

Ševčenko is not only a poet of the Ukrainian common people, but generally the poet of the common people [*poèt prostogo naroda*], of the common humanity [*ljudskoj gromady*] that had long been suppressed by the conditions of social existence, but still senses the need for other conditions, and is already beginning to move in that direction, though it does not yet see a true path and often falls into despair and despondency even when hope for a distant future looks into their soul.[86]

Separately and cumulatively, the prescience of these formulations is stunning. "National leader," "prophet," "poet of common humanity" are terms which accurately reflect the *contemporary* understanding of Ševčenko: the former two virtually defining the conceptual (in effect, rhetorical) axis of the popular, cultic and "patriotic" responses, and the latter serving as a touchstone for a broad range of approaches, from the ideological to the analytical.[87] The present discourse on Ševčenko, whatever its level of sophistication, is simply inconceivable without recourse to these terms. In laying the groundwork for this edifice, the sublime meaning with which Kostomarov invests the notion of the *narod* also defines the quality that enables and, intellectually speaking, legitimizes the whole subsequent reception of Ševčenko—the idea of his universality. In earlier readings, in Kuliš's graveside oration, in Kostomarov's own early responses which we have already discussed, the frame for considering the poet's impact was Slavdom or "all-Russianness"; now it is something much more compelling: "common humanity."[88]

86. Ibid. The awkward syntax, the array of subordinate clauses, seems to reflect the author's slippery task of giving voice to social disaffection without crossing over into political dissent.

87. In the latter I would also include my own reading. "Poet of common humanity," especially when associated with collective, unconscious emotions—and a hoped-for, providential solution—is as close as one can come to speaking of *communitas,* mythopoesis, and a millennarian perspective without benefit of theories and systems of analysis that were still far in the future. Cf. *Poet as Mythmaker,* passim.

88. In the late Soviet period a subtle and sophisticated rearticulation of this idea by the critic Vadym Skurativs'kyj created a major literary scandal: the author was banned from print for several years and the editor of the journal that ran his piece, the poet Dmytro Pavlychko, was sacked. Presumably, the offense in Skurativs'kyj's essay, "Ševčenko v konteksti svitovoji literatury," *Vsesvit,* 1978, no. 3, pp. 184–109, was that it ascribed to the Ukrainian poet absolute—not contingent, not indebted-to-Russian-revolutionary-democratic-thought, but absolute—priority in articulating the cause of enslaved humanity:

Саме Шевченко вперше в історії (і не літератури, а людства) ворушив цю тисячолітню німоту, саме через нього вперше прохопилася словом, а не лише криком, сама зазвучала, як казали середньовічні теологи, "субстанція пекла", його моторошна, наскрізь пропечена стражданням "речовина". Тут не Орфей спустився в пекло—тут раптово заспівало, затужило в повний голос усе його каміння, усі його стіни й склепіння. Уявімо собі на хвилину, що соборний плач антільських невільників раптово повернувся в слово, віднайшов його, осів у ньому, не втративши при цьому жодної своєї сльози. Уявімо собі, що він, із своєї до-знакової, необхідної неоформленості і

The notion of Ševčenko-as-Prophet has long become equally central to the discourse. Already in 1879 Myxajlo Drahomanov was devoting the first chapter of his seminal study of Ševčenko to a survey of the way in which his "prophecy" was being parsed and exploited by virtually every political and socially articulate segment of Ukrainian society.[89] For his part, Kostomarov's achievement rests not only on the fact that he was one of the very first to articulate this idea and bring it to collective consciousness (a consciousness that quickly moved from the literary and cultural to the political), but that he also sought to define it. The paradigm he chose—that of Genius—was surely familiar to his readers. His treatment of Ševčenko's prophecy, and the genius that underlies it, however, turns out to be as ambivalent and prone to self-deconstruction as any that he was to apply to Ševčenko.

4. ŠEVČENKO THE GENIUS

The text in which Kostomarov confronts this problem, the *Urtext* and the Rosetta Stone of his Ševčenko reception, and the text around which we ourselves are somehow fated to circle in puzzlement and fascination, is again the "Vospominanie o dvux maljarax." Few things are more indicative of the present-day torpor in Ševčenko scholarship, particularly its treatment of his reception, than the fact that the profound ambiguities of this remarkable essay have never really been examined.[90] Critics and commentators would cite the inspired and eminently quotable passages without seeming to notice that the overall text in which they were imbedded was saying something quite

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стихійності перейшов у знаки з усіма їхніми прикметами, якостями, умовами, обов'язками—у знакову реальність мови, зберігаючи водночас свою стихійну, невідпорну силу, свою дорефлективну, дораціональну міць. Із своєї без-мірності він прийшов до міри, в гранично вивірений простір вірша, у піфагорейську періодичність метра й ритму, при цьому залишаючись по суті своїй безмірним, постійно перекриваючи всі ритуали розміру й рими.

Сума таких уявлень і наблизить нас почасти до розуміння всієї грандіозності й загадковості явища Шевченка, до його планетарного значення. Вперше його словом заговорили світи, які залишалися таємницею за сімома замками для елітарної культури, чи не для всіх її літературних експедицій, туди споряджених" (p. 187).

The argument is nuanced and forceful, but its conceptual matrix, its (in all likelihood quite subliminal) paradigm is Kostomarov's.

89. Cf. his "Ševčenko, ukrajinofily i socializm," *Hromada,* no. 4, 1879, pp. 101–230. (Cf. also M. P. Drahomanov, *Literaturno-publicystyčni praci u dvox tomax* (Kyiv, 1970), vol. 2, pp. 7–133.)

90. Cf., for example, two of the more substantive and balanced treatments—Je. Šabliovskyj's "Ševčenko i Kostomarov," *Zbirnyk prac' p'jatnadcjatoji naukovoji ševčenkivs'koji konferenciji* (Kyiv, 1968), pp. 23–50 and M. P. Komyšančenko's *Z istoriji ukrajins'koho ševčenkoznavstva. Tvorčist' T. H. Ševčenka v ocinci dožovtnevoho literaturoznavstva* (Kyiv, 1972), pp. 169–79.

different; alternatively, in some editions the text was abbreviated and the implicit "contradictions" simply deleted (without the least hint, of course, that what was left out might radically change the picture).[91]

In effect, the passages in question articulate the first serious attempt to look at the total meaning of Ševčenko, with special reference to both the historical existence and the consciousness of the nation. In terms of identifying the issue, to be sure, they are preceded by only a few weeks by Kuliš's article, or "letter from the homestead," "Čoho stojiť Ševčenko jako poet narodnyj," which appeared in *Osnova* in March of 1861. In it, the other high priest of the nascent Ukrainian secular religion speaks of Ševčenko as one who gave voice to Ukrainian collective feelings, who first showed the sublime power and dignity of the *narod*, who first communed with the mute burial mounds, in effect was the first to understand the Ukrainian national past, and who, like Moses for the Israelites, led the *narod* from its bookish (!) bondage.[92] But Kuliš's insights are couched in characteristically pragmatic terms—the emancipation of the *narod* from its own muteness and the insignificance imposed upon it by the "city's" canon—and characteristically are not attuned to the personal and human dimension. Kostomarov's advantage is that his are; and for him, Ševčenko's role is shown as

91. Cf., e.g., *T. G. Ševčenko v vospominanijax sovremennikov* (Kyiv, 1962), pp. 151–53.

92. Thus: "...аж тут Шевченко голосно на всю Україну озвався, мов усі співи народні і всі людські сльози разом заговорили. Підняв він з домовини німу нашу пам'ять, визвав на суд нашу мовчазну старосьвітчину і поставив перед нею Українця, який він єсть тепер, яким він через історію стався"; "Шевченко—наш поет і первий історик. Шевченко перше всіх запитав наші німі могили, що вони таке, і одному тілько йому дали вони ясну, як Боже слово, одповідь. Шевченко перше всіх додумався, чим наша старосьвітчина славна і за що проклянуть її грядущі роди"; "Шевченко чистим подвигом словесним докінчив діло, за которе гетьмани наші нечистим серцем бралися. Шевченко, воздвигши із упадку голосну мову українську, назначив широкі границі нашому духу народньому. Тепер уже не мечем наше народне право на вражих твердинях зарубане, не шпаргалами і печатьми супротив лукавства людського стверджене: у тисячах вірних душ українських воно на самому дні заховане і тисячолітніми споминками запечатане"; "Тим-то не хто, як хуторяне та селяне, знають і чують душею, чого стояв Шевченко. Він їх вивів, наче Ізраїля, із книжньої неволі, в котору були городяне взяли всякий розум письменний; він скинув з них ганьбу всесвітню, що вони люде—ні до чого; він возвеличив їх образ духовний і виставив його на взір перед цивілізованим миром..."

"Čoho stojiť Ševčenko jako poet narodnyj", *Tvory Pantelejmona Kuliša*, vol. 6 (L'viv, 1910), pp. 488, 490, 492 and 494.

The sense of a sacerdotal cast to Kuliš's—and Kostomarov's—roles was felt by both principals. As described by Kuliš in his remembrance of Kostomarov (see n. 135, below), in their post-exile period (and prior to their estrangement in the late 1870s) they spontaneously came to address each other as "Otec Nikolaj" and "Otec Pantelejmon"—and correspond in a form of Old Church Slavonic (see, for example, Ihnat Žytec'kyj, "Kuliš i Kostomarov (Nedrukovane lystuvannja 1860–70 rr.)," *Ukrajina*, bk. 1–2, 1927, pp. 39–65). What began as a donnish mockery of their own bookishness and archivalism became a self-fulfilling prophecy—and a revealing metatext on the national revival.

inseparable from his individuality. The imagery here does echo Kuliš, but it clearly rings with Kostomarov's own voice, and it draws its strength from the personal, autobiographical connection.

Kostomarov begins by saying that when he first met Ševčenko there was nothing attractive or warm about him: he was cold and dry, though straightforward. In this Kostomarov professes to see the characteristic, historically conditioned reserve and suspicion of the peasant. "But," he continues,

> in a short time we came together and became friends. Taras Hryhorovyč read me his unpublished poetry. I was overcome with fear: the impact they had on me reminded me of Schiller's ballad "The Veiled Image at Sais." I saw that Ševčenko's muse was tearing in two the veil of national life. It was frightening and sweet and painful and intoxicating to peer inside!!! Poetry always takes the lead, always takes the bold step; history, scholarship and practical activity follow in its footsteps. It is easier for the latter, but difficult for the former. One must have keen eyesight and strong nerves so as not to be blinded or to fall senseless from the sudden flash of truth that is thankfully concealed from the meek crowd that follows the beaten path alongside the mysterious veil—not knowing what is concealed behind that veil! Taras's muse broke through to some underground dungeon which for several centuries was closed by many locks, sealed by many seals, covered up by the earth which had purposefully been tilled and seeded so as to conceal from the descendants even the memory of the place where the underground cavern was to be found. Taras's muse, with its inextinguishable light, boldly entered this cavern and opened up behind it a path for the sun's rays, and fresh air, and human curiosity. It will be easy to enter into this cavern now that air has been let in; but what human strength must it take to stand up to the age old miasma that can kill in an instant any living force and extinguish any earthly flame! Woe to the bold poet—he forgets that he is a man, and that if he dares to be the first to enter he may fall... But poetry does not fear deadly miasms—if it is true poetry. And its light will not be doused by any historical or societal fumes, for that light burns with an eternal fire, the fire of Prometheus.[93]

When somewhat further on he speaks of the "life-giving voice of genius,"[94] he is clearly building on these inspired images. And it was surely this pathos that elicited the initial enthusiasm for his essay.

Judging by the subsequent reception of Kostomarov as a reader of Ševčenko, this vision became the centerpiece of his critical legacy. The passage draws its power from a syncretism that clearly means to evoke the poetic world and the multifaceted impact of Ševčenko: the echoes of mythical, biblical, and archetypal imagery, of Prometheus ("Kavkaz"), and of the Ur-poet, Orpheus, who through his music made mankind human, and was

93. "Vospominanija o dvux maljarax," pp. 88–89.
94. Ibid., p. 90; cf. also n. 80.

also the first to descend to Hades,[95] the allusions to literary craft and to the critic's own model of perception (Schiller's poem), and the opening of history's crypt ("Rozryta mohyla," "Velykyj l'ox"), the not-so-veiled allusion to society's (the government's!) strictures, the "miasms" that stifle opposition and fresh thought, and, above all, the overwhelming, personal immediacy of the experience of reading the poetry: "It was frightening, and sweet, and painful, and intoxicating to peer inside!!!" Despite all that, however, the experience and the insight are qualified, and then undercut.

They are qualified, on the one hand, by the intellectual thrust of the whole argument. As we have seen, Ševčenko's *narodnist',* his identification with the *narod,* his role as its spokesman or indeed *porte parole* are consistently superimposed on the individual, the role of genius-as-such. For every phrase or image of the above passage there are two or three sentences, even paragraphs, that elaborate and vary the thesis that his poetry flows from and articulates the voice of the people. The sheer volume of the rhetoric enforces this perspective and reinforces our sense that Kostomarov's notion of genius—for all the eloquence he invests in describing Ševčenko's individual power and originality, his virtually superhuman effort in transcending the limitations of normal mankind—is essentially Herderian: genius is understandable only within the context of the nation, the Volk, the *narod.*[96] Even more eloquent is the overall conceptual frame of this essay, which, after all, is entitled "A Remembrance of Two Painters." Ševčenko, we know, was a painter—even though this is not what gave him his orpheic and promethean character. Who, then, was the other painter?

There is certainly no suspense, for Kostomarov tells us this at the very outset. The essay, in fact, begins like an anecdote, or the tale of an amateur ethnographer:

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95. The image of the common man's everyday life as a living hell is a striking topos in Ševčenko; cf., for example, in "Jakby vy znaly panyči":

..в тім гаю
У тій хатині, у раю
Я бачив пекло...

96. Cf. Giorgio Tonelli, "Genius, from the Renaissance to 1770," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (New York, 1973), vol. 2, p. 295. It is important to note that this conflation of genius and nation (*narod*) had deeply permeated the intellectual climate of the time. See, for example, the passage in a letter of V. M. Bilozers'kyj to M. I. Hulak, which is one of the first recorded responses that defines Ševčenko in these terms:

Вчера был у меня Иван Як[овлевич] П[осяденко] и сказал, что Ш[евченко] написал новую поэму «Иоанн Гусс». Я поневоле приятно позадумался над тем, какого гениального человека мы имеем в Тарасе Гр[игорьевиче], ибо только гений посредством глубокого чувства, способен угадывать потребности народа и даже целого века, к чему не приведут никакая наука, ни знания, без огня поэтического и вместе религиозного. *Kyrylo-Mefodijivs'ke tovarystvo*, vol. 1, p. 105.

In one village of the eastern Ukrainian territories there lived, and maybe still lives today, a highly remarkable personality. This personality is capable of evoking many thoughts in one's soul and of leaving indelible impressions; this was the peasant Hryc'ko, by profession a painter. As is well known, a painter is a frequent occurrence in Ukrainian peasant life. Painting is usually one of the first steps taken by a peasant when his individual talent leads him out of the agrarian cycle. A painter is usually also literate; art leads him to curiosity; the painter paints the Virgin, holy men and women, and it is useful to know how to represent them; there appears the desire to know who they were and what happened to them in life, and the painter reads Holy Writ and the Lives of the Saints...[97]

Kostomarov continues in this tone of sympathetic condescension for several pages: we get details of how Hryc'ko grew up as an orphan, how he was a strange child, put to work as a herdsman and considered somewhat retarded by the villagers; how his master recognized his talent for drawing and decided that there would be more use from him if he were taught to be a painter; how he learned to read and as a typical peasant auto-didact sought to make sense of the world by studying the Bible and popular Russian novels (by such as Bulgarin or Marlinsky), after which he advanced to popular world history and simple mathematics. When Kostomarov (so the story goes) loses sight of him, he is still a serf and still engaged in painting icons and other primitives.[98]

The story of Hryc'ko serves as a rather lengthy introduction to Ševčenko. The transition itself is more or less plausible:

That year when for the last time I saw Hryc'ko the painter, on the opposite western part of Ukraine I met by accident another painter. His early fate is similar to that of Hryc'ko; but nature, which was generous to both, gave to this painter other gifts and thus ordained another path. This painter was called Taras Hryhorovyč Ševčenko. There is no need here to recount the story of his youth or his early upbringing: he himself has described it in his autobiography. This painter did not succumb to the chains that had entangled him at birth—his talent burst them and led him from the narrow sphere of obscurity into that of elevated thoughts, deep suffering and immortality. "He was the glory of his time," Ukraine will some day say of him, as was once said of one of her Hetmans.[99]

The bulk of the essay, of course, deals with Ševčenko himself, and in it, as we have seen, Kostomarov elaborates not one, but all four of the basic modalities or keys of his treatment of Ševčenko; by reason of this synthetic approach, but especially by virtue of the passion and intensity that continually inform his multi-leveled argument, this remains *the* central text of his Ševčenkiana. It is highly significant, therefore, that at the end of this

97. "Vospominanija o dvux maljarax," p. 86.
98. Ibid., pp. 86–88.
99. Ibid., p. 88.

crowning work Kostomarov again returns to the theme of the *two* painters. And he does so not to contrast them, but to reinforce the similarity between them. Having touched all the bases (and beyond what was already discussed this also includes a brief, but characteristically sharp rebuttal of Polish attempts to "tame" Ševčenko), Kostomarov ties his whole reminiscence into one focused *pointe*: "In the present time," he says,

> when the great epoch of national renewal [*èpoxa obnovlenija narodnoj žizni*] is being consummated, I turn with sorrow to my remembrance of the two Ukrainian painters that I knew in my life. The liberation of the *narod* will not be of any use to my two poor painters. Hryc'ko the painter was born too early and lived the better years of his life under the oppression of serfdom, which prevented him from developing his remarkable talent for his own spiritual happiness and the good of others; Taras the painter died early, missing by only six days the day which would have been the happiest day in his martyr's life: for it was that day that began the consummation of that which was the soul of Taras's poetry.
>
> But is it right, you will say, to mourn two painters when millions are rejoicing for themselves and their descendants? It is right—because with this rememberence of two painters thousands and milions crowd the imagination—painters, wheelwrights, carpenters, herdsmen, farm workers, and all types of servants: lackeys, drivers, yard-keepers, to many of whom nature may well have given at birth the right to be something other that what they actually became; while at the same time others, the great men of word and deed—writers of books, artists, men of jurisprudence—should perhaps, in view of their true abilities, be performing the duties of the former. It is right—because even the greatest of human advances will not put an end to the obstacles that stand in the way of man fulfilling on this earth his natural calling. It is right, finally, because with every remembrance of a man who did not achieve in life that for which he strove you are obliged to confront those crushing, unanswerable questions: Why are we mortal? Why are we stupid? Why do we grow old?...[100]

This concluding coda surely reveals Kostomarov at his rhetorical best: combining reason and passion, a sense of the righteous cause with genuinely poetic insight into the emotions which animate his audience and which were the creative wellspring of the poet whose memory they have come to honor. Not the least of its achievements is that its pathos so effectively obscures the odd narrative construct that animates this essay. For if one looks at it more closely, the idea of "the two painters" cannot but give rise to a number of puzzling questions.

All of them turn on the profound asymmetry of juxtaposing the outstanding Ukrainian cultural figure of his time with an anonymous and semiliterate peasant painter. The most basic question that arises here is simply: Was there ever a Hryc'ko-*maljar*? What evidence is adduced for his

100. Ibid., pp. 92–93.

existence? For virtually everything that is said of him cries out "topos" or "type".[101] He seems nothing so much as a literary fiction, an echo of preexisting models. Thus, the device of contrasting peasants in order to show their essential individuality and humanity and to dispel the contemptuous notion that they were a mere faceless mass was at the heart of Turgenev's *Zapiski oxotnika* (1852), particularly the first, programmatic story, "Xor and Kalinich."[102] But despite the literary stylization, and the possible echoes of Turgenev, Hryc'ko the painter was real—as we can see from a letter he wrote to Kostomarov in 1868 requesting help in a family matter and clearly referring to a meeting such as the one with which the memoir begins.[103] (Whether Kostomarov did answer and help is not evident from the historical record.) Within the narrative of the "Vospominanie o dvux maljarax" the problem is more specific and acute: the juxtaposition of Taras Ševčenko and Hryc'ko the painter, or, specifically, the depiction of Hryc'ko's early life, seems to function primarily as a parody of Ševčenko. The signals may be more or less subtle, but they are unmistakable. For one thing, what is presented as Hryc'ko's childhood and early years largely follows that of Ševčenko's; later in the text Kostomarov himself alludes to this directly ("Pervonačalnaja sud'ba ego byla pohoža na sud'bu Gric'ka"[104]), but curiously it is Hryc'ko, not Ševčenko, who provides the frame of reference. Thus:

> He was born a serf. In childhood he lost his parents and was left to be brought up by his relatives. He was put to herding the lord's herd, I do not recall which one. There was something strange in the boy; the peasants thought he was dull-witted [*ščitali ego pridurkovatym*]. There is no point of telling how he avoided the children's games and how the boys pinched him and roughed him up for this. Otherwise, one would be forced to repeat what we so often encounter in the descriptions of childhood in the lives of saints. When on windless days the millers

101. This is suggested by an apparent indefiniteness in the narrative, beginning with the opening line: "В одном селе восточного малороссийского края..." and various generalizations; thus, only in the first paragraph: "Как известно, в малороссийском крестьянском быту, маляр—явление частое," or "Маляр, обыкновенно, вместе с тем и грамотный..." or "Но известно, что Малороссиянин, как только сделается благочестивим человеком, сейчас начинает философствовать"; ibid., p. 86.

102. For a highly informative discussion of the "humanization" of the peasant, cf. Donald Fanger, "The Peasant in Literature," in *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, ed. Wayne S. Vucinich (Stanford, 1968), pp. 231–62.

103. See the letter to Kostomarov from "Maljar, Hryhorij" (*sic*) dated 26 November 1868 and signed "Hryc'ko maljar," fond 22, no. 178, in the Central'na naukova biblioteka in Kyiv. The content is clear and moving and describes Hryc'ko's deep worry that his son is being discriminated against in school—according to him, both for his peasant background and his independent thinking—and faces expulsion. He appeals to Kostomarov to intercede and reminds him that in their earlier meeting (!) he, Kostomarov, had promised that if a need were to arise he would help in whatever way possible.

104. "Vospominanija o dvux maljarax," p. 88.

were not working, Hryc'ko would sit under a windmill that was at the edge of the village and would draw on its walls various figures with coal or chalk; thus he once lost his animals; for which he was whipped. This repeated itself again. The landlord decided that his farm boy's drawings are not without value, and that in view of that his career as a worker is misdirected: he will sooner be a painter than a swineherd or shepherd. The landlord gave it further thought and then set him off to be taught by some artist in the county town.[105]

Here, and in subsequent passages, these same moments (variations, in effect, on the theme of the poet's humble origins and unique calling) which will resonate with a special pathos in the future canon of Ševčenko biography, are presented as typical and rather banal. The narrator suggests as much through his own casual lack of interest in the details: "Ego pristavili pasti gospodskoe stado, ne pomnju kakoe," or "...iz nego skoree vyjdet živopisec, čem svinar ili ovčar," or "... i otdal ego v nauku kakomu-to xudožniku v svoem uezdnom gorode." At the same time, the irony of the reference to hagiography—the notion is applied, after all, to the life of a Hryc'ko—is pointed and inescapable. Given the parallels that are set in motion here, that irony, by the process of an excluded middle, implicitly devolves upon Ševčenko. In the purely formal sense, the overall asymmetry of the narrative—the juxtaposition of the premier Ukrainian cultural figure with an unknown peasant—can only function as parody.

There is another, no less striking element of asymmetry in the narrative, however (and, as in all such instances, this overdetermination suggests causes and a level of meaning more profound than the merely formal or conventional). For in effect, having postulated by the title and the initial focus on Hryc'ko that he will be dealing with "two painters," Kostomarov, when he does turn to Ševčenko, does not discuss him as a painter at all—other than by applying to him an identical formula: "Taras-*maljar.*"[106] The entire treatment of Ševčenko is focused on his poetry, its unprecedented power and resonance, and above all its *narodnist'*. That he was also a professional and highly talented painter, who through his painting and his study of art had normal access to high culture—the fact, in a word, that he was not a *maljar*, but a *xudožnik* who precisely because of this, and notwithstanding his roots in the Ukrainian peasantry, could also fit into that high society designated by Kostomarov as "*knigopiscy, xudožniki, zakonniki*"—this remains totally blocked out.[107] In effect, a remarkable, and

105. Ibid., p. 86.

106. To be sure, he does note that in 1858, when they met after long years of exile, it was within the walls of the Academy of Arts (in St. Petersburg); ibid., p. 89.

107. A good example here is *Xudožnik*. (A richly illustrated depiction of the world of high art implied or alluded to in its pages is found in *Povest' Tarasa Ševčenko "Xudožnik". The Artist, A Story by Taras Shevchenko* [Kyiv, 1989].) Kostomarov may have known this

complementary double distortion occurs here: just as Ševčenko's poetry was placed and discussed exclusively in the frame of folk poetry, of Kol'cov, the *narod,* and so on, so also the starting point and basic criterion for the overall discussion of the "two painters" is determined not by Ševčenko but by Hryc'ko. For the "normal" and "logical" juxtaposition, the frame projected by manifest, social reality, would have required, for example, that Ševčenko be compared with his teacher, Brjulov, or with his friend and fellow art student Shternberg—but not by any stretch of the imagination with an all but anonymous Hryc'ko. (By the same token—although some time needed to pass—the comparison to Kol'cov would also appear more and more inadequate.) The fact that Kostomarov does indeed construe the frame in the way he does suggests that what is at issue are not "two painters" but "two Ukrainian painters," or, given the fact that for him the category of *Ukrainian* is coterminous with and quite indistinguishable from that of the *narod*, "two painters from the *narod*," in effect "two peasant painters." In sum, the entire essay is built on this paradigm, and the final coda, where the formula of the "two painters" is yet again invoked, is only its most eloquent articulation.

Does it follow from this that Kostomarov's underlying intent is to somehow debunk or deflate Ševčenko? Certainly not consciously. For all the complexities of his relationship to the poet, Kostomarov's overall conception, and his various formulations, are guided by the large task of paying homage to the one who already then was being identified as the greatest son of the Ukrainian *narod.* None of Kostomarov's contemporaries—not the audience at the commemorative evening that first heard him read his essay, not Kuliš and Bilozers'kyj who immediately printed it in *Osnova*, not any of the many critics and memoirists that wrote on Ševčenko, and on Kostomarov—perceived anything untoward in it. In fact, as was already noted, to this day the critical tradition has not focused on it as an issue of implicit historical or esthetic misprision, or even as a *problem* in the reception of Ševčenko. But the dual perspective, the narrative that proceeds not as a story about Ševčenko but as one about "two painters," clearly suggests a fundamental redefinition of the poet; the various rhetorical and narrative devices, beginning with the belletrization itself, the notes of irony (particularly as regards the inevitable tendency to engage in hagiography), the intimations of parody, all contribute to a serious conceptual, even "ideological" purpose. That they were not perceived as such, that Kostomarov's revision was not recognized for what it

novella even as he was writing the "Vospominanie o dvux maljarax." To be sure, in 1862, it was M. Lazarevs'kyj who was in posession of the manuscripts of Ševčenko's novellas and was in fact announcing their sale. In time they all came into Kostomarov's possession. At the very least, however, Kostomarov certainly knew Ševčenko's biography, his life in St. Petersburg, and his participation in the world of art, culture, and society.

was, simply underscores the degree to which his paradigm resonated with the collective perception, indeed was so fully incorporated into it.

The dual focus on Ševčenko and Hryc'ko-*maljar* itself has a double, implicit function. On the individual level it reminds us of our common humanity. The elegiac conclusion of the essay, with its unmistakable echoes of Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,"[108] particularly its separation (in life) and then conflation (in death) of the mighty and the lowly of this world, clearly intends to bring us back to a sense of our own mortality, to the reality before which we are all equal, and all equally vulnerable: "...Зачем мы смертны?—Зачем мы глупы?—Зачем мы стареемся?..." Apart from its universal, and existential import, however, the contemplation of these questions cannot but function as an antidote to the new hagiography—the nascent cult of Ševčenko—that Kostomarov had already hinted at. With some prescience, he seems to be cautioning his audience against that very apotheosis of the poet that would ultimately blur both his image and his message. That this was a vain hope, that the tide of the collective refiguring of Ševčenko was inexorable, is highlighted by the fact that a scant ten years later, such an apotheosis determines Kostomarov's new reading of Ševčenko in the already mentioned article in *Poèzija slavjan*.

At the same time, the focus on the "two painters" conveys an "ideological" message—precisely through the opposition of "Genius" and *narod*. Despite the fact that in this essay Kostomarov is the first to articulate the issue and scope of Ševčenko's genius, and that the eloquence with which he does this still resonates within the critical reception, the narrative leaves no doubt that that genius is subordinate to the *narod*. In this opposition the latter is clearly sovereign: the *narod* gives him birth and infuses him with its power (its own genius, in effect) and ultimately provides the sole frame or paradigm for understanding the poet. Kostomarov's essay thus becomes an ideological set piece. For nothing is more eloquent than the simple fact that Kostomarov's eulogy for Ševčenko is cast as a "rememberance of two painters," Hryc'ko-*maljar and* Taras Hryhorovyč Ševčenko—indeed in that order. And the issue, of course, is not the semi-anonymous Hryc'ko (although his existence as a real-life figure lends a special psychological authenticity to the entire narrative), but the *narod,* because, to repeat Kostomarov, "with this remembrance of two painters thousands and millions crowd the imagination—painters, wheelwrights, carpenters, herdsmen, farm workers..." And both painters, not just Hryc'ko, but Taras as well, and the genius that is within him, are an emanation of this common humanity.

108. "Sel'skoe kladbišče," Žukovskij's Russian translation, appeared as early as 1802.

On the immediate historical and ideological level the subordination of the individual, even the "Genius," to the fate of the *narod* is justified by the issue of serfdom; this is the inhumanity that calls for the larger perspective, and elicits the essential pathos of Kostomarov's text. But serfdom, of course, is only the narrower context; beyond that is the larger frame of reference of growing national consciousness, and beyond that still, in the more distant future, the awareness that both the historical experience and the consciousness are shaped by a variant of colonialism. In the broader context of Ukrainian political and intellectual history, the subordination of the individual becomes a central structure of the populist thought that dominates the second half of the nineteenth century and extends well into the twentieth. As has often been argued, Kostomarov plays a central role in establishing this mode of thought, a mode that is paramount in the Ševčenko reception: in the popular mind, and in much of traditional Ševčenko scholarship as well, the notion of "genius" is prominent, and invariably linked to the *narod*. At the same time, however, "genius" is invoked solely to stress the collective dimension. And this formulation, as I have already argued, only serves to obscure the totality of Ševčenko as it ignores the central features of an individuality particularly attuned to doubt, to irony and self-irony, to openness and ambiguity.[109]

A further unhappy, but altogether inevitable development was that the first function of Kostomarov's vision of *two* painters, namely his emphasis on Ševčenko's humanity, his implied caution against hagiography, was largely forgotten. If it did appear, its strength was always inversely proportional to the collectivist perspective that Kostomarov himself had helped inculcate in Ukrainian society. The need for a culture hero clearly came to overshadow considerations of individuality—especially sensitivity to, and perspective on, the real man behind the rapidly expanding myth.

The skewed collective perception of Ševčenko clearly recapitulates Kostomarov's own blind spots. Given his seminal role in formulating the reception, and his prominence as the premier exegete of Ševčenko, his historical, or operant responsibility for this development is plain. To argue this, however, is merely to state a tautology of intellectual history: each formulation or program achieves the resonance and "influence" that "history" (in effect, cultural readiness and a host of other factors) will allow it. The question of value is extrinsic to the process itself—although certainly central to our conceptualization of it. In the case of Kostomarov, therefore, our task is not so much to apportion responsibility and blame for "distortion" (and in some measure it is simply distortion, with no quotation marks), but, having surveyed its content and context, to cast a glance at its mechanics.

109. Cf. my "Ševčenko jakoho ne znajemo," *Sučasnist'*, no. 11, 1992, pp. 100–112.

On the one hand, this is the question of intellectual rigor and honesty. Kostomarov's flaw or "sin" is that he knew, but chose not to know. He chose to turn a blind eye to the evidence. He certainly was not privy to all of Ševčenko's thoughts, and he indeed might not have witnessed such sentiments as the "*moskalenenavidenija*" which Kuliš recounts with such relish.[110] But more than any of his contemporaries, and much more than most of the later critics, he had access to the texts. From his own words we see that he knew their broad range—the illicit, "subversive" poems from the "Try lita" period, written just before the two of them met, the "bootleg," exile poetry of the *Mala knyzhka*, which Kostomarov himself says could never hope to pass the censor, the extensive evidence of the prose, where the narrator, far from being a man of the people, a "*prostoljudin*," is sophisticated and cosmopolitan.[111] The evidence they provide, individually and cumulatively, goes far towards refocusing or correcting the picture that Kostomarov chose to draw. But draw it he did. What remains, therefore, is to consider his reasons.

5. THE QUESTION OF MOTIVES

Admittedly, an inquiry into motives relies primarily on inference and runs the risk of conjecture. In this case, however, it can hardly be avoided. For even if one does not need to provide reasons for the flash of brilliant insight, one cannot speak of blindness, of a certain intellectual, and particularly *systematic* obfuscation, without attempting to identify the underlying causes. That said, we can discern several distinct areas of motivation.

The first of these—basic and banal—is fear. A small, but telling example of the climate in which the poet, or critic, or scholar had to work is provided in a reminiscence of Kostomarov written by a close friend, the minor poet Oleksandr Korsun. The incident he describes occurred when he was a student at Xarkiv University, and Kostomarov had just finished (the time is around 1840), and concerns another minor Ukrainian poet, Amvrosij Metlyns'kyj (pseudonym: Amvrosij Mohyla) who was then a professor there. Its point is simple: Korsun and Kostomarov were then doing comparative Slavic work and the former had borrowed from the university library a three volume edition of Mickiewicz in order to translate his "Crimean sonnets"; to get the books he had used a blank signed by Metlyns'kyj, which the latter had given

110. Cf. n. 69 above; cf. also Drahomanov's comment on the literary tradition (which he sees as going back to Kotljarevs'kyj, Kvitka, and the early Gogol') of such "moskalenenavidenija": "Ševčenko, ukrainofily i socializm," *Literaturno-publicystyčni praci*, vol. 2, pp. 14–15, n. 3.

111. Cf. above, passim, especially nn. 39 and 109, and Drahomanov's comments, below.

him as a matter of routine (the system required professors to sign out books). When Metlyns'kyj heard of what had been borrowed over his signature he sent a messenger with a note demanding that Korsun "'immediately, as soon as possible', return Mickiewicz to the library." "He was in horror," Korsun explains, "at my boldness—taking out these disgraceful books in his name."[112] Korsun notes in passing that the edition in question was published in Vilnius, with the official censor's approval. He does not comment on Metlyns'kyj's panicked reaction.

But the event that showed—with the greatest public and historical resonance—that the government was utterly serious about the danger of Ukrainian separatism was the trial and conviction of the members of the Brotherhood of SS. Cyril and Methodius. This, of course, is a separate issue and deserves separate attention, but the recent publication of the voluminous files on this case of the *Tret'e Otdelenie* does oblige the historian to reopen it.[113] Even a preliminary glance shows two discernible patterns. The first is that the authorities (a) were not working with any clearly defined sense of what constitutes criminal activity in the purview of literature, and of historical and ethnographic research, and the right (or lack of it) to associate (something not unexpected in an authoritarian, despotic state), and (b) were not at all persuaded about the criminal intent of most of the accused; in fact, the assessment is repeatedly made that most were guided by excessive enthusiasm, indiscretion and naivete, not by subversive intent.[114] Indeed, the only one deemed to be clearly guilty is Ševčenko. At the same time (and this clearly flows from the preceding), the investigators were inclined to pounce on anything, even the seemingly trivial—Kuliš's drawing of a severed Cossack head, with an eagle on it, his conceit of appending the phrase *rukoju vlasnoju* as he signed his letters (this, presumably echoing the practice of the Cossack hetmans), or the fact that someone used the word *kacap* (derogatory for "Russian")—if it could illustrate Ukrainian patriotism, separatism or anti-Russian feeling.[115] The second pattern, or the overall strategy, is more sophisticated. It draws the conclusion—from the historical perspective, surely justified—that even seemingly innocent expressions of Ukrainophilism are potentially dangerous and subversive, and it sets in motion a broad set of measures to carefully monitor all educational, cultural and intellectual

112. Aleksandr Korsunov, "N. I. Kostomarov," *Russkij arxiv*, no. 10, 1890, pp. 206–207.

113. *Kyrylo-Mefodijivs'ke Tovarystvo*, ed. I. I. Hlyz' et al. (Kyiv, 1990), vols. 1–3.

114. Cf., for example, the official conclusions regarding Kuliš's culpability (ibid., vol. 2, doc. no. 48, pp. 80–81), and that of Kostomarov (ibid., vol. 1, doc. no. 366, pp. 307–308.

115. Most telling in this regard is the interrogation of Kuliš; cf. ibid., vol. 2, doc. no. 36, pp. 47–59.

activities as they pertain to the issue of Ukraine and Russia and to root out any dangerous tendencies.[116] The policy of instilling the fear of God into all real and potential Ukrainian or Ukrainophile dissidents is thus spelled out well before the more concrete actions of the Valuev circular of 1863 and the Ems ukaz of 1876.

Not surprisingly, fear, attenuated into political caution, became for many the very warp of their *public* self-identification. Thus, Drahomanov, writing with great forthrightness (but still from the safety of Geneva) speaks of the disconcerting readiness of Ševčenko's friends, colleagues and exegetes to deny his most basic and passionate commitments. For as much as Ševčenko's formulations are devoid of, or simply unatuned to, the political dimension as such, his allegiance is to Ukraine, and her freedom and separateness from Russia is the cornerstone of his vision. And it is precisely this "patriotism" and "separatism" that his friends and exegetes are the first to deny.[117] The priority, as Drahomanov correctly observes, must go to Kuliš, who

> ... in the Epilogue to *Čorna rada*, which was published in the Moscow *Russkaja beseda* in 1857, and not yet daring to call Ševčenko by name, speaks of this "outstanding poet of south Russian poetry, the singer of human injustice and his own fiery tears" thus:
>
> They call him a fanatical [*bezumnyj*] patriot, but among other things it is he who struck the first blow against that pernicious local patriotism which raises up its own historical heroes and turns its eyes away from the achievements of the neighboring nation [*narod*], that patriotism which posits its glory not in the success and security of the whole country, but in the victory of some party or even some individuals, at times, indeed, to the detriment of the whole population... Yes, he would become fanatic [*doxodil do bezumija*] in pouring out his anger at human injustice; he was possessed when he called upon heaven and earth [to punish] those whom he held responsible for the suffering of fellow man. But who will judge the poet for the fact that succumbing to the unbearable pain in his heart he did not maintain measure in his cries?[118]

As for Kostomarov, a few years later he would deny there even was a sin of "*bezumnyj patriotizm*." Drahomanov adduces here the already cited notion from the "Vospominanie o dvux maljarax" ("Neither the Great Russians without the Ukrainians, nor the latter without the former, can complete their development. The one people is indispensable for the other; the one

116. See, for example, O. F. Orlov's draft of his summary report to Nicholas I regarding the society, ibid., vol. 3, doc. no. 426, pp. 306–308.

117. For his part, Ševčenko seems to have been prescient on this issue as well: cf. the ending of "Marija."

118. M. Drahomanov, "Ševčenko, ukrainofily i socializm," *Tvory v dvox tomax*, vol. 2, p. 8.

nationality complements the other..."[119]), and shows that it was not only a standard leitmotif, but an idea that informed the thinking of many:

> With small differences, the words of Mr. Kostomarov were always spoken by the Ukrainophiles in Russia when there was occasion to speak *publicly* of Ševčenko [emphasis mine—G.G.G.]. We ourselves said something similar in *Nedelja* in 1874 and the *Kievskij telegraf* in 1875. And such things were said not from insincerity but from the fact that when some Ukrainophiles in Russia truly did not wish to appear as "separatists," each for their own reasons, of course (thus Mr. Kostomarov, in his scholarly works written after 1857, would come out with ideas about the "federal principles" in all of Rus'; others were heading in the direction of universal socialist thought)—then they simply did not want to admit, even to themselves, that their "prophet" was at any time a "Ukrainian separatist."[120]

In the final analysis, however, the premise that fear as such is an operant motive is not altogether persuasive. Here, again, Drahomanov provides a succinct statement of the problem. In a short article entitled "Obščerusstvo Kostomarova" (which is actually a letter to the editor of the Galician newspaper *Pravda*), he responds to a polemical article, "Ukrajins'ke pys'menstvo i M. L. Kostomarov. Vidpovid' M. P. Drahomanovu," that had appeared earlier that year (1892) over the signature "Černyhovec" (the pen name of Illja Šrag)[121] and notes that the only real issue in their polemic is whether Kostomarov was sincere in his loyalist views.[122] An answer, he argues, could be provided by some new documentation—letters, diaries, and so on—which at that moment was simply not available. He also points out that the strictures (especially before 1876) were hardly so severe that one could not take a stand:

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119. Ibid., pg. 8. Cf. n. 60 above.

120. Ibid., pp. 8–9. Even though the attacks were scurrilous, Kostomarov would more than once defend himself against the charge of separatism; cf., e.g., "Ukrainskij separatizm," "Otvet g. Malorossu-Volyncu," and "Otvet Malorossu-Volyncu" (all written in 1864); *Naukovo-publicystycni praci,* pp. 193–200. An inkling of the tenor of this discourse is conveyed, for example, by the concluding paragraph of his "Otvet g. Malorossu-Volyncu":

> Пусть же г. Малоросс-Волынец или кто-нибудь другой из усердных рыцарей, сражающихся с сепаративнимы призраками, один раз на всегда обличит меня в преступных замыслах и вредных побуждениях и предаст справедливому суду общества и властей; а если это невозможно, то прошу избавить мое имя от двумысленных намеков, относящихся к области уголовного суда а не литературы. Если г. Малоросс-Волынец честный человек, то он должен объявить свое настоящее имя. После тех клевет, которые расточали в своих брошюрах Поляки против Малорусских писателей, обвиняя их в разрушительном коммунизме, превратном социализме и из'являя удивление: как это Русское правительство терпит подобное зловредное направление, нам сомнительно, чтобы этот "Волынец" был "Малоросс." Ibid., p. 198.

121. Cf. O. I. Dej, *Slovnyk ukrajins'kyx psevdonimiv* (Kyiv, 1969), p. 391.

122. M. Drahomanov, *Lysty do Iv. Franka i vnšyx. 1887–1895*; vydav Ivan Franko, L'viv, 1908, pp. 388–404; here p. 399.

Whoever wanted to could express himself in print, even after the *lex Josephoviciae*—as, for example, Ol[ena] Pčilka, who did so in Russia, or Nečuj [Levyc'kyj] in Austria, and that given the fact that Nečuj, whose real name was long known in Russia, was indeed serving as a teacher. To think that Kostomarov would fear the squinting eye of some bureaucrat, even if a minister, and would thus not dare express his real thoughts in a matter that was after all not political but literary, is to ascribe to Kostomarov something that is indeed much worse than opportunism.

One may agree with this or not, and Drahomanov may well be projecting his own responses. But what follows is more persuasive, namely the argument of internal consistency:

The main thing is that Kostomarov's "all-Russian" [*obščerus'ki*] views in matters of literature fully correspond to his historical views, which he expounded in all his scholarly works. It is difficult to assume that a person like Kostomarov could lie for all those years, in twenty-five volumes of scholarly work!! In all these works, Kostomarov, even while admitting a certain national distinctness in the Ukrainian population, not only did not deny Rusianness [*rus'kosti*] either to the Belarusians or the Great Russians, but looked at them as his own people, much closer than the other Slavs. More than that: for all his Ukrainian autonomism (which, to be sure, after 1847 Kostomarov never fully elaborated in relation to the present), he looked at the annexation of Ukraine to Muscovy as something organic, and on the Muscovite state, and the new Russian Empire, as direct descendants of the old Kyivan Rus'—and thus he also deemed organic the consequences of Russian state history of the eighteenth century, specifically the cultural unity of Ukraine and Muscovy; he saw the—"all-Russian," as he called it—literature of Puškin and Gogol' and others like them as native [*ridnoju*] to the Ukrainians as well, and in this language he wrote almost all his works, indeed all the works through which he made himself immortal both in Ukraine and in Muscovy.[123]

The second major area of motivation relates to Kostomarov's temperament, the quirks and predilections that for the most part were more apparent to his contemporaries than to later generations. His tendency to challenge received wisdom and specifically to debunk historical figures that popular lore and hagiographic historians had turned into national heroes had already elicited in his lifetime a number of attacks and polemics. In his *Autobiography* Kostomarov speaks of the resentment and anger released by his demythologization of such Russian "national heroes" as Susanin or his revisionist views on Dmitri Donskoj and the battle of Kulikovo. Thus of the former he says:

123. Ibid., p. 400.

Since I had attempted to show that the history of Susanin had been ornamented by various additions of idle fantasy, and the event could not have taken place in the form we have been accustomed to seeing it and even reading of it in the textbooks, there immediately appeared defenders of patriotic glory who sought to see in my action something malicious. A rumor began to spread that I have set for myself the task of devaluing glorious Russian [historical] figures and, so it was said, of removing from the pedestal and debunking Russian heroes.[124]

While Kostomarov's defense is persuasive, there is some truth to the charge: he did engage in the kind of scholarly inquiry that revises received knowledge and in so doing ruffles the feathers of complacent and self-satisfied "society." This is only to his credit as a historian, but he apparently did enjoy his role as gadfly and debunker (albeit an academic one). This penchant, however, can hardly be confined to his Russian ("all-Russian" or "Great Russian") topics: as a mode of inquiry or turn of mind it surely must extend to his Ukrainian themes, and in a small but very concrete guise we do see it in his oblique reference to the danger of hagiography in the accounts of Ševčenko's life. And, after all, the issue here is the psychological tendency to debunk—and that certainly would not be confined or restrained by the ethnic context. His larger, conscious and "ideological" frame, the need to juxtapose genius and *narod*, and the "tempering" or qualification of the former by the latter, is also consistent with such "revisionism."

The other character traits that are mentioned by his contemporaries and historians—his illness and irritability in later life, his tendency to unnecessary conflicts born of a "childish" stubbornness—may also have a bearing on his perspective on Ševčenko, but, given the chronology, they relate more to his overall biography, or his alienation from the mainstream of the Ukrainian movement in his declining years, than they do the reception proper.[125]

More complex, psychological moments may also play a role. One such is envy: a "Salieri complex." The notion certainly has been applied to Ševčenko's other great friend, exegete, and rival—Kuliš.[126] Leaving aside the inherent tenuousness of this model, and mindful of Drahomanov's rejoinder that any such allegation can only be weighed against some new documentation (or at least internal consistency), one is left with only one

124. *Avtobiografija*, p. 591.

125. Cf. D. L. Mordovcev, "Istoričeskie pominki po N. I. Kostomarove," *Russkaja starina*, 1885, vol. 46, pp. 617–48; here p. 648; and Osyp Hermajze, "M. Kostomarov v svitli avtobiohrafiji," *Ukrajina*, 1925, nos. 1–2, pp. 79–87, here pp. 84–87.

126. Cf. especially the developed use of this metaphor in P. P. Čubs'kyj's (Myxajlo Mohyljans'kyj's) "Kuliš i Ševčenko," in *Pantelejmon Kuliš* (Kyiv, 1927), pp. 102–126; here, pp. 111, 117, 126 and passim [=Ukrajins'ka Akademija Nauk, Zbirnyk istoryčno-filolohičoho viddilu, no. 53].

piece of evidence—and even that is an absence. But it is a structured absence: for like Kuliš, Kostomarov, who had been a published Ukrainian poet, with two collections to his credit, virtually stopped writing poetry when Ševčenko appeared on the scene. After Ševčenko's death Kuliš returned to writing and publishing poetry; Kostomarov did not.[127] He wrote only a handful of poems after 1841, and indeed the prose and drama he wrote or published after the appearance of Ševčenko was written in Russian.[128] Does this constitute a retreat from Ukrainian writing and from the undoubtedly daunting prospect of being compared to Ševčenko? Is the resentment that this may imply sufficient to support a "Salieri complex"? The line of reasoning is not specious, and the psychological moment (especially since it has so long been repressed) bears further analysis, but its ability to shed light on Kostomarov's peculiar blind spots remains uncertain.

The second moment is also not certain, but is surely more profound, and its context, and textual underpinnings, now stand revealed. It again shows the workings of fear—now, however, raised to the level of panic. The psychological issue is guilt, born of recantation. Its locus, providing an emblematic instance of recantation, was the behavior of Kostomarov (and Kuliš as well) during the trial of the Brotherhood of SS. Cyril and Methodius. As the records of the investigation show, there were some, like Hulak, who were remarkably strong (at least at first), and some, like Bilozers'kyj, who caved in at the very outset. The one who stood out—in not recanting, or denying his work, or indeed apologizing for anything—was Ševčenko.[129] Kostomarov's performance was perhaps the poorest of all: he was the one who gave the most answers and redid his testimony the most times. He continually relied on intellectual elaboration and obfuscation; he was evasive and he contradicted himself, denying that he had written anything and denouncing what he had written as terrible; he was apologetic—and in the end he threw himself at the mercy of his inquisitors. His incoherence and agitation were such that still in the course of the investigation the police came to the conclusion that he was losing his mind.[130] On his behalf it should be

127. Cf. Kostomarov's introduction to the first posthumous (1867) edition of the *Kobzar,* which he also edited. As Kuliš later saw it, its thrust was to concede that after Ševčenko one could hardly try to compete in that medium ("...после него напрасно стал бы кто-нибудь звонит в его струны..."); "Vospominanija o Nikolaje Ivanoviče Kostomarove," *Nov',* 1885, vol. 4, no. 13, p. 73.

128. It is also revealing that Kostomarov began the story "Sorok lit" in Ukrainian in 1840, but only wrote the first chapter. It appeared in print in Russian (with a wholly reworked first chapter) in 1876.

129. Cf., e.g., the protocol of his interrogation: *Kyrylo-Mefodijivs'ke tovarystvo,* vol. 2, doc. no. 261, pp. 324–28.

130. Thus in the official medical report of May 2, 1847, signed by staff physician Špis:

noted that apart from the fact that of all those arrested he had the most to lose (his budding career, his reputation), his treatment at the hands of the police was not only calculatedly brutal (after his arrest he was confined for almost a day in a shed that resembled a pig sty), but specifically devised to find his weak points and to break him psychologically.

In time, the legacy of this trial and their respective responses may well have become for Kostomarov a quintessential burden of guilt: he had denied his beliefs and his writings, and Ševčenko had not.[131] Both had faced their moment of truth, but one had flinched. Kostomarov had survived (first in the relative comfort of Saratov and then simply by living longer) and Ševčenko, in Kostomarov's own words, had "boldly entered the cavern... forget[ting] that he is a man, and that if he dares to be the first to enter he may fall..." The ensuing pattern of contradictory feelings, of identification with and praise for the hero, of denial of this and seeming flashes of amnesia, and then further compensation for it, would appear to point to a central dark area in the relationship, a truth from which—for Kostomarov—the veil could simply not be lifted.

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It is much easier, in comparison, to anatomize the conceptual schemata of Kostomarov's reception of Ševčenko. To be sure, to speak of them as motives clearly courts the danger of circularity, for they inhere in the texts and animate the basic method of his discourse; as such they need to be distinguished from motives taken as psychological or ideological causes. Still, these schemata or paradigms are not only present in the texts, but, as we can tell from the overall evidence of Kostomarov's beliefs and writings, they antedate and determine the texts; they constitute the overall matrix by which he organizes his experience, here specifically the reception of Ševčenko, and thus function as a kind of philosophical motivation. They are basically two. The first, to which we have already devoted much attention, is the idea of the *narod,* an idea, as we have seen, to which Kostomarov the historian can subordinate even history (in effect, making it secondary to ethnography), or even Genius. For Kostomarov, the ability of this idea to obscure or distort seems to be directly proportional to its hold on his thought.

"...Костомаров в продолжении двух дней обнаруживал признаки омрачения ума, которое в последнее время значительно умножилось, при том же телесные явления, как-то: взгляд и пульс заставляют опасаться еще большого усиления сумашествия, почему я признаю необходимым для предосторожности поместить его в больницу (для) умалишенных." No. 354, *Kyrylo-Mefodijivs'ke Tovarystvo*, vol. 1, p. 294.

131. One is tempted to find implicit confirmation of the depth of the trauma and its repression in the fact that in his *Autobiography* Kostomarov hardly refers to this episode—but this, again, would be an argument from absence.

The second is the paradigm of poetry. It rests, of course, on a central Romantic value—the apotheosis of poetry as divine speech and of poets, in Shelley's much cited words, as the "unacknowledged legislators of the world."[132] The main difference, however, is that if in the West the poets are indeed unacknowledged (the hyperbole of Shelley's claim may well be activated by poetry's growing marginalization in the face of new middle class values), in the Slavic East, the national poets, as exemplified by Mickiewicz and Ševčenko, become prophets who legislate for their respective societies in all but the literal sense of the word. The cult of Ševčenko, like the cult of Mickiewicz, with its projection of the *sacrum* and its attendant strictures, becomes a despotic extension of such "legislation."[133] In this process a major contributing role is played by such as Kostomarov, who direct their intellectual and institutional authority to furthering the notion of the sovereignty of poetry and as a first step in this direction prostrate themselves before its power.[134] Thus throughout the *Vospominanie o dvux maljarax* (and in various passages in other texts), Kostomarov's discussion of Ševčenko is couched in a language that is not only consistently awestruck in the face of true poetry, but in its reliance on metaphoric diction seems to be as autotelic as poetry itself. (This applies, moreover, not only to his evocation of the Poet, his role, his task, and so on, but also to such attendant matters as the *narod*. Clearly, this discourse does not and is not meant to subordinate itself to dispassionate analysis; as an articulation of higher truths—precisely as in the poetry of Ševčenko—it is resistant, even dismissive, of cold reason.) To be sure, Kostomarov's contemporaries, Kuliš, and later Drahomanov, seek to temper and balance these claims, and the modality itself, but the Romantic faith in the sovereign power of poetry is hardly affected and is revived with redoubled strength by the voluntarists of the early twentieth century. The "*deržava slova*," the belief in the liberating (later: nation-building) power of the Word that is a touchstone in the thinking of such nationalists as Malaniuk or Lypa, does indeed find its fully acknowledged basis in the poetry of Ševčenko, and his words from his *podražanie* of the Eleventh Psalm, "возвеличу/ Малих отих рабів німих!/ Я на сторожі коло їх поставлю слово" serve here as the ideal epigraph to this swelling discourse. But the first critical articulation is Kostomarov's; he is the Paul of this new secular religion.

132. Cf. his *Defense of Poetry* (1821).

133. For a recent treatment of the cult of Mickiewicz, cf., for example, *Balsam i trucizna. 13 tekstow o Mickiewiczu* (Gdańsk, 1993), especially the essay by Bolesław Oleksowicz "O potrzebie 'Czarnej legendy' Mickiewicza," pp. 145–56.

134. In the case of the Polish *wieszcz*, there was the further expectation of direct prophetic instruction; cf. Józef Bohdan Zaleski's apotheosis of Mickiewicz, cited and discussed in Oleksowicz, ibid., p. 148 and passim.

At its center is the equivalence that is posited between poetry and social, collective reality. The two domains appear to be unmediated and virtually coterminous. In time, the overarching (and in terms of Ukrainian cultural history the overwhelming) effect of this conflation will be the imposition of social involvement and social duty on all of Ukrainian literature. Admittedly, this sense of total engagement will also draw its strength from positivist and utilitarian notions, but (perhaps paradoxically) its roots lie in a transcendent sense of poetry's sublime role and authority.

As for Ševčenko, the further articulation of his role and authority will be animated largely by Kostomarov's vision (and generally speaking the overall reception of Ševčenko will become the lever for interrelating literature and society and the yardstick for measuring the collective role of the writer). The first step is the identification of the man with the poet, or, the perception of the whole Ševčenko phenomenon through the prism of poetry. In the often cited "Vospominanie o dvux maljarax" Kostomarov is at pains to deny that Ševčenko can be perceived as a "citizen": "he remains a poet—in literature and in life."[135] The inversion of Ryleev's well known formula resonates, of course, with Kostomarov's overall construction of Ševčenko's meaning: the idea of "the Poet" serves the double function of depoliticizing, even dehistoricizing Ševčenko (and in practical terms, removing, as Drahomanov was to observe, the spectre of separatism), and at the same time stressing the universality, in effect, the all-Russianness of his appeal. (Thus, it is no surprise that for Kostomarov the reception of Ševčenko, the fact that people immediately recognized him for the poet that he was ("это—великий поэт!") is above all an argument for proving a common, all but undifferentiated all-Russian audience.[136]

The course of history soon demonstrated the hollowness of these notions. But the paradigm itself was not eclipsed: in the emerging and soon dominant canon, "the Poet" came to fill in the whole space of "Ševčenko," and the fact of his non-poetic work and persona, of his prose, his *Diary*, his letters, his painting, and most generally his full social personality was simply left out of the equation. That this, among other things, is detrimental to an adequate

135. К таким же незрелым суждениям (the comparison is to the idea that Kol'cov can be thought superior to Ševčenko) мы должны отнести и то, которое брошено было недавно на свежую могилу поэта,—суждение признавшее его гражданином, а не поэтом. На деле выходит наоборот: Шевченко гражданином-то никогда не был, и оставался поэтом и в литературе и в жизни. "Vospominanija o dvux maljarax," p. 92.

136. "В сочинениях его так много общерусского, что Великоруссы читают его даже в чрезвычайно плохих стихотворных переводах: как ни искажали его переводчики все-таки не могли испортить до того, чтоб первородная поэзия не высказывалась наружу. По нашому мнению переводить Шевченка отнюдь не следует..." "Vospominanija o dvux maljarax," p. 92.

understanding precisely of the *poetry* and the nature of Ševčenko's *poetic persona* was by and large also not perceived.

A basic feature of such totalization was that the poetic word was taken as the literal, ideal truth, the image behind the veil. There is no more dramatic and moving instance of this than the fact that the site of Ševčenko's final burial place was determined on the basis of his poetry. As Kostomarov tells it in his *Autobiography*, immediately after Ševčenko's funeral and burial in St. Petersburg, his countrymen began making efforts to secure permission to rebury him in Ukraine according to the wishes he expressed in an 1845 poem "Jak umru to poxovajte...," generally known as "Zapovit" (The Testament). Kostomarov cites the opening lines of the poem (and these are in fact the only lines of Ševčenko that he does cite in this work) as irrefutable proof that this was indeed the historically, socially obligatory testament.[137] Over the years this pattern was repeated countless times as Ševčenko's poetry was made into a direct and unmediated accompaniment to various forms of social and political action—as slogan and instruction, as exhortation and injunction.

This, then, was the second step—the inevitable but surely unconscious actualization of the idea that poetry, especially a poetry deemed to be prophetic, is coterminous with the collective. In this conjunction, the latter—as the principal cultural value and touchstone—must dominate, and poetry comes to be seen as but the voice of the collective. At the end we have a genuine, and genuinely melancholy paradox: the collective image of one of the most individualistic of poets is totally determined by his social roles and the various functions imposed on him by his cultural resonance. In the course of time, the prophetic and then the cultic images will come to dominate society's perception, and in the long darkness of Soviet rule, this will be further adumbrated by a triumphalist cast. In a manner all too familiar from history, the individual, the textually and historically given author will hardly be perceptible behind the canonic and opportunistic elaborations.

Is Kostomarov in any way responsible for this? No more than any writer or thinker is responsible for the resonance and evolution of his ideas. What is clear, however, is that his perception of the new light that was Ševčenko, his fusion of seeing and not seeing left a lasting afterimage in Ukrainian consciousness.

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137. N. Kostomarov, *Avtobiografia*, p. 537. For his part, Kuliš says virtually the same thing: "Мы хоронили его торжественно, и потом отослали его гроб на днепровския высоты, согласно стихотворному завещанию поэта"; "Vospominanija o Nikolaje Ivanoviče Kostomarove," p. 70. Cf. also *Smert' i poxorony T. G. Ševčenko (Dokumenty i materialy)* (Kyiv, 1961), especially the accounts of P. Lebedyncev and H. Čestaxivs'kyj.