

# **The 1999 J.B. Rudnycky Distinguished Lecture**

University of Manitoba

Presented by

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## **PROBLEMS WITH THE HORIZON OF EXPECTATIONS: THE RUSSIAN RECEPTION OF UKRAINIAN LITERATURE IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY**

### **I. Introductory and Theoretical**

This paper reflects my longstanding interest both in the history of Ukrainian and Russian literary relations, particularly in the 19th century when they were especially complex and many faceted, and in reception theory. It is based in some measure on my earlier work, particularly a long study on this subject that appeared in Ukrainian in my *Do istorii ukrainskoi literatury* (Kyiv, 1997), but it also reflects work in progress.

The connection of the two foci -- the historical and theoretical -- is, as I see it, highly productive. Modern Ukrainian literature provides a paradigmatic example of a literature developing within another literature and then separating from it in the course of only one century moving from virtual non-existence to dynamic existence as a full-fledged, broadly differentiated national literature.<sup>i[1]</sup> This history can, of course, be studied in a positivistic manner – and such has been the preponderant pattern to date. But clearly a more nuanced theoretical matrix is called for, especially if we propose a new analytical treatment. As I hope to show, reception theory offers particularly valuable insights in this connection. At its best, it enables us to reach a new understanding of the development of both Ukrainian and Russian literature and culture and the subtle moments that both unite and separate them.

It goes without saying, of course, that the Russian-Ukrainian connection is absolutely central to the history and historiography of modern (i.e., 19th century) Ukrainian literature and the political renaissance that it animated.<sup>ii[2]</sup> Without exaggeration it can be called *the* essential framework. The reason is obvious: at the start of the century Ukrainian literature is undeniably a provincial addendum to the imperial Russian literature – albeit an addendum with its own (indistinctly remembered, to be sure) traditions and roots and with significant participation on the part of Ukrainian writers in the all-Russian literary process.<sup>iii[3]</sup> (One should also note that parallel to the Russian context Ukrainian literature is also developing in the Austrian empire and providing an all-important counterpoint to events in "greater Ukraine." While clearly important, this, however, will not occupy us here.) In short, the paramount issue of identity is addressed precisely in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian relationship, which is, indeed, more an ontology than a relationship. In essence (and this was precisely the issue that Soviet, especially Soviet Ukrainian, literary scholarship was *structurally* unable to face) Ukrainian literature developed not only under the tutelage of Russian literature (as was incessantly stressed by the Soviet line), but also in opposition to it. In fact, Ukrainian literature became Ukrainian only to the extent and by the fact that it identified itself as other than Russian, that it separated itself from that putative and canonic unity.

It is generally accepted that 19th century Ukrainian literature provided the cultural and intellectual space, and the paradigm for the emerging national consciousness<sup>iv[4]</sup> In a word, literary self-awareness, self-assertion and "separatism" invariably led to their political articulation.<sup>v[5]</sup> This is already projected, though at first only in an ambient, subliminal way, by the broad phenomenon of "kotliarevshchyna," the burlesque literary tradition of the early 19th century, and the essential demarcation that it makes between the internal and intimate Ukrainian world and the external, cold and formal and Russian one.<sup>vi[6]</sup> Subsequently, the bridging of the literary and the political is epitomized by the activities and program of the short-lived Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, which formulates the first modern Ukrainian political, or rather (precisely because of its Romantic and messianic cast) *prepolitical* program. The political perspective has always dominant, of course, and the great majority of approaches to both the national revival in general, and the Russian-Ukrainian literary and cultural relationship in particular, whether Soviet or non- (or anti-) Soviet, have been cast precisely and above all in political terms. But while this connection, and this frame, is always there, and the very dates we use as markers continually suggest its presence – 1847 and 1876, and later 1905 not to say 1917 and 1918 – and cannot be avoided, an attempt at examining some deeper structures clearly requires that we go beyond them.

A major, revisionist counterpoint to the traditional approaches is reception theory which arose in Germany in the early 1960s and in the course of the next decades became a powerful new tool for rereading literary history. As formulated by Hans Robert Jauss, who along with such scholars as Wolfgang Iser and Jurij Striedter stands as one of its original and most influential spokesmen, it not only shift the focus from the production of literature to its reception, to the reader and his context, but also provides a new perspective on the multifaceted semiotics of the work. Although the roots of reception theory are deep and ramified its most prominent antecedent is the hermeneutics of Hans Georg Gadamer. The continuity that is established here relates above all to an understanding of history not as a problem that needs to be bracketed and separated out so that one can get at the work itself (as was urged by Husserl and Ingarden and phenomenological theory) but as the very essence of the problem. Indeed Gadamer stresses that it is necessary to accept, i.e., understand temporality and history and with them all the predispositions, indeed prejudices and biases of a given time and place in order to understand the text that originates in it. As he says: "The hermeneutically trained mind must from the beginning be attuned to the otherness of the text. Such an openness does not suggest "neutrality" as to the object of analysis or self-denial, but it does include cognizance of one's prejudgements and prejudices. One has to be aware of one's prejudices in order for the text to appear in all its otherness and reveal its truth vis a vis the preceding opinions of the interpreter.<sup>vii[7]</sup> On the other hand – and this will be of major importance for our context – historicity and the state of always being anchored in an existential world (Lebenswelt) is conveyed by the totality of attitudes, convictions and judgments or prejudices of an individual, but above all by language. Precisely language according to Gadamer "places," or "grounds" man in this world. Language is not only that which, as Wilhelm von Humboldt first claimed, creates a separate and unique vision of the world, but indeed is that which makes the world possible: "Language," says Gadamer, "is not only a feature defining man, but that which allows the world to exist for him. For man the world exists as for no other creature. But this world exists in language."<sup>viii[8]</sup> Language, in short is the "horizon of hermeneutic ontology."<sup>ix[9]</sup> As we shall see, it is precisely the issue of language, of the acceptance of Ukrainian as a literary medium that constituted the central issue – and stumbling block – in the reception we will proceed to examine.

The notion of a horizon, specifically of expectations, that is of an intersubjective system of signs which establish the dynamic boundaries of a text, in a word its esthetics is a central notion in the reception esthetics of Jauss, particularly as formulated in his groundbreaking work "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" [in the German original: *Die Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft*]. As he argues: "The horizon of expectations of a given work allows us to define its artistry precisely in the way it works on a given audience... The way in which a given literary work – at the moment when it arises – satisfies, exceeds, disappoints or denies the expectations of its initial audience becomes the criterion for determining its esthetic value."<sup>x[10]</sup> And further: "The reconstruction of the horizon of expectations in relation to which a given work was created and read in the past allows us to again ask the questions to which the text provides answers and in this manner discover how the contemporary reader saw and understood the given work."<sup>xi[11]</sup> The issue is crucial and bears repeating, and it was formulated earlier by Gadamer (and also by Collingwood): "One can understand the text only if one understands the questions the text is answering." As we shall see, the reception in question very seldom attempted to fathom the questions being asked.

## II. The First Phase of the Russian Reception

A major concern in our understanding of the Russian reception of Ukrainian literature should be the internal continuum, specifically the question of periods and the way they shade off one into the other. While a closer analysis is a task for a future history of Russian-Ukrainian literary relations, one can already clearly distinguish the following patterns.

The first and not very distinct period, from the turn of the 19th century to the end of the Decembrist period (1825) or indeed the first Polish uprising of 1831 (one is always falling back on political, extrinsic milestones), constitutes what I would call the pre-reception phase of the relationship. From the Russian side, whether in the sentimental travelogues of V. Izmailov (*Puteshestvie v poludennuiu Rossiuu*, 1800-1802) or I. Ialikov (*Puteshestvie v Malorossiiu*; 1803) or in the classicist pseudo-historical fiction of V. Narizhyi (himself a Ukrainian; i.e., his *Bursak* and *Zaporozhets*, both in 1824) or in the relatively extensive historicist interests of the Decembrists, primarily K. Ryleev (particularly in his *Dumy* and the poem *Voinarovskii*), the focus is on Ukraine, its past, its character, its exoticism, the moral-historical (or "republican") lessons it can teach the present, and not on its creativity, on its perspective. In some measure, of course, this is because the new Ukrainian literature is still in its infancy, is still finding its voice, but the problem is deeper. In fact there *are* emerging voices, beginning with Kotliarevskiy's *Eneida*, but it is characteristic of the Russian response of this period – and the nature of this response will become truly manifest only in the dynamics of the following periods – that Ukraine is perceived as an *object* of interest not a *subject* with its own historical and cultural space, and least of all as a partner in dialogue.

Characteristically, from the Ukrainian side there is also no genuine conception of dialogue. As I have argued, the nature or function of *kotliarevshchyna* – both the epigons of Kotliarevskiy and more essentially style itself – is precisely to sidestep dialogue by supplanting it with strategies of subversion and anti-canoncity cloaked in the rhetoric of parody and burlesque (of writing *a la moujik*) and animated by the psycho-social paradigm-mask of the "khytryi Maloros").<sup>xii[12]</sup> The discovery of dialogue, attenuated and mediated though it may be, is a feature of the subsequent phase, and one, moreover, that is introduced by the Ukrainian side. (This, too, is characteristic of political, colonial relationships, and serves to further reinforce this paradigm.)

The next phase is in fact the first phase in which one can properly speak of the Russian reception. In terms of its highlights it can be said to begin with the appearance of Gogol, and then of Shevchenko, but in effect it is a response to a perceived presence and voice, and as such it relates not only to these major figures but to a range of others, less prominent on the all-Russian scene, but also highly significant: Kvitka, Hulak-Artemovskiy, Kotliarevskiy himself, and others. Its beginning in the early 1830's thus coincides not only with Gogol's first Dikanka stories (1831), but with the publication of works in Ukrainian or on specifically Ukrainian themes, with, so to speak, a clear-cut Ukrainian perspective. One would include here above all the works of Kvitka, e.g., his programmatic "Saldatskii patret" and "Suplika do pana izdatelia" (both in 1833) and the even more programmatic "Marusia" (1834), the *Malorossiskie pesni* (1827) of Maksymovych, the *Zaporozhskaia starina* (1833-1835) of Sreznevskii, the *Malorossiskie poslovitsy i pogovorki* (1834) and the *Nashi ukrainski kazky...* (1835) of Bodianskiy, and other

such works. (It should be noted that the ground for this was prepared a decade earlier by the publication of Bantyi-Kamneskyi's *Istoria Maloi Rossii* and the broad circulation in manuscript of the important *Istoria Rusov* [1822-1825].) The first appearance of Shevchenko (the *Kobzar* of 1840) is thus prefigured and prepared by this thematically and generically broad array of writings, and it can now be demonstrated that for its unprecedented resonance his poetry draws strongly on the pre-existence of this literary tradition and at the very outset establishes its literary, moral and indeed "national" authority by a subtle but goal-directed use of intertextuality (for example in "Na vichnu pamiat Kotliarevskomu" or "Hoholiu"). If Shevchenko is undeniably the aesthetic, as well as national and indeed political highpoint of this period – and apart from his massive impact on Ukrainian society he certainly also constitutes the prime focus and theme of the Russian reception – the main intellectual (and again implicitly national although formally prepolitical) articulation of this period are the programs of the Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, particularly the *Zakon Bozhyi*, later known as *Knyhy bytiii ukrainskoho narodu*, Kostomarov's paraphrase and reworking of Mickiewicz's *Ksiogi narodu i pielgrzymstwa polskiego*. (And it must be stressed that these were indeed articulations, for although the *Zakon Bozhyi*, and all the other writings of the Brotherhood were arrested like the members of the society themselves, and kept under lock and key until after the Revolution, they were all reformulated and broadly disseminated – albeit in a poetic and mythographic mode – in the poetry of Shevchenko.) A prologomena to this program – also from the pen of Kostomarov, and itself the first systematic and of course programmatic statement on Ukrainian literature – is his "Obzor sochinenii pisanykh na malorosiskom iazyke" (1842).

The Russian critical response to the Ukrainian literature of this period, and the activities attendant to it, is overwhelmingly centered in the writings of Belinskii. He analyzed, commented, reacted to, praised or fulminated against virtually every important text or event in this period, from Maksymovych's *Malorossikie pesni* to Gogol (to whom, as we know, he devoted massive and continuing attention), to Kvitka, and to Shevchenko. He even commented – although it hardly brings him any credit – on the suppression of the Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius and praised the government's punishment of Shevchenko.<sup>xiii[13]</sup> Both by virtue of its breadth, but even more so by the nature of his intellectual/ideological predispositions, Belinskii's attention to Ukrainian literature and to things Ukrainian reflects a certain systematics, one that will an indelible mark on his period and on those to come.

One must note at the outset, however, that the prominence given to Belinskii in Soviet and even pre-Soviet times reflects a certain deformation of the discipline, i.e., of a thoroughgoing ideologization of literary history in Soviet times and before that its far-reaching contamination by journalism as well as ideology. For in a purely scholarly, analytical and cognitive way Belinskii is a much more modest figure than we have been led to assume. As was convincingly demonstrated by Chezhevskiy, Belinskii's entire theoretical and conceptual repertoire was taken second or third hand (usually by means of ad hoc translations of German scholars and philosophers – above all Hegel – that his friends made for him).<sup>xiv[14]</sup> This, as a rule, was then simplified, transformed into metaphysics and fleshed out with journalistic rhetoric. Characteristically, description and prescription, analysis and exhortation, are continually confused. Apart from not always being well informed or rigorous, there is

the more general issue of dogmatism and intolerance, and most sadly an elementary confusion as to the function of art. What is most important, however, that as serious and demonstrable as these flaws were it was still Belinskii who had a hypnotic hold on the Russian intelligentsia and throughout the century and beyond was the voice of Russian putatively enlightened opinion. As a later critic, Iu. Aikhenvald, put it "Among the Russians, Belinskii was like Thales among the Greeks – a philosopher who was wrong on all counts – but he was always the first."

For all that, his views were and remained (in some measure to this day) an accurate reflection of prevailing attitudes – particularly as concerns attitudes toward Ukraine and Ukrainian literature in particular. His main statements on the topic were made in reviews and articles written in the late 1830s and especially the early 1840s. At first there is some ambivalence, even statements that might appear positive, if somewhat condescending; but when by 1841 Ukrainian works begin to appear one after the other Belinskii, with evident glee, begins to take aim at them as a duck hunter does on birds that are beginning to come over the horizon. (Jauss's theory probably never envisioned this variant of the horizon of expectation.) Whether almanacs like "Lastivka" (The Swallow) or "Snip" (The Sheaf), histories, like that of Markovych, poetry (of Shevchenko), or prose (Kvitka) Belinskii proceeds to dispatch all of them. His arguments are well known by now: the Ukrainian language existed when Ukraine was autonomous; then its oral poetry was interesting. But Ukraine left its original, pristine and naive state and entered the path of civilization by becoming part of the Russian empire. Now, as a result of social differentiation, its higher strata had accepted the Russian language and with it higher civilization. As a consequence, too, the language of the folk (*narodna mova*) had become corrupted; thus "we can now say that there is no Little Russian language, only a local dialect, just as there is a Belorussian, Siberian and other local dialects."<sup>xv[15]</sup> Moreover, since there is no specifically Ukrainian upper class – the upper classes are presumably totally integrated into Russian society – then all that can be written in Ukrainian are things for a lower class audience, undemanding and fundamentally inferior, in peasant style and designed for peasant tastes. Gogol, he claims, is an excellent example of the fact that anything – even if deals with the Ukrainian theme or setting – that is on a higher esthetic level must inevitably be written in Russian.<sup>xvi[16]</sup> (It should be noted in this connection that precisely this judgment is later repeated by Vladimir Nabokov in his nasty little book on Gogol/Hohol.)

While the topic certainly merits more analysis, one can summarize here by noting that at the heart of Belinskii's theorizing is not so much ideology as ideologism; as has been noted, the rationalism and universalism that he borrows from German philosophy are not designed to aid cognition or to create a metaphysics of history, as for Hegel, but for socio-political pragmatics. His various (and interminable) meditations on the "real" and on "reality" are for all practical purposes focused on power and authority. He is continually circling around the question of what has the right to exist, and in essence authority and the authoritarian principle are perhaps his defining features. The systemic core of his thought is a focus on empire, its structures and values, and thus too on hierarchy – of higher and lower (nations, languages etc.), on centralism (at least for literature, and for the state as well), and loyalty (if not explicitly to the Romanovs then to the state). In this sense it is clear that Belinskii does not represent any one political camp or orientation – e.g., the "progressive") but a much deeper consensus of the intellectual and political thought of his society. His influence, of course, radiated throughout Russian society, and as already noted was also canonized in the Soviet period.

### III. Continuity and Discontinuity Between the pre- and post-1847 Periods

The 1847 suppression of the Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius (which Belinskii welcomed in ardent terms) was a manifest watershed in Ukrainian cultural and literary life. At its most basic, the arrest, indictment and punishment of Ukrainian writers and intellectuals for purely literary and intellectual activities raised the stakes in a most dramatic way, in effect it fundamentally changed the rules of the game. In a manner that closely foreshadows later developments (particularly the Ems ukaz of 1876), the ruthless imposition of police and penal methods had the following far-reaching, structural effects:

1. Ukrainian writing was politicized. Even though various poems of Shevchenko, i.e., of the "Try lita" period, or the *Knyhy bytiia*, were already implicitly political, the fact that they were deemed to be so by all-powerful authority, and that concrete and harsh consequences were drawn from it made them authentically, existentially so.
2. By being deemed political Ukrainian literature was made simultaneously serious and non-regional. This effect, to be sure, was not sudden, in fact it was rather drawn out, but it became inexorable; the Valuev circular of 1863 and the Ems ukaz of 1876 thus become inevitable escalations – and so also the still more escalated Ukrainian responses to them. The most concrete expression of the promotion to seriousness and all-Russian status was the aura of martyrdom conferred upon Shevchenko, particularly after his return from exile in 1857/1858 – conferred, that is, precisely by the Russian intellectual and artistic elite, not just the Ukrainian one. Just as it was inconceivable for the author and the readers of the first (1798), or second (1809), or even third (1842) editions of *Eneida* to see the poem as actually (i.e., criminally) subversive (and not just metaphorically, jokingly so), so also it was inconceivable for Kotliarevskiy and his readers and admirers to see him as ever being an all-Russian martyr and culture hero, lionized (not by all of course, but by those who counted) – in St. Petersburg, not Poltava or Kiev! The fact and the perception of Shevchenko's genius was surely the indispensable, essential factor; but victimization by a despotic power was the enabling one.

If 1847 was a divide it was also a highly ambivalent one. One of its most evident consequences on the Ukrainian side was a virtual decade of silence, in effect until the return from exile (after the death of Tsar Nicholas I) of first Kostomarov and Kulish and then Shevchenko. Moreover, as Drahomanov was later to observe,<sup>xvii[17]</sup> the effect was also to severely dampen, in the case of Kostomarov to all appearances even permanently intimidate the writer. The locus of ambiguity, however, lies in the fact that while seeming to portend so much change, 1847 also appeared not to change much at all.

The continuity in the systematics of the Russian reception of Ukrainian literature can be summarized as follows:

- a. There is no shift as to the dominant paradigm of the *narod*, more specifically of the implicit ethnographic/folkloric cast associated with all things Ukrainian;
- b. There is also no apparent shift as to the regional, dependent and ahistorical conception of Ukraine – in fact the two major Ukrainian historians, Kostomarov and

Kulish, themselves co-participants and victims of the suppression of the Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, both write massive histories of Ukraine, in Russian of course, the central paradigm for which is that of innate, elemental, historically-interrupted-only-to-be-reconstituted unity between Ukraine and Russia.<sup>xviii[18]</sup> (As shown emblematically by Kostomarov, this flows directly from the preceding premise, i.e., the implicit precedence given to ethnography over history);<sup>xix[19]</sup>

c. There is little if any overt acknowledgment of the political dimension – even while the emerging western Ukrainian, Galician activism, particularly after 1848, shows the Ukrainian issue to be not only an internal-political but also an international one (i.e., affecting not only the Russian but the Austrian Empire as well). In effect one would have to say that the actual discourse of the Russian reception appears quite unaffected by the fundamental break that has just been ascribed to the legacy of 1847;

d. As a consequence of all the above, there is also no real change in the apparent lack of differentiation on the part of Russian receptors when addressing Ukrainian literature. A striking example of this in 1829 was the lack of any response to the appearance of Borovykovskiy's translations of Mickiewicz (i.e., the Crimean Sonnets and "Farys") which manifested a sophisticated Romantic diction utterly free of the burlesque, comic or sentimental idiom invariably ascribed to Ukrainian works. Even though, or perhaps precisely because this did not fit the preordained schema, this achievement was simply ignored. In the period in question a similar situation obtained, although with the growing acceptance of the "Genius" of Shevchenko there is some movement towards a more differentiated reading.

A certain discontinuity, however, seems to be signaled by a visible decline of interest in the Ukrainian theme. As reflected in Sipovskii's overview, as the century neared its mid-point the writings devoted to this topic were more and more written by Ukrainians and in Ukrainian.<sup>xx[20]</sup> As time went on, the specifically Russian interest in Ukraine declined. This may be ascribed to two basic circumstances. One is that the topic had run its course: the Romantic poetics, with its attendant historicism and folklorism that were the modes or vehicles, so to say, of the Ukrainian theme was dissipating. With Russian literature turning to realism, with its urbanism, social concerns and so on, the focus would necessarily have to change. The other, more general, is that there is a growing, albeit initially still subliminal awareness in both the Russian and the Ukrainian societies (the latter, obviously, was to realize it much sooner) that these are indeed two different literatures; there is, in short a major paradigm shift. When Sipovskii examines the theme of "Ukraine in Russian literature (1800-1850)" and includes in his survey, as noted, works written in Ukrainian, he is largely justified since in the first decades (although with growing attention) Ukrainian writings are indeed part of an overarching Imperial or all-Russian literature (even in the 1870's Drahomanov was persuasively arguing for the validity of such a paradigm). After 1847, however, and then the appearance of *Osnova*, the repressive measures of 1863 and 1876, the emigration of Drahomanov and the rapid rise of western Ukrainian literature, the content and the paradigm of a common all-Russian literature becomes ever more shaky. It may thus be argued that the major defining feature of the period 1847-1876 is precisely the germination or the enablement of the sense of separation. A certain substantiation of this is that the subsequent period of the Russian reception, i.e., 1876 to 1905, witnesses (along with a number of other developments) a dramatic upsurge of academic studies and histories of Ukrainian literature. By then the notion of separation had attained academic



legitimacy. Indeed it already begins to appear much earlier, i.e., in Gerbel's prominent anthology of Slavic poetry, *Poeziia slavian* (1871).

#### **IV. The Horizon of Expectations Reconsidered: the Deeper Structures**

Even though our overview was necessarily cursory, we are still obliged to draw some general conclusions, albeit some of them may be phrased as questions for further investigation. The general intent of course is to conceptualize the deeper structures of the reception in question. I would like to frame it in terms of seven for the most part *unranked* points or issues.

1. The first and most important issue is that of common structures, of a shared cultural base, which thereby enables a common ontology, in effect, the possibility of mutually intelligible dialogue, of a common discourse, in short. In one sense this is precisely the question of whether we are dealing with one or two literatures, and the question of when they diverge. As already noted, this unity both existed and did not exist: Ukrainian literature, especially at the start of the 19th century, but in terms of some of its structures, i.e., institutions, until the time when it began to be officially persecuted by the Russian state, was indeed part of Russian literature – but a part which was progressively, consistently and (as we now see from the perspective of history) inexorably becoming independent. Arguably this is the path of every new literature, and the process, presumably, is always accompanied by such or other stresses.

But this hardly exhausts the problem. For even full differentiation can provide the ground for a common discourse, a common context, that enables co-participation or continuity in a given horizon of expectations. In other words, even if there are two separate literatures they can (though not necessarily) have a dialogue, a common language, a common horizon. This is particularly true of cultural areas with a shared history, as we see for example in Western Europe, although this is hardly the only example). It is precisely in this context – on the interface of French and German literature – that Jauss illustrates his theoretical concept of change or adjustment in the horizon of expectations (Horizontwandel). In an extensive and "thick" analysis he shows, for example, how the horizon of expectations changes between the reception of Jean Jacques Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise* and *Die Leiden des Jungen Werther* of Goethe, i.e., the transition between an Enlightenment world view and that of pre-Romantic poetics, more specifically that of German idealism.<sup>xxi[21]</sup> The basic precondition, however, is that despite all the differences between the two periods and literatures in question, there is much common ground. Readers in one society, while internalizing one horizon of expectations do apprehend and in some fashion do accept the other one, and they do understand the questions to which the other, "foreign" work is providing its implicit answers. The question of common structures and esthetic criteria is so self-evident for Jauss that he reflects only in passing, and quite late in the text at that, on the very fact of the translations of the French text into German.<sup>xxii[22]</sup> For him this is evidently a secondary issue. At the same time, a deeper common language – esthetic values, common cultural and historical experiences – and with that basic parity, or equivalence, or symmetry between the two sides are equally evident. In our case, on the other hand, it is amply clear that between Ukrainian and Russian literature there was no symmetry:

their histories, their status and their prospects at the time in question could not have been more asymmetrical. Given the fundamental difference in status, i.e., between a dominant and a subordinate culture all other similarities and common traditions become secondary. In a direct fashion this also models the literary situation, i.e., the reception, and thus in principle it is difficult if not impossible to speak of a common horizon of expectations. As was suggested above, Russian expectations about Ukraine, and about Ukrainian literature, do evolve, but they continually and fundamentally diverge from the Ukrainian reading of a given phenomenon or text.

2. In hermeneutic theory this is precisely the basic question: how does a given reception read or reconstruct the questions which a given text poses or which it indeed answers. Can the receiving side formulate these questions for itself? What precisely – speaking now in terms of structures and of system – can be seen or not seen by the given reception? For our part we can provide some preliminary answers. While seeing the central issue of national character (narodnist) and such manifestations as the oral mode (paradigmatically in Shevchenko's *Kobzar*), the Russian reception did not see that this is not so much a theme, nor just a Romantic mode, as it is a code in which the given culture is asserting its identity and uniqueness. (What was certainly not seen is that this self-assertion, this new literature, is being made primarily by representatives of the upper classes, and that Shevchenko here is only a very prominent exception to the pattern.) For this reason, too, behind the sentiment and the historical thematics one seldom if ever saw the presence of the sacred and the modality of myth (most clearly, of course, again in Shevchenko). As far as the Russian reception was concerned, it clearly saw the parody; for Belinskii this was the all but exclusive function of Ukrainian literature, as he says in his comments on Kostomarov's "Obzor sochinenii pisannykh na malorosiskom lazyke": "We are convinced that Kotliarevskii, as a wise and talented Little Russian understood that in the Little Russian (as in any other) dialect the only thing that one can write are parodies or simple tales and stories, and in no way did he intend to make a literature out of this.<sup>xxiii[23]</sup> What was not seen, what Belinskii for one did not want to see, was that behind this parody (and the simple tales and so on) there was a much more important function – collective self-assertion.

3. A consequence of this was a lack of patience, an unwillingness to see the wholeness and the systemic nature of the phenomenon. Even while the material base of Ukrainian literature was becoming ever broader, up to the very end of the period in question the differentiation occurring in Ukrainian literature was not observed: *a priori*, its "higher," esthetically sophisticated aspects were subsumed under the initial and broadest denominator of the burlesque style i.e., *kotliarevshchyna*.

4. A central issue in discussing the horizon of expectations is the presence of an esthetic attitude towards the text in question; according to Jauss, this is what makes the shift in the horizon of expectations (Horizontwandel) also a question of interpretation.<sup>xxiv[24]</sup> And what it requires is careful reading, and re-reading – and that, of course, can hardly be assumed in a situation of cultural incommensurateness, where the Ukrainian side, and its historical experience, and especially the language are considered esthetically inadequate or insufficient. In fact, what occurs is an attitude of functional and active non-acceptance, or indeed rejection, which has no analogies in those examples and literatures utilized by Jauss and his colleagues. But this cultural or as we can now say colonial barrier can also serve as an ultimate test for the very notion of the horizon of expectations.

In a word, Ukrainian texts were seldom read carefully or re-read; the mass of the Russian reception are first time reviews. To be sure, the process of interpretation and of academic criticism does begin in the second half of the century, but the initial superficial reading does assure that that fusion of horizons (between the text and the reader) that is postulated by reception theory did not really occur. While there were translations from Ukrainian into Russian (beginning with the translations of Kvitka's stories), it is difficult to speak of the formal influence of Ukrainian literature on the Russian – with the exception of Gogol/Hohol – who is, of course, a very special case. This is entirely to be expected. Also noteworthy is the fact (as discussed above) that Russian interest in Ukrainian literature declined precipitously with the passing of Romantic values and poetics, i.e., around mid-century. This again suggests that Ukrainian writings and the Ukrainian theme were essentially seen as something regional, or, alternatively, as "raw material" to be reworked according to one's own operant perspective. Thus, too, the common ground that would allow a shift of horizons, a transition from one context to another was lacking.

5. The horizon of expectations always functions as an intersection of various attitudes and modes: of literary norms as such, of the general esthetic expectations of an individual and of an age, of individual and collective stereotypes and prejudices, indeed prejudices. As we see so clearly in the criticism of the 1840s, especially Belinskii's, the Russian reception of Ukrainian literature is conditioned in large measure by both ideological and pragmatic considerations, which altogether consciously set aside and marginalize esthetic criteria. Programmatic, extra-literary, prescriptive, and social concerns become paramount – what can and cannot be, what has and what does not have the right to exist or to call itself literature; most specifically what reformist functions can this literature perform. A striking example of this is the treatment of Gogol/Hohol ever more exclusively in terms of Russia, Russian society, Russian history – and not in terms of the qualities of his creativity, his style. With respect to Ukrainian literature as a whole these issues are even more muted: thinking about Ukrainian literature is frequently confined to testing its *Salonsfähigkeit*, its acceptability in polite society. The very language, of course, makes it clear that it is not capable of passing this test.

One of the most problematic of the then current stereotypes, which is energetically put to the service of ideological criticism, is the issue of national character (*narodnist*). As we see in the reception of Shevchenko, both in Russian and Ukrainian criticism (and paradigmatically in Kostomarov), the model of the *narod* is as likely to obscure as to enlighten.<sup>xxv[25]</sup> Thus, in the case of Shevchenko, that very quality which makes him such a watershed in Ukrainian literature, i.e., his essential and programmatic individuality, his unique subjectivity, is often obscured by the collective (and ever more dominant, and ultimately canonic) image of national spokesman.

6. The question of questions, and the most fundamental difference between the Ukrainian and Russian sides and their perspectives relates to institutions. The authoritarian nature of the Russian discourse, and, obversely, the amorphous and syncretic nature of the Ukrainian one are based precisely on the presence or absence of this structure. This institutional character is reflected most strikingly in the fact that the Russian reception in question is not an amorphous field of "readers," but a discrete set of critics, journals, social and professional attitudes, in short, a

differentiated public. And this substantiates the thesis of the empirically oriented reception theorists (e.g., Viehoff) that it is the critic who formulates the horizon of expectations. Still, the wide spread tendency – in Ukrainian and Russian, and in western criticism as well – to examine reception through the prism of ideological groupings (of "progressive," "liberal," or "reactionary" orientations) may introduce a deceptive differentiation and obscure the presence of deeper shared structures.

The phenomenon of institutions and institutionalization has its specific ramifications. One of these is that since Ukrainian literature was only in the process of being born and of developing its institutional base – often in the face of significant official constraints – it could not but be undifferentiated, syncretic in a fashion, and thus inclined to stress and to establish self-identification on an intuitive and an emotional basis. The Russian side, in contrast, exhibits if not an outright hypertrophy then at least a monopolistic cast to its institutional base. In contrast to the Ukrainian side, one may postulate that despite the mass of various institutions – ranging from the state, the academic establishment, publishing houses, to various groups and salons – what is absent is a general, undifferentiated (even if symbolic) common space. One may also postulate that this high degree of institutionalization creates in the Russian discourse a particular focus on the question of reality (as we saw in the case of Belinskii), which, on the one hand, is a cognitive function and on the other a pragmatic one, in effect a variant of the drive for authority and control.<sup>xxvi[26]</sup> In the Ukrainian discourse the dominant value is most probably truth and justice (*pravda*). The difference in the profiles (on all levels – social, intellectual and institutional, above all) of Russian and Ukrainian culture seems to correlate to the classic opposition between an imperial center and a colony.

7. Finally, one must also consider the temporal element, that is, the fact that cultural processes and the societies that engender them not only have their particular dynamics, but also their rhythms and cycles. Each culture is crystallized or matures in different historical-cultural circumstances and thus receives its specific cultural imprinting. For Russia this was during the 18th century and it included the paradigm of empire, of universalist and rationalist values, and the cultural model of classicism. For Ukraine (as for some other countries in central and eastern Europe) this crystallization of identity coincided with Romanticism and with the emphasis, indeed the apotheosis of the *narod*, the ethnos, folklore, the collective spirit and so on. This historical-cultural coding also creates its implicit horizon of expectations, as, as we can see, the Russian and the Ukrainian models are not synchronic; their basic orientations (reception theory's *Einstellungsstruktur*) are different.

The second temporal moment is more concrete and bears on the very notion of the horizon of expectations. In effect: can one speak of a horizon of expectation at the moment a literature is being born, when it is in *statu nascendi*, or only when there is already an established ground for genuine contacts, i.e., mutual receptivity? In other words, does a horizon of expectations exist if there are only social and psychological, but not esthetic criteria in play? In principle the answer would seem to be yes, for since a horizon of expectations involves both literary and social conventions (cf. Grimm), it is what it is, which is to say that if there is no readiness to perceive or accept a given model, approach or work it simply does not register, it is not perceived. And thus since at a given stage Ukrainian literature has not yet won its "rights," its "acceptance," or "recognition." if its language is still not being recognized as a "normal," or "legitimate" medium, if its canon is still so uncrystallized that there is no internal consensus, let alone external; "recognition," then what kind

of esthetic criteria can one speak of, that is of criteria that would be adequate to and specific to that very Ukrainian literature and not merely imposed or borrowed? But then the question arises – can *esthetic* criteria ever be only "internal"? For what is "internal," i.e., specific to the group, are cultural moments, and cultural-historical manifestations. On the other hand, if a separation from a canon is occurring, if a new canon, and new criteria, and a new language (in the broadest semiotic sense of the term) are being produced then how can one speak of a common horizon of expectations? Based on the Russian reception of early 19th century Ukrainian literature one may conclude that despite a range of common experiences and values, and despite the fact that in the social and all the more so in the political planes there was one common context, then to the extent that we are talking about writing in Ukrainian literature that was progressively (albeit slowly) being transformed into a separate national literature that common context did not exist. And thus too there was no common horizon of expectations. For as many examples show, some things were simply not perceived; they were beyond the field of vision; they did not register on the seismograph. The code was different. All of this, to be sure, requires more study. The field in question, – in Ukrainian and Russian and western studies, remains largely virgin territory. Future studies are quite likely to draw on the heuristic possibilities of the idea of the horizon of expectations. But if our comments here are correct, that very notion may require revision – especially as concerns the question of cultural dynamics and the interrelation of esthetic and cultural moments.

## NOTES

<sup>xxvii</sup>[1] This does not apply to the early period (eleventh to the thirteenth centuries) of Ukrainian literature. The middle period (the late sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries) does provide some analogies, but here, too, Ukrainian literature cannot be described as developing *within* the Polish.

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<sup>ii</sup>[2] In this regard it is considerably more important than the analogous Polish-Ukrainian interface in the nineteenth century, although exactly proportional to the one that obtained in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, i.e., for the middle period of Ukrainian literature.

<sup>iii</sup>[3] Cf. my articles "From Province to Nation"; on "Russian-Ukrainian Relations: a Formulation of the Problem," and "Semantyka kotliarevshchyny...".

<sup>iv</sup>[4] Cf. "From Province to Nation"

<sup>iv</sup>[5] (As more than one literary historian has observed, Belinskii's basic hostility to Ukrainian writings stemmed from the fact that he perspicaciously saw precisely this inevitably; cf. Luckyj, *Between Gogol and Shevchenko ...*

<sup>v</sup>[6] Cf. Semantyka kotliarevshchyny

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- viii[7] Cf. *Hermeneutics vs. Science. Three German Essays*, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1988, p. 71 .
- viii[8] G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 419
- ix[9] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 415-65
- x[10] Cf. Jauss, *Toward and Esthetic of Reception*, p. 25.
- xi[11] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- xiii[12] Cf. *Semantyka kotliarevshchyny*
- xiii[13] Cf. his letter to P.V. Annenkov, PSS, 12, pp. 441-42...
- xiv[14] D. Chyzhevskiy, *Hegel bei den Slaven*, Darmstadt, 1961.
- xv[15] PSS, 5, 177.
- xvi[16] PSS, 5, 179.
- xvii[17] cf re Kulish, in Kost on Sev. paper...
- xviii[18] cf. Kost's Vozsojed and Kulish's Otpadenie... etc
- xix[19] Cf. Insight and Blindness...
- xx[20] Sipovskii, *Ukraina v rosiiskomu pysmenstvi...*
- xxi[21] Cf. Hans Robert Jauss *Question and Answer. Forms of Dialogic Understanding*, Minneapolis, 1989.
- xxii[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 148-196; here: p. 174.
- xxiii[23] Cf. i.e., in his review of "Molodyk na 1844 god": PSS, 8, 107.
- xxiv[24] Cf. his "Der poetische Text im Horizontwandel der Lektüre," *Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik*, Frankfurt, 1982, pp. 813865.
- xxv[25] Cf Blindness and insight...
- xxvi[26] Cf. Edward J. Brown, "So much depends... Russian critics in search of 'reality'," *The Russian Review*, October, 1989, vol. 48, No.4, pp. 353-82.