Oleksandr Boron'. *Povisti Tarasa Shevchenka i zakhidnoievropeis'ki literatury: Retseptsiia ta intertekstual'ni zv''iazky* [*Taras Shevchenko's Novellas and Western European Literature: Reception and Intertexts*]. 2nd ed., Vydavnytstvo "Krytyka," 2015. 158 pp. Bibliography. Index. $16.90, paper.

Oleksandr Boron''s slim monograph aims to inform the reader about intertextual links to the works of nineteenth-century British and French novelists in the Russian-language novellas of the preeminent Ukrainian poet, writer, artist, public figure, and bard of the Ukrainian nation Taras Shevchenko (1814-61). Shevchenko is known mostly for his poetry, which set the standard for the contemporary Ukrainian language and ignited the spirit of the Ukrainian nation with its anti-imperialist themes. His Russian-language novellas, however, have evaded the radar of Ukrainian and Western criticism. Thus, Boron''s discussion of intertexts in Shevchenko's autobiographical novella, *Khudozhnik* (*The Artist*, 1856), and in his other novellas *Varnak* (*The Convict*, 1853), *Kniaginia* (*The Princess*, 1853), *Muzykant* (*The Musician*, 1854-55), *Bliznetsy* (*The Twins*, 1855), and *Progulka s udovol'stviem i ne bez morali* (*A Stroll with Pleasure and Not Without a Moral*, 1855-58) is a welcome addition to the field of Shevchenko studies. The book meticulously traces references to a variety of Western European novels in Shevchenko's novellas and letters; apparent here is Boron''s tremendous effort to locate a great number of secondary sources—especially those of archival and factual natures that show which Western European novels were available in Russian-language translation in the Russian Empire in Shevchenko's time and where and when they appeared. Boron' also points to the presence of such novels (either in their original language or in French or Russian translation) in the libraries of members of Shevchenko's social circle (such as Karl Briullov) and to their availability during Shevchenko's exile, following his arrest in 1847.

The book under review has two main parts, which address British and French literary allusions, respectively. It also has a very brief introduction and conclusion. A bibliographic reference section at the end shows that the chapters devoted to British novelists Charles Dickens, Sir Walter Scott, Oliver Goldsmith, and Jonathan Swift and to the French writers George Sand and Eugène Sue have already appeared as articles and, therefore, constitute reprints in the book. Only three chapters, devoted to the British authors Daniel Defoe and Samuel Richardson and the Frenchman Honoré de Balzac (twenty-eight pages—approximately twenty percent of the monograph's content) are new contributions. This may be one of the reasons why the book reads disjointedly at times: each chapter starts with the same introductory phrase instead of offering a progressive narrative unified by a broader research question. For instance, an analysis of the impact of literary intertext

Volume V, No. 1 (2018) DOI: https://doi.org/10.21226/ewjus378

on Shevchenko's writing as a whole is not made at cogent points in the text; in addition, neither the question of the cultural history of translations nor the topic of the reception of Western European literature in the Russian Empire generally in the nineteenth century is addressed at relevant points in the author's discourse. Based on the intertextual references and citations, what were the literary preferences in the Russian Empire? Also, why is there an absence of German literary allusions? Such a unifying arc is not present in the book.

The monograph does offer a number of analytic observations. For example, Boron' notes how Shevchenko imitates Scott's narrative style and borrows the noble robber character type from Scott's historical novel *Rob Roy* (1817). Boron' also shows how Shevchenko uses intertexts to polemically reflect on the reception of Sand's and Sue's works in the Russian Empire (136). The analytic observations are acute, particularly when Boron' brings up an interesting polemic in Russian imperial intelligentsia circles centred on a comparison of the indigenous oeuvre of Nikolai Gogol' (Mykola Hohol') with Sue's popular sensational novels; or when he speaks of Shevchenko comparing the works of the female authors Marko Vovchok (Ukrainian) and George Sand (French) based on gender and similarity of theme: "[B]oth female authors had to fight gender stereotypes of the nineteenth century on their path to literary recognition" (my trans.; 120). However, a more in-depth comparison and more detailed discussion of overlap of themes in Shevchenko's novellas in relation to those of Sand, Sue, Scott, and other authors, above and beyond the intertext mentioned, and a specification of the reasons why Shevchenko chose to use such intertext all would have strengthened the analytic aspect of Boron''s monograph.

In addition to the aforementioned pinpointing of secondary sources, another very useful element of the book is its textual identification in Shevchenko's novellas of passages containing references to British or French authors; identification is made by name, title(s) of work(s), or characters or settings introduced in such works. Although Boron' devotes his chapters to a specific cohort of Western European authors, he mentions other authors only in passing—for example, Ann Radcliffe (see 73); it would be interesting to see how the intertextual references to Radcliffe, who was known for being an originator of the sentimental Gothic school, shaped the style and sensibility of Shevchenko's novellas.

Despite the monograph's rich factual material, the book falls short of fully addressing the importance of intertext in Shevchenko's novellas or linking such intertext to other bodies of his literary work, such as his poetry. Intertextual theory is also left unexplained, except for a narrow, literal allusion to the intertexts as direct references to outside sources. Intertextual theory, though, is broad and includes pastiche, literary allusions, irony or

parody, and indirect references, none of which are discussed by Boron'. Furthermore, it might have been useful to encapsulate the discussion of intertextual method within an interpretative framework (for example, references to Scott, Radcliffe, and Sue might have been fruitfully explored through the lens of the Gothic conceptual framework). The monograph shows an attempt to do so by identifying Shevchenko's interest in the genres of epistolary novel and morality tale (aimed at instructing through entertainment) in the course of Boron''s discussion of Shevchenko's references to Dickens, Swift, Defoe, and Richardson; however, this framework is underdeveloped, and the analyses are too disjointed to constitute a unifying argument.

Despite these analytic shortcomings, the book's factual references relating to the publication and reception of Western European novels in the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century may be of use to scholars working in the fields of Ukrainian and comparative literary studies. Also, thanks to Boron', Shevchenko's Russian-language novellas and their literary allusions are now assembled for future research use.

Svitlana (Lana) Krys
MacEwan University