O. I. [Oleksandr Ivanovych] Borzenko. ***Sentymental'na "provintsiia" (Nova ukrains'ka literatura na etapi stanovlennia)*** [The Sentimental "Province" (The Emerging New Ukrainian Literature)]. Kharkiv: Kharkivs'kyi natsional'nyi universytet im. V. N. Karazina, 2006. 321 pp. E-book. <www-philology.univer.kharkov.ua/nauka/e_books/borzenko.pdf>.

This monograph takes on very significant and still-debated questions regarding the rise of modern Ukrainian literature at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. At the time, both Russians and Ukrainians were concerned with defining their own identities and their national narratives. Within the imperial narrative, Ukraine was viewed as a province contributing to the *obshcherusskii* nation. For Ukrainians, however, the narrative was more complicated, inasmuch as they had to negotiate the imperial *obshcherusskii* identity while seeking to preserve their own *malorosiis'kyi* identity. One of the key claims made in this monograph is that a modern Ukrainian consciousness of a separate, national identity was constructed via the aesthetic experience of its literature. Borzenko sets out to illustrate this point by examining three major Ukrainian writers of the time—Ivan Kotliarevs'kyi, Petro Hulak-Artemovs'kyi, and Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnov"ianenko—all of whom, at various times, held official positions in the imperial administrative structure but also extolled their ethnic identity and their native province.

The interpretation of "provincial" becomes one of the crucial issues in his approach to understanding the Ukrainian literature of this period. One view has been to treat "provincial" as an evaluative term that sees Ukrainian literature of the time as an "incomplete literature" (D. Chyzhevs'kyi's view). Essentially, this approach views Ukrainian literature through the lens of high genres, prevalent at the time in both Europe and Russia, and finds Ukrainian literature circumscribed and lacking. A critique of this approach has been based on a cultural anthropological view that treats cultures in their own right, as arising from and serving the needs of their own community, people, or nation (G. G. Grabowicz). In this view "provincial" becomes a descriptive term designating a native culture (Ukrainian) that is different from that of the centre (St. Petersburg/Moscow). For Borzenko, it is the latter approach that resonates throughout his study.

Borzenko advances the argument that during the period of transition from Neoclassicism to Sentimentalism to Romanticism, Ukrainian native and literary conditions reinforced one another to produce a positive image of a province with its own distinctive features. He examines how the above-mentioned three Ukrainian writers were shaped by the context of their time—by Enlightenment concepts of improving society and by Sentimentalism's emphasis on the personal, on the intimate, on "one's own

little corner." In discussing the influence of the Enlightenment, Borzenko focuses on the general notion that the upper classes engage in service for the benefit of society/humanity and that literature (writing) was seen as a form of edification. As a generation between literary periods, all three writers were familiar with the traditional rhetoric of sermons, official speeches, and panegyrics (written in the high style with Church Slavonicisms) largely through their education in religious seminaries, academies, or monasteries. Kotliarevs'kyi's education lasted ten years, Hulak's three, and Kvitka's took place in the religious context of his family and a ten-month sojourn as a monk. Despite their "high" education, all wrote literary works of a very different order, which in the Neoclassical canon were considered low to middle genres: burlesques, mock epics, comedies, comical anecdotes.

Borzenko relates this separation of styles and genres to the difference between an official imperial persona and a personal persona, which closely corresponds to a difference between the two competing identities that came to be expressed during Sentimentalism and in Sentimentalist terms. The consequences of these distinctions are reflected in the attitudes toward the Ukrainian language and in the forms taken by Ukrainian literature. Two issues are at play here: distinctiveness/difference and status/dignity, both within parameters established by imperial literature and culture.

As for language, Borzenko notes that being multilingual was characteristic of an educated Ukrainian. And these three authors—who spoke Russian, wrote literary works in Russian, published in leading Russian journals—were read by a Russian audience that was interested in one of "our" provinces of the empire. Borzenko introduces the telling example of Pletn'ev, a professor of Russian literature at St. Petersburg University, publisher of *Sovremennik* and a friend of Kvitka's, who, as a teacher of Russian literature to the royal princesses Olga and Mariia, recommended that they read Kvitka's Russian stories. But the issue was whether one could write serious literature in Ukrainian, often called a *prostonarodnyi* or *narodnyi iazyk*, suited for what then was considered light fare. As Zerov has pointed out, Ukrainian writing of the time consisted of anecdotes from folk life, plays based on village life, romances, tales illustrating witty proverbs, and historical memoirs for a local readership consisting of provincial nobility, middle–level officials, and village clergy (12). Borzenko cites the well-known exchange that unfolded in the early 1830s between Hulak and Kvitka (195), where Hulak did not see Ukrainian (a language of the people) as capable (or perhaps appropriate) for high literature; Russian was to be the choice. Hulak's own works and even his letters in Russian are written in a serious, official style that is clearly distinguished, as Borzenko notes, from his Ukrainian works. It was Kvitka who announced that his story *Marusia* (1834) was written to prove that Ukrainian could be used for literature more serious

than the burlesque, that is, caricature-like works, derogatorily termed *kotliarevshchyna*.

For Borzenko, it is Sentimentalism and the influence of Rousseau and, later, Herder that exerted a significant influence on the formation of Ukrainian literature and national consciousness. It led to the collection and publication of folk songs, which were viewed as a repository of natural, unspoiled language and national character. It elevated the spoken language of the people by characterizing it as genuine, untainted, and sincere while treating the language of high society as false, artificial, and mannered. As a result, spoken Ukrainian acquired a dignity that made it appropriate for literature. Borzenko readily admits, of course, that despite the dictum to write as one speaks, which was also a rejection of the Neoclassical notion of a high style with Church Slavonicisms (172), the literary language of all three writers is a stylized speech of the people (*prostonarodna mova*). But while the simple folk were given a voice, the younger generation of Romantics, which venerated the people, became critical of this literature for its skewed treatment of the people and their language.

According to Borzenko, another crucial aspect of Sentimentalism that neatly dovetailed with native Ukrainian traits (individualism, emotionalism) and created an image of a provincial *Malorossia* that resonated with local readers was a sense of the personal, heartfelt, and detailed "small" world—the family, one's circle of friends—that was set against the imperial centre with its officialdom, rhetoric, and hierarchical order. In Ukrainian literature, it was often expressed through a tone of banter, irony, self-mockery, a persona of the "simple fellow" (a person who was one of us—*svii*), which clearly differentiated it from Russian literature. For Borzenko, one of the significant consequences of such literature was that it became proof of a distinct identity and the viability of a separate ethnos (19) and that it contributed to the rise of romantic nationalism and a local/provincial pride that gradually developed into a general Ukrainian patriotism with the next generation.

This is an excellent monograph that in numerous ways illustrates its case: how literature contributed to the dynamics of a growing sense of a distinct Ukrainian identity. The difference was not merely between province and centre (something brought out in Russian literature, as well); there was also a conscious difference in ethnos (locale, traditions, characteristics). While the emphasis on particularity in this monograph is not misplaced, there is another issue that is only intimated rather than fully explored. The very Ukrainian texts that fostered this development of "one's own corner" (in theme and style) were treated as light fare by the imperial centre and, I submit, by these Ukrainian writers as well. That is, the charge of "provincialism," in the evaluative sense, spurred the efforts of Ukrainian

writers to create a high and serious literature. As examples one can mention Hulak's translation of Goethe's "Der Fischer" into Ukrainian, Kvitka's Ukrainian-language *Marusia*, and the criticism by Romantics of the earlier generation for its unflattering treatment of the simple folk. This preoccupation with the status of the language and literature would continue to resonate among Ukrainian writers. Borzenko should be credited with convincingly showing how Kotliarevs'kyi, Hulak-Artemovs'kyi, and Kvitka initiated the process of national rebirth, which continued to develop throughout the nineteenth century.

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