

Title: Gogol with/in Little Russian Literature
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Like the characters in *Dead Souls*, who may be described as constituting “types of one,” Gogol himself is invariably projected as a *sui generis* phenomenon that typifies the field of Russian literature: “the father of Russian (moralizing/satirical/realist) prose”; a romantic writer whose biography is defined almost exclusively by the rather unremarkable peripeties of a literary career; the “simultaneity” or “parallism” of his literary output (i.e., the near futility of attempting to “periodize” his work); his decision to “ride” Little Russian “scenes” into a (successful) literary career in Russia(n); a linguistic non-normativity that is palpable in his *entire* oeuvre; finally (and commensurately), repeated (“hygenicist”) efforts to question his place (and not just that of the Dikanka Tales) in the Russian literary canon (most recently, for instance, by A. Ranchin) while simultaneously disavowing his so-called Ukrainian problem. Yet the process of fixing Gogol *qua sui generis* phenomenon firmly in the Russian literary canon was, as Romanchuk and I argue, essentially a function of “repressing” his status as a purveyor of a specifically Little Russian literary sensibility, one recognized as such by the likes of Nadezhdin, Senkovskii, Polevoi, or, for the matter, Evgenii Baratynskii, who upon first encountering Dikanka ascribed them to Perovskii-Pogorelskii.

The aim of this paper, then, is to situate three of Gogol’s earliest published works—“Bisavriuk,” two chapters from the unfinished “Strashnyi kaban,” and two chapters from an unfinished historical novel—in that inchoate socioliterary field that we call Little Russian prose. As constituted by such writers as Nareznyi, Somov, Pogorelskii, and Gogol himself, this field, as I shall discuss, can be characterized by at once a common set of features—e.g., descriptions of Little Russian “scenes,” naïve spontaneity (childishness), (coarse) humor, antiquarian historicism, orality (*skaz*), a variety of Ukrainianisms—and by none of these, insofar as it has all of these features *because* it is Little Russian.

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