## "PARABASIS IN NIKOLAY GOGOL'S THE INSPECTOR GENERAL: THE PROVERBIAL MEDIUM

**Abstract:** While not attached to the original 1836 text of his play, The Inspector General, Nikolay Gogol appended the famous proverbepigraph "Don't grumble at the mirror if your [own] puss is distorted" to the 1842 edition of his comedy, which he recognized as the final and definitive version. Fond of the pithy folk language of both Russia and his native Ukraine, it is not surprising that he would do so. In addition, this proverb-epigraph captures the moralistic message that Gogol clearly intends to impart to his readers, a message that the Mayor blasts to his audience in the closing scene of Act Five. In light of his fondness for Aristophanic Comedy, however, Gogol may have had another purpose in mind as he opened the 1842 version of his play with this famous Russian proverb. The Russian literary critic Vyacheslav Ivanov first called attention to this aspect of Gogol's play early in the last century, when he made an argument for the Mayor's outburst at the close of Act Five as a *parabatic* statement in the style of the Old Comedy of fifth-century Greece (B.C.). While acknowledging the genius of Ivanov's analysis of the play, the present article departs from his conclusion that this outburst represents the central parabatic moment in the play. Instead, a case is made for considering the proverb-epigraph that opens Gogol's play as either the main *parabasis* or, at least, as one that is parallel, perhaps a prequel to the Mayor's famous address to his audience at play's end.

**Keywords:** Russian proverb; Nikolay Gogol; 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian Comedy; Russian satire; Vyacheslav Ivanov; Old Comedy of fifthcentury B.C. Greece; Aristophanes; *parabasis*.

In one of the more perceptive analyses of Nikolai Gogol's nineteenth-century comedy masterpiece, *The Inspector General*, the Russian Symbolist poet and literary critic, Vyacheslav Ivanov (1866-1949), made a compelling argument for similarities between the nineteenth-century Russian playwright's comedy and the Old Comedy of Aristophanes (fifth-century B.C.).<sup>1</sup> The unusual originality of this essay is not surprising in light of

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Ivanov's thorough training as a classicist, which eventually led to a professorship of Greek at the University of Baku.<sup>2</sup> To a considerable degree his views on art and culture had been heavily influenced by the ancients, and he often applied these views to his analysis of Russian literature.

The main argument advanced by Ivanov in his article on *The* Inspector General and the comedy of Aristophanes relates to his view that the action of Gogol's play "is not limited to a circle of personal relationships, but, rather, presents these relationships as components of a collective life and embraces a whole social microcosm, self-contained and self-sufficient, which stands symbolically for any social confederation, and of course reflects, as in a mirror, just that social confederation to whose entertainment and edification the comic action is directed." Ivanov follows up this view by observing parenthetically, "As the epigraph to The Inspector General has it: 'There's no grumbling at the mirror if your [own] puss is crooked." In his analysis Ivanov continues to argue for more of a social message intended for Gogol's audience rather than a satirical attack against specific characters or types of characters, noting that rather than a personal or domestic intrigue that accounts for the underlying action of the play, Gogol focuses on the depiction of an entire town. In fact, Ivanov holds that Gogol does not present individual, isolated characters or their private domestic affairs so much as the "town" as a collective persona.

This idea of a collective self-awareness is reflected as well in Ivanov's treatment of "parabasis," or the "coming forward" of the Greek chorus during an intermission in a play's action, when at a fixed moment in the comic action members of the chorus and, occasionally, the actors themselves appeared before the audience out of character to deliver the author's views on various matters treated in the play. Accompanied by a sounding of flutes in the background, chorus and actors, marching in military cadence descended aggressively upon the first few rows of spectators spewing in their faces the searing verses of the abusive parabasis. Ivanov links this Old Comedy vision of universal laughter acting in collective judgment to Gogol's own play, The Inspector General, whose parabatic moment Ivanov sees culminating at the end of the play in the mayor's outburst directed not so much at his fellow actors on the stage, but at the members of

the audience itself: "I can't see a thing. I can see what looks like pig-snouts instead of faces, and nothing else.... Now look, just look, all the world, all good Christians: see what a fool they've made of the mayor.... And everybody will grin and clap their hands.... What are you laughing at? You're laughing at yourselves! Oh, you...."<sup>4</sup>

As original and convincing as Ivanov's analysis is, the present essay will propose another candidate for consideration as a parallel form of parabasis in Gogol's play, that is, the proverbepigraph to the play itself: "На зеркало нечего пенять, коли рожа крива/Don't blame the mirror for your own ugly mug." It can be argued that similar to the original practice of the Old Comedy of fifth-century Greece, this proverb-epigraph, which opens Gogol's play, functions as a sort of authorial choral message intended for the edification of the Russian audience. Unlike the original parabasis of Greek Comedy, the parabatic moment I am positing does not occur at the traditional midpoint in the play, nor does it involve a choral descent into the front rows of the audience. I do feel, however, that the proverb-epigraph that opens this play can be viewed as performing a function similar to the original Aristophanic period of comedy to which Ivanov refers. In addition, readers should be aware that the proverbepigraph of Gogol's play is not to be confused with the medieval French and Elizabethan practice of the "proverb-play," in which playwrights constructed an entire play around a given proverb for purposes of explicating the very message of the proverb.<sup>5</sup> Gogol's use of this Russian proverb in his epigraph seeks to shed light on the meaning of the play itself, and not vice-versa. Furthermore, while Gogol depicts the manners and mores of midcentury Russia, he never moralizes nor engages in direct authorial indictments of the characters in his play, as often intimated in both Aristophanic comedy as well as later medieval and Elizabethan proverb drama. As Janko Lavrin notes, Gogol "does not even pretend to swing the whip in his own hands, but makes his characters whip themselves without knowing it, as it were, especially when they talk of their own abuses with a kind of childlike innocence."6

To advance this argument, let us consider some of the main characteristics of proverb use in literary works. By the very nature of their being uttered, proverbs have provided timeless advice and warning intended for listeners and readers alike. Their moral didactic message has remained a constant feature in spoken proverbs as well as those used in literature, with the simplicity of their native folk wisdom communicating well to readers and listeners alike. Similarly, their pithy wit and wisdom provided a clear yet entertaining appeal for authors wishing to encapsulate moral and ethical advice to their readers. Gary Saul Morson goes so far as to say that on occasion a proverb can function not so much as "a statement in the story," but as a "statement about the story," a particularly apt role for Gogol's play. Structurally speaking, proverbs can provide the perfect opening to a scene, as in the opening sentence to Part One of Tolstoy's Anna Karenina or, in the case of Gogol's play, they can encapsulate the intended authorial message to his readers and audience. Owing to the power and expressiveness of proverbs, their use—especially in the form of a proverb-epigraph enables readers to penetrate the falseness and shallowness of the characters whom they encounter in a play like Gogol's The Inspector General. As detailed in V. M. Mokienko's recent compilation of Russian proverbs, the first formal listing of the folk proverb that opens Gogol's play dates back to S. M. Snegirev's 1848 study, Русские народные пословицы и притчи/ Russian Folk Proverbs and Sayings. We know that this proverb opening did not appear in the first draft of Gogol's play, but did surface, however, in a later version in 1842, which was considered by Gogol himself as well as literary scholars to be the authentic and complete version of the play. As a moral lesson for readers and theatergoers alike, this proverb-epigraph succeeds in capturing both the personalities of the main characters in the play as well as the moralistic lesson to be learned by play's end. Let us look, therefore, at the now famous characters of Gogol's play to consider how it is that the proverb-epigraph previews the foibles of their personalities as well as underscores the meaning of the play itself.

The dramatis personae of Gogol's play present a broad circle of varying inept and corrupt provincial government officials and their cronies in a remote Russian backwater somewhere to the southeast of Moscow. The local mayor, Anton Antonovich Skvoznik-Dmukhonovsky, one of the central characters in the play, succinctly characterizes the town, stating that "you ride a

horse for three years and you won't reach another state." In the introductory notes to his play, Gogol informs his audience that the Mayor is a man fond of bribes (взяточник) who occasionally conducts himself, however, somewhat reputably. According to the local merchants, the Mayor celebrates two birthdays each year on each occasion of which they are expected to provide him with presents. In addition to ordering the postmaster to intercept letters containing complaints and denunciations from the townspeople, the Mayor routinely pilfers anything his family needs or wants from the town's merchants. Those who stand in his way or fail to meet his demands are commissioned off to the ranks of the army as recruits. Over the course of the play, readers also learn that he has misappropriated government funds that he requested for the construction of a new church in town. To cover up this act, he plans to submit a claim that the church burned down.

As the play opens Anton Antonovich has assembled the local town dignitaries at his home to announce the imminent arrival of an inspector general from the capital, St. Petersburg. Like the Mayor, each of the town's representatives has ample cause to feel uneasy at this news as their respective corruption or venality is only outdone by their glaring incompetence. The local judge, Lyapkin-Tyapkin, an avid hunter and quasi-freethinker in spite of having read only five-six books in his life is adequately defined by the meaning of his comical name—Slip-Shod: geese must be driven out of his waiting room and the courtroom is littered with his laundry. Instead of the fair-minded and traditionally blindfolded statue of Justice to adorn his courtroom, a whip stands in the corner over a document cabinet. During the course of the play, Zemlyanika reveals that the Judge is engaged in an affair with Dobchinsky's wife. The Curator of the town's Charitable Institutions, Zemlyanika (Strawberry), a corpulent, sluggish and lumbering man runs the affairs of the hospital rather complacently and reveals himself throughout the play as an intriguer and swindler. Patients under his charge lie in filthy hospital rooms and are deprived of their medicine. In order to improve the impression of health care statistics, he succumbs to the Mayor's order to release certain patients. Further adding to the comicality, if not criminality of this rural backwater, the town doctor, Christian Hübner, is an inept German unable to speak a word of Russian and capable only of producing a nondescript sound ranging somewhere between "i" and "e." Out of pure curiosity (and boredom?), another of the town's officials, the Postmaster, Shpekin, a simple-minded civil servant finds absolutely nothing questionable about his routine practice of opening and reading the mail that passes through his office. On occasion, he even retains those letters that he finds of special interest. Luka Lukich (a pun on the Russian word for onion) Khlopov, the Superintendent of Schools, embarrasses easily and admits that his own education has left him unduly disposed to yield to authority. In Act I he complains, furthermore, of the vulnerability of his position: "God preserve anyone from serving in education! You're frightened of everything; everyone interferes, everybody wants to show that he too is an educated man." Other officials conduct their duties with equal disregard: the town's streets are in desperate need of cleaning, garbage must be removed, and a rickety old fence needs to be torn down. Characteristically, Gogol does not paint the town officials nor the local merchants and townspeople as abysmally corrupt and evil, but more so as amiably venal and hopelessly inept. A decade later the author would write that his intention in this play was "to collect into one heap all that I knew to be bad in Russia" and to expose it to laughter.11

Soon after the Mayor has announced news of the imminent arrival of an Inspector General, two local landowners, Bobchinsky and Dobchinsky come to the Mayor's home with news that, indeed, a mysterious young newcomer named Khlestakov has already taken up residence at the local inn. To make matters worse, Dobchinsky informs everyone that the newcomer has already dwelled in the town for two weeks, news of which concerns the Mayor even more since during this time he has had the wife of a noncommissioned officer flogged and recalls that prisoners in the local jail have not received any food. Dispatching the others to set their affairs at their respective departments in order, the Mayor decides that he must visit this young visitor at the town's hotel in order to determine the potential damage both he and the town officials are likely to incur. The opening of Act II reveals the supposed Inspector General in reality to be a visiting ne'er-do-well, who has gambled away all the money his father has given him and now finds himself and his servant, Osip, lodging in a provincial hotel for which he has neither money nor ability to pay for food and lodging. More nincompoop than charlatan, Khlestakov is too self-centered and stupid to appreciate the awkwardness and potential peril of his situation. Vladimir Nabokov best characterized the essence of Gogol's protagonist: "Khlestakov's very name is a stroke of genius...for it conveys to the Russian reader an effect of lightness and rashness, a prattling tongue, the swish of a slim walking cane..." Viktor Erlich similarly puts his finger on the pulse of Khlestakov's personality: "Khlestakov is a phony rather than a fraud, an almost unwitting beneficiary of a totally unearned windfall rather than a schemer who sizes up a situation.... He is not smart enough to be a schemer: it takes him nearly two acts to understand the situation in which he finds himself."13 The exchange between the Mayor and Khlestakov early in Act II reveals the stupidity of each as neither recognizes the essence of this case of mistaken identity. The former fawns obsequiously and caters to the ego of the latter who, in turn, avails himself of the situation. When Khlestakov complains of the inedible food at the hotel, the Mayor offers to put him up at another apartment; taking this to mean a jail cell, Khlestakov responds indignantly: "How do you dare?...Why now I...I serve in Petersburg." Hearing this response the Mayor immediately intuits that the new arrival has learned of the Mayor's proclivity for bribe-taking and overall malfeasance in running the town. Realizing that the townspeople no doubt have denounced him already, the Mayor responds to Khlestakov's suggestion that he be given a loan of two-hundred rubles by casually slipping him, instead, with four-hundred. Having secured what he thinks to be the Inspector General's goodwill, the Mayor further plays up to Khlestakov by offering to put him up more comfortably in his own home.

Acts III and IV continue in a similar vein with dialogue and action further delineating character as well as preparing for the climax to come in Act V. Fearful that the person they take to be an Inspector General will inevitably uncover their corruption, malfeasance, and ineptitude, the various town dignitaries find ways to slip their own bribes into the hands of Khlestakov. At first slow to suggest that they provide him with "loans," he gradually becomes quite comfortable in doing so and by the final meeting with one of the civil officials proves himself quite comfortable in demanding their bribes. Individual officers embody in

varying degree the aptness and wisdom of the proverb-epigraph. Artemy Filipovich Zemlyanika, for example, reflects the limit-less bounds of an arrogance of stupidity in explaining to Khlestakov that the beds in the hospital under his supervision are nearly empty because almost all the patients have been cured: "Ten are left, no more; the rest have all gotten well. It's been arranged that way, that's the setup. Since I took command, it may even seem incredible to you, they all get well like flies." Only the ignorance of the Mayor and Khlestakov could manage somehow to ignore the malapropism of Zemlyanika's statement.

Not only the various town officials, but the Mayor's own wife and daughter, as well, reflect the venality suggested by the parabatic reflection of the proverb-epigraph. Both the wife and daughter (respectively, Anna Andreyevna and Marya Antonovna) demonstrate their ego-inflated personalities and simplemindedness by primping and fawning before Khlestakov in vying with one another for his favor. Following the latter's claim to be on a first-name basis with the poet Pushkin and a long line of inebriated boasting of setting his dinner table at home with 700 rubles worth of watermelon and serving soup that he has purchased directly from Paris and claiming that he is about to be promoted to the rank of Field Marshal, Anna Andreyevna naively responds: "Oh how fine! I love young people like that terrifically! I'm simply head over heels in love. And I must say he liked me a lot...." Thereupon mother and daughter continue to argue over whom Khlestakov prefers of the two. Later in the act Anna Andreyevna will reveal her utter stupidity and impermanent devotion to her husband by responding to Khlestakov's declaration of love: "But let me note: I'm in a certain sense...I'm married."16 Clearly, as the proverb-epigraph suggests, Gogol's play is intended more as social satire than as political commentary. Even the two landowners, Dobchinsky and Bobchinsky, who do not hold any public office, are lampooned for their ignorance and simplemindedness. The former, for example, having paid Khlestakov a healthy bribe desires to have his illegitimate elder son be permitted to take on the family name. Equally as pathetically, Bobchinsky makes a plaintive request: "I most humbly beg you, when you get back to Petersburg, to tell all the different nobles there, the senators and admirals, that you know...there lives in such-and-such a town one Pyotr Ivanovich Bobchinsky. Just say that: there lives one Pyotr Ivanovich Bobchinsky."<sup>17</sup>

Finally, the behavior of the merchants and townspeople themselves tends to reflect, as in a crooked mirror, the ugly mugs of a simple and venomous provincial populace. One of the leading merchants begins the heated rant by complaining to Khlestakov that the Mayor is starving the tradesmen by billeting soldiers in their homes and demanding that they provide his wife and daughter with free goods from their shops. In hopes of securing the Inspector's favor, the merchants are only too happy to offer him a bribe: not the 300 rubles that Khlestakov suggests, but 500. [Following their scalding accounts of how the Mayor has mistreated and abused them, these same merchants and townspeople later in the play will attempt to ingratiate themselves once again with the Mayor once they learn that he is about to become the father-in-law of the man they mistakenly take to be the Inspector General.] After the merchants' departure two of the town's local women intrude with their own complaints. The Locksmith's wife explains how her husband was unlawfully conscripted out of turn by the Mayor, who had received a healthy bribe from the tailor's father in order to spare his son's being enlisted into army service. Next a Non-Commissioned Officer's (N.C.O's) wife describes how the Mayor mistakenly has had her publicly flogged on the street following arguments and scrapping by other women in the town. While she complains that nothing can be done to undo the public humiliation, the N.C.O.'s wife feels that a fine on the part of the Mayor could partially recompense her: "I got no reason to turn down my good fortune, and the dough'd come in real handy right now."18 In a tawdry and insincere attempt to dispel the allegations the townspeople have lodged against him, shortly before the end of Act IV the mayor will respond to the indignant complaints of his townspeople: "I swear on my honor, not half of what they said is true. They themselves swindle the people and cheat them. The noncommissioned officer's wife lied straight to your face, pretending I'd flogged her. She's lying, honest to God, she's lying. She flogged herself."19

Act V of the play continues the depiction of greed, corruption and envy on the part of the Mayor and his family along with the merchants, local townspeople, and city officials. Emboldened

by the prospects of becoming the father-in-law to the person whom he takes to be a high-ranking Inspector General from St. Petersburg, the Mayor lashes out at the merchants who had informed on him to the supposed Inspector General in Act IV. Similarly, his wife, Anna Andreyevna, shares his dream of moving to the capital and assuming a new life in society. Each reveals their shallowness and vengefulness in wishing to abandon the lifelong provincial life that has informed their lives. The Mayor assumes, for example, that he will be appointed to the rank of general with the sole goal of having others—couriers and adjutants—race ahead of him when traveling to prepare others for his arrival. Anna Andreyevna, on the other hand, has more immediate plans for their supposed future: "You must remember that we have to change our life completely, that your friends aren't going to be some kind of an old dog-lover judge who you go out and poison rabbits with..."<sup>20</sup> Their posturing changes radically, however, with the arrival of the Postmaster, who informs all the assembled that he has unsealed and read a letter that Khlestakov has sent to a friend in which he ridicules the Mayor, local officials and townspeople for their corrupt ways and ignorance in taking him for an Inspector General instead of the itinerant down-and-out small time official he is. Each of the officials and their Mayor come in for ridicule as Khlestakov describes them to his friend: the Postmaster, for example, is described as drinking like a fish; the Supervisor of Charitable Institutions, Zemlyanika, is referred to as "a pig in a yarmulka;" the Superintendent of Schools, Luka Lukich, is accused of smelling of onions, and Judge Lyapkin-Tryapkin is labeled a boor to the worst degree.

It is at this point in the concluding moments of Act V that the Mayor turns to the audience to utter his famous accusation, which Ivanov describes in his article as the *parabatic* moment in the play: "Just look, look, all you world, all Christianity, all of you just look how the Mayor's been made fool of!...What're you laughing for? You're laughing at yourselves!" It is difficult to argue with Ivanov's analysis that the Mayor's address functions as a form of Old Comedy *parabasis*. After all, while this *parabatic* choral moment typically occurred in the middle of the Greek play's action following the prologue and *parados* (entrance song) and *agon* (formal debate), there were exceptions to

the rule. Aristophanes's Lysistrata, for example, has an unusual double chorus and his final two plays have no parabasis at all. In addition, Aristophanes regularly would play directly to his audience and involve them in his action. In his *Frogs*, for example, Dionysus engages in a comical exchange with the Priest of Dionysus sitting in the front row of the audience.<sup>22</sup> Finally, it will be recalled that the opening monologues/ soliloquies of several Old Comedy plays were directed to the audience. Is this not, arguably, the function of the proverb-epigraph that opens Gogol's Inspector General? While not attached to the 1836 text of the play, Gogol added it to the 1842 revision, which has remained the standard text of the play. Like the Mayor's address that appears in the closing moments of the play, this Russian proverb operates as a "prequel" to the message Anton Antonovich directs to his audience in Act V. He chides them for "laughing at themselves" at play's end echoing the wisdom of the proverb-epigraph: "Don't grumble at the mirror if your [own] puss is crooked." Is this proverb not an authorial "choral message" designed to edify Gogol's audience and to prepare them for the social comedy that follows? Unlike the Mayor's address to the audience at the end of the play, this proverb contains the simplicity of moral and ethical advice by way of a preview to the play but, rather than take the form of a tirade or outburst, the proverb comes in the form of timeless folk wisdom of which Gogol was so fond. In Morson's formulation it is not a statement in the story but, rather, a statement "about" the story.

In his "Leaving the Theater after the Performance of a New Comedy," which Gogol wrote by way of a commentary on the play following its opening performance in 1836, he noted that the ideal comedy should embody an all-inclusive collective sense of life on the stage so that the spectators would feel included as well as implicated in what they are laughing at: "Comedy should cohere spontaneously, in all its mass, into one great, inclusive knot. The plot should embrace all the characters, not one or two—and touch upon the things that stir all of them, to whatever degree." No one better than Gogol would recognize that this "all-inclusive collective sense of life" is best represented and conveyed in the collective wisdom of the folk as presented in the timeless form of the Russian proverb. While it is impossible to document that the proverb-epigraph to his play was intended by

Gogol to function as a type of *parabasis*, similar to the Mayor's address at the end of the play, we do know that he considered the classical model of Aristophanic Comedy to be a source of important inspiration to him.<sup>24</sup> In addition, in light of his profound interest in and fascination for Russian and Ukrainian folklore, what better vehicle to convey both the moral as well as the social message of a didactic author, like Gogol, than the proverb?

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Translated as "Gogol's *Inspector General* and the Comedy of Aristophanes," in *Gogol from the Twentieth Century*, ed. Robert Maguire (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

<sup>2</sup>Ivanov was appointed to the professorship of Greek Studies at Baku University in 1921, where he remained for three years until his departure from the Soviet Union to Italy, where he lived for the rest of his life writing, translating, and teaching.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>4</sup>Н. В. Гоголь: Собрание сочинений в 7 томах, под общей редакцией С. И. Машинского, Н. Л. Степановв, М. В. Храпченко, (Москва: Издательство «Художественная литература», 1967), том 4, Драматические произведения, 103. The initial version of The Inspector General was completed and staged in St. Petersburg in 1836.

<sup>5</sup>For more discussion on this distinction, see Clarence D. Brenner, *The French Dramatic Proverb* (Berkeley, California: Privately printed, 1977).

<sup>6</sup>Nikolai Gogol (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 81.

<sup>7</sup>"Tolstoy's Absolute Language," in *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 74 (1981), 667-687.

<sup>8</sup>Большой словарь русских пословиц, В. М. Мокиенко, Т. Г. Никитина, Е. К. Николаева (Москва: *ОЛМА Медиа групп*, 2010), 373. Snegirev's book was published in Moscow.

<sup>19</sup>Н. В. Гоголь: Собрание сочинений, IV, 12/238. English translation appears in F. D. Reeve, An Anthology of Russian Plays (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), I, 41. All subsequent quotes from Gogol's play will come from these two volumes with the Russian page reference given first, followed the the page number of the English translation.

<sup>10</sup>Собрание сочинений IV, 14/241.

<sup>11</sup>Polnoe sobranie sochinenii (Moscow, 14 volumes, 1937-1952), VIII, 440.

<sup>12</sup>Nikolai Gogol (New York: New Directions, 1944), 55.

<sup>13</sup>Gogol (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), 104.

<sup>14</sup>Собрание сочинений в 7 томах, IV, 48/268.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid*., 55-56/274.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 83/296.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 71-72/287.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 85/297.
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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 79/293. <sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 91/302. <sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 103/313.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>The author gratefully acknowledges Classics Professors Mark Usher (University of Vermont) and James Svendsen (University of Utah] for their helpful comments in the preparation of this article.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Cited from *The Theater of Nikolai Gogol*, ed. Milton Ehre, translated by Milton Ehre and Fruma Gottschalk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 181.

<sup>24</sup>Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, V, 143.