

Title: Poetics of Order: Gogol's Dikan'ka Cycle  
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Abstract:

Inspired by his first literary success with *Evenings on a Farm near Dikan'ka*, Gogol published the second volume of the collection under the same title. Both volumes consist of the same number of stories, and some critics have focused on the continuities within the collection (Gippius and Gukovskii). Following Gukovskii's lead in his study on the compositional principle of the Dikan'ka cycle, I propose to read the stories in pairs, taking one from the first volume and then turning to its counterpart from the second.

My hypothesis is that the Dikan'ka cycle is structured to follow a specific compositional map. Both collections begin with a preface told by the beekeeper Rudyi Pan'ko, and the first tales in both collections adopt a tone of comic farce. The next selection in each volume is a horror story involving the death of an innocent child ("St. John's Eve" and "A Terrible Revenge"). However, the tales that follow ("A May Night" and "Ivan Fedorovich Shpon'ka and His Aunt") at first glance appear to have little in common. Yet on closer examination, I would argue that they share a crucial commonality in that they create confusion through their conflicting manners of storytelling, partly by means of the metaliterary device of a letter. Gogol intensifies the sense of confusion to the point of negation in the final stories. In short, this analysis will examine the folkloric world of Dikan'ka as a model for understanding what Gogol aspires to achieve in a variety of different narratives.

Gippius, Vasili. *Gogol*. Moskva: AGRAF, 1999.

Gukovskii, G. A. *Realizm Gogolia*. Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1959.