Title:

The Frame Narrative Unframed: The Narrative Voice in Gogol’s *Evenings on a Farm near Dikan’ka.*

Abstract:

In the 1820’s and 1830’s the practice of writing short story collections was on the rise in Russian literature. Gogol’s *Evenings on a Farm* continued this practice, following the canon of the ‘evenings’ genre. The ‘evenings’ was a type of short story collection which became particularly authoritative around that time; it typically included stories with multiple levels of narrative framing, the uppermost level being the host of the evenings who recorded the stories and made them available for publication. Approached formally, Gogol’s *Evenings* seems to abide fully by this well-established canon; however, upon closer review, it appears that in the depths of the narrative frames, a new type of narrator is beginning to crystallize. This new narrator dominates the entire collection, giving the reader subtle clues of his presence and exposing the flaws associated with delegating the act of narration to characters.

This paper examines the narrative strategies in *Evenings on a Farm* that signal the emergence of the new type of narrator, and discusses the role of *Evenings on a Farm*  as a performative utterance proclaiming the change of the dominant strategy in the literary narrative. It combines the traditional methods of narrative analysis with computational study of narrative voices in Gogol’s cycle.