Overall, Leighton's strategy is to dissect selected, highly representative literary texts; it is a journey "through seemingly disparate subjects that despite their bewildering complexities, are ultimately connected" (p. 194). He demonstrates beyond doubt that the esoteric tradition in Russia represents a "hidden culture . . . that helped shape Russian romantic literature." (p. 194) Given the scrupulous scrutiny with which scholars have studied the Romantic period in Russia, Leighton's accomplishments in this book are extraordinary. There is a clear sense that Leighton has only just begun, that he is eager for fellow travelers on his journey into the yet unexplored territories of Russia's esoteric tradition.

A plea for tighter editing ("Cut by 10 percent" is always good advice) and for greater inclusion of Russian (rather than transliteration or nothing) together with translated quotations aside, these two excellent books are models of scholarship; would that there were more of them in our field. Each monograph is marked by a masterful command of the relevant literary, social, political and historical issues. Each author's extensive scholarly profile, spread over at least fifteen years for Bagby (by his own calculation) and more than a quarter century in the case of Leighton, attests to sustained intellectual curiosity and long-term dedication to the study of Romanticism. Each author generously acknowledges the contributions of others, a signal characteristic of the unselfish spirit that marks serious scholarship.

Lastly, each book addresses a specialized audience of Slavists and comparativists and demands a committed reader. That reader will be amply rewarded: an abundant yield of satisfying discoveries about the esoteric tradition and Bestuzhev-Marlinski, and a profoundly enriched understanding of Russian Romanticism.

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This lively, thoroughly-researched book brings an important perspective to Gogol's studies by focusing at length on the writer's use of Baroque themes and techniques. Although Shapiro is far from the first to study aspects of this topic, his book is the most detailed and systematic treatment of this major subject to date.

Shapiro argues that Gogol was surrounded by the Baroque from womb to tomb. Interest in the Baroque was kindled in his native Ukraine, where the puppet theater (the *verstep*), the folk-art broadsheet (the *lubok*), and a string of major writers from Stefan Lavrisski to Grigorii Skovoroda had been strongly influenced by the Baroque aesthetic; this interest was broadened during Gogol's prolonged stay in Rome.

One of the many strengths of Shapiro's book is its extensive use of the textbooks and anthologies which Gogol had studied at the Nezhin Gymnasium. Through these textbooks (especially Nikol'skii's *Foundations of Russian Philology* and Tolmachev's *Rules of Philology*), Gogol became familiar with the threefold aesthetic that the Baroque had inherited from antiquity: *docere, movere, et delaire* ("to instruct, to move, and to amuse," p. 14). Indeed, Shapiro argues, the Baroque provided a "lens" through which Gogol could view and absorb two millennia of European culture, from classical rhetoric and medieval religiosity through Renaissance humanism.
Shapiro devotes some very interesting pages to the influence of the *vertep* on Gogol's work, noting, for example, the likely origin of the 700-pound Taras Bulba in the *vertep* Cossack, with his heroic belligerence and superhuman appetite. As Shapiro argues, many characters in early Gogol borrow features from stock characters mocked in the *vertep* (e.g., hussars, Poles, Jews, gypsies, and devils). But Gogol went on to strive for a more psychological, deeper portrait of his characters and thus went far beyond the crude stereotypes of the *vertep* in creating the most important "leitmotif" of his later works — the corruption of the human soul.

When Gogol was growing up, the *lubok* was extremely popular in Ukraine. In one of his most interesting sections, Shapiro argues that this genre strongly influenced Gogol's satire on human weaknesses and follies. Shapiro states that links to the *lubok* are reflected in the plots of many of Gogol's most famous works, including "The Nose," *Marriage*, "The Coach" and even *Dead Souls*. Shapiro suggests that Gogol borrowed the *lubok's* "turnover technique" (which created a major change in a picture when it was turned upside down) in *Dead Souls*, where Chichikov "at one moment seems to the town bureaucrats a true millionaire and then a forger of banknotes, at one moment Napoleon and then Captain Kopeikin..." (p. 234) As Shapiro argues, this technique emphasized "the multifacetedness of experience"; in borrowing it, Gogol forced the reader "to seek the complex meaning beyond the superficial veneer of characters and events." (p. 234)

Chapter 2 ends with a discussion of the important impact of the emblem on Gogol's work. The emblem (which usually combined a short motto, a picture, and a prose or verse citation) thrived in Ukraine from the seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries and played an important role in the writings of Simeon Polotskii, Grigorii Skovoroda, and others. Emblem books became important in Russia, as well, from Peter I's publication of *Symbolica et Emblemata*, which became the source of much later emblem literature in Russia (like Maksimovich-Ambodik's famous 1788 collection, which Gogol probably knew).

Shapiro argues that Gogol endowed the emblem (which had degenerated into a cliché by the nineteenth century) with new vitality. He mentions that Chichikov in *Dead Souls* repeatedly likens his life to a ship in a stormy sea or a shipwreck — comments that probably have their origin in the emblem book. As Shapiro notes, "this shipwreck emblem, repeated so frequently throughout *Dead Souls*, is clearly Chichikov's *impressa* (an emblem worn as a badge that expressed personal aim or ambition), which [he] uses to gain the sympathy of the other characters." Shapiro notes that Gogol's originality lies in his ironic use of the emblem for self-characterization of a protagonist; thus, for example, Gogol uses the emblem "to build up the reader's perception of [Chichikov's] *poshlost*," and "Chichikov emerges as a rogue who was punished according to his just deserts and not as the unjustly persecuted victim he would like to appear*" (p. 111).

Chapter 3 examines the role of Baroque (rhetorical commonplaces) in Gogol's works. Shapiro shows that several frequent Baroque *topoi* play an important role in Gogol, including *theatrum mundi* (the idea of man as an actor on the stage of life, embodied in Khlestakov, Chichikov, the Significant Personage, and others) and the brevity of existence (with its famous variant *memento mori* — the need to "remember death" and think of saving one's soul). He argues that Gogol's characters reduce these *topoi* to cliché and to *poshlost*. As the narrator of *Dead Souls* notes sarcastically about two merchants discussing the *topos* of the end of the world, "they chattered about Antichrist on the way to the tavern for their tea." (p. 173)

Chapter 4 deals with Gogol's use of a number of rhetorical devices and figures of the Baroque period, especially anaphora (the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of