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## Laurence Sterne's 'Noseology' and the Making of Gogol's *The Nose*

### Abstract

It has become a tradition to use the succession of Gogol's short novel *The Nose* from Laurence Sterne's *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* as a key to its interpretation, and to identify its kinship to the 'noseology' in 1820s' and 1830s' Russian literature and the peculiar type of Russian Sternianism, which originated as a result of the novel's reception in Russia. In this research perspective, set originally by V. V. Vinogradov, so much work has been completed that its potential seems to have been exhausted. Nevertheless, certain vagueness and several logical gaps have been identified in the established visions about Sterne's influence on Gogol. The task of the present study is to bridge these inadequacies and to clarify the mechanisms that helped transform Sterne's 'noseology' into the puzzling world of Gogol's *The Nose*.

The examination conducted in this paper demonstrates that the essential link between the whimsical logic of Gogol's short novel, and especially the paradoxical substantiation of the theme of the nose in it, on the one hand, and Sterne's novel *Tristram Shandy*, on the other, is manifested as re-actualization of an entire network of motifs that were established by the source novel and were reproduced in specific ways both in *The Nose* and in Gogol's other works. As a result of this process, strange associative groupings that seem to have been deprived of meaning were set firmly as fixed configurations. A characteristic of the specific mechanism manifested in Gogol's autotextuality is the fact that the cluster of interconnected images and notions issuing from Sterne's novel was repeated again by means of varying combinations of elements. Each of these single derivative substantiations is incomplete with regard to the paradigm, and though inexhaustible and scattered throughout various texts by Gogol, they still remain recognizable parts of a common constellation, whose prototype was created by Sterne.

**Keywords:** Gogol; Lawrence Sterne; 'noseology'; intertextuality.

### ‘Носологията’ на Лорънс Сърн и направата на Гоголевия *Нос* Резюме

По традиция, като ключ към интерпретацията на повестта *Нос* на Николай Гогол се извежда приемствеността ѝ от *Животът и мненията на Тристрам Шанди, джентълмен* на Лорънс Сърн, както и родството ѝ с ‘носологията’ в руската литература от 20-те и 30-те години на XIX век и своеобразното руско ‘стернианство’, производни от рецепцията на романа в Русия. В тази изследователска перспектива, зададена първоначално от В. В. Виноградов, е работено толкова много, че възможностите ѝ изглеждат изчерпани. Въпреки това, в установените виждания за влиянието, което Сърн упражнява върху Гогол, присъстват известни неясноти и логически процепи. Задачата на настоящото изследване е да запълни тези непълноти и да изясни механизмите, по които ‘носологията’ на Сърн е била преобразувана в загадъчния свят на Гоголевия *Нос*.

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Проведените в статията наблюдения показват, че същностната връзка между причудливата логика в повестта на Гогол и в частност парадоксалната конкретизация на темата за носа в нея, от една страна, и романа на Стърн *Тристрам Шанди*, от друга, се проявява като реактуализиране на цялостна мотивна мрежа, зададена от източника, и възпроизведена по специфични начини както в конкретната повест на Гогол, така и в други негови произведения, при което като устойчиви конфигурации се закрепват странни, привидно лишени от смисъл асоциативни групирания. Характерно за специфичния механизъм, проявен в автотекстуалността на Гогол, е че снопът от взаимосвързани образи и представи, излъчен от романа на Стърн, се преповтаря чрез вариращи комбинации от елементи. Всяка от производните единични конкретизации е непълна по отношение на парадигмата, но дори и в тази си неизчерпателност и разпръснатост из различни текстове на Гогол, те все пак остават като безпогрешно разпознаваеми участници в една обща констелация, чийто прототип е дело на Стърн.

**Ключови думи:** Гогол; Лорънс Стърн; ‘носология’; интертекстуалност.

Traditionally, Laurence Sterne’s novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* is registered in a privileged position as the source of influence for the interpretation of the famous St. Petersburg novella of Gogol *The Nose*. Alongside with *Tristram Shandy* criticism has established the succession of this work out of a broad range of texts in the Russian and from there in the Western European ‘noseology’. This instituted research perspective, originally laid out by V. V. Vinogradov<sup>2</sup>, has been explored so much that its potential seems exhausted. Nevertheless, in the established concepts for the kinship between Gogol and Sterne there are certain obscurities and logical clefts, which although lightmindedly assigned to the creative wilfulness of Gogol himself, will remain credited to the account of the critics, while provoking the desire to revise them. The aim of this present consecutive attempt on the correlation capacity of Gogol’s novella and Sterne’s novel is to complete some of the imperfections by orienting its interpretation more specifically in the perspective of its succession from the ‘noseology’ of Sterne. At the same time Gogol’s concretization of Sterne’s ‘noseology’ will be read within the system of the natural predilection of the Russian author to it, as witnessed in his works *The Tale of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarrelled with Ivan Nikiforovich (The Squabble)* (1833), *Nevsky Prospekt* (1833-1834), and especially *Diary of a Madman* (1935).

Although these are common grounds in the research on Gogol’s *The Nose*, the relations between this novella and Laurence Sterne’s novel continue to be reduced solely to a readily repeated, logically built yet simplifying scheme. The principal arguments in it are the series of present internal and external factors for the accomplishment of the influence. Among these the translation of *Tristram Shandy* during the period 1804 to 1807 is pointed out; the great popularity of the English author in Russia during the 19<sup>th</sup> century is also taken into account, as well as the available multiple imitations of Sterne composed by Russian authors as additional evidence for his active creative reception. To

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<sup>2</sup> Виноградов, В. В. Натуралистический гротеск. Сюжет и композиция повести Гоголя „Нос”. Във: В. В. Виноградов. *Избранные труды. Поэтика русской литературы*. Москва: Издательство „Наука”, 1976, сс. 5-44). [Vinogradov V. V. Naturalistic Grotesque. Plot and Composition of Gogol’s Tale *The Nose*. In: V. V. Vinogradov. *Selected Works. The Poetics of Russian Literature*. Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1976].

these factors is also added the broadly unfolded ‘noseology’ in the Russian literature of the same period and the kindred, appearing parallel to it, ‘Sterneism’, identified not only decades later by the Russian formalists Shklovsky and Eichenbaum, but also in synchronicity with the literary phenomena that represent it.<sup>3</sup>

Other components of the so constructed research scheme are the recognition of specific internal factors (which are, for instance, the current strong interest in noseplastics in Russia at that specific historical moment or in anecdotes and phraseological expressions acting out the theme of the nose). The direct influence of Sterne on the work of Gogol is likewise included, analysed likewise in relationship with other personal literary preferences.<sup>4</sup> Specially focused on the kinship between Gogol and Sterne is a more recent article by Neil Stewart,<sup>5</sup> where *The Nose* is interpreted in comparison with *Slawkenbergius’s Tale* from *Tristram Shandy* but the comparative analysis subordinate rather to the contrastive juxtaposition, has been harnessed basically to narratological and more general ideological purposes in such a way that the content correlations remain at the background.

The thesis this consecutive comparativist attempt on *The Nose* and *Tristram Shandy* shall try to substantiate is that Gogol’s novella leads to the noseology of Sterne in a significantly deeper and sophisticated way herewith not simply the theme itself is reproduced but the complete motif network also, set out by the novel *Tristram Shandy*.<sup>6</sup> Thus the topic of the nose in Gogol shall be analysed in its complex relation with a number of content elements, seemingly foreign and unrelated to it, such as, for instance, finding the nose inside a bread roll, wrapping it in a rag, the specific role attributed to the barber, the visit of the nose to the Kazan Cathedral<sup>7</sup> and the like, all these emblematic signs in the alogical universe of Gogol, that also provide an opportunity of being identified as peculiar borrowings from Sterne.

It is beyond any doubt that the principal model for *The Nose* is the famous inserted tale of Slawkenbergius from *Tristram Shandy*. Sterne offers a model ‘noseological’ tale. In an outspoken disparity with the title, this tale, as is well known, is in fact not about the Slawkenbergius in the title,

<sup>3</sup> According to a piece of evidence not fully reliable, quoted by Vasilii Maslov, Pushkin himself named Gogol ‘The Russian Sterne’ (Маслов, Виктор. Интерес к Стерну в русской литературы XVIII-го до начала XIX-го века. В: *Историко-литературный сборник, посвященный В.И. Срезневскому*. Ленинград: Академия наук, 1924. [Maslov, Vasilii. The Interest in Sterne in the Russian Literature from the 18<sup>th</sup> till the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In: Historical-Literary Collection Dedicated to V. I. Sreznevskii. Leningrad: Academy of Science, 1924:371, quoted by Stewart 2001: Stewart, Neil. Notes on Noses. Laurence Sterne and Nikolai Gogol. Arcadia, Band 36, Heft 1, s.144].

<sup>4</sup> These are the principal directions as set out in the quoted study of V. Vinogradov.

<sup>5</sup> Stewart, Neil. *Notes on Noses. Laurence Sterne and Nikolai Gogol*. Arcadia, 2001, Band 36, Heft 1, p.143-155.

<sup>6</sup> The term **motif network** (мотивна мрежа) has been borrowed from Radosvet Kolarov’s study *Repetition and Creation: the Poetics of Autotextuality*. See: Коларов, Радосвет. *Повторение и сътворение: поетика на автотекстуалността*. София: Народна просвета, 2010 [Kolarov 2009: Kolarov, Radosvet. *Repetition and Creation; the Poetics of Autotextuality*. Sofia: Narodna Prosveta, 2010].

<sup>7</sup> In the English translations, the Kazan Cathedral is rendered either as Gostiny Dvor or as the Grand Bazar as they obviously use the censored edition.

but about a certain Diego, a stranger with an incredibly large nose whose brief visit to Strasbourg provoked a phenomenal excitement and confusion among the people in the city which in the final analysis lead to its capture by the French. Sterne presented the tale as ‘a treatise by Hafen Slawkenbergius’ and himself as ‘the translator’. Respectively, the text is rendered in parallel versions in English and Latin, whereupon the size of the translation exceeds by far the size of the original (only the opening of the original is included, complemented by separate details and free interpretations). The canvas of the story is only alluded – Diego is travelling to his beloved Julia and only the plan of the last, missing part of the tale, bespeaks of their meeting. The incomplete tale, named as the ninth ‘in all my ten tales, in all my ten decades’ of the tales of Slawkenbergius, factually ends with a reference to the ‘tenth of the tenth decade’ that should tell of the desired meeting of the hero with his beloved woman. In conformity with the logics of the circumstances set forth so far, that chapter is ambiguously titled *The Intricacies of Diego and Julia*. Regardless of the artistically tangled speculations of the narrator concerning the appropriate interpretation of the obscurities related to the named intricacy, the allusion is sufficiently transparent. Otherwise the principle plot thickens around the nature of the gigantic nose which turns out to be the basic independently manifesting itself figure in the story. The citizens of Strasbourg are divided in their opinion whether it is real or artificial, and for many the ambition to touch it and thus resolve the dilemma becomes a matter of life and death.

It is easy to perceive that the story scheme of Gogol’s *Nose* is directly correlated to the story told by Sterne. In addition to the leading moment with the personification of the nose, the parallel with the oscillation concerning its nature and the oscillation in identifying it as live or dead, as natural or artificial, which is present in both literary works, is imperative. Nevertheless, however, confining the observations on the succession between *The Nose* and *Tristram Shandy* solely to the narrative of *Slawkenbergius’s Tale* is inappropriate since the topic of the nose around which the inserted tale is organized, is the leading topic in the whole novel of Sterne. Moreover its implementation is in a regime of specially marked priority. While ‘justifying’ his imperative commitment to the topic of the nose, Sterne bases his arguments on the arguments of his frantically philosophizing character, Walter Shandy, Tristram’s father, one of whose maniac convictions is also that the shape and the size of the nose, alongside with the name and the upbringing are the most important factors determining the destiny of a particular person. Following the logic of his theory the misfortunes of his son Tristram ensue mostly from the circumstance that during the delivery the doctor crushed the nose of the newly born with his forceps, and subsequently the child received by mistake the most unfavourable possibly for his development name.

Although in the course of the chapter of his novel specially dedicated to the noses Sterne emphatically declares that under the word ‘nose’ he means just “a nose, and nothing more, or less”<sup>8</sup> which has misled even Vinogradov to adopt this assertion literally and seriously, which in turn has given him good reasons to consider that Gogol has proceeded ‘contrariwise’ attributing dual meaning<sup>9</sup> to the nose, practically in *Tristram Shandy* the nose is accompanied by graphic sexual connotations and its traditional symbolic connection with the male reproductive organ is reconfirmed and is contextually elaborated.

A convincing proof of the validity of this notional correlation is the specially marked role of the noses in the history of the Shandy family. The narrator provides evidence to the fact that Tristram’s great-grandfather was encumbered in convincing his future wife marry him because his nose was too small. This nose, however, compared to ‘an ace of clubs’, turns out to be only the beginning of a catastrophically unfavourable trend, since it was longer than the nose of Tristram’s grandfather, and his nose, in its turn was longer than the nose of Tristram’s father. And as a logical final of this line of degradation shaped in such a way, Tristram himself, the next representative of the clan turned out to be completely deprived of a nose. A characteristic detail that supports the notional correlation implicitly present in this tale is the portentous specification of the narrator on the occasion of the unfortunate delivery of Tristram, namely, that the technique applied by the feckless doctor damaging his nose, could have had, in case the forceps was applied to his head and not to his hip, fatal consequences on ‘his \*\*\*’. Moreover the accident with Tristram’s nose turned out to be a dark omen for a subsequent, even more fatal incident when the window sash fell against the boy and – as it seems altogether – castrated him.

The undersized noses of the men in the Shandy family emblemize the sexual insufficiency of the whole family. It is to this family deficit that the ‘cock and bull story’ refers, as it is manifested in the final scene of the novel (in a very Sternean way not materialized as a story). Although it remains formally untold, the story in question – according to the artful qualification of the narrator, ‘one of the best of its kind’ – in fact is present implicitly in the narrative through a series of allusions, that the men in the family lack not only the ‘nose’, but also the ‘cock’ and the ‘bull’ rudiment. A mark of this inadequacy are the sciatica and the rather advanced age of Walter Shandy due to which by the time his son Tristram was born he could perform his marital duties only one time monthly. And because this periodicity coincides with his regular duty – winding up the wall clock, Walter Shandy for facility’s

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<sup>8</sup> In its concrete articulation, this assertion looks as follows, “... by the word Nose, throughout all this long chapter on noses, and in every other part of my work, where the word Nose occurs – I declare, by that word I mean a nose, and nothing more, or less”. Sterne: Sterne, Laurence. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy Gentleman*. Wordsworth Classics, 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Vinogradov. V. Op. cit., 33.

sake performs them as parallel activities. From here ensues the awkward situation in which the wife, accustomed to the established order of things, asks her husband at the possibly most inappropriate moment if he had not ‘forgot to wind up the clock’. The confusion of ‘animal spirits’ resulting from this awkward situation is specified by the narrator as the principal reason for the erroneous conception and also subsequently for the traumatic delivery of Tristram. A mark of that same insufficiency is also the suspicious battle wound of Uncle Toby and its location and the consequences from it are described in the novel with an imperative ambiguity. In this same order of symbols the shameful episode with the Bull of service of the family which did not justify the entrusted expectations is lined up also. And again in the same thematic line the puzzle with their pedigree mare is presented which to the general disappointment and amazement – in a portentous parallel with the misfortunate delivery of no less a person than Tristram – produced an ugly mule. All these episodes reconfirm the sexual and fertile insufficiency of the Shandy household. Compared to these, *Slawkenbergius’s Tale* appears in a compensatory contrast and the exorbitant nose of Diego respectively appears as a metaphor of a kind of the triumphant vitality.

If the novella of Gogol is read in juxtaposition to this outlined, complete and rich in content complex of Sterne’s novel, a series of moments in it, which on a contractual basis are perceived as deliberately nonsensical, assume logical explanation, while others, which are mostly estimated as peculiarities resulting from the interpretation of the author, turn out to be correlative to the output model.

Thus, ambiguous sexual connotations, concomitant with the absent or later on retrieved nose of Major Kovaloff and have become the occasion for the Freudian interpretation of the novella (carried out in its most extreme doctrinal version by Ivan D. Yermakov)<sup>10</sup>, are presented in a direct dependence with the interpretation of the nose by Sterne. It is through the English author that the succession of Gogol’s novella from the ‘noseology’ of Rabelais is accomplished, kindred to the popular-festive culture. Sterne himself draws his inspiration from a rich series of literary precedents. In the cited chapters dedicated to the noses (III, 35-37) he enumerates some of the best known representatives of the thematic line grafted by himself: Rabelais, Bruscombille, Andreas Scroderus, Prignitz, Erasmus of Rotterdam. With all these authors the discussion on noses and their size masterly juggles with the codes of the corporal symbolics, inherent to the popular-festive culture. The most significant among the precedents is *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, where the nose is the central image, specifically emphasized and correlated to the overall system of images of the material-corporal lower part.

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<sup>10</sup> See Yermakov, Ivan. ‘The Nose’. In: Robert A. Maguire, edit. *Gogol from the Twentieth Century: Eleven Essays*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1921(1974), p. 155-194.

The fantastic and absurd nose in Gogol's novella belongs to the same literary family. As model implementation of the metaphor, Gogol's story engineers the potential opportunity, manifested by each hyperbole of the corporal bulges for a final separation from the body and for its independent life. At a number of moments in the novella the interpretation of the nose follows closely the Rabelaisian model in which the principal characteristics of the popular-festive culture are manifested. In this respect particularly indicative is the episode with the visit of the Nose to the Kazan Cathedral. In the system of the festive culture the nose denotes unequivocally the corporal lower part. Its induction into the temple is equivalent to blasphemy and the reference can be identified with the paradigmatical formulas from *Gargantua and Pantagruel* where the nose is introduced to all sorts of sacral texts. An argument supporting such thesis is also the moment with which the specific episode is connected, as well the whole story – one of the greatest Christian holidays, Annunciation, which is at the same time also time for carnival *par excellence*, since it always occurs during the period of the Great Lent.<sup>11</sup> The fixation of the end of the story as 7 April also leads us to the ambivalence of the carnival language – a date which in the Julian Calendar, used in Russia, is in fact equivalent to 25 March in the Gregorian Calendar.<sup>12</sup> Again, finding the nose in a loaf of bread in the language of the carnival can easily be deciphered as outspoken travesty of the Eucharist.<sup>13</sup>

The details that are subject to additional rationalization by correlating Gogol's text to the novel of Sterne are several. Let us begin with the characteristic contrast on which the intrigue of the novella is built – the inexplicable **presence** of the nose in the loaf of bread of the barber is in parallel with its just as inexplicable **absence** from the face of Major Kovaloff. This compensatory symmetry is in fact implanted in Sterne's novel where, as it was mentioned before, the corporal excess triumphant on the face of Diego is a functional substitute of the awkward shortage in the Shandy family. It is again to Sterne that the persistent likening to **a pancake** of the smooth surface left on the face of Kovaloff after the disappearance of his nose leads us. If this comparison had appeared only once, it could have been ignored but it is repeated and this is a reliable signal it is not accidental. It is even less of an accident that the same comparison is present also in *Tristram Shandy*, besides it appears right during the

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<sup>11</sup> The carnivalizing effect of the calendar can be observed also in Gogol's *Diary of a Madman*, where the last episodes located in Spain and structured in correspondence with the carnival logic are dated 30 and 34 February – non-existing dates which are guaranteed to be related to the period of the Great Lent and respectively of the carnival.

<sup>12</sup> This detail has been marked by Thomas Seifrid. See Seifrid, Thomas. Suspicion toward Narrative: *The Nose* and the Problem of Autonomy in Gogol's 'Nos'. *The Russian Review*, vol. 52, July 1993, p. 382.

<sup>13</sup> Aleksey Dunaev prompts such an interpretation. See: Дунаев А. Г. *Гоголь как духовный писатель (Опыт нового прочтения "Петербургских повестей")*. Искусствознание, №1, 1998, с. 391-427. [Dunaev, A. 'Gogol as Spiritual Writer (An Attempt of Rereading *St. Petersburg Tales*)'. *Isskustvoznanie*, No. 1, 1998, p. 401].

description of the smashed nose of the newly born Tristram.<sup>14</sup> It is necessary to specify that while in English ‘flat as a pancake’ is a phraseological expression, in Russian there is an actual choice of a term for the comparison. The yet again steady reference to the heat boil on the nose of Kovaloff speaks also for the connection with the precedent, reproducing a detail from *Slawkenbergius’s Tale* where exactly a pimple on the nose of Diego is an argument in support of the thesis that the case in point is a real nose.

Again, in a correlation with Sterne’s novel an explanation may be given for the ambiguous connection between the vanished nose and the barber present in Gogol’s novella. It is appropriate to remember here that in the work of the Russian author such connections are not isolated. As Vinogradov appropriately reminds us, already in the short story *The Night before Christmas* [*Christmas Eve*] the storm pinching the character’s nose is imagined as a barber who tyrannically is seizing his victim by the nose.<sup>15</sup> In one of the most impressive examples of the private ‘noseology’ of Gogol, the episode from *Nevsky Prospect* where Hoffman is about to cut off Schiller’s nose, the shoemaker Hoffman is imagined rather as a barber.<sup>16</sup>

At first sight in this point there is as if no connection to *Tristram Shandy*, since the barber seems to be absent from Sterne’s ‘nose paradigm’, but in fact he is presented as Gogol’s substitute of the man-midwife Dr. Slop. In the literary semantics that accompanies his figure, the barber represents a holder of medical authorities which is confirmed in *The Nose* by the no fortuitous emphasis on the inscription on Ivan Yakovlevich’s firm sign ‘Also, Blood Let Here’.

And again the characteristic rag mentioned several times as an element of the frustrated handling of the found nose by the barber Ivan Yakovlevich takes us back to Sterne’s novel (“I’ll wrap it in a rag, in some corner...”; “...wrapped the nose in a rag...”; “...to rid himself of the nose [in the rag], and return quietly...” etc.).<sup>17</sup> In *Tristram Shandy* after the misfortune with Tristram’s nose the man-midwife tried to make a false bridge [prosthesis] using a **piece of cotton** and a thin piece of whalebone out of the maid’s stays (III, 28). What is more interesting and more important in this

<sup>14</sup> “... he has crushed his nose, Susannah said, **as flat as a pancake** to his face” (III, 27 – STERNE 1996:147) Cf. in Gogol, “... a surface **absolutely smooth, just like a freshly baked blini** [pancakes]”; “...the wound could not have healed so soon and be **as smooth as a blin** [pancake].” (Italics mine, C. P.).

<sup>15</sup> Vinogradov, V. Op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Here is the moment in question reminding us of a scene at the barber’s, “Schiller was drunk; he **sat on a chair** stamping his foot and heatedly making some point. None of this would have seemed particularly strange to Pirogov, had it not been for the extraordinary disposition of the figures. Schiller was seated, **with his head held high, while Hoffmann had seized this nose with two fingers and was wielding the blade of his shoemaker’s knife in close proximity to his skin.**” (Italics mine, C. P.).

<sup>17</sup> The stability of the associative binding of the nose and the cotton rag is witnessed by the dedication, inscribed by Gogol in the album of E. G. Chertkova, where in the context of a playful comparison of the relations between the writer and the lady in question to the relations between their noses, there are contemplations to the effect that the nose, instead of standing in the middle of the face, could have been carried around in a pocket wrapped in a handkerchief. See Yermakov 1921 (1974): 163-165.



comparison, so far overlooked, is that the wrapping in a rag flawlessly arouses the association with swaddling or delivery. This associative move deserves special attention, since in Gogol the nose is actually in a content connection with the figure of the midwife even though this is indirect. A characteristic example demonstrating the identification of the figures of the barber and the midwife is a fragment from *Diary of a Madman* where they are imagined by the main character as demonic collaborators.<sup>18</sup> Again, the implications contained in the obtrusive reproach of the badly smelling hands of the barber in the novella *The Nose* are also along these lines. Identical is the meaning of the stable parallels of the micro-plot of the removal (or the threat of removal) of the nose and the presence of a dog as an infernal sign (for instance, in *The Nose* and in the *Diary of a Madman*, with the presence of a paradigmatical black poodle in *The Nose* at that).

In this seemingly completely reproduced Sternean paradigm by Gogol where the nose is present by default accompanied by the ideas of delivery, sexuality and carnivalization, or – on another level, – with the images of cotton rags and pancakes, the absence of a significant content component is disturbing – a component that in *Tristram Shandy* is presented in a logical and emphatic binding with the nose. This component is the clock and its periodic winding up by Tristram's father and in it the narrator reveals the reason for the misfortunate drama with Tristram's nose. In the novella *The Nose* such a moment is absent. The careful inspection, however, indicates that the incompleteness of the paradigm is only a seeming one, because the theme of the 'irregular' nose in Gogol, too, is accompanied invariably by reference to some anomalies in the recording of the time. A detail which has been given some attention but has been also interpreted basically in the light of the grotesquely uncoordinated world of Gogol is the puzzling indication 'from eight o'clock to three [in the morning]' which the 'noseless' Kovaloff reads in the advertisement of old shoe soles. In the *Diary of a Madman* Poprishchin consecutively imagines foreign superiority in the terms of possession and in this the clock and the nose are presented in an absolutely equivalent role as signs of privileged position.<sup>19</sup> There again, his anachronic dates appear parallel to the obsession of the character with noses.<sup>20</sup> Although

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<sup>18</sup> See the entry on '86 Marchember': "That is all ambition, and the reason is that there is under the tongue a little blister in which there is a little worm of the size of a pin's head. And this is constructed by a barber [...] I don't remember his name at the moment, but so much is certain that, in conjunction with a midwife, he wants to spread Mohammedanism all over the world, and that in consequence of this a large number of people in France have already adopted the faith of Islam..."

<sup>19</sup> "His chamberlain's office will not procure him [...] Neither is his nose made of gold; it is just like mine or anyone else's nose. He does not eat and cough, but smells and sneezes with it." Then, "Our chief clerk has gone mad. [...] A councillor! What sort of important animal is that? He wears a gold chain with his watch, buys himself boots at thirty roubles a pair; may the deuce take him!"

<sup>20</sup> The entries on '30 February' and '34 February' contain respectively the famous moon panorama with the noses and the confidential information about the wart under the nose of the Bey of Algiers [in the Russian original it is the *Dey* of Algiers]. Analogical is the case with the entry of 'January in the same year, following after February' where the allusion of some hyperbolic, anomalous nose is present, 'All the world knows that France sneezes when England takes a pinch of snuff.'

more discretely than in Sterne, in Gogol also the disobedient nose and the disobedient clocks are presented with an identical generating meaning function.

The observations conducted so far demonstrate that the interpretation of the theme of the nose in Gogol is in a deep and natural connection with Sterne's novel *Tristram Shandy*. This connection consists in the re-upgrading of a complete motif network, as set by the source and reproduced by specific ways both in the novella discussed, and in other work of Gogol, and in the process odd, seemingly devoid of meaning associative groupings become stabilized. A particularly curious moment in the specific mechanism demonstrated in the creative memory of the writer is that the sheaf of interconnected images and notions radiated by Sterne's novel is reiterated through varying combinations of elements. Each of these single concretizations is incomplete in terms of the paradigm, however, even though they are incomprehensive and only partially concurring, dispersed in various texts of Gogol at that, remaining as infallibly recognizable participants in a common constellation. There are images present in it that have been deliberately ignored in favour of focusing on the novella *The Nose*.

Such is for instance the case with the moon, which in *Tristram Shandy* is an important component of the universe of 'hobby-horses', populated by noses, cotton rags, unreliable clocks and ill-natured incompetent man-midwives. Actually, the whole novel has been dedicated to the moon, that beloved muse of Sterne.<sup>21</sup> The interconnectedness between the noses and the moon will be manifested in a much more intensive form in Gogol in the famous fragment from *Diary of a Madman* (30 February):

“But I feel much annoyed by an event which is about to take place tomorrow; at seven o'clock the earth is going to sit on the moon. This is foretold by the famous English chemist, Wellington. To tell the truth, I often felt uneasy when I thought of the excessive brittleness and fragility of the moon. The moon is generally repaired in Hamburg, and very imperfectly. [I am surprised England pays no attention to that.] It is done by a lame cooper, an obvious blockhead who has no idea how to do it. He took waxed thread and olive-oil – hence that pungent smell over all the earth which compels people to hold their noses. And this makes the moon so fragile that no men can live on it, but only noses. Therefore we cannot see our noses, because they are on the moon. When I now pictured to myself how the earth, that massive body, would crush our noses to dust, if it sat on the moon, I became so uneasy...”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> “Be pleased, my good Lord, to order the sum to be paid into the hands of Mr. Dodsley, for the benefit of the author; and in the next edition care shall be taken that this chapter be expunged, and your Lordship's titles, distinctions, arms, and good actions, be placed at the front of the preceding chapter: All which, from the words, *De gustibus non est disputandum*, and whatever else in this book relates to Hobby-Horses, but no more, shall stand dedicated to your Lordship. – **The rest I dedicate to the Moon**, who, by the bye, of all the Patrons or Matrons I can think of, has most power to set my book a-going, and make the world run mad after it.” (*Tristram Shandy*, 1, IX).

<sup>22</sup> Actually, in this case Gogol is directly indebted to *Cyrano de Bergerac* via Senkovsky (See. Dunaev. Op. cit., 398-400). But Bergerac belongs to the same “noseological tradition” that brings together authors such as Rabelais, Sterne, Carlo Goldoni with his *Pinocchio*, et al.

The observations conducted here demonstrate sufficiently convincingly that the succession between Tristram Shandy and the work of Gogol is significantly more fundamental than what has been accepted currently. The opportunity of establishing this succession is premised by recruiting also other works of Gogol in the comparative procedures, in addition to the traditionally used as illustration novella *The Nose*, but also – and this is even more important – by researching the intertextual binding of not simply independent images, but the complete motif network which, once adopted, turns into a leafing generating model for the creative memory of Gogol.