

BULGAKOV AND CERVANTES

There are several reasons why it is a worthwhile exercise to examine the relationship between Bulgakov's works and those of Cervantes. In the first place, Bulgakov himself was intimately acquainted with Cervantes's *Don Quixote*: in connexion with a commission from the Vakhtangov Theatre, Moscow, in December 1937, Bulgakov learnt Spanish, studied Cervantes's work at least partly in the original, and produced his own free dramatization *Don Kikhot*, mainly over the summer of 1938, his final text being dated 18 December 1938.¹ Secondly, Cervantes's *Don Quixote* is one of the three great works of literature explicitly referred to in *Master i Margarita*, when Korov'yev, outside Griboyedov House, the headquarters of the Moscow Writers' Organization, is ironically thrilled to think that 'at this very moment there is maturing in that house the future author of a *Don Quixote* or a *Faust* or, who knows, a *Dead Souls*'.² As Leatherbarrow has pointed out:

It is almost as though Bulgakov wishes to align his own novel with the works mentioned, for *Master i Margarita* shares a common theme with the three titles singled out by Korov'ev: that of the struggle between creativity and mediocrity, between the grandeur of man's restless, searching urge to transcend the limitations of the commonplace and what Gogol called 'the mire of pettiness' which seeks to anchor him firmly to the world of the here and now.³

A third reason for the present investigation is that it has not been undertaken hitherto. Though studies exist of Bulgakov and Goethe, Gogol', Dostoyevsky, and H. G. Wells, nothing comparable has yet been written on Bulgakov and Cervantes.⁴ Similarly, little or no reference is made to Cervantes in the works of scholars who have specifically investigated the literary sources of *Master i Margarita*.⁵ The purpose of this article, therefore, is to fill this gap and in particular to consider questions like the following. Is Bulgakov's *Don Kikhot* not merely a dramatization but an original and personal work? To what extent, if any, is Bulgakov's novel directly influenced by *Don Quixote*, in the way that it is clearly influenced, for example, by *Faust*?

Of the many interpretations of *Don Quixote* which have been put forward since it was first published, Part I in 1605 and Part II in 1615, three in particular might be expected to appeal to Bulgakov — the comic satirist whose works contain a strong

¹ 'Neizdannyye stseny iz p'esy *Don Kikhot* (Publikatsiya Ye. S. Bulgakovoy)', in *Servantes i vsemirnaya literatura*, edited by N. I. Balatov (Moscow, 1969), pp. 273–77 (pp. 273–74); M. O. Chudakova, 'Arkhiv M.A. Bulgakova: Materialy dlya tvorcheskoy biografii pisatelya', *Zapiski otdela rukopisey, Gosudarstvennaya biblioteka SSSR im. V.I. Lenina*, 37 (1976), 25–151 (p. 134). The play's premiere, which was well received, took place at the Pushkin Theatre in Leningrad on 13 March 1941, a year after Bulgakov's death. For further details on this and subsequent Soviet productions, see A. C. Wright, *Mikhail Bulgakov: Life and Interpretations* (Toronto, 1978), pp. 240–41.

² M. A. Bulgakov, *Romany* (Moscow, 1973), p. 768. Further page-references to this edition of *Master i Margarita* are given after quotations in the text.

³ W. J. Leatherbarrow, 'The Devil and the Creative Visionary in Bulgakov's *Master i Margarita*', *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, 1 (1975), 29–45 (p. 30).

⁴ E. Stenbock-Fermor, 'Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* and Goethe's *Faust*', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 13 (1969), 309–25; M. O. Chudakova, 'Bulgakov i Gogol'', *Russkaya rech'*, 2 (1979), 38–48 and 3 (1979), 55–59; D. Lowe, 'Bulgakov and Dostoevsky: A Tale of Two Ivans', *Russian Literature Triquarterly*, 15 (1978), 253–62; C. Rydel, 'Bulgakov and H. G. Wells', *Russian Literature Triquarterly*, 15 (1978), 293–311. The fullest study to date in English of *Don Kikhot* is by Wright, pp. 238–49.

⁵ See, for example, B. M. Gasparov, 'Iz nablyudeniya nad motivnoy strukturoy romana M.A. Bulgakova *Master i Margarita*', *Slavica Hierosolymitana*, 3 (1978), 198–251; I. F. Belza, 'Genealogiya *Mastera i Margarity*', in *Kontekst — 1978* (Moscow, 1978), pp. 156–248; and N. P. Utekhin, 'Master i Margarita M. Bulgakova (Ob istochnikakh deystvitel'nykh i mnimykh)', *Russkaya literatura*, 4 (1979), 89–109.

strain of Romanticism and, some would say, the ironic relativist who blurs distinctions between good and evil, fantasy and reality. These interpretations may be termed the satirico-comic, the romantic-idealist, and the ambivalent-relativist.⁶

In the satirico-comic interpretation which prevailed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, *Don Quixote* is considered to be a comic epic in which Cervantes ironically ridicules Don Quixote and the once popular genre of romances of chivalry, and parodies his protagonist's lunatic attempts to recreate the fictional experiences of knight-errantry in his own life and age. Don Quixote's acceptance of reality and renunciation of his delusions on his death-bed are the triumph of common sense, reason, and true moral goodness. Cervantes succeeds in his stated aim of provoking laughter, Don Quixote's madness and Sancho Panza's simplicity are comic, and the pair are to be laughed at by the reader.

In the early years of the nineteenth century the German Romantics completely transformed attitudes to *Don Quixote* by interpreting it as a work which directly anticipates the values of Romanticism. In the romantic-idealist interpretation they inspired, *Don Quixote* is seen as an essentially profound, poetic, and philosophical work, whose comedy lies only on the surface. Don Quixote himself is a symbolic, universal idealist, a heroic altruist; his aims are sublime though the means he employs to further them might be absurd. His madness is only external, as his inner spiritual life and values are sound. Typically, for Schelling Cervantes is 'a philosopher-poet treating through the symbolism of the hero's adventures the universal struggle of the Ideal and Real' (Close, p. 35). Don Quixote is a tragic hero whose noble idealism and creative imagination are frustrated by an uncomprehending society, and his death is the last sad act of his tragedy.

In the ambivalent-relativist interpretation, twentieth-century uncertainties and existentialist views are projected onto Cervantes's novel. Cervantes is seen to be the precursor of doubting modern man, unable to accept or discover any absolute truths or values, uncertain of his ability to know or to represent objective reality. His all-embracing irony enables him to remain enigmatically noncommittal. His subjective, self-conscious narrative techniques are a subtle game with artistic illusion which prompts, but does not answer, philosophical questions about the nature of truth and reality. Don Quixote himself creates his own reality, insisting that the values of knight-errantry, derived from imaginative literature, are as valid as any other values.

In Russia, where the first poor translation of *Don Quixote* appeared in 1769, the romantic-idealist approach has generally been preferred to the satirico-comic view. As L. B. Turkevich puts it in her *Cervantes in Russia*: 'It was the conception of him [Don Quixote] as a symbol of the eloquent but impractical dreamer in man that predominated in Russian criticism. The dauntless idealist, ill-suited to the realities of life, the victim of its ironies — this was the figure that awoke a response.'⁷ Turgenev's famous and influential lecture of 1860, *Gamlet i Don Kikhot*, portrayed Don Quixote as a fervent believer in truth and a magnificent self-sacrificing

⁶ Much of what follows is drawn from the excellent survey of Cervantine criticism by A. Close, *The Romantic Approach to 'Don Quixote'* (Cambridge, 1978).

⁷ L. B. Turkevich, *Cervantes in Russia* (Princeton, 1950), p. 223. Other surveys of the influence of Cervantes in Russia include Y. Malkiel, 'Cervantes in Nineteenth-Century Russia', *Comparative Literature*, 3 (1951), 310-29; C. Derjavin, 'La crítica cervantina en Rusia', *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 94 (1929), 215-38; and A. L. Grigor'yev, 'Don Kikhot v russkoy literaturno-publitsisticheskoy traditsii', in *Servantes: Stai' i materialy* (Leningrad, 1948), pp. 13-41.

idealist.⁸ The more recent ambivalent-relativist view has had little chance to flourish in the USSR, where a Marxist sociological approach soon became standard.⁹

There is no need to speculate on Bulgakov's own interpretation of *Don Quixote*, for, as his dramatization makes clear, it is very much in both the Romantic and the Russian traditions.

Bulgakov is reported to have been under no illusions about the difficulty of successfully dramatizing Cervantes's long, rich, and varied work, which is full of incident, characters, and interpolated tales (Wright, pp. 238–39). His dramatization is certainly far more than simply illustrations of selected incidents from *Don Quixote* — much of Bulgakov's play is not taken from Cervantes's text at all.¹⁰

The characters and relationship of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are of course central to Cervantes's novel, and to Bulgakov's play. Though he cuts out many of their adventures and all of Cervantes's interpolated narratives, both of the main characters are allowed to develop and reveal themselves quite fully. Some idea of the extent of Bulgakov's compression of the original can be gained from the fact that of Cervantes's 116 chapters, only twenty-three are in any way reflected in the play. This sort of contraction is only to be expected in a dramatization, as is the compression of different events in the novel into single incidents in the play — for example, Act II, Scene 3, at the inn includes incidents (the whore Maritornes and Quixote's fight with the wine-skins) from two separate visits by Don Quixote in the novel (Part I, 16–17 and 35). Again, such minor changes as Don Quixote's speech on the Golden Age, which is made to goat-herds in the novel (I. 2) but to Sancho in the play, or the merging of two different barbers into one, are clearly indicated by the needs of the dramatization.

Some scenes in the play have only the most tenuous links with Cervantes's text. Thus in Act II, Scene 3, at the inn, none of the conversation between Maritornes, the muleteer, and the innkeeper is in *Don Quixote*, and a large part of the comic scene with Don Quixote's magic balsam belongs to Bulgakov rather than to Cervantes — though with both these scenes it can be argued that Bulgakov is simply expanding, for dramatic and comic reasons, Cervantes's less-detailed narrative. The same cannot be said, however, for the love relationship between Sansón Carrasco and Don Quixote's niece Antonia, which is given considerable prominence in the play (Act III, Scene 5; Act IV, Scene 9) — probably as a contrast to Don Quixote's illusory love for Dulcinea del Toboso — but which is nonexistent in the novel. Similarly, the most farcical scene of the play (in Act III, Scene 5, where Don Quixote tries to introduce the priest, the barber, and Antonia to the mythical characters that they themselves are pretending to be) is entirely the product of Bulgakov's imagination. Such scenes intensify the comedy, and like the expansion of minor roles (the barber, Antonia, Maritornes, the housekeeper), they can be regarded as being motivated by the theatrical needs of the dramatization and as being in keeping with the spirit of Cervantes.

⁸ I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy i pisem v dvadtsati vos'mi tomakh* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1960–68), VIII (1964), 171–92.

⁹ See, for example, P. I. Novitsky, 'Don Kikhot Servantesa: K sotsiologii zhanra i obraza', in *Khitrounnyy idal' go Don Kikhot Lamanshskiy*, translated by B. A. Krzhevsky and A. A. Smirnov (Moscow, Leningrad, 1935), pp. v–xxxvii.

¹⁰ The following text has been used for the purpose of comparison: Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, edited by Martín de Riquer, 2 vols (Barcelona, 1958).

More significant and interesting are changes introduced by Bulgakov into speeches which are otherwise taken from the novel, and the play's final act (Scenes 8 and 9), in which Don Quixote is defeated by Sansón Carrasco in his disguise as the Knight of the White Moon, is forced to return home, and dies. The effect of these changes is to heighten Don Quixote's nobility and sense of vocation, to emphasize the evil in the world about him, and to increase the tragedy of his downfall.

In Act I, Scene 1, when setting forth with Sancho, Don Quixote makes a long speech in which he asserts that he is

born to turn our wretched iron age into a golden age. I am the man to whom are fated great dangers and hardships but also great exploits! . . . Let us go round the world in order to avenge the insults bestowed by the fierce and powerful on the helpless and weak, in order to fight for discredited honour, in order to give the world back that which it has irrevocably lost — justice.¹¹

In Cervantes's text, by contrast, Don Quixote sets out merely in the hope of 'eternal fame and renown' (I. 1). In Bulgakov's play, though not in Cervantes's original, there is a strong suggestion that Don Quixote *wilfully* chooses to ignore mundane reality (that is, he is an idealist rather than a lunatic). Thus when Sancho is insisting on the earthy and rather grimy reality of the peasant girl Aldonza Lorenzo, Don Quixote identifies his fantasy with the imagination of the artist when he says:

Well let my Dulcinea in your eyes be a peasant girl and not a noble lady. The important thing is that for me she is purer, better, and more beautiful than all princesses. . . . I love her, and that means that in my eyes she is as white as a fall of snow, that her forehead is the Elysian fields, and her eyebrows are heavenly rainbows! . . . The poet and the knight sings of and loves not the woman made of flesh and blood, but the one created by his tireless imagination. I love her just as she has appeared to me in my dreams! I love, Sancho, my ideal! (p. 487)

After his defeat by Carrasco, Don Quixote admits that he had known all the time that his opponent was really Carrasco and not the Knight of the White Moon (p. 575).

In Act III, Scene 6, in his argument with the priest at the Duke's court, Don Quixote includes in his defence (which otherwise follows Cervantes closely (II. 32)) the following words from Bulgakov:

Whom have I avenged by going into battles with the giants who have so annoyed you? I have interceded for the weak who have been hurt by the strong! If I have seen evil anywhere I have gone into mortal combat in order to slay the monsters of malice and crime. Don't you see them anywhere? You have bad eyesight, holy father! (p. 549)

The defeat and death of Bulgakov's knight are strikingly different from those of Cervantes's Don Quixote, who is defeated by Carrasco in disguise, promises to return to his village for a year, there falls ill, and on his death-bed regains his sanity and renounces the novels of chivalry. All this is much expanded and adapted by Bulgakov. Before his duel with Carrasco, Don Quixote has a premonition of death. Then, as he lies defeated, he says: 'I cannot admit that there is anything more beautiful in the world than Dulcinea' (p. 566). Frightened by the eyes of the Knight of the White Moon, by his 'cold and cruel gaze', he goes on, in contrast to Cervantes's text: 'I have suddenly begun to think that Dulcinea does not exist at all! No, she does not exist! . . . She does not exist! . . . There is nothing more beautiful

¹¹ M. A. Bulgakov, *Dramy i komedii* (Moscow, 1965), p. 488. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

than she!' (p. 566). Though he now acknowledges that his ideal does not exist, he refuses to admit that Carrasco's flesh-and-blood lady is more beautiful — he prefers to die. It is this sudden loss of faith in the existence of his ideal, combined with his insistence that the nonexistent ideal is more beautiful than the material, which causes his illness and death and his willingness to renounce knight-errantry for ever. In the final scene, as Sancho and Don Quixote return to their village, the armour piled on the back of the horse looks like 'an empty knight with a broken lance' (p. 569). Full of foreboding, Don Quixote compares his life to the sun which is just about to set, and he is terrified because, he says: 'I am meeting my own sunset completely empty, and there is nothing to fill this emptiness with' (p. 571). To the despondent Sancho he explains: 'I am afraid that he [the Knight of the White Moon] has cured my soul, but when he cured it, he took it out and did not replace it with another. He has deprived me of the most precious gift awarded to man — he has deprived me of freedom' (p. 571). Deprived of both his physical freedom (he is to be confined to his village) and his spiritual freedom (to believe in the transcendent ideals of his imagination), Don Quixote feels he is fettered to the earth which will devour him.

His rejection of the ideal world is further underlined when he says to the peasant girl, Aldonza (who, incidentally, never appears in Cervantes's novel, but Bulgakov twice brings her prosaic reality before the audience): 'You are Aldonza Lorenzo, a peasant girl from the next village. You have never been Dulcinea del Toboso; I gave you this name, but it was when my mind was darkened, and I ask your forgiveness for it' (p. 572). Similarly, he now acknowledges the fake knight Carrasco to be 'the best knight of all those we met in the course of our wanderings — but he is a cruel knight' (p. 573). The 'best knight' but 'cruel' — why? Carrasco has revealed his truth to Don Quixote, but it is a bitter and cruel truth: the real is better than the ideal, for the ideal does not exist. All that is left for the disillusioned Don Quixote to do is to welcome death, for it will fill his emptiness and release him from a world devoid of ideals. In his last speech before his death he tells Carrasco to marry Antonia and admits that 'you have a lady, and your lady really is more beautiful than Dulcinea . . . She is alive, your lady' (p. 576).

Despite the comedy and elements of farce, then, Bulgakov's *Don Kikhot* is in the end a sad and pessimistic work, in which a Romantic, noble, idealistic Don Quixote is overwhelmed by the earth and the evil around him which he had set out to overcome.

One result of Bulgakov's gloomy interpretation is that the play acquires considerable relevance to its time. It must be remembered that it was written in 1938, a year when Russia was in the grip of Stalin's terror. In these circumstances, Cervantes's knight who fights, however misguidedly, for the ideals of chivalry, easily becomes a figure of sanity in an insane world. Bulgakov would seem to have selected particularly relevant extracts from Don Quixote's many speeches. In Act I, Scene 2, he tells Sancho of a past Golden Age when men lived happily, simply, and at peace, and lies, falsehood, deceit, and malice were unknown; in Act III, Scene 6, he advises Sancho on the virtues of good government, tells him to observe the law and not to have recourse to arbitrary rule, and urges the need for justice and mercy; he also warns him not to eat or drink lest he should be poisoned by those opposing his governorship. Though taken from Cervantes, such passages acquire an added significance as indirect political comment in their Stalinist context, as do Bulgakov's interpolations

about defending the weak, the evil that abounds in the world, the precious gift of freedom, the overwhelming of ideals, and death as a welcome release.

Another result of Bulgakov's changes is that the play becomes a personal statement, as they enable Bulgakov to identify himself more closely with Don Quixote. By 1938 Bulgakov's literary career finally lay in ruins. Already in 1929 and 1930 he had been reduced to despair after the banning of his plays written in the 1920s; his career in the thirties had been fraught with difficulty; after the banning of *Kabala svyatosh (Mol'er)* in 1936, which consequently ruled out the forthcoming productions of the plays *Ivan Vasil'yevich* and *Posledniye dni (Pushkin)*, he clearly realized that he had no future as a Soviet playwright, and decided to give up writing plays altogether. As he wrote to his friend Veresayev in April 1937: 'My latest attempts to write for the drama theatres were pure Quixotism on my part. And I shall not repeat it. I shall not be around on the drama theatre front any more. I have got experience, I have experienced too much.'¹² By 1938 too, Bulgakov was well aware of the serious deterioration in his health. He saw himself, as a writer, in terms of a knight, battling for his right to artistic freedom, battling for good against evil: a friend wrote that he 'used to dream of literary chivalry';¹³ Sakhnovsky from the Moscow Art Theatre was to pay tribute to Bulgakov at his funeral as a 'genuine knight of art'.¹⁴ It is significant that his Quixote equates the poet with the knight. Similarly, Don Quixote's words to Sancho that storms are inseparably linked with the knight's calling also apply to that of the poet, whose vocation necessarily entails suffering and self-sacrifice. As Bulgakov once remarked: 'It is difficult to be a master. Just think how many of the simplest and sincerest feelings you have to reject in order to become a master, who can overcome even these feelings if necessary' (Yermolinsky, p. 90). Bulgakov's literary knight-errantry at times seemed as frustrating and as tragic for him as was Don Quixote's vocation. Don Quixote's depression and despair when he finds that he has achieved nothing, has been pursuing illusory goals, and is to die empty, can also be seen to some extent as Bulgakov's most pessimistic (if not final) assessment of his own life and achievements as a writer. In the words of the critic Smirnova, Bulgakov has 'put so many of his own thoughts and feelings into the play, he has given so much of himself to his characters . . .'.¹⁵

On a less personal level, the fate of Don Quixote can be seen to parallel that of many other Soviet writers in 1938: at the point of Carrasco's sword Don Quixote is forced to renounce his former beliefs and his vocation. This renunciation could be portrayed on stage either as genuine or as insincere (which would emphasize the parallel), but the effect remains the same. Like Don Quixote the writers were reduced to 'emptiness' and were deprived of their purpose.

In his plays *Kabala svyatosh (Mol'er)* and *Posledniye dni (Pushkin)*, Bulgakov had previously drawn a similar parallel between the literary fates of Molière and Pushkin at the hands of their societies, and, by implication, his own fate and that of other Soviet writers. Yet neither of these plays is as pessimistic as *Don Kikhot*. For both Molière and Pushkin triumph over defeat and death — their fame, ideas, and works live on. Their physical death is insignificant. There is no such suggestion in

¹² L. Milne, 'K biografii M. A. Bulgakova', *Novyy zhurnal*, 111 (1973), 151-74 (p. 162).

¹³ S. Yermolinsky, 'O Mikhaile Bulgakove', *Teatr*, 9 (1966), 79-97 (p. 88).

¹⁴ 'Materialy o M. A. Bulgakove', *Mosty*, 11 (1965), 378-400 (p. 395).

¹⁵ V. Smirnova, 'Mikhail Bulgakov — dramaturg', in *Sovremennyy portret* (Moscow, 1964), pp. 282-332 (p. 331).

Don Kikhot, which must therefore be regarded as Bulgakov's blackest and most hopeless work.

Yet, at the same time as *Don Kikhot* was being written in 1938, Bulgakov was also nearing the end of his work on *Master i Margarita*, his 'last sunset novel' as he described it in a letter to his wife on 14 June 1938, his use of Don Quixote's metaphor being a clear indication that he considered his novel to be his last testament to a world that he knew he was leaving.¹⁶ To the pessimism of *Don Kikhot*, *Master i Margarita* opposes its optimistic assertions that evil can never triumph; that the imagination can create myths and ideals which are just as valid as and more powerful than material reality itself; that 'everything will be as it should be, that is what the world is built on' (p. 797); that spiritual power is mightier than temporal power; that physical death does not matter and is not to be feared. How can the apparently contradictory standpoints in *Don Kikhot* and *Master i Margarita* be reconciled? What is the relationship between Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, Bulgakov's *Don Kikhot*, and *Master i Margarita*?

Bulgakov's dramatization was written in 1938. Though he studied *Don Quixote* carefully while preparing his play, there is no evidence available that he was seriously interested in Cervantes's work, or acquainted with it, much before that date. It is known that by the summer of 1938 most of Bulgakov's work on the essentials of *Master i Margarita* had been completed. The archive drafts of the novel show that Bulgakov began a sixth revision of the whole text of *Master i Margarita* in 1937, that he worked on this systematically in the early months of 1938, finishing it in May, with the text being typed by the end of June. Only at the beginning of July did he seriously resume the work on *Don Kikhot* which he had started briefly in December 1937.¹⁷ To establish specific influence of Cervantes on Bulgakov's novel, therefore, it is necessary to find either evidence of Cervantine changes introduced into *Master i Margarita* after 1938 or evidence of details that are clearly derived from *Don Quixote*. A close comparison of the texts of both novels leads to the conclusion that there is no evidence on either count.

Though Bulgakov continued to introduce changes into his novel almost until his death, the published studies of the drafts mention none that obviously derives from Cervantes. Changes in 1939 include: the appearance of Matthew (instead of a 'dark horseman') to request Voland to grant the Master 'peace'; the release of Pilate by the Master; unspecified revisions of the Epilogue. Even later changes emphasize the undying love of Margarita for the Master, introduce the episode with Professor Kuzmin, and add to the opening of the final chapter words about the suffering, weary man accepting death without regret and with a light heart (Chudakova, 'Tvorcheskaya istoriya', pp. 250–53). As regards details common to both novels, Bulgakov and Cervantes both use the same phrase '*pravdivoye povestvovaniye*' ('*verdadera historia*') when asserting the truthfulness of their narrative.¹⁸ It is possible that Bulgakov here adopts this narrative device from Cervantes, but that is all that can be said.

Though *Don Quixote*, then, exerts little or no influence on *Master i Margarita*, there is a great deal in common between Bulgakov's novel and his Romantic dramatization *Don Kikhot*. Both works consider the relationship between the ideal and the real; both works raise questions about what is real, what is true; both works feature sincere

¹⁶ M. O. Chudakova, 'Tvorcheskaya istoriya romana M. Bulgakova *Master i Margarita*', *Voprosy literatury*, 1 (1976), 218–53 (p. 252).

¹⁷ Chudakova, 'Tvorcheskaya istoriya', pp. 244–49; 'Arkhiv M.A. Bulgakova', p. 134.

¹⁸ This was first noted by Belza, p. 242.

Romantic idealists whose visionary imaginations bring them into conflict with reality and those around them in the world they wish to reshape. Thus, Don Quixote insists that he is a crusading knight-errant and that the earthy Aldonza is the beautiful Dulcinea; Iyeshua insists that 'there are no wicked people in the world' (p. 444) and that 'all power is coercion over men and there will come a time when there will no longer be the power of the Caesars or any other power. Man will come into the kingdom of truth and justice where there will be no need for any power' (p. 447). The Master dedicates himself to a creative search for the truth about Pilate and Iyeshua and acknowledges spiritual values and ideals and the reality of Voland. All three, Don Quixote, Iyeshua, and the Master, are considered mad by less worthy characters who are supposedly sane. All three are betrayed: Don Quixote by Carrasco who refers to himself as a 'coward and deceiver' (p. 574); Iyeshua by Iuda and the cowardice of Pilate; and the Master by Mogarych and critics such as Latunsky. Finally, all three die — but only two, Don Quixote and the Master, die as broken men. It is this last significant fact which explains the precise relationship between *Don Kikhot* and *Master i Margarita*.

The pessimism of *Don Kikhot* is indeed reflected in *Master i Margarita*, in the figure of the Master, whose conception as a fully-developed character was complete by 1938, that is before *Don Kikhot* (Chudakova, 'Tvorcheskaya istoriya', p. 249). Instead of Cervantes's novel influencing *Master i Margarita*, precisely the reverse seems to have happened — Bulgakov's *Master i Margarita* influenced his interpretation of *Don Quixote* as expressed in his dramatization. The character of Don Quixote is much influenced by the character of the Master, who is, as it were, projected onto him. As he appears in the novel, the Master, described by Voland as 'thrice Romantic' (p. 798), is but a pale shadow of his former idealistic self. He has renounced his artistic vocation, given up all hope, and yearns for a release in death. Thus he tells Ivan: 'I do not have a name any more. I have renounced it as I have everything else in life' (p. 553). He assures him that he is incurable. He does not escape from the clinic because 'there is nowhere for me to go' (p. 548). He has lost interest in his novel, has lost his faith in the power of love. He is finally broken by his prison experiences. When, at Margarita's request, he is spirited out of the clinic, he says: 'I am terribly ill . . . I'm terrified, Margot' and 'I am nobody now . . . I am mentally ill' (pp. 701–702). He does not wish to return to his former life because 'It's too late. I don't want anything else in life. Except to see you' (p. 704). He will not continue to write, for 'I no longer have any dreams at all and I also have no inspiration . . . Nothing around me interests me except her . . . they have broken me and life is tedious' (p. 708). The broken, empty Master thus closely parallels Bulgakov's dying Don Quixote, as Margarita emphasizes when she says: 'They have emptied your soul . . . they have maimed and crippled you' (p. 782). Like Don Quixote, he dies without regret.

While Bulgakov had no choice but to end his dramatization with the death of Don Quixote (which in any Romantic interpretation is inevitably tragic and pessimistic), he was bound by no such constraints in his novel. Unlike Don Quixote and the Master, Bulgakov himself does not die in despair and emptiness, but ends his novel and last testament on an optimistic note. The dreams of the Master and Iyeshua are realized, their attempts to create a better reality are successful. Iyeshua is seen in his idealized kingdom of truth and justice, the Master is shown that his created Pilate exists, Pilate and Iyeshua are reconciled. Though the Master has given up the

struggle against evil and does not therefore deserve light, he and Margarita are nevertheless compassionately reunited and granted peace — a reflection of Bulgakov's typically ambivalent attitude to the writer, whose role is so important, but whose personality is often so weak. In this way the pessimism of *Don Quixote* and the Master is put in perspective and becomes part of a more optimistic whole. The difference between Bulgakov and his created characters, whatever their autobiographical basis, is finally emphasized.

The earlier questions can now be answered. The pessimism of *Don Kikhot* does not contradict the greater optimism of *Master i Margarita*, it is absorbed by it. *Master i Margarita* is not influenced by Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, but itself influences Bulgakov's interpretation of Cervantes.

It must be concluded that Bulgakov's interest in Cervantes came too late in his career for it to have any obvious effect upon his own work. Yet Bulgakov's dramatization of *Don Quixote* remains a fascinating example of his ability to reinterpret and transcend his source material and so to create a distinctively personal and topical work. Whether one considers such diverse matters as the Faustian or Gogolian elements in *Master i Margarita*, the presentation of the events of the Civil War in the Ukraine in his earlier novel *Belaya gvardiya*, or the references to the works of H. G. Wells in his science-fiction stories and plays, it can always be seen that Bulgakov subordinates his sources (literary, historical, autobiographical, and topical) to his overriding artistic aims. In his play *Kabala svyatosh (Mol'er)*, for example, in order to draw an effective parallel between the fate of the artist in Louis XIV's France and in Stalin's Russia, Bulgakov radically distorts the known facts of Molière's last years. In this respect, he makes use of Cervantes in substantially the same way as he makes use of the many other literary and non-literary sources elsewhere in his works. It should occasion little surprise, therefore, that his dramatization of *Don Quixote* of 1938 is so quintessentially Bulgakovian, and so significantly determined by *Master i Margarita*, the masterpiece with which he was then principally concerned.

PETER DOYLE

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER