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Introduction. The Polyphonic World of Cervantes and Dostoevsky

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The Polyphonic World of Cervantes and Dostoevsky is the first scholarly attempt to examine Don Quixote from the angle of dialogism and polyphony. Although Mikhail Bakhtin considered Dostoevsky the “creator of a polyphonic novel,” Slav N. Gratchev believes that the first elements of polyphony can be observed in Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*. A preliminary objective will therefore be to articulate—without reducing the role of Dostoevsky in the creation of the polyphonic novel and relying on Bakhtin’s interpretation of polyphony, heteroglossia, and multivoicedness—that the polyphonic structure appeared and evolved to a state of relative maturity centuries before Dostoevsky. This book subsequently explores how and why the polyphonic structure was born within the classic monophonic structure of *Don Quixote*, the ways in which this new structure positioned itself in relation to the classic monophonic one, and what relations it may be said to have established with it resulting in a unique amalgam—the hybrid semi-polyphonic novel. An overarching concern throughout the project will be to trace Cervantes’s search for new and more sophisticated expressive possibilities that the old, monophonic narration could not offer while also shedding light on how Cervantes systematically and deliberately employed polyphonic structure in *Don Quixote*.

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Cover image: “Cervantes writing *The Illustrious Kitchen Maid*”,
courtesy of the Hotel Carlos V in Toledo, Spain

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Introduction

The communication and interrelation between Spanish and Russian literature have lasted for several centuries. At times, the connections grew weaker and at other times stronger, but they never disappeared completely. Throughout this period, which extends roughly from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, there were single instances when the relationship between Spanish and Russian literature was becoming very intense, and we can admit that these interactions were very productive for both sides. The careful study of motives, forms, and all possible aspects of such communication, even if reviewed only in part, can be both revealing and productive for Spanish literary history as well as for Russian.

A historic overview of Spanish-Russian literary relations will give us abundant and interesting material for more concrete literary analysis and for theoretical generalization and conclusions. These materials will show us significant similarities in the process of historical development of two countries that, in spite of being so far apart territorially and culturally, have much in common. In fact, the Spanish-Muslim cultural interrelations in the Middle Ages are in many ways reminiscent of the Mongol Yoke¹ that spread over Russia and lasted for almost three centuries. An understanding of these events then may help us explain later processes that took place in Russia and Spain once Arab and Mongol dominations came to an end, in particular regarding the role of the so-called *exotic color* in the arts, in the transformation of literary genres, etc.

The history of Spanish-Russian literary relations also demonstrates the multiplicity of the form of mediation that both literatures employed as they became acquainted with one another. Because the popularity of the Spanish language developed in Russia relatively late, Spanish literature was known in Russian mainly through translations from French, German, or even English

sources. It must be admitted that the history of Spanish-Russian literary relations has not been studied in depth up to the present day. Many aspects of these connections that are, in my opinion, of great importance for the literature of both countries, and have not yet received significant scholarly attention. This could be one of the possible reasons why the deep and multifaceted influence that was exercised by *Don Quixote* on classical Russian literature of the nineteenth century, and especially on Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot*, has not been studied as extensively as it should have been.

This study will not attempt to exhaust all questions related to this matter, even within the limits of the more particular or specific questions that may arise while the study unfolds. Instead, what it does aim to accomplish is to mark the possible routes that perhaps would lead us toward some generalizations and conclusions. At the very least, this study aims to arouse scholarly interest toward a key topic that has not yet been thoroughly studied: the birth of the *polyphonic* structure in *Don Quixote*, and the profound influence that first *novel of idea*, as I would like to call *Don Quixote*, exercised on its direct descendent—*The Idiot* by Fyodor Dostoevsky—making it possible to think and talk of these two literary artifacts as *twin novels*.

At this point, it may be appropriate to define the key terms that will be used throughout this study: *novel of idea*, *polyphony*, and *heteroglossia*. First of all, it is important to distinguish between the newly proposed term *novel of idea* and the fairly well-known concept of the *novel of ideas*. The latter belongs to the so-called genre of philosophical fiction in which a significant textual space is devoted to discussion of the types of questions that are normally addressed in discursive philosophy: what is the purpose of life, what are the limits of ethics and morals, what is the role of art and reason in the development of knowledge, etc. Conversely, the *novel of idea* belongs strictly to the genre of the polyphonic novel where the *idea* is put to test by the author, and this *idea* assumes the role of a fully fledged subject, not object, and inevitably enters into a continuous dialogue with the main hero, with other ideas, and with the author of the novel. *Heteroglossia* can be defined as a *multi-voicedness* that allows the coexistence and/or the conflict of the variety of voices, the convergence of consciousnesses and/or speeches that inherently belong to completely different social strata; however, all these voices are artistically organized within a single linguistic code. As I will propose and demonstrate here, heteroglossia, by its nature, always tends to modulate into the state of polyphony. Consequently, we can define *polyphony* in literature as a super-complex texture that consists of many (two or more) fully independent voices that are all organized into complete harmony. It must be noted though that only within the polyphonic structure can the *novel of idea* be fully realized, and heteroglossia will play the role of a bridge that will connect traditional monophonic structure with the far more sophisticated

polyphonic one that will become a necessary foundation for the creation of the so-called polyphonic *novel of idea*.

Additionally, a brief overview of the historical context that surrounded *Don Quixote* in Russia could be appropriate and helpful. It is widely accepted, according to Mikhail Alekseev, one of the prominent Russian scholars of Romance literatures and their interactions with Russia, that the “discovery” of *Don Quixote* in Russia can be attributed to Vasily Trediakosky.² He mentions the novel of Cervantes in his monograph dedicated to Russian orthography. Trediakovsky indicated that conversations between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza could be viewed as a model of the *natural* conversation:

Разговору должно быть натуральному, а именно такому, какой был при всех удивительных похождениях между скитающимся рыцарем Донкишотом и стремянным его Саншею Пансою. [The conversation has to be natural; exactly that happened between the knight errant Don Quixote and his squire Sancho Panza]. (qtd. in Alekseev, 63. My translation is throughout the book unless otherwise noted.)

It is very significant that Tredyakovsky talks about “natural conversation,” the phenomenon that will become a focus of my present study. We will attempt to see how and by what specific techniques Cervantes managed to create the highly dialogical unity between the hero and the *idea*. Definitely, there should have been some specific tools, some unknown devices, that Cervantes decided to employ in order to create the desired “unity of answerability” that will “guarantee the inner connection of the constituent elements of the person.”³

To complete the picture of the gradual acquaintance of Russian intellectuals with *Don Quixote*, we must mention Mikhail Lomonosov,⁴ who acquainted himself with the Spanish masterpiece through German literature. He purchased this book (in German) from the Academy of Science’s bookstore in 1761, and *Don Quixote* was in his personal library thereafter. It is unfortunate that history did not preserve for us any of Lomonosov’s reactions to the book. All we know is that Lomonosov, at approximately the same time, decided to study Spanish and, while preparing the first *Grammar of the Russian Language*, called Spanish the most powerful of all European languages, comparable to Russian in its richness of vocabulary and expressive force.⁵ It is possible to conjecture that Lomonosov was one of the very first Russian intellectuals who read *Don Quixote* with a great deal of thinking and scientific curiosity, although he still was using the secondary German translation of the book.

Many years would pass, however, before *Don Quixote* would come to the attention of the general public and gain the place that this book occupies in

Russian literature today. It may be disappointing, but the first translation of *Don Quixote* prepared by a Russian translator only appeared in Russia in 1769, after the deaths of both Lomonosov and Trediakovsky. Even more disappointing is that, for the longest time, we did not even know the name of that translator. The translation, still made from French and not from Spanish, was greatly reduced and amounted to merely a quarter of the original size of the book. Although published in two volumes, that book included only 27 chapters out of the 126 chapters written by Cervantes! To make matters worse, all subsequent series of translations persistently followed the same erroneous route; they were nothing but diligent attempts to translate the great Spanish novel not from its original language but from another translation, in most cases the French.

The question of Cervantes' place in Russia remained open for another half century. The first solid study only appeared in the West in the 1950s. It was the doctoral dissertation of Ludmila Buketoff-Turkevich, defended at Princeton and later expanded into a book, that provided abundant information but, unfortunately, was incomplete and far from accurate. Her work, as was rightfully noted by Yakov Malkiel, was a good "attempt to survey the vogue and influence of Cervantes in Russia"⁶ and perhaps still "can render a notable service as a collection of organized data"⁷ but cannot be viewed as entirely reliable. One of the reasons for that serious deficiency might be that Buketoff-Turkevich was physically unable to access a wealth of sources and studies undertaken by Soviet scholars in the late 1930s to early 1950s. For that very reason, it seems appropriate to make some corrections and clarifications.

As I have mentioned, the name of the first translator of *Don Quixote* that appeared in 1769 was not known and thought to be lost. He was finally identified by a Russian scholar, Victor Semennikov,⁸ in 1914 as Ignaty Tayls who was a teacher of German in one of the military colleges. Semennikov also established that the publication of the book was subsidized by the translator himself. It is quite possible that the shortage of finances may account for the extensive abridgements that the book suffered. Nonetheless, this grossly simplified *Don Quixote* still experienced the fate of transformation "del nome proprio al nome comune"; the name of Don Quixote became widely known in Russia, and his fame was comparable with that of Don Juan—the only Spaniard who enjoyed major popularity in Russia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The process of appropriation of *Don Quixote* by Russian literary criticism was initiated by Konstantin Masalsky whose book was titled, very significantly, *The Don Quixote of the Nineteenth Century*.⁹ To the same scholar we owe the very first direct translation of the novel made in 1838. This translation, although superior to that of Ignaty Tayls, was still incomplete, but reasons for that abridgement remain unknown to us. Russian readers had to

wait for another thirty years, until 1866, before they finally received the first unabridged translation, generated directly from Spanish by V. Karelin.¹⁰ That important translation, that Dostoevsky was perhaps acquainted with, became a first building block in constructing the *Cervantian Temple* in Russia.

Among Spain's literary celebrities, hazily made out at the outset, Cervantes' figure became in time the most firmly delineated and most engaging. Russian taste has changed profoundly at several momentous junctures, and preferences for given facets of Cervantes' art and "philosophy" (traditionally dear to Russian critics) have shifted a good deal since Belinsky. But the esteem for his work among the intellectual elite and its impact on writers able to set new standards and on a broadening group of ambitious readers, witness the demand for steadily improved translations, abridgements, and commentaries.¹¹

This brief overview should explain the profound interest that Russian intellectuals, including Dostoevsky, had toward Don Quixote where, as I suggested, we may also observe the birth and development of the polyphonic structure. This is what this study attempts to demonstrate. It is reasonable to suspect that this birth was not accidental and was not *ex nihilo*. The appearance of polyphony from one end is closely related with heteroglossia that, as it will be shown in chapter 5, gradually modulates into the polyphonic structure; from another end, it is related to the notion of the *idea*.

What is meant here by the term "idea" is the conglomerate of thoughts, ideas, and points of view that all together determine the individual, his Life and, eventually, his destiny. I chose to use here the word *Weltanschauung*—the fundamental cognitive orientation of an individual. This *Weltanschauung*, or *idea*, acquires maximum strength only in the polyphonic novel because it enters into dialogic relations with the main hero of the novel, with other *Weltanschauungs*, and even with the author himself. I suggest that *Don Quixote* and *The Idiot* can be justifiably called *novels of idea* because the *idea* in both of them lives and acts as a fully fledged subject, as an individual. One of these two novels—*The Idiot*—is a polyphonic novel in the classical sense of the word while *Don Quixote*, in my opinion, can be called a *hybrid* novel because here, as I will demonstrate, we witness the first appearance of the polyphonic structure that, within the homophonic structure, acts as *punctum contra punctus*, granting us the right to talk about the birth of polyphony. The choice of Dostoevsky's novel is not arbitrary; precisely in this novel, Dostoevsky reworks and profoundly re-accentuates the character of Don Quixote, in other words, appropriates it on Russian soil and creates a totally unique character—Prince Myshkin. The astral connection that I conceive between these two characters allows me to call these books the *twin novels*.

The penetration of Cervantes' aesthetic and philosophical values into Russia and his significant presence in the literary horizons of nineteenth century Russia make it possible to inquire in depth about his undeniable influence on Dostoevsky. This influence is so significant that Dostoevsky, consciously or subconsciously, writes a novel whose reminiscences and connections with Cervantes are so intense and suggestive that it seems surprising that up to now we have not seen any *magnum opus* written about this important literary phenomenon.

Instead, only here and there can we find some ideas floating around and indicating that this phenomenon has been noticed and acknowledged by scholars. However, we do not have anything yet that would encompass all these interesting and meaningful thoughts and observations. What I attempt to do is to offer some panoramic view of this important literary phenomenon.

I decided to call both novels, *Don Quixote* and *The Idiot*, as *novels of idea*. The name is obviously derived from the theoretical views of Mikhail Bakhtin, although he never uses the same term and simply refers to the essentially new type of the novel created by Dostoevsky—the polyphonic novel where, according to Bakhtin, the *idea* becomes a fully independent and acting subject. In my opinion, usage of somewhat new terminology can greatly precipitate and facilitate the assimilation of some new postulates, and it may be easier to follow the line of reasoning.

While I fully agree with Bakhtin that Dostoevsky is the creator of the polyphonic novel as a specific *genre* within the novel itself, I still have some thoughts that I would like to express and ponder about while we walk through this study together. At the very beginning, it is always a little dangerous to make statements that later one would not be able, or willing, to complete. That is why I will ask the same question that Howard Mancing posed in his article “Coming to America”: is it “really possible to write a novel that does not in some way resemble the *Quixote*?”¹²

I have no doubts that in the case of *The Idiot* we have a perfect example of the so-called *quixotic novel*—a fact confirmed by Dostoevsky himself in his *Diary of a Writer*. For total clarity of the terminology, it would be useful to explain what is meant by the term *quixotic novel*:

The quixotic novel most typically is one that involves a character who has some of those qualities we associate with *Don Quixote* and/or displays an innovative, postmodern, narrative self-awareness that places a work in juxtaposition to Cervantes. Often there is an element of satire in a *quixotic novel*, but by no means are all such novels mere satires or anti-romances.”¹³

This quote does not suggest that *The Idiot*, the work that will be the main focus of one of the subsequent chapters, is important for us only because it can be rightfully denominated as a *quixotic novel*. To say that would be

a gross simplification of my intention, and I would eventually go astray myself or, far worse, would lead my readers astray. Nor do I want my work to require an additional interpretative effort; all concepts and terminology must be stated clearly, and my techniques of literary analysis should not be outmoded or deficient. I simply believe that the inherent connections that exist between these two *twin novels* are not as superficial as they may seem. Conversely, these connections represent two ends of the same process—the birth of polyphony in the first *novel of idea*, *Don Quixote* of Cervantes, and the triumph of the creation of a new genre, the polyphonic novel, in its highest form of expression through *The Idiot* of Dostoevsky.

These connections between Cervantes and Dostoevsky are not accidental. Walter Schubart, for example, also indicated that there are too many similarities between Spain and Russia to go unnoticed. If known, the mysterious contacts that exist between the Spanish and Russian souls could be finally explained.

España y Rusia son dos pueblos intermediarios entre lo europeo y lo oriental, pero más oriental que europeo. Ambos fueron los debeladores de un Napoleón. Ambos sostenedores de la gran polémica en contra del Occidente. Culturas campesinas más que técnicas. Teleológicas y finalistas. De un cristianismo fraternizante. De existencias maximalistas, absolutas: exaltadoras de la muerte, místicas y atormentadas. Sin normas clásicas, anormales. Con artistas que pueden intercambiarse, como el *Greco*, que parece un pintor ruso o bizantino, y Goya, comparable al pintor ruso *Vereschaguín*. Y de ese mundo de sueños salen el poema clásico de España, *Don Quijote*, y la novela más rusa de Dostoevsky.¹⁴ [Spain and Russia are two countries intermediate between Europe and Orient, but they are both more oriental than European. Both played a huge role to help to defeat Napoleon. Both have always been in the center of great controversy against the West. Of the peasant cultures, rather than technical ones. Teleological and finalists. Of a fraternizing Christianity. Advocates of maximalist existences; fascinated by death, mysticism, and tormented by them. Without classic norms, somewhat abnormal. With artists that can be easily mistaken, like El Greco, who could be a Russian or Byzantine painter; like Goya, comparable to Russian painter Vereschaguin. And from that world of dreams comes the classic poem of Spain, *Don Quixote*, and the most Russian novel by Dostoevsky.]

The connection between Cervantes and Dostoevsky was pointed out by Buketoff-Turkevich in her book that has already been mentioned, *Cervantes in Russia*. She suggested that Dostoevsky was strongly attracted by the ideological and philosophical aspects of *Don Quixote* and that, for him, this book became a real “commentary on life and a revelation of the human mind and heart.”¹⁵ This assertion holds a lot of value; Russian intellectuals, through inherent affinity to the Spanish soul, intuitively grasped the secret formula

of Cervantes' art—the ability to hear multiple voices of people and the voice of the *idea* that was converted into the independent subject. Being self-contained and engaged into the dialogue, this idea will investigate itself by discovering the reality existing at the edge of illusion created by the artistic imagination of Cervantes.

I suggest that to understand the profound and elusive effects made by *Don Quixote* on Dostoevsky is far more important than to trace the superficial similarities or create a mere list of literary curiosities that will be found if we routinely do the ordinary comparative analysis of these two literary works. The focus of this study is to get to the roots of the phenomenon of polyphony that was first introduced within the homophonic structure of *Don Quixote*. This structure allowed Cervantes to build an intricate semi-polyphonic world that broke the intractability of the classic homophonic novel and found its natural place within the newly formed hybrid novel—*Don Quixote*.

Only in this new, more sophisticated, homophono-polyphonic world could the *idea* receive the equal rights that put it on par with other subjects of “equal consciousnesses and their worlds.”¹⁶ In this new world, any given and simple event was combined into the supreme unity “while at the same time retaining their unmergedness” (4). Cervantes accomplished this task beautifully, and Dostoevsky developed this process further; he polished all the elements of the novelistic polyphonic structure initiated by Cervantes and finalized it by building the new and more sophisticated polyphonic literary world that would eventually “destroy the established forms of the basically monological (homophonic) European novel.”¹⁷

Every other novel written after 1605—are, by definition, *quixotic* novels, that is, novels grounded—directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously—in the *Quixote*.¹⁸

This claim should not be looked at as intrinsically challenging; this so-called “quixotic principle” was introduced by Harry Levin quite some time ago while referring to “the tragicomic irony of the conflict between real life and the romantic imagination,”¹⁹ the conflict that we witness both in *Don Quixote* and *The Idiot*.

Don Quijote y Michkin son hombres arraigados en el suelo de un mundo distinto, pero perdiendo igualmente de vista la realidad y sin saber moverse ya en ella. [...] Ambos pobre locos, opuestos al tipo del hombre nórdico, ario, prometeico, europeo, al tipo de hombre “con éxito en la vida.”²⁰ [Don Quixote and Michkin are men rooted in the soil of a different world, but they equally lose sight of reality and do not know how to move in the reality. [...] Both are poor madmen, opposed to the type of Nordic, Aryan, Promethean, European, to the type of man that is “successful in life.”]

Levin and Caballero do not stand alone in their claim; Harold Bloom also indicated that, “all novels since *Don Quixote* rewrite Cervantes’ universal masterpiece, even when they are quite unaware of it.”²¹

Eventually, we will need “a book that would show in detail that every novel ever written bears *Don Quixote* within it like an inner filigree,”²² but my present study does not pretend to become an exhaustive study of *Don Quixote* nor *The Idiot*. What it attempts to explore is only two aspects of the whole issue—the appearance of polyphony in *Don Quixote* and the influence of Cervantes on Dostoevsky’s novel, *The Idiot*. Everything will be looked at and discussed only and exclusively through the optic of Bakhtinian theory in reference to the proposed scientific inquiry. Consequently, all the passages selected from both texts will serve the same purpose: to analyze the birth of polyphonic structure and its interaction with homophony and to find the umbilical cord that connects two great novelists—Miguel de Cervantes and Fyodor Dostoevsky.

Cervantes’ modern novel was written in a form that would be widely and productively utilized throughout Europe for the next three and a half centuries and that, at the same time, limited his artistic imagination. Perhaps he had two choices: to enclose within the homophonic space so perfectly tuned but restricting in its stability or to push the boundaries of the homophonic novel further—toward the polyphonic form.

Was Cervantes cognizant of the fact that, while achieving these newly established objectives unachievable within the closed homophonic structure, he would have to disassemble to some extent these so “well domesticated” homophonic forms? We do not know that, and can only make conjectures; perhaps he did. But he certainly came to the understanding that the homophonic novel could not possibly let him reflect the fullness of Life that lies on all levels of dialogical reality that he endeavored to conceive. His newly conceived scheme needed new tools, new approaches. I think that the dialogical reality popped up upon Cervantes only when Don Quixote “se armó de todas sus armas, subió sobre Rocinante, puesta su mal compuesta celada, embrazó su adarga, tomó su lanza, y por la puerta falsa de un corral salió al campo.”²³ [armed himself with all his weapons, climbed on Rocinante, laid his evil composite gauntlet, wrapped his armor, took his spear, and through the back door of a corral went out into the field.]

The dialogical reality demanded its master use newer, more sophisticated, tools and devices in order to make it reveal itself in all its beauty, its richness, and, virtually, rediscover itself in the polyphonically dialogized reality. It has always surprised me how the *polyphonism* of *Don Quixote* went totally unnoticed by literary criticism, not acknowledged or appreciated by the most prominent literary critics. Even some artists notorious for their keen and very sensitive understanding of European literature like Vladimir Nabokov have

never rendered a single word about the possible hybrid nature of the novel. In his famous and highly controversial lectures about *Don Quixote* that were given at Harvard University during the 1951–1952 school year, Nabokov frivolously divided all novels into the one-track and multi-track ones and, by doing so, created even more confusion for future evaluation of *Don Quixote*.

Madam Bovary, for instance, is a one-track novel, with hardly any switches. *Anna Karenina* is a multi-track novel with major switches. What is *Don Quixote*? I should call it a one-and-a-half track novel, with a few switches. Knight and squire are really one, and anyway the squire only plays up to his master; however, at a certain point in the second part they get separated.²⁴

This statement seems surprising, at the very least. How was such a connoisseur of European literature and a sensitive artist himself able to lead his 600 students, the “young strangers enrolled in Humanities in Harvard”²⁵ into the blind alley instead of teaching them to accept the “principal of augmentation dialogically?”²⁶ Far from being a structuralist, Nabokov still enclosed himself in the mechanics of the text itself and, consequently, forced all his students to do the same. Instead of trying to listen to the *voices* with their natural complex and suggesting “dialogic relation among them,”²⁷ he diminished his task to merely dividing everything into simplified mechanical categories—something like single-track, multi-track, one-and-a-half track. By doing so, Nabokov overshadowed the book itself and ended up by calling *Don Quixote* nothing less than a “very primitive novel.”²⁸ To make things even worse than they already were, he enclosed *Don Quixote* into the tight and uncomfortable cell of the picaresque novel.

This did not seem enough. Nabokov did not stop at that point and further accused the hero of being in pursuit of a “more or less antisocial quest moving from job to job or from joke to joke in a series of colorful, loosely strung episodes with the comic element.”²⁹ Such a blindness and refusal (or inability?) to see both the dialogism and antinomy that are abundantly present in *Don Quixote* is inexplicable and, to a certain extent, inexcusable. We deal here with a book where even the simplest thought expressed by the protagonist almost invariably becomes dialogic, and in the other occasion antinomic, that is, demonstrates rational but contradictory results of applying pure thought to the universe.

In spite of the mutual incompatibility that is either real or only apparent, in the dialogical context the same thought all of a sudden makes a rapid transformation—exactly as it happens in real life, isn’t it? But Cervantes does not leave us puzzled; the logical development of the idea becomes intact. All inner and logical strings stay unbreakable and tightly unite every individual consciousness—the consciousness that is being expressed

by word, by utterance, by thought, and even by intonation. This is possible only if the *idea* becomes the *unified unity* that is materialized to the extent of getting on par with each individual consciousness. They all, each consciousness and the *idea*, will function completely independently in the perfectly organized *polyphonic* world to which *Don Quixote* undoubtedly belongs.

Through this concrete consciousness, embodied in the living voice of an integral person, the logical series becomes part of the unity of the event depicted. A thought, drawn into an event, itself becomes part of the event and takes on the peculiar character of an 'idea-feeling' or 'idea-force' which creates the inimitable uniqueness of the *idea*.³⁰

All that escaped the attention not only of Nabokov but also of many other scholars who rightfully were talking about the direct or indirect influences exercised by Cervantes on Dostoevsky, and *The Idiot* in particular. Why did nobody consider the possible exhaustion of the artistic expressivity of the homophonic novel and Cervantes' natural desire to compensate for these shortcomings? He decided to look for another, more powerful, literary device—the polyphony that brought to life the hybrid *novel of idea*, *Don Quixote*. The polyphonic structure that entered into the homophonic novel stretched the boundaries of the flat homophonic world and opened for Cervantes new, unexplored horizons in creating more complex, more realistic, and an inherently dialogical image of the main hero. This same hero became a principle bearer of the *idea* whose presence profoundly transformed not only the initial plan of the novel but also the author's view of his own hero.

As a result of all these transformations and the aesthetic self-objectification of the author into his main character under the condition that "the whole of the hero must remain the ultimate whole,"³¹ Cervantes managed to separate himself from Don Quixote, and from himself! In the process of this separation and self-objectification, each one of them was still able to define another in terms of values for the other. The dialogue began. Through this dialogue, Cervantes created the unique world, the blend of the classic homophonic vision of reality combined with the polyphonic, or cosmic view—the view that was able to erase the boundary between flat and inconclusive homophonic reality and illusion. In this new world, the consciousness of the hero, his *Weltanschauung*—the *idea*—became an independent subject and entered into continuous dialogue with its own bearer, Don Quixote. As a result, we received a book of immense inner stability—the phenomenon that we will try to explain here in light of Bakhtinian theory.

NOTES

1. *The Mongol invasion* that is also known as the “Mongol Yoke” on Russia was heralded in 1223. This invasion lasted until 1480 and had incalculable ramifications for the history of Europe, including the division of the East Slavic People into three different nations.

2. Vasily Trediakovsky (1703–1768) was the Russian poet, literary theoretician, and interesting playwright who, together with another Russian poet and scientist, Mikhail Lomonosov, helped to lay the foundations of classical Russian Literature. He was also the first Russian citizen who, not belonging to the nobility, received his education abroad, at the Sorbonne.

3. Bakhtin, M. *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*. Ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov. Trans. Kenneth Brostrom. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 1.

4. Mikhail Lomonosov (1711–1765) was a Russian polymath, scientist, and writer who made important contributions to literature, education, and science. For instance, among his discoveries was the atmosphere of Venus. Lomonosov was also a prominent poet who created the basis of the modern Russian literary language.

5. This fact is based on the study conducted by Yuri Lotman and commented on in his article “K voprosu o tom, kakimi yazikami vladel Lomonosov.” The article was published in the journal titled *XVIII vek*. Vol.3. (1958): 445–464.

6. Malkiel, Yakov. “Cervantes in Nineteenth-century Russia.” *Comparative Literature*, 3. 4(1951), 311.

7. Malkiel, 311.

8. Semennikov, V.P. *Russkoe satiricheskie jurnali: 1769–1774*. Sankt-Peterburg, 1914.

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