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Recommended Citation

Gratchev, Slav N. "Don Quixote in Russia in the Early Twentieth Century: The Problem of Perception and Interpretation." *South Atlantic Review*, vol. 83, no. 2, pp. 145-158.

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South
Atlantic
Review

Summer 2018

Volume

83

Number 2

Journal of the South Atlantic
Modern Language Association

Don Quixote in Russia in the Early Twentieth Century: The Problem of Perception and Interpretation

Slav N. Gratchev

This study logically continues my previous examination of the perception of *Don Quixote* in Russia throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and how this perception changed over time. In this new article, I will again use a number of materials inaccessible to English-speaking scholars to demonstrate how the perception of Don Quixote by Russian intelligentsia shifted from humorous to complete admiration and even idealization of the hero. Don Quixote was more and more frequently compared with Prometheus, the most powerful and most romanticized personage of Greek mythology. Indeed, “начав юмористический роман, осмеивающий увлечение современников рыцарскими похождениями, Сервантес и не думал, что потешный рыцарь печального образа постепенно вырастет в гигантскую фигуру страдальца-идеалиста” (“by starting a humorous novel satirizing contemporary fascination with knightly adventures, Cervantes could not even guess that the amusing Knight of the Sad Countenance would gradually grow into a great figure of the suffering idealist”; my trans; Solomin 91).

This study will not attempt to exhaust all questions related to this matter. Instead it tries to open some new routes that will perhaps lead us toward new generalizations and productive conclusions. At the very least, this study aims to arouse a scholarly interest in some key topics related to Cervantes’ reception in Russia in the early twentieth century, his re-discovery and gradual transformation or, more to the point, *re-accentuation* of the image of Don Quixote during the Silver Age of Russian literary Renaissance.

This term—Silver Age—initially suggested by the Russian philosopher Nikolay Berdyaev,¹ became customary to use when referring to the last decade of the nineteenth and the first two decades of the twentieth centuries.² It was not only an exceptionally creative period in the history of Russian poetry and prose, but it was also a time for re-evaluating many of the values of the past, including Cervantes’ Don Quixote.

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It is only in the twentieth century that, for the first time, we start hearing the voices of intellectuals, poets, writers, and literary critics refer to Cervantes as a “genius.” It is noted that, “Между тем, Дон Кихот, как истинное произведение гения, содержит в себе массу сторон и в каждой из них Сервантес является огромным знатоком человеческого ума и сердца” (“Meanwhile, Don Quixote is a true work of genius. It contains a lot of different sides, and, in each of them, Cervantes is a great connoisseur of the human mind and heart”; my trans; Solomin 93).

G. Galina,³ one of the many talented poets that appeared during the first decade of the twentieth century, right at the splendor of the Silver Age, wrote a short poem that is unique in its romantic perception of Don Quixote. Here, maybe for the first time, the old notion of the “loco” (crazy) is defeated, and the image of the “Bronze horseman”⁴ comes out instead of the Knight of the Sad Countenance:

От будничной тоски, тревоги и забот
я ухожу в мой мир фантазии туманной.
мне облик видится тогда смешной и странный -
в наряде рыцарском безумный Дон Кихот.
а сытая толпа бежит, глумясь над ним,
как за шутком своим, забавным и безумным,
и потешется, венчая смехом шумным
все то, что он зовет великим и святым.
пусть это только бред его души больной,
он все же дорог мне в своей борьбе напрасной.
кто может так любить, так ненавидеть страстно,
тот не безумец, нет! тот рыцарь и святой. (Galina 26)

From everyday boredom, anxiety, and worries
I run into my world where only fantasy reigns.
And the first one I see is a Stranger--
Our eternal knight Don Quixote.
And a well-fed crowd runs after him,
and calls him clown, funny, and insane,
and laughs at him, and makes funny faces
at everything he calls great and holy.
But even if it's only the cry of his sad soul,
he is still dear to me while he fights in vain.
The One who can love and hate so, with such a passion
He is not a madman, no! He is a Knight and Saint! (my trans)

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It was symptomatic at that time—the time of the first Russian Revolution—for intelligentsia to look for an escape into the “world where only fantasy reigns,” and it is particularly interesting that, in this world, they found the eternal figure of Don Quixote. Galina, whose poem I just cited, represented in her poetry the very best tradition of Russian poetry of the late nineteenth century. She belonged to the generation of Blok, and her re-accentuation of Don Quixote as a “Knight and Saint” can be seen as emblematic for the entire Silver Age literary generation.

It should not be forgotten that in 1905 Don Quixote “turned” 300 years old, and his “birthday” also had a remarkable resonance in Russia. Vyacheslav Ivanov⁵ gave Don Quixote a new title, calling him “The Hero of Our Time.”⁶ In his article “The Crisis of Individualism,” specifically dedicated to the 300th anniversary of *Don Quixote*, Ivanov, for the first time in Russian literary criticism and, possibly for the first time ever, called Cervantes’ novel “a poem,” reconfirming the new and highly romanticized perspective that Russian Silver Age intelligentsia of the early twentieth century developed toward Cervantes’ hero. He states:

Весь сонм великих теней с нами...Эти вечные типы человека глядят не только в вечность. Есть у них особенный, проникновенный взгляд и на нас. Они поднялись из небытия под общим знаком, их связывает между собою нечто пророчесвенно общее. Впервые во всемирной истории они явили духу запросы нового индивидуализма и трагической антиномии. (Ivanov 831)

The whole company of great shadows is here with us . . . [Ivanov refers to Hamlet, King Lear, and Macbeth.] These eternal human types look into eternity, but they also look at us. They rose from obscurity under a common sign; they share a lot in common, and there is prophesy related to each of them. For the first time in world history, they have revealed the spirit of new questions of individualism and its tragic antinomy. (my trans)

What is interesting, though, is that Ivanov, also for the first time in literary criticism, does not put Don Quixote on a lower scale in relation to those “eternal human types,” but instead he places Cervantes’ hero above Hamlet in his philosophical significance and humanistic mission. For Ivanov, Don Quixote does not just come to this world with

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the *new word*; instead, he comes to this world to bring a new life, to revive a tradition of *chivalry*, and to restore the good old meaning of the *knight-errantry*. Ivanov states:

Он, как и Гамлет, носитель своих скрижалей. Только не новые и еще не выступившие письмена силится он разобрать на них: нет, ясно начертаны в его сознании старые письмена, отвергнутые миром. Не новое действие родится в нем, а старое воскресает. (Ivanov 834)

He, like Hamlet, is the carrier of his own tablets. But he is not trying to read the new writings that simply try to show themselves to the world; instead, he remembers the old ones that are clearly inscribed in his mind, those writings that are now rejected by the world. It is not a new action that is being born inside him but an old one that is being resurrected. (my trans)

Ivanov does not stop here with the particular uniqueness of Don Quixote that he sees in Quixote's attempt—so far unheard of in universal literature—to challenge the realness of the world by the realness of his personal *Weltanschauung*.⁷ In this bold attempt—to challenge the entire world—Ivanov sees the uniqueness of Don Quixote, his philosophical and universal significance. This daring attempt to challenge the imperfect world is what makes Don Quixote the second truly great *individualist* of world literature.⁸ But still, insists Ivanov, Don Quixote would be the “first Knight” in a crowd that consists of Macbeth, Othello, Hamlet, and King Lear. There is something in Don Quixote, notes Ivanov, that makes this Spanish knight totally singular and totally unparalleled by any of the great Shakespearian characters. He indicates: “Но в глубине своей души он несет росток новой души...Если мир не таков, каким должен быть, как постулат духа, тем хуже для мира, да и нет вовсе такого мира” (“But in the depths of his soul he carries the germ of a new soul ... If the world is not what it should be, as a postulate of the spirit, so much the worse for the world, and a world like this does not even exist”; my trans; Ivanov 834).

But only just paired with the great crowd of Shakespearian characters, Don Quixote almost immediately makes another step forward—the very step that will distinguish him forever from other great literary figures. He dares to *reject* the world as it is! In other words, in the early seventeenth century, at the dawn of modern literature, Don Quixote has done what Ivan Karamazov of Dostoevsky will do, only 250 years later. As indicated:

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Ну так представь же себе, что в окончательном результате я мира этого божьего - не принимаю, и хоть и знаю, что он существует, да не допускаю его вовсе. Я не бога не принимаю, пойми ты это, я мира, им созданного, мира-то божьего не принимаю и не могу согласиться принять. (Dostoevsky 214)

Well, imagine yourself that, as a final result, this world of God is what I do not accept, and, even though I know that it exists, I do not accept it at all. And, it is not God that I do not accept, you must understand this. It is the world He created, this world of God. This is what I do not accept and cannot agree to accept. (my trans)

Not a single literary character, before Cervantes or after him, ever went so far as to reject the world, but Don Quixote did. He is not a philosopher, like Ivan Karamazov; he is just a knight errant, but not accepting the world that had become so corrupt is the essence of his *individualist Weltanschauung*. Hamlet also does it, but his motives are different; it is certainly easier to reject the world when you are unhappy and when your heart is full of revenge. Then the frustration can be explained and understood, and the challenge can be justified. The case of the Spanish knight is different; Don Quixote, who “whenever he was at leisure (which was mostly all the year round) gave himself up to reading books of chivalry” (*Don Quixote* I: 82), certainly does not have much reason for frustration. Nevertheless, he “hit upon the strangest notion that every madman in this world hit upon that he should make a knight-errant of himself, roaming the world over in full armor and on horseback in quest of adventures” (*Don Quixote* I: 83).

Don Quixote, unlike Hamlet, does not pursue any personal revenge; his ambitions are immeasurably higher, and this is what, for Ivanov, makes Don Quixote immeasurably more versatile, more philosophically and spiritually significant than one of the most famous Shakespearian characters. He argues:

Он борется с миром на жизнь и на смерть, и вместе отрицает его. Чары волшебников обтатили всю вселенную в одну иллюзию. Вначале герой прозревает колдовское наваждение только в отдельных несоответствиях искомого и обретаемого; потом кольцо чародейства смыкается вокруг одинокой души сплошную темницей

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обмана. Мир, уже весь целиком, один только злой призрак.
(Ivanov 834)

He fights with the world for life and death and denies it at the same time. The enchantments of wizards have turned the whole world into an illusion. Initially, the hero begins to see magical obsession only in certain inconsistencies between the desired and the gained, but then the ring closes more and more around the lonely soul, sorrowing and poisoning her by deception. And the world, now the entire one, is nothing but one evil ghost. (my trans)

It is interesting to observe how the highly romantic attitude toward Cervantes' hero, experienced by early Russian symbolists like Galina and Solomin, gradually shifted toward an appreciation of his philosophical significance and spiritual strength. It may not be surprising though if we recall that Russian intelligentsia had always been looking for the strong spirituality and the total *answerability* of the literary character. (This important term was introduced to literary criticism by Mikhail Bakhtin in 1919 when his first scholarly essay "Art and Answerability" appeared in the journal *Mir Iskusstva* ["The World of Arts"]). It does not mean that the romantic attitude toward Don Quixote completely disappears, but certainly it becomes more marginal than at the dawn of the twentieth century.

What interests us in particular is analyzing how the "crisis of individualism" that Don Quixote supposedly experiences is being viewed, perceived, and interpreted in Russia during the first decades of the twentieth century and how the "rebellion against the world" pairs Don Quixote with a rebellious Greek titan, Prometheus, the first and the only individualist in world literature before Don Quixote. As Ivanov states:

Бунт против мира, впервые провозглашенный этим новым Прометеем печального образа, наложил свои стигмы на многострадальную тень героя из Ламанчи. Отныне на знамени индивидуализма будет начертан вызов объективной истине, своего рода утверждение ценности нас возвышающего обмана, тьмы низких истин. Именно как было в гносеологии Ницше: истинно то, что усиливает жизнь; всякая другая истина есть ложь. (Ivanov 106)

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The revolt against the world, first proclaimed by this new Prometheus of the Sad Image, cast its shadow of stigma on the long-suffering hero of La Mancha. From now on, the banner of individualism will be inscribed on the challenge to objective truth, a kind of a statement that claims the value of the elevating deception, the darkness of low truth. It has been in the epistemology of Nietzsche: the truth is what enhances life; every other truth is a lie. (my trans)

While this “crisis of individualism” that Ivanov analyzes in his article is symptomatic of all great literary characters—Othello, Hamlet, and King Lear—who suffer from it, Don Quixote instead glorifies this “crisis.” He, in spite of all the imperfections of this world, loves and glorifies “the darkness of low truth” that nourishes the indestructible soul of this individualistic Knight-errant. Why then should he care that today’s beauty too often wears the distorted mask of a ghost of greatness? He deliberately condemns himself to chivalry, to the desperate search for truth and to endless wandering, and his knight-errantry will always be free from any fear and any reproach.

Maybe that is why in another article, “Shakespeare and Cervantes,” Ivanov notes that “чем-то радостным, бодрящим и добрым веет от страниц Сервантеса, страниц незапятнанных ни злобою, ни осуждением, ни горестным раздумьем о смысле жизни” (“something pleasurable, invigorating and good emanates from the pages of Cervantes, pages that do not convey malice, nor condemnation, nor sorrowful meditation on the meaning of life”; my trans; Ivanov 108).

The “crisis of individualism” that so heavily and tragically affects Othello, Hamlet, and King Lear, is, in Cervantes’ book, transformed into something completely different; it becomes an ode to the tireless knight. And the Russian critic, despite all the mishaps that happen to the Hero, refuses to see tragedy in *Don Quixote*; as he notes:

Дон Кихот оставляет в душе читателя благостное очищение, в основе которого лежит пафос веры и глубокое чувствованье тщеты всякого самочинного человеческого стремления перед простою правдою Бога. (Ivanov 108)

Don Quixote leaves in the soul of the reader a unique sense of happiness, which is based on faith, enthusiasm, and a deep feeling of the vanity of all arbitrary human endeavors if compared to the simple truth of God. (my trans)

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How can this transformation of the “crisis” be explained? Is Don Quixote an individualist of a different caliber than Hamlet, King Lear, and Othello? Why does the novel that is, although not formally, still a tragedy by its internal nature, leave us with this “unique sense of happiness,” and not sorrow, like *Hamlet*? There must be something that distinguishes this “new Prometheus of the Sad Image” from his counterparts, and this must be something very significant. To all these questions, Ivanov gives us one absolutely comprehensive answer; it is the harmonic equilibrium that possesses the soul of a Spaniard, and only a Spaniard. He states:

Это гармоническое равновесие души есть, несомненно, плод испанской верности католической церкви, - верности, которая обезвредила и смягчила глубокие противоречия, раскрывшиеся в сознании новых времен. (Ivanov 109)

This harmonious balance of the Spanish soul is, undoubtedly, the fruit of fidelity to the Catholic Church—loyalty, which defused and softened all deep contradictions disclosed by the minds of modern times. (my trans)

This equilibrium could, however, easily generate a very superficial and even narrow-minded attitude toward the world. But the sensitive ear of Cervantes, the poet, was able to hear and recognize the noise of the fierce battle—the battle between the rising and awakening New World and the last medieval Night Shadows. This is how, perhaps, the Russian critic perceives Cervantes’ novel. And to fight such a battle there must be a new type of hero who is not blinded by revenge, like Hamlet; who is not blinded by jealousy, like Othello; and who is not blinded by deep sorrow, like King Lear. Only such a hero would be able to bring his mission to the end. Who could it be? What country would give birth to this hero?

The mystical glow of the Spanish soul has always been so close and loyal to the Catholic faith, and this soul could not cool down as quickly as did the souls of other European nations. The melting furnaces of the Spanish spirit continued to burn in the secluded shelters of the hermits of spirit, while, outside of their modest dwellings, the unbearably white Spanish day continued to dazzle, and the lonely knight kept riding his Rocinante and, sweating and squinting in the bright sun, constantly looked into the horizon. Only this new type of hero who “did not care to put off any longer the execution of his design, urged

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on to it by the thought of all the world was losing by his delay, seeing what wrongs he intended to right, grievances to redress, injustices to repair, abuses to remove, and duties to discharge” (*Don Quixote* I:78) would sally forth “without giving notice of his intention to anyone, and without anybody seeing him” (*Don Quixote* I: 78). Ivanov notes,

И вот перед нами, как и перед самим Сервантесом, стоит, подобная загадке сфинкса, фигура странствующего рыцаря. Стоит она как вечная проблема: как может благородное и доблестное, святое и пламенное, чистейшая любовь и вера, не смутимая никакою видимостью, вечно распинаться верховным Разумом жизни? и как люди, осмеивающие и презирающие высокое и святое, могут оказываться в согласии с судом этого Разума? (Ivanov III)

And here stands, in front of us, as before it was standing before Cervantes, as a famous riddle of the Sphinx, the figure of the knight-errant. It stands as an eternal problem: how can the noble and valiant, the holy and pure, the pure love and faith, be forever condemned by the Supreme Mind of life? And how can people that ridicule and despise the high and the holy be in accordance with that Mind? (my trans)

Where does Ivanov perceive the real greatness of Cervantes? Does he see it in his ability to solve this riddle? But, does Cervantes ever try to solve anything? Probably he, like any great artist, prefers to offer us questions, not necessarily to answer them. So, “how can people that ridicule and despise the high and the holy be in accordance with that Mind?”

These are what Ivanov identifies as the amazing qualities of Cervantes: he can see and describe things as they are, and, for the ultimate *answerability*, he is even capable of “отдать на поругание платонического любовника Дульсинеи” (“giving up for public reproach the sad platonic lover of Dulcinea”; my trans; Ivanov 108). He sacrifices his hero, even though his heart is bleeding, to see how heartless and merciless the outside world is. And so Quixote leaves this imperfect world the last “individualist”—the only one who truly cares for others and not himself. As we can see, the “crisis of individualism” is definitely present in *Don Quixote*, but it is a different kind of crisis; it is the crisis of a society that is neither ready nor willing to accept the new hero whose “great time” has not come yet. As Ivanov argues: “Величие Сервантеса покоится на его гениальном узрении

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иррационального в “рационально” устроенном мире его эпохи.” (“Cervantes’ greatness rests on his genius of beholding rationally the irrational, organized, world day consciousness of his era”; my trans; Ivanov 112).

Another prominent Russian symbolist, Konstantin Balmont,⁹ also offers us an interesting understanding and extensive re-evaluation of Cervantes’ literary hero. Contrary to Ivanov, who was interested more in the new philosophical significance of Cervantes’ work, Balmont focuses on different aspects of Cervantes’ hero; instead of analyzing Don Quixote’s philosophical significance in relation to his dramatic counterparts (Hamlet, Othello, and King Lear), Balmont puts Don Quixote in the historical context of his own country, Spain, and pairs him up with another great Spanish literary character—Don Juan. Probably no one before Balmont or after him has ever better contextualized Don Quixote, and not only connected him with Spain but also pointed out the internal ligaments that connected Don Quixote to other countries. Balmont argues:

Вся история Испании была сплошным безумным и непрерывным романом. Многовековая дуэль с маврами, создание самого красивого европейского языка, сосредоточение под властью одного короля стольких царств, что солнце не заходило в его владениях . . . Сервантес, который в мусульманском плену несколько раз избегает казни победною чарою своего морально-красивого лика и пишет свою бессмертную книгу в тюрьме, приготовленную для него добрыми соотечественниками . . . Лопе де Вега, считающий свои драмы и комедии тысячами, и какие комедии! Святая Тереза, бессмертно влюбленная в Христа . . . Непобедимая Армада, потонувшая прежде, чем ей пришлось побеждать или быть побежденной . . . и это неправдоподобное падение после всемирно-смелого головокружительного взлета, и этот веселый ребяческий смех, и звук кастаньет . . . и все это после того как историческая роль безвозвратно сыграна. Не страницы ли это из книги сказок? Я сказал - сыграна? О, нет! Кроме внешних монархий существуют внутренние. И пусть никогда больше не повторится фигура Филиппа Второго, но в пределах целого земного полушария говорят и будут говорить по-испанworld’s greatски, и мы, европейцы, не можем прожить и нескольких часов чтобы не сказать - Дон Кихот и Дон Жуан. (Balmont 34)

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The whole history of Spain has been a continuous and uninterrupted novel. The centuries-long duel with the Moors, the creation of the most beautiful European language, the concentration under one crown of all those kingdoms, where the sun never set. Cervantes, who was a Muslim prisoner several times, avoided the capital penalty due to his beautiful moral . . . and wrote his immortal book in prison, prepared for him by his good fellow citizens. Lope de Vega, counting his dramas and comedies by the thousands, and what comedies! Saint Teresa, forever and immortally in love with Christ. The Invincible Armada, drowning before it was able to win or be defeated. And the improbable and dizzy fall of the empire after its meteoric rise. And this merry and childish laughter and the sound of castanets. And all this after the historic role is played forever. Isn't it a page from a book of fairy tales? Did I say—played? Oh no! There are internal, external monarchies as well. And although there may never be repeated the figure of Philip II, within the whole terrestrial hemisphere they speak and will always speak Spanish, and we Europeans cannot live a few hours and not say Don Quixote and Don Juan. (my trans)

As we remember, romanticism is what characterized the entire group of the Russian Silver Age poets, and their complete admiration of Don Quixote as a New Hero, a Messiah, changed, for many years, the perception of Cervantes' hero in Russia in the early twentieth century. Romanticism was in the air, and the ghost of freedom, after all those terrible years, started to loom again. That ghost awakened Russian intelligentsia, who again started to believe that there was a better world and started to look around, and here He was, a real Hero, Don Quixote de la Mancha, the Spaniard.

It is interesting how unquestionably Balmont connected Spain not only to Russia but to other countries as well. For him, a hero like Don Quixote can never be disconnected from the world, neither by space nor by time; he is timeless, and he is *spaceless*, so to speak, and, being as such, he leads and connects other literary characters in one invisible chain—the *Knight-errantry*. Balmont argues that,

Есть мировая переключка от страны к стране . . . Страна к стране посылает в веках вестника, чтобы страны не одичали в своей отъединенности; посылает такого глашатая, короткий говорит равно убедительно и своим, и всем чужим. Гекзаметры Гомера не поют ли до сих пор и в современной Элладе, и в бледной Норвегии, и в

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ученой Германии. И не читает ли «Дон Кихота» и русский шкильник, и судомойка в Аргентине, и надменный англичанин, и мало что читающий житель Испании! (Balmont 334)

There is a global connection from country to country. From country to country, a messenger is sent through the centuries so that other countries do not get alienated in their disunion; each country sends a herald that can talk equally well to his own people and to all strangers. The hexameter of Homer is being sung nowadays in the modern Hellas, and it is sung in pale Norway and in scholarly and educated Germany. And doesn't any Russian schoolboy, and the kitchen girl in Argentina, and the haughty Englishman, and also the little reading resident of Spain still read "Don Quixote"? (my trans)

As I have been trying to show, the most romantic age in the history of Russian poetry—the Silver Age—fully re-interpreted Don Quixote; from a Knight of the Doleful Countenance, Cervantes' hero became the greatest and the noblest literary figure as well as the most romantic one. Thus, in the enchanted kingdom of Romanticism, the exclusive love of all romantic poets for four major literary figures—Prometheus, Faustus, Don Quixote, and Don Juan—became nothing less than a logical inevitability. These four eternal characters have been and always will be irresistible to the heart of any romantic, whether he is a poet or not. Prometheus will always symbolize a broken barrier between Heaven and Earth, between Knowledge and Ignorance. Faustus will always mesmerize us with his boundless thirst for Knowledge that is inaccessible to Man. Don Juan will die again and again for his boundless passion for Love. But Don Quixote will always be the eternal Troubadour of the platonic Dulcinea, the Knight of the Dream, struck by his endless and unachievable quest for universal happiness. As Balmont observes,

Торжествующая Природа и пробужденная Личность - вот те два светильника, говорящие о Новом Времени и Новом Человеке...И тот же огонь горел в Сервантесе, когда он написал «Дон Кихота», книгу, которую читали и будут читать больше всего на земном шаре. (Balmont 473)

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The triumphant Nature and the Awakened personality—these are the two candlesticks that speak about the New Time and the New Man. And the same torch was leading Cervantes when he wrote “Don Quixote,” the book that people have read and will continue to read the most. (my trans)

Notes

1. Nikolai Berdyaev (1874-1948) was one of the most prominent Russian political and religious philosophers of the twentieth century.
2. Starting in 1929, the political situation in Communist Russia began to change rapidly. Stalin, who gained absolute and uncontrolled power, initiated a preliminary purge among the “Old Bolsheviks” who were still supportive of Lenin’s ideas. Freedom of expression was becoming an inexcusable luxury, more often dangerous than not. My next article will deal with the perception and interpretation of Don Quixote in the 30-50s, up until Stalin’s death in 1953.
3. Galina is a literary nickname of the poetess Glafira Einerling (1870-1942), who was writing in the traditional style of the late nineteenth century.
4. Bronze Horseman is the famous statue of Peter the Great erected in Saint Petersburg by Catherine the Great in 1782.
5. Vyacheslav Ivánov (1866-1949) was one of the most prominent of the Russian symbolist poets, literary critics, and philosophers.
6. *The Hero of Our Time* is a novel written by Mikhail Lermontov in 1840 that started the tradition of the Russian psychological novel. It is also considered to be the pinnacle of Lermontov’s prose and one of the most influential Russian novels of the first half of the nineteenth century.
7. *Weltanschauung* is a concept, fundamental for German philosophy and epistemology, that refers to a wide-world perception.
8. He is second after Hamlet who, as we know today, appeared between 1599 and 1602.
9. Konstantin Balmont (1867-1942) was a Russian symbolist poet, literary critic, and translator. Due to his immigration from Soviet Russia, his name was forgotten for many years and his translations, often excellent, were not published. Only at the end of the 1980s did his name regain popularity and love among a new generation of Russians.

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