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**"Aspects of the fantastic grotesque  
in the works of V. Mayakovsky,  
M. Bulgakov and E. Schwartz"**

**(A dissertation submitted  
for the M.A. degree)**

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The grotesque in Soviet literature is a field of study which has been neglected both in the Soviet Union and the West. In the Soviet Union interest in the grotesque reached a high point in the formalist criticism of the twenties, since the grotesque is one of the most clearly expressed devices of defamiliarisation. After a long period of taboo a revival takes place in the sixties.

An attempt has been made in this thesis to define the grotesque and to apply this definition to the works of V. Mayakovsky, M. Bulgakov and E. Schwartz.

We are primarily concerned with the structural features of their grotesque and the relationship of these to comedy and tragedy. While very similar in its structure and its use of comedy devices, the grotesque of all three writers differs substantially in its nature. We have attempted to establish the reasons for the differences and to define the function of their grotesque.

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I

INTRODUCTION

Before discussing "the grotesque" as applied to Soviet literature, we must give a definition of the term itself. The term "grotesque" appeared at the end of the fifteenth century when a painted ornament, unknown till then and distinguished by a fanciful interplay of vegetable, animal and human forms, was discovered in Rome during excavations in Roman grottos. In this ornament there were none of the sharp boundaries which in nature divide different phenomena from one another. Depiction was not static and the distinctions between heterogeneous phenomena were boldly ignored as one passed imperceptibly into the next, one seemingly giving birth to the other. The term "grotesque" was brought into literature from painting and for a long time studies of the problem were made on the basis of painting. German investigators have made the biggest contribution to the study of the grotesque and have outlined two main approaches<sup>1</sup>. One approach (Floegel) considers the caricature element to be the essence of the grotesque; the other approach (Fischer) - the fantastic. There also exists a third approach synthesizing both conceptions of the grotesque (Schneegans): "Caricature consists in the exaggeration of the trivial

<sup>1</sup> See M. Бахтин «Творчество Рабле и народная культура средневековья и Ренессанса», Москва «Художественная литература» 1965, pp. 49, 52, 131; Wolfgang Kayser "The Grotesque in Art and Literature", Bloomington 1963, pp. 29-36.

З.Ефимова «Проблема гротеска в творчестве Достоевского», Наукові записки науково-дослідчої катедри історії європейської культури, Харків 1927 No. 2, 145-149;

«Литературная энциклопедия» 1930 том 3, pp. 29-36

for the purpose of ridiculing it. It will be grotesque only when it exaggerates to the point of impossibility, when we begin to sense that such a representation cannot be encountered"<sup>1</sup>. Schneegans sees the grotesque as purely satirical. The place of the grotesque is in satire, the purpose of it - to strike a moral and social blow at the phenomena being ridiculed and negated by extreme fantastic exaggerations. Another investigator of the grotesque, Volkelt, sees the grotesque as one aspect of the comic, as the highest degree of comedy, in fact. According to Volkelt the main features of the grotesque are contrast and extreme exaggeration, which had previously been suggested by others and which are typical of the comic in general. According to this view the difference between the grotesque and the comic is not qualitative but only quantitative; "Fantastic delineations are essential to the grotesque in art. One may regard the grotesque as caricature in the broad meaning of the word but the characteristic feature is here exaggerated to the point of distortion."<sup>2</sup>

There are no special investigations into the problem of the grotesque in Russian criticism of the 19th century, though the term is familiar to Belinsky<sup>3</sup>. The Russians seem to be content with the existing definition of the term. Like the Germans, they regard it as an aspect of comedy and in their definitions emphasise its structural features.

In "Novyi slovotolkovatel'" (1803) the grotesque is defined thus: "So named are funny depictions which combine within them parts that do not belong to them naturally and which have a strange appearance"<sup>4</sup>. In

<sup>1</sup> «Литературная энциклопедия», op.cit., p.97. and З.Ефимова, op.cit., p.147  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.148.  
<sup>3</sup> В.Белинский «О русской повести и повестях Гоголя» Избранное Москва т.1, p.155  
<sup>4</sup> «Новый словотолкователь» часть , СПб.1803, p.645

"Opyt nauki izyashchnogo, nachertannyi Galichem" (1825) it is stressed that the grotesque "both as a special type of comic beauty and as a special means of creative act by the phantasy by upsetting the external appearance of natural phenomena and by creating new, strange but pleasant transformations along the lines of natural creations which act in continuous tints, shades and gradations, mocks in its arabesques the pedanticism of nature itself, the established forms of whose creatures seem to it still too monotonous"<sup>1</sup>.

A similar definition is given in the "Bol'shaya entsiklopediya" (1902): "The grotesque represents in the main something hideously strange, a product of humour linking without any obvious justification the most heterogeneous concepts because, ignoring specific details and only playing with its own originality, it appropriates everywhere only that which corresponds to its exuberant and capriciously mocking attitude to life"<sup>2</sup>.

It would be untrue to say, however, that the concept of the grotesque was not treated at all in Russian criticism before the 1920's. Meierkhold's interesting article "Balagan"<sup>3</sup> (1912) may serve as an example. However, we have failed to discover any serious investigation of the problem before the 1920's despite the fact that the grotesque was widely used by the writers of the Symbolist generation. In this study we are concerned primarily with the 20's when much attention was paid to the grotesque in Soviet criticism. Many prominent Soviet writers experimented with the

<sup>1</sup> «Опыт науки изящного, начертанный А. Галичем», Санкт-Петербург 1825, p.47

<sup>2</sup> «Большая энциклопедия», СПб. 1902, v. 7. p.227

<sup>3</sup> В. Мейерхольд «Балаган» in the book «Статьи, письма, речи, беседы», Москва «Искусство» 1968, p.225

devices of the grotesque in the early stages of their development. This applies equally to such realists as Leonov, Kataev and Fedin as to modernists such as Kaverin, Zoshchenko and Bulgakov, who, some constantly, the others repeatedly, came under critical bombardment for their formalistic "twists and turns".

The term grotesque came into wide use, and misuse, in the 20's: "At present, as we know, the noun and adjective 'grotesque' are being declined in all cases and applied automatically to the most varied phenomena which are connected only by the fact that they represent something unusual"<sup>1</sup>. Interest in the grotesque during these years can be explained by the heightened interest in form and style generally and by the desire to rejuvenate earlier artistic forms. This was the period when Russian formalism was flourishing and Shklovsky's theory of defamiliarisation (ostranenie) had become widely accepted. According to this theory<sup>2</sup> the purpose of art is to defamiliarise a familiar phenomenon and thus intensify the perception of it, to prolong the process of its recognition, so that the reader, recognizing the familiar in the unfamiliar form, receives more aesthetic pleasure. The term 'ostranenie' comes from 'stranny' 'strange', and 'grotesque' is often replaced by this word: "Grotesque serves for denoting a funny, strange and exceptional phenomenon, and from this point of view 'grotesque' may have the meaning of a certain device in the field of art and literature in particular"<sup>3</sup>. The grotesque, at the basis of which there lies as a rule an element of the fantastic, defamiliarises

<sup>1</sup> Я.Зунделович «Поэтика гротеска» in «Проблемы поэтики» под редакцией В.Я.Брюсова, Москва-Ленинград 1925, p.66

<sup>2</sup> В.Шкловский «О теории прозы», М.-Л. 1925, p.13

3 Я.Зунделович op.cit. p.60

the material to the point of impossibility, and because of this the grotesque is a device for complicating the form, creating what Shklovsky called (*zatrudnennaya forma*), since in comparison with other devices, it increases the difficulty of perceiving the thing and thus does what Shklovsky demands: "tears a thing out of the sequence of associations where it is usually found."<sup>1</sup>

The formalists were attracted to the grotesque by its ability to lay bare the form of the work, to make obvious the process of 'making' a thing, to stress the structure of the thing itself. "In comedy, the grotesque and parody" wrote Eikhenbaum "form as the system of certain precise artistic devices is stressed more strongly and clearly than in any other species."<sup>2</sup>

Studying the grotesque on the basis of the classical works of Gogol and Dostoevsky, the formalists made extremely valuable observations on the composition, style and language of grotesque works. The titles themselves of the formalists' articles (such as Eikhenbaum's "Kak sdelana Shinel'", Slonimsky's "Tekhnika komicheskogo u Gogolya", Tynyanov's "K teorii parodii") indicate that the formalists were attracted by the external side of the work. Though they gave brilliant analyses of the devices of the grotesque, the formalists unfortunately did not try to define the rôle of these devices in an author's complete system of artistic representation of reality and did not attempt to find the connection between style and writer's vision of the world. As a result in the formalists' analyses grotesque devices as a rule exist in their own right and if they are conditioned it is only by the author's striving towards the "playing

<sup>1</sup> В. Шкловский, *op.cit.* p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> В. Эйхенбаум «Некрасов» in «О поэзии», Ленинград, 1969, p. 36

with reality". Eikhenbaum, for instance, states: "The style of the grotesque demands firstly that the situation or event being described be enclosed in a world of artificial experiences, small to the point of fantasticality (as in "Old-world Landowners" and "The Story of the Quarrel...") and completely isolated from reality at large and from the genuine fullness of spiritual life, and secondly that this be done not with a didactic and not with a satirical purpose but with the purpose of opening up space for 'playing with reality', - setting out and redistributing its elements, so that its usual interrelations and connecting links (psycheological and logical) turn out to be inoperative in this newly reconstructed world and any trifle may grow to colossal proportions".<sup>1</sup> The formalists never gave a theoretical definition of the term "grotesque". However well-prepared they were theoretically, they manifestly avoided analysing the works of their contemporaries; as Zamyatin put it: "the formalists still do not risk operating on people who are alive and continue to experiment on corpses."<sup>2</sup>

As well as being the period of great interest in the concept of the grotesque the 20's also marked the flowering of the grotesque in Soviet contemporary writing. These were the years when Russian prose was developing under the influence of Bely, Remizov, Zamyatin, the writers who reinterpreted Hegel's use of the grotesque in their writings and whose influence in this can be traced in many succeeding Soviet writers. The 20's were the years of great experimentation and relative freedom. These were the years of great upheaval, breaking of old structures, old ways of life. We can call these years a

<sup>1</sup>Б.Эйхенбаум «Как сделана Шинель» in «О прозе», Ленинград.1969.р.322.

<sup>2</sup>Б.Замятин «Новая русская проза» in «Лица», Международное литературное содружество.1967.р.193.

turning-point of history. And it is generally accepted that the grotesque as a rule appears in such periods: "The grotesque thrives in an atmosphere of disorder and is inhibited in any period characterized by a pronounced sense of dignity, an emphasis on the harmony and order of life, an affinity for the typical and normal and a prosaically realistic approach to the arts."<sup>1</sup> In these years Soviet satire reached the highest point of its development. The development of Soviet satire was partly hastened by the introduction of NEP which favoured the appearance of profiteers and swindlers, a prime target for satirists. The Soviet bureaucrat made his first appearance in these years and the Soviet philistine firmly established himself in a form reminiscent of that pre-revolutionary years. A few writers came to the grotesque as a result of their disillusionment in NEP, thus reflecting in their works all the fear and confusion that seized them in the face of the revival of forms of life which they hoped were gone for good.

In the 20's Mayakovsky creates his grotesque plays and Bulgakov - the master of the grotesque - comes into literature. To the 20's belongs the activity of the 'Serapion Brothers' - the literary group uniting different writers through their desire to find their own style, all of them being dissatisfied with the simple reflection of reality in literature. No matter how different these writers were, they often used grotesque devices. Zoshchenko experiments with the language, adding a grotesque character to his language with combination of various layers of language. The 'Serapion' Kaverin makes wide use

<sup>1</sup>L.B.Jennings "The ludicrous demon." Aspects of the Grotesque in German Post Romantic Prose. 1963.p.26.

of the grotesque in composition, skilfully mixing fantasy and reality. Tynyanov, as critic and as novelist, stands for the renovation of genre as a reaction against the familiarity which had invalidated the old artistic forms. "One has to break a thing somehow in order to feel it afresh. In literature evidently something glued together is stronger than something intact"<sup>1</sup>, maintains Tynyanov, and this opens the way for the grotesque, since in 'glueing' the parts together distortion or displacement are inevitable and it is all a question of the degree of the distortion and the sharpness of the displacement. If the displacement has a fantastic character it would not be far removed from the grotesque.

Zamyatin's hypothesis about the synthetic tendency in the development of Russian prose dates also from the 20's. In Zamyatin's opinion, so dynamic a period in a society's development as the post-revolutionary years would inevitably bring about a move towards synthesisism in Russian prose. Zamyatin tried to define the typical features of the new synthetic art: "1) Retreat from realism and everyday life. 2) Fast moving, fantastic subject. 3) Condensation in symbolism and colours. Only a synthetic characteristic of each phenomenon is given and not a detailed description. 4) Concentrated, concise language, choice of words with maximum efficiency. 5) Observation of changing phenomena and phases leads to attempts to establish the ultimate aims of the movement. Hence the elements of philosophy and of broad general conclusions grow into the artistic organism"<sup>2</sup>. As the

<sup>1</sup> Д.Тынянов «Литературное сегодня» in «Русский современник» 1924 No.1, p.299

<sup>2</sup> «Дискуссия о современной литературе» in «Русский современник» 1924 No.2, p.275

artist's motto Zamiatin suggests "shift and warp" (sdvig,krivizna)<sup>1</sup>. By virtue of its specific character - its fondness for alogical disorder and disharmony and its dislike of unity - , the grotesque is extremely close to synthetic art. All the features mentioned by Zamiatin - the striving of synthesisism for exaggeration, generalization, the synthesis of fantasy and reality, the dislocation of the planes in space and time, and the creation of synthetic images - are characteristic of the grotesque in general, although the concept of the grotesque is narrower than the concept of synthesisism. But the purpose of the grotesque, like the purpose of synthesisism, is often to reveal the true nature of the phenomenon. According to Meierkhold, "the grotesque, being the second stage towards stylization, has managed to do away with analysis. Its method is strictly synthetic. The grotesque creates without compromise (on the level of conventional improbability, of course) a complete fullness of life without concerning itself with petty details"<sup>2</sup>.

The Soviet critic Yuri Mann considers generalization to be the essential feature of the grotesque; "The grotesque - he writes - emerges as a striving for extreme generalization, summing up and extraction of some sense and essence from the phenomenon, time and history. Obviously there are definite psychological rules under which the grotesque with its characteristic defamiliarization and condensation of colours, lines, etc., involuntarily produces broader associations and evokes generalization"<sup>3</sup>.

Zamiatin's forecast about the future development of Russian prose was unfortunately not fulfilled; this was not by any means Zamiatin's fault or the fault of those writers who gave preference to synthesisism and therefore to the grotesque at a certain stage of their development.

<sup>1</sup> «Дискуссия о современной литературе», op. cit., p.276

<sup>2</sup> В.Мейерхольд, op. cit., p.225

<sup>3</sup> Ю.Манн «О гротеске в литературе», Москва 1966, p.59

It was largely the result of imposing on literature the method of socialist realism which demanded "the reproduction of a lifelike verisimilitude, the conveying of the content of reality within the bounds of reality itself"<sup>1</sup>.

It was no accident that in the 1930's with the official proclamation of socialist realism as the main method of Soviet art we observe a sharp fall in the number of works using grotesque devices and witness the decline of satirical genres and an increase in attacks on writers using the grotesque. The 1930's are years of stabilization and of a prosaically realistic approach to art. Not surprisingly, the authors of the literary encyclopaedia of 1930 deny any place for the grotesque in these years. In their opinion the grotesque reflects the instability of being: "Epochs of social and economic equilibrium are not familiar with the grotesque. The grotesque appears at times of economic, political and ideological crisis. In these periods a social psychology emerges which reflects a recognition of the misery, decay and instability of existence. Such a social psychology is most typical for the decadent moods of dying social groups which are being swept from the arena of history. Their cultivation of the grotesque reflects the instability of existence, their duality and the instability of their outlook. The grotesque of Bulgakov and Ehrenburg - fellow-travellers - has this decadent character"<sup>2</sup>.

So it came about that the grotesque, in the broad meaning of the term, was the lot of writers who did not accept the revolution and fellow-travellers who doubted the triumph of socialism. In the 30's

<sup>1</sup> В.А.Ковалёв «Многообразие стилей в советской литературе» М.-Л. 1965, p.84

<sup>2</sup> «Литературная энциклопедия», op. cit., p.35

the grotesque becomes an extremely dangerous practice. Usage of it risked the accusation of slandering socialism, of deliberate distortion of the picture of reality, of violating the main principles of socialist realism and of numerous other sins. This situation continued until the middle of the 50's. Naturally, the number of writers using the grotesque fell sharply. But this does not mean that there was a complete absence of grotesque works in the 1930's. Bulgakov's works ("Master i Margarita"), Schwartz's ("Ten"), Platonov's ("Gorod Gradov") and Tynyanov's ("Voskovaya persona") are in themselves adequate refutation of this. The tragedy however is that some of the main works of the above-mentioned writers saw the light of day only in the 1960's and, as they dealt with topical questions of the 30's, they could not have any influence on events. But the very fact that they were written refutes the existing opinion of the 30's as years of complete artistic decline and stylistic monotony in Soviet literature. Unfortunately, in the years that followed the grotesque was kept even more in the background in Soviet literature, and in the system of socialist realism a small place is found for it only in satire. Being alien to socialist realism and to realism in general, "the only function left for the grotesque under socialist realism is to be a means of caricature and parodying its enemies"<sup>1</sup>. The grotesque can serve only "as one of the means, but not the chief means, a subsidiary, but not the main weapon of satire"<sup>2</sup>. It can only be a subordinate element in the sort of artistic picture which basically satisfies a demand for verisimilitude. Without this condition the grotesque is sheer arbitrariness, formalistic

<sup>1</sup> «Литературная энциклопедия», op. cit., p.36

<sup>2</sup> А.С.Бущин «О гиперболе и гротеске в сатире Щедрина» in «Вопросы советской литературы» V, М.-Л. 1957, p.29

twisting and turning"<sup>1</sup>. Taking into account the pitiful state of satire itself, with compulsory observance of demands for verisimilitude even in satirical analysis inevitably distorting its specific character, the grotesque ceases to exist altogether in the 40's and the first half of the 50's with the important exception of Schwartz's plays. Only in the second half of the 50's and the beginning of the 60's does the enlightenment come, and the term grotesque acquires the former popularity of the 20's. In 1965 Bakhtin's book written in 1941 was published under the title "Tvorchestvo Rabelais i narodnaya kul'tura srednevekov'ya i renessansa" and at last gave due attention to the problem. In 1966 there appeared Yurii Mann's work "O groteske v literature" in which the author tried to define the place of the grotesque in modern literature. We should also mention two articles by D.Nikolaev in the journal "Voprosy literatury"<sup>2</sup>, both of which confirm the mounting interest in the grotesque among Soviet critics.

Bakhtin's work is without doubt the most valuable. As well as analyzing the problem of the grotesque in the Renaissance, Bakhtin raises a great number of questions in relation to the modern grotesque. Unfortunately he ignores the grotesque in Soviet literature, although in twentieth century literature he notes the existence of two kinds of the grotesque - the modernist grotesque connected with the traditions of the Romantic grotesque (Kayser's book is devoted to the study of this kind of grotesque)-, and the realistic grotesque, connected, in Bakhtin's opinion with the traditions of grotesque realism and folk culture. The concept of the modernist grotesque follows from the development of the Romantic grotesque. This is related to the writer's dualistic world view

<sup>1</sup>.ibid., p.10

<sup>2</sup>.Д.Николаев «Границы гротеска» in «Вопросы литературы», 1968 No.4 and «История одного города» и проблема сатирического гротеска in «Вопросы литературы», 1971 No.2

his attitude that the world is unstable and that everything is collapsing and disintegrating. For Kayser, for example, the main thing in the grotesque is something hostile, alien and non-human, "ominous and sinister in the face of a world totally different from the familiar one", "the grotesque is the estranged world. But some additional explanation is required, for, viewed from the outside, the world of the fairytale could also be regarded as strange and alien. Yet its world is not estranged, that is to say, the elements in it which are familiar and natural to us do not suddenly turn out to be strange and ominous. It is our world which has to be transformed"<sup>1</sup>.

It is clear that such a type of grotesque in Soviet literature can only be met with a rebuff from the critics, since socialist realism intends to show the world as anything but chaotic, alien, or unstable and the position of the writer should be anything but indefinite or vague. No wonder that some grotesque works containing an indefinite attitude to everything (such as Bulgakov's works) were met with fierce attacks in Soviet criticism. Yet despite the attempts of the critics to diminish this type of the grotesque in Soviet literature of the NEP period quite a number of the elements of the modernist grotesque originating in the Romantic grotesque can be found there. The same can be said about the second type of the grotesque, the realistic grotesque, which Bakhtin links to the traditions of grotesque realism and to a specific carnivalised outlook ("karnaval'noe miroshchushchenie") that belongs to folk culture. It is ambivalent in its nature and has a very strong laughter element resulting from the annual cheerful

<sup>1</sup> Kayser, op. cit., p.184

destruction of time now passed and the death of time. It is possible to find elements of this type of the grotesque in Bulgakov's "Master i Margarita" and in Mayakovsky's "Klop". It is not our task, however, to distinguish these elements in the works of the writers under discussion. Neither are we going to determine which scholar, Kayser or Bakhtin, is nearer the truth. Most likely, both are right, but, dealing with different kinds of material, come to different conclusions. As Jostein Börtens comments on Bakhtin's theory: "This limitation of the gloomy and oppressive forms of grotesque imagery to certain manifestations of romantic and contemporary art and literature is, however, arbitrary and unhistorical. The chimeric world of demonic grotesque may be traced back at least into the Middle Ages. Most likely it constitutes a negative pole of the gay and liberating grotesque of carnival festivals"<sup>1</sup>.

In general we have to note the sharply satirical orientation of the grotesque in Soviet literature. Bakhtin's reluctance to discuss the grotesque in Soviet literature can be explained by this, since Bakhtin has reservations about the satirical grotesque generally: "Where the grotesque comes to the aid of an abstract tendency, its nature is inevitably distorted since the essence of the grotesque is to express the contradictory and double-faced fulness of life"<sup>2</sup>.

A negative attitude to satire characterises the majority of scholars of the grotesque (Kayser, Jennings, Börtens, Bakhtin, Eikhenbaum). Some critics even deny the presence of the grotesque

<sup>1</sup>Jostein Börtens "Gogol's 'Revizor' - a Study in the Grotesque", in "Scandoslavica" 1969 No.15, p.48.

<sup>2</sup>M.БАХТИН, op. cit., p.71

in works where the satirical intention is very strong. Some, like Kayser, suggest the existence of a special type of the grotesque, namely the satirical, as opposed to the fantastic<sup>1</sup>. Only Soviet critics seem to accept the beneficial influence of satire on grotesque works: "The grotesque can serve, and very successfully serves, the purposes of satire. And it is not in the least degenerated or distorted by this. Moreover it is in satire that it achieves its primary development, and it is with satire that its flourishing in realistic art is linked"<sup>2</sup>. We will take the opposite view, however: that an author's intention to satirize influences and changes the very nature of the grotesque. Mayakovsky will serve as our example in this connection. We will treat the grotesque as an aspect of the comic, since beyond the limits of the comic the concept of the grotesque becomes extremely diffuse, opening up the possibility of relating to the grotesque everything that is strange and unusual. In this sense we agree with Bakhtin that "laughter is an essential feature of the grotesque; in situations of total seriousness no grotesque is possible"<sup>3</sup>. But it needs to be noted that the laughter in different forms of the grotesque is of different types (humour, irony, sarcasm, the infernal laughter of the Romantic grotesque). So our definition will read thus: the grotesque is a form of the comic consisting of an artificial fantastic structure, combining phenomena that cannot be met together in real life. We have limited our definition to the structural features; it has to be noted that at the basis of the grotesque structure lies a certain principle of artistic

<sup>1</sup> Kayser, op. cit., p.189

<sup>2</sup> Д.Николаев «Границы гротеска» op. cit., p.91

<sup>3</sup> М.Бактин, op. cit., p.44

thinking; in most cases the grotesque reflects the author's perception of the world and his complex attitudes to reality.

For this pure type of the grotesque the fantastic element is absolutely essential. Its presence destroys the familiar causal connections, standard concepts and normal relationships of reality. (Kayser's concept of the alienated world which is typical for the grotesque would be relevant here). In acknowledging the necessity for the fantastic element we are following the main orientation of Soviet criticism (Yu. Borev, D. Nikolaev, Yu. Mann). It is necessary, however, to make the reservation that the presence of the fantastic does not by itself produce the grotesque. One only needs to remember science fiction or fairytale where a fantastic element is present but no grotesque. The reason for this is that in both genres, in pure science fiction or in pure fairytale, there is only the one, fantastic, plane. Science fiction is based on the plane of scientific hypothesis; everything follows from this and the action develops on this one fantastic plane. Similarly, the fairytale is a single-plane structure.

In the grotesque two planes are essential but they have to be connected artificially in the form of sharply contrasting planes which do not merge into one, so combining phenomena which are in reality incombable. As Eisenstein stated it in the 30's: "The elements of the artificial bringing-together of the fantastic and the real create the specific quality of the grotesque. The non-bringing-together of the levels, the absence of a synthesis, is the characteristic of the grotesque. The material plane and the non-material are present here not as a unity which is turned to show now one facet, now another, but, on the contrary are given as the penetration of one plane into another and the manifest

collision of the real with the unreal"<sup>1</sup>.

Thus it is not so much a question of the phenomena themselves as of their new appearance as a result of their artificial combination. In Nikolaev's words: "The grotesque requires the appearance of the sort of combinations of objects, figures, attributes, phenomena, actions which are impossible in real life"<sup>2</sup>. This new grotesque structure we face in the literary work is utterly absurd and ridiculous. Structurally it consists of heterogeneous elements. One of the elements in this grotesque structure may be completely real, it can be part of everyday life or society, but the other element may be purely fantastic, supernatural, the product of the author's imagination (such as the phosphorescent woman in a Soviet office in Mayakovsky's "Banya", or the devil's presence in Moscow in Bulgakov's "Master i Margarita", or the monstrous reptiles attacking the country in Bulgakov's "Rokovye yaitsa"). What we are faced with here is the particularly artificial nature of the combination. A heterogeneous element is brought in from without and seems outwardly unjustified, but it is only so at first glance since on deeper enquiry we start to see clearly that there is a connection between both elements which makes the combination possible, however awkward.

In the case where the grotesque is constructed from heterogeneous elements, both of which exist in nature or society, we have particularly to take into account the extent to which the laws of reality are distorted in the resulting combination. If the connections between phenomena and their appearance are so much distorted that a strange new world with its own laws is created and if in this world we recognise the true features

<sup>1</sup>С.Эйзенштейн in «Вопросы литературы» 1968 No.1, pp.106-107.

<sup>2</sup>Д.Николаев «Границы гротеска» op. cit., p.80.

of reality only with difficulty, we are faced with the grotesque. If, despite the combination of elements remote from one another, reality can still be perceived and the laws of reality are displaced but not broken to the point where they are completely unrecognizable, it would be better to talk about the 'grotesque colouration' of the work. Sometimes, despite the distortion of its proportions, the world depicted by the writer is too close to existing reality or is not ridiculous enough to be called a grotesque world. In this study we will use both terms: "fantastic grotesque" and "grotesque colouration".

As we have mentioned already, the grotesque is a form of the comic. This does not mean that the grotesque in Soviet literature is devoid of a tragic element. In the grotesque work the tragic is often hidden: on the surface lies the express comic element, and the reader is confronted first of all with something outwardly incredible and he can only laugh at it; "But he can go further, perceiving the essence of the grotesque and then the whole depth and full meaning of its comedy will be revealed to him"<sup>1</sup>, as Mann suggests. In relation to the grotesque one has some justification in supposing that the comic demands a developed aesthetic taste. As Mann comments: "The lightness of the comedy does not exclude its seriousness. Comedy in the grotesque is released in the grotesque with the comprehension of the reasonable in the unreasonable, of the natural in the strange"<sup>2</sup>. The deeper the reader penetrates the content of the grotesque work, the clearer it becomes to him that the comic element in the grotesque is often intertwined with a powerful dramatic or tragic element. As a rule comic and tragic elements exist together in the grotesque, alternating, with one or other prevailing.

<sup>1</sup> D.MANN, op. cit., p.131

<sup>2</sup> ibid., p.132

We are primarily interested in the fantastic grotesque. We shall deal with those works in which the grotesque applies to almost all the elements of its structure and is a part of its composition, used in constructing its characters and even penetrating into its language. In our study we have chosen to analyze the works of Mayakovsky, Bulgakov and Schwartz. The choice of these three writers may be justified by the following considerations: 1) Mayakovsky, from the very beginning of his literary career, was hostile towards a simple reflection of reality; he was always inclined towards exaggerated imagery and towards the fantastic. We will take Mayakovsky because Soviet literature actually starts with him. (For this reason we do not touch on the work of Zamiatin who stands on the borderline between Russian classical literature and Soviet literature). Mayakovsky is also interesting because of his combination of the fantastic grotesque with satire. 2) We shall take Bulgakov because he is one of the main representatives of the fantastic grotesque, the great master of the mixing of real and fantastic elements, and also because even at the end of the 30's when the majority of writers had abandoned this method Bulgakov continued to be loyal to it. His novel "Master i Margarita" bears witness to this. Bulgakov is also interesting because in his works the grotesque never played a purely satirical role as in Mayakovsky. 3) We shall take Schwartz in whose works the fantastic grotesque took a particular form - the fairytale.

It may seem strange that we should be analyzing the dramatic works of Mayakovsky and Schwartz together with the prose of Bulgakov, but Bulgakov is not only a prose writer. He is also a dramatist and in his prose his technique very often follows that of the dramatist. Despite the great differences between these writers, there is a certain similarity

as far as their grotesque devices are concerned. All three writers use the grotesque in composition, in the construction of their characters, and some of the devices of their grotesque language are similar. We shall be concerned not only with the devices of the fantastic grotesque used by these different writers, but also with the connection between the grotesque and their outlook on the world.

## II Mayakovsky

### 1. The structural features of Mayakovsky's grotesque.

A. The presentation of everyday reality  
(the plane of the real).

B. The presentation of the fantastic  
(the plane of the fantastic) and the  
emergence of the grotesque.

**A. The presentation of everyday reality (the plane of the real).**

It should be clear from the introduction that by the structure of the fantastic grotesque, we usually mean a certain combination of the two planes of the fantastic and the real. The grotesque of Mayakovsky, Bulgakov and Schwartz is constructed in this way. Before considering the resulting grotesque structure itself we will try to differentiate and examine both these planes in the grotesque of the above-mentioned authors. What are these two planes? What makes their combination possible? As we know, their parallel existence does not by itself produce the grotesque. It is necessary that these two planes interact. First of all let us examine the presentation of everyday reality. Is there anything in its depiction that can justify the appearance of a heterogeneous fantastic element? Is it completely alienated, unrecognizable or are there any indications of period and historical verisimilitude? We will begin with the structure of Mayakovsky's grotesque in his plays "Klop" and "Banya".

The first act of the play "Klop" shows the 1920's, the NEP period. Everyday life is caricatured, its proportions are distorted, its episodes are sharply exaggerated. The events of the first act of the play are reduced to a few episodes (the shopping scene at the doors of the department store, the scene in the hostel for working youths, and the wedding)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>. By the first act we mean the first four scenes which are related to the plane of reality.

Despite the distortion of the truth of everyday life and the obvious absurdity of behaviour and language of the characters, the first act on the whole is not perceived as grotesque. Even such a distorted scene as the scene of the wedding constructed on the combination of two concepts as remote from each other as a wedding and a party-meeting (*svadba zasedanie*)<sup>1</sup> is perceived as a mere caricature. Though built on obvious distortion of proportions, the scene does not arouse sharp alienation, does not create something strange, unusual, because of the intrusions (deliberately stressed) of indications of contemporary reality, of the deliberate approximation of the situations, characters, phrases in the scene with those from newspaper feuilletons based on factual material of that time. The authenticity of the indications of reality is felt everywhere. This apparently was felt particularly by the reader (spectator) of the 1920's, who was familiar with all the problems of the NEP period, since newspapers were full of them. And then Mayakovsky himself said that "the basic material treated in the play are the facts which came into my newspaperman's and propagandist's hands. In my play there are no situations which are not supported by dozens of authentic cases."<sup>2</sup> Actions, words and episodes from real life are visible behind the situations of "Klop". Mayakovsky even refers to the facts that lay at the basis of his play. In his film scenario "Pozabud' pro kamin"<sup>3</sup> which was the prototype of "Klop", Mayakovsky directly cites the articles from the newspaper "Komsomol'skaya

<sup>1</sup>The term is used, for example, by В.МЯКОВСКИЙ «Сатирики время». Советский писатель. Москва 1963, p.145.

<sup>2</sup>В. Маяковский, v.12, p.190.

<sup>3</sup>В. Маяковский, v.11, pp.191-212.

pravda" and the magazine "Kultura i revolyutsia". Meierkhold, in his famous production of "Klop", also strived for maximum authenticity and audience recognition. The scenes were supposed to allow the audience to recognize the vulgarity surrounding them in real life, and authentic vulgar objects bought in state shops were displayed on the stage, etc.<sup>1</sup> All this creates an impression of insufficient artistic treatment of the facts - associations with facts were too obvious to the spectator. Even the wedding party-meeting of Prisyarkin happens to be a parody on the scenario "The new wedding" ("svadba po-novomu") in V. Bayan's "Red fête" ("Kumachovye gulyanki")<sup>2</sup>. Of course, the modern reader (spectator) does not perceive this scene as a parody on something definite, but it is quite possible that the reader of the 20's, familiar with the details of everyday life, took it exactly in that way. As a result, despite the use of caricature in the depiction of the plane of reality, we unmistakably recognize the typical everyday life of the 20's. The illusion of reality is created with the help of these indications. We can say that in depiction of the plane of reality in Mayakovsky's play "Klop", two tendencies interact. On the one hand we can observe the sharp caricaturing of everyday life. This distortion alone can be brought to the level of the grotesque, but Mayakovsky does not take it so far. On the other hand, the factual material, the preservation of a documentary basis, visible beneath caricatured situations and characters, creates verisimilitude. The second tendency turns out to be stronger than the first. As a result we have a rather topical caricature close to the depictions to be found in newspaper feuilletons. But due to this

<sup>1</sup> See К. Рудинский «Режиссёр Мейерхольд» Москва, 1969, p. 402.

<sup>2</sup> Б. Милевский, op. cit. p. 142. See also В. Баян «Кумачовые гулянки. Хороводные игры». Серия «Красные посиделки» М-Л изд. Молодая Гвардия. 1927.

caricaturing a grotesque coloration is imprinted on the depiction of reality of the first act.

The scene of the wedding, however, is often presented on the stage with a shift towards the grotesque. This relates particularly to the second half of the scene where the factual material is limited. Meierkhold, for example, in his production of "Klop" in 1928, presented the "red wedding" as philistine bacchanalia totally estranged from reality with the characters behaving in an absurdly illogical manner: the barber's attack on the matron of honour with the fork in a satan-like manner, the threatening screams of the best man disrupting the atmosphere of contentment among the guests, the growing confusion and final destruction of the characters.<sup>1</sup>

We might also suggest that the grotesque nature of the wedding scene (and this relates to the grotesque coloration of the whole first act dealing with reality of the 20's) will increase for another reason. The factual material of the play becomes more and more obsolete for the modern spectator, the topical elements of everyday life are fading and the theme itself loses its sharpness and evokes fewer associations with reality. And if the spectator of the 20's would never be sure whether he is facing an alienated reality where all the rules are distorted to the point of the absurd, the modern spectator is more inclined to see it in that light.

In Mayakovsky's second play "Banya", we are concerned with the social order. The play is directed against the bureaucracy and the red tape of the newly-established Soviet apparatus.

<sup>1</sup>К. Руденцкий, op.cit.p.403.

The subject provides many opportunities for introducing grotesque shifts. The attributes of the grotesque, alogism and the absence of motivation are embedded in bureaucracy. Reality in "Banya" is much more sinister than reality in "Klop". We are confronted with a "paper kingdom". It is headed by the Chief Coordinator, Pobedonosikov, who leads the administration entrusted to him « к социализму по гениальным стопам Карла Маркса и согласно предписаниям центра»(p.301)<sup>1</sup>. On the same social ladder, but lower than Pobedonosikov, stands his secretary, Optimistenko, who guards the peace of his master, and respects «ТОЛЬКЕ ТО ЛИЦО, КОТОРОЕ ПОСТАВЛЕНО И СТОИТ»(p.344). Bureaucracy penetrates all spheres of life including art, theatre and press, which are embodied in a naturalistic painter of portraits and historical battles, Isaak Belvedonsky, a theatrical director adjusting his tastes to the tastes of the governing officials, and a reporter, Momentalnikov (Immediatik), who, as his name already suggests, is ready to fulfil immediately any order and abuse anyone as required. The universal figure of Ivan Ivanovich (a permanent yes-man) provides ample opportunities to illustrate bureaucracy running riot.

In "Banya" as in "Klop" Mayakovsky follows the same pattern of caricature, distortion of proportions, stressing the alogism of actions and motivations. But in "Banya" caricature at times reaches proportions of fantastic absurdity and thus comes close to the grotesque. Examples are: the behaviour of the characters, their arguments, gestures, remarks in the scene of Pobedonosikov conversing with the naturalistic painter of portraits and historic battles are so ridiculous that the situation exceeds the limits of pure caricature. Belvedonsky:

<sup>1</sup>All quotations from Mayakovsky are given from В.Маяковский. Полное собрание сочинений в 13 томах. Москва 1959. Изд. Художественной литературы.

«Какая скромность при заслугах! Очистите мне линию вашей боевой ноги. Как сапожок чисто блестит, прямо хоть линии»...«Карандаш дрожит. Не передать диалектику характера при общей бытовой скромности. Самоуважение у Вас, товарищ Победоносиков, титаническое! Блесните глазами через правое плечо и через самопишущую ручку-с.Позвольте увековечить это мгновение» (p.300-301).

Pobedonosikov's tirades which he dictates to his secretary are devoid of any logical sense, they are absurdities of a fantastic nature:

«Даже Лев Толстой, даже эта величайшая медведица пера, если бы ей удалось <sup>з</sup> взглянуть на наши достижения в виде вышеупомянутого трамвая, даже она заявила бы перед лицом мирового империализма: Не могу молчать. Вот они красивые плоды обязательного просвещения» (p.296).

Equally ridiculous in its combination of the incombinable is Pobedonosikov's attempt to apply bureaucratic terminology to his family life. Pobedonosikov to his wife: «Надо и тебе уметь самообразовываться и диалектически лавировать. А что я вижу в твоём лице? Перехиток прошлого, цепь старого быта!».(p.312). Thus the grotesque coloration of "Banya's" reality seems to be stronger than "Klop's"; it is later intensified by the piling up of absurdities acquiring genuine grotesque qualities in the scenes with the phosphorescent woman. Nevertheless, despite this, at times, fantastically absurd character of reality in "Banya" this reality is as recognizable to a Soviet audience as the reality of "Klop". Extensive factual material brings verisimilitude to the seemingly fantastic situations and characters of the play. Milyavsky, in his book "Satirik i vremya", provides many examples of bureaucratic activities only slightly less fantastic than Pobedonosikov's. On the 18th April 1928, "Pravda" quotes the words of Stepanov - head of the Murmansk office "Sevzapgosrybtrest". In reply to reproaches

for participation in a drunken bout, Stepanov answered: «Вполне авторитетно заявляю: я был там по согласованию вопроса с ГПУ.» And when the note appeared in a wall-newspaper Stepanov found a way out quite in the manner of Pobedonosikov: «По постановлению ЦК партии я занимаюсь самокритикой и заметка «Диктатура» написана лично мною»<sup>1</sup>. Two tendencies we observed in the depiction of the plane of reality in "Klop" can easily be traced in "Banya". (The sharp caricaturing of life bordering on the absurd which creates the sensation of alienated reality, when we sense that our links with it are actually breaking, and the accumulation of factual material leading to associations with our world which restore our links with this world.) But as opposed to "Klop", the first tendency sometimes takes over and the caricature approaches the level of the grotesque.

We have mentioned in the introduction that the grotesque can serve as a means of construction of the characters. In "Klop (in the first act) construction of the characters is achieved without grotesque devices. We are mainly interested in Prisytkin, since it is he who becomes a grotesque character against the new fantastic background of the second act and starts to be perceived in a new way. It does not make other characters less important, since they are all part of reality in the first act. But together with Prisytkin some features of the twenties are transported into the fantastic future. In the depiction of the characters we find the same distortion of proportions, the same deliberate impoverishment by the exaggeration and development of only one feature.

<sup>1</sup> Милевский, op.cit. pp.86-87.

However, the characters, like the situations, do not become grotesque in the first act. The same factual material and documentary basis prevent the characters from acquiring a fantastic appearance. The indications of contemporary reality are constantly felt behind the caricatured Prisyarkin. Numerous documentary facts out of which Mayakovsky "squeezes" (pressuet)<sup>1</sup> the truth in Prisyarkin speak for themselves (numerous newspaper reports about workers betraying their class by marrying girls of bourgeois origin, the extreme forms that arguments concerning fashion took in the Komsomol etc.) All this helps the character, despite sharp exaggeration and caricature, to preserve some verisimilitude and real proportions or at least some outer similarity to them.

Prisyarkin's character is built on the principle of stressing his animalism. This animalism is created at the expense of the deliberate impoverishment of the character, the weakening and sometimes complete absence of psychological motivation in Prisyarkin's actions. The first act, for example, demonstrates Prisyarkin's complete inability to think, to grasp all the variety of meanings of the word ("red", for him, is only revolutionary, therefore he is in favour of the red wedding and he does not seem to make a distinction between the red sweating bride, the red ham and the red caps of the bottles on the table). Here is the picture of his realised dream - the red wedding in the ironic interpretation of Bayan: «Ваше классовое, возвышенное, изящное и упомительное торжество!... Невеста вылезает из кареты - красная невеста...вся красная,- упарилась, значит; ее выводит красный посаженный отец, бухгалтер Ерыкалов, - он как раз мужчина тучный, красный, апоплексический, - вводят это вас красные шафера, весь стол в красной ветчине и бутылки с красными головками. Красные гости кричат «горько, горько», и тут красная (уже супруга) протягивает Вам красные-красные губки»... (p.224).

<sup>1</sup>Маяковский.оп.сит. v.12.p.185.

In the first scene of the shopping, Prisyarkin and his cronies are surrounded by a parade of things and demonstrate their complete devotion to the material world. To intensify this Mayakovsky presents the things as animated. Here are a few examples from the salesman's jingles:

Пуговичный разносчик:

«Голландские,  
механические,  
самопрививающиеся пуговицы.» (p.217)

Разносчик кукол:

«Танцующие люди  
из балетных студий.  
Лучшая игрушка  
в саду и дома,  
танцует по указанию  
самого наркома!» (p.217);

from the author's remarks concerning the scenery:

«Большая парикмахерская комната. Бока в зеркалах. Рояль с разинутой  
пастью, справа печь, заворачивающая трубы по всей комнате.» (p.236);

from the remarks of the characters on Prisyarkin:

«Парень: Не в галстук дело, а в том, что не галстук, а к галстуку  
привязан. Даже не думает - головой пошевелить боится». (p.228);

from the remarks of Prisyarkin and his likes (about the grand piano):

«Под крылышко, под крылышко ее берите! Ух и зубов-то! Вдарить бы!» (p.237)

Присыркин: «Не оттопчите ножи моей рояли.» (p.237)

Prisyarkin's animalism is also created by the emphasis laid on his parasitical nature (his name itself confirms this: Prisyarkin comes from the word "rash"- сыпь). In Mayakovsky's opinion he is the parasite living on the body of the proletariat. So it happens that on the one hand Prisyarkin is the creature, devoid of ability to think (to motivate his actions and behaviour logically), on the other hand Prisyarkin is a parasite living at the expense of others. This emphasis on

animalism<sup>1</sup> is very important since it helps the caricatured character of Prisytkin in the first act to become grotesque in the second (against the new fantastic background), to be taken for an animal not figuratively, but literally. So we can say<sup>that</sup> on the plane of reality of "Klop", Mayakovsky presents everyday situations and characters with the help of caricature. Due to caricature a grotesque colouration is reflected on them. This colouration is a specific preparation for the conversions of situations and characters into the grotesque.

In Mayakovsky's second play "Banya", the characters are built by stressing their artificiality. The point of departure is possibly the poem "Iskusstvennye lyudi"<sup>2</sup> (1926) where the bureaucrat was called «Аппарат для рожения некоторых выражений» such as «надо согласовать», «неувязка», «в общем и целом». The artificiality of Pobedonosikov is already apparent in the post he occupies. Pobedonosikov - glavny nachal'nik po upravleniyu soglasovaniya (chief coordinator) - while abbreviated it is "glavnachpups"; "pups", a doll, is an artificial creation.

Being artificial dolls, Pobedonosikov and other characters speak in mechanised clichés which give the impression of their having been programmed. Mechanisation of speech is the main device Mayakovsky uses in characterizing these artificial people. It is often achieved by the repetition of remarks taken to absurdity. Here are, for example,

<sup>1</sup> The animal-like appearance of Prisytkin was well displayed by Il'yinsky who played the part of Prisytkin in Meierkhold's famous production. According to the witness Il'yinsky tried to emphasise the animalism of Prisytkin and spoke in an unpleasant voice with squeals and grunts. К.Рудницкий, op.cit.p.403.

<sup>2</sup> В.Маяковский, в.7, pp.203-205.

Optimistenko's constant repetitions:

«Каждый вопрос можно и увязать и согласовать»; Моментальников's  
«Эчеленца прикажите, аппетит наш не велик»; Ivan Ivanovich's  
«Надо открыть широкую кампанию»; «У вас есть телефон?»; Маленькие  
недостатки механизма»; «Лес рубят, щепки летят».

Mechanisation of speech may also be achieved by stressing the inability to think, to comprehend the right meanings of words, to draw proper conclusions. Ivan Ivanovich, for example, cannot grasp the meaning of a complete sentence. As in an imperfect machine only the last word of the phrase leaves an imprint in his brain leading to an incoherent accumulation of words. By purely visual association, the verb «разговаривать» recalls in his memory the imagery of «телефон», and makes him indulge in the tirade: «Я буду разговаривать с самим Павлом Варфоломеевичем... У вас есть телефон? Ах, у вас нет телефона!» (p.286) The mention of «механизм», however, leads his thoughts astray in a new direction: «Маленькие недостатки механизма. Ах, какие механизмы в Швейцарии! Вы бывали в Швейцарии? Везде одни швейцарцы. Удивительно интересно.» (p.286) Having heard Nozhkin's remark ending in «колбаса». «А ты организованно катись колбасой!!!» he clings to the last sounding word, and hurries to jabber: «Колбасой? Вы бывали на заседаниях? Я бывал на заседаниях. Везде бутерброды с сыром, с ветчиной, с колбасой - удивительно интересно!» (p.334).

As an extreme mechanisation of the character's speech, Mayakovsky uses the device of the speech of a broken mechanism. Pobedonosikov sometimes reminds one of a broken mechanism which starts to jam, to stammer and to lose any logical thought: «И над своим непосредственным, ответственным начальством и над посредственной... да нет, что я говорю! Над безответственной тенью Маркса... Не пускать! Задержать!... Прекратить!... Не позволю!» (p.296) Or Ivan Ivanovich who, thrown overboard by the

time machine, continues to blurt out like a wound-up automaton:

«Лес рубят - щепки летят. Маленькие... большие недостатки механизма.

Надо пойти привлечь советскую общественность. Удивительно интересно.»(p.346).

The shift towards artificiality of character is helped by their comparison to inanimate objects. It turns out that Optimistenko is «гладкий и полированный как дачный шар, на зеркальной поверхности которого отражается только начальство».(p.288) The following remarks are thrown in the direction of Pobedonosikov: «бумажный улав», «портфель набитый», «клипса канцелярская». The artificial nature of Mayakovsky's characters was well demonstrated in Yutkevich's film of "Banya" which used actual dolls in creating the bureaucrats' "synthesising masks".<sup>1</sup> One can say that the characters in "Banya" are built on caricature brought at times to a point of fantastic impossibility approaching the grotesque. Thus their grotesque colouration is stronger than in "Klop". The stressing of their artificiality and automatism gives us the impression that something alien is present in them and turns them into real machines. It is thus possible to suggest that the grotesque character of "Banya's" heroes increases on the plane of reality in comparison with "Klop". Prisyvkin's animalism, as we remember, was more human than the artificiality of the doll and the mechanised speech of "Banya's" characters. We would fail to identify Prisyvkin with an animal were it not for the people of the future.

<sup>1</sup> «Советский экран» 1961, N.14, p.7

B. The presentation of the fantastic (the plane of the fantastic)  
and the emergence of the grotesque.

As far as the fantastic plane is concerned, it is clearly separated from reality in "Klop". It is revealed in the second act. This is a fantastic picture of the future in the year 1979. How does Mayakovsky depict this fantastic plane? On the fantastic plane itself the grotesque as such is absent. Just as with everyday life on the real plane, Mayakovsky depicts the future with exaggerated features. However, the features exaggerated by Mayakovsky in the future are the opposite of those on the real plane. In fact, whereas in the depiction of everyday life the human weaknesses of the philistine (his liking for alcohol, his extreme vulgarity) which are perfidious but nevertheless human, in the depiction of the future on the second fantastic plane Mayakovsky takes as his basis and exaggerates only two aspects - automation and soullessness or the loss of individuality, the loss of all human weaknesses and shortcomings, collectivism raised to a fetish. We can see that the future is shown in a satirical light in the tradition of the anti-utopian novel.

The mere presence of the fantastic does not on its own produce the grotesque. The grotesque as such in Mayakovsky's play arises in the confrontation of two mutually exclusive planes - the fantastic and the real and in their interaction. As a result of such interaction numerous grotesque shifts occur. Whereas Prisyppkin perceives «розм и грѣш» on a vulgar sentimental philistine level (one extreme), people of the future can read about roses only in horticultural textbooks, and about daydreams only in medical works under the section on dreams, since the people of the future perceive everything in its naked materialism (another extreme).

In the same way shaking hands - the human way of greeting each other, presented by Mayakovsky in the first act in an exaggerated way as mutual pawing probably in a drunken state - takes in the future the other extreme form of "an ancient antisanitary custom"; falling in love is reduced by Mayakovsky to sentimental sighs to the music of the guitar and this turns into an ancient disease when «человечья половая энергия, разумно распределяемая на всю жизнь, вдруг скоротечно конденсируется в неделю в одном воспалительном процессе, ведя к безрассудным невероятным поступкам» (p.259). We are not interested in whether Mayakovsky wanted to express his vision of future communist society. It is important for us that such a picture with the shift towards dehumanisation adds a grotesque absurdity to the everyday life of the twenties.

On the background of this fantastic picture of the future the features and attributes of the life of the twenties brought by Prisyppkin to an alien environment acquire a grotesque character; human weaknesses and shortcomings lead to strange consequences. Ugly phenomena come to life: "the ancient diseases" rage in the city; the epidemic of love "takes on oceanic proportions"; hundreds of workers infected by a strange disease (alcoholism) lie in hospital and there is no shortage of those who want to be inoculated with a dose of this mysterious illness and in such a way to sacrifice themselves in the cause of science. It was necessary to establish huge ventilators to disperse the poisonous fumes of Prisyppkin's respiration, to strain every nerve of world medicine and science in order to stop the catastrophe spreading.

A grotesque shift occurs in Prisyppkin's character on his arrival in the <sup>society</sup> of the future. It is very important that in Prisyppkin's character features opposite to the features of the people of the future are exaggerated; Prisyppkin's character in the first act helps him become grotesque in the second act: Prisyppkin's exaggerated features, his

animalism and parasitical nature which have already been displayed in the first act assist firstly in bringing Prisyarkin closer to the bed-bug, the parasite, and then in their complete identification with one another, that is, they prepare Prisyarkin's transformation into the grotesque. In the second act the alogism of Prisyarkin's motivations bordering on impossibility is particularly emphasised: Prisyarkin is extremely delighted at the sight of the bed-bug and he is seized by grief at its disappearance. His response to the advertisement that a human body is required by the zoo to be constantly bitten is so ridiculous that it is almost impossible to motivate such an act from the point of view of logic. But it makes a shift to the grotesque and prepares for Prisyarkin's transformation into the bed-bug. Prisyarkin himself assists in this: he places himself and the bed-bug on the same level. As a result/<sup>at this point</sup>his Character begins to be deformed from the caricatured to the grotesque. The fact itself of Prisyarkin's unrecognizability to the people of the future as a human gives him a half-human appearance. The people of the future address Prisyarkin as a creature of neuter gender, they rank Prisyarkin with lower creatures. But the bed-bug, on the other hand, is raised by them to a higher rank. It appears at times almost human. Thus the scene of the hunting of the bed-bug is given in such hyperbolic terminology that one has a feeling that what they hunt is some highly developed animal if not human. Thus, by reducing Prisyarkin to the rank of lower creatures and by raising the bed-bug to the higher ones, the people of the future make it clear that there is very little difference between them. On the new soil of the sterilized fantastic future Prisyarkin turns out to be completely unacceptable for the people of the future. he becomes a zoological example of an anthropoid and "with the help of comparative bestiology "the people of the future completely identify him with the parasite - the bed-bug. He is "the most striking parasite"

and differs from the insect "bed-bug normalis" only in size. Prisyarkin is the animal and his place is in a cage. In this for Mayakovsky is "the bestial essence of philistinism".

Another difference between Prisyarkin of the first act and Prisyarkin of the second is that in the first act as a result of documentary material, Prisyarkin was perceived as caricature of the contemporary Tom, Dick or Harry; he acted in the familiar (for him and the audience of the 20's) environment and caused laughter as a result of the immediate recognition of familiar things. In the second act, being the only person transported into the future, Prisyarkin exceeds the limits of the concrete character and acquires some generalized meaning, becomes a symbolic character.<sup>1</sup> Prisyarkin's transformation from a caricatured character into a grotesque one is carried out due to the unusual angle of vision. Prisyarkin is an animal and parasite in the eyes of the people of the future. It is they who finally identify him with an animal. As we have seen, the basis of this identification was already laid in his caricatured depiction, built on exaggeration of his animalism.

The collision of the fantastic plane with the real takes place in the second act. Introducing the fantastic Mayakovsky uses two dramatic moments: Zoya's attempt on her life ended unsuccessfully in order to make Zoya a witness, the contemporary of Prisyarkin, and perhaps to show how the future changes the person; and the dramatic scene of the fire devoid of dramatism due to which Prisyarkin's later resurrection itself in the future society becomes possible, his transportation from one time into another. One can say that Mayakovsky's grotesque is built on the intersection of the present with the future; it rests on the equation of the real plane with the present and the fantastic plane with the future. So two persons from the present have arrived in the future;

<sup>1</sup>. М.Эвентов «Маяковский - сатирик», Ленинград, 1940, р.120.

one of them, Zoya, has grown into it naturally, the other, Prisytkin, is placed there in an artificial way. The man of the future and Prisytkin, the attributes of everyday life of the 20's, and the future, mutually exclude each other. In their interaction ugly grotesque phenomena arise. In such a way the fantastic grotesque of Mayakovsky's play "Klop" is built on the combination of the uncombinable, heterogeneous elements: the real - the present and the fantastic - the future.

The fantastic plane in "Banya" is less developed than in "Klop". We are presented with the phosphorescent woman but we can only imagine the future communist society she represents. It is obvious though that the society she comes from is free from bureaucracy and red tape which dominate the present. The phosphorescent woman herself does not constitute a background for grotesque transformations as does the fantastic picture of the future in "Klop". But she quickens the transformations. Yu.Mann<sup>1</sup> describes her as the peculiar catalyst or litmus paper who reveals the absurdity of the bureaucracy. Because of this pure accelerative function<sup>2</sup> of the fantastic element (phosphorescent woman in this case) more emphasis is made in "Banya" on the moment of confrontation between this fantastic and the contemporary planes, on the characters' attitudes to the fantastic. The characters in "Banya" accept the fantastic without thinking and react to the appearance of the phosphorescent woman merely according to their bureaucratic function. Optimistenko's main concern is to check whether her documents are in order. In the same manner Pobedonosikov immediately

<sup>1</sup> Ю.МАНН, op.cit.p.135

<sup>2</sup> The future in "Klop" also played accelerative function but it was presented more as reality of its own.

issues the order to his secretary: «Накрути хвост вертушке. Справься там, знаешь у кого, возможная ли это вещь,сообразно ли это с партэтикой и мыслимо ли безбожнику верить в такие сверхъестественные явления.» (p.322)

The grotesque nature of Pobedonosikov is brought out in conversations with phosphorescent woman when he strives to acquire cosmic proportions with his intentions to bureaucratize the whole planet. «Получив штаты, я переведу масштаб в международный. Надеюсь, вы не хотите обесканцелярить и дезорганизовать планету.» (p.342)

We can now draw a conclusion that the structure of Mayakovsky's grotesque in both plays follows the general law of the grotesque (a combination of two mutually exclusive elements: the fantastic and the real; the real being equated with the present and the fantastic with the future). And though the fantastic element is less developed in "Banya", it is present to a larger degree in the plane of reality, being the product of ridiculous features embodied in it.

Let us also note another feature of "Banya" as opposed to "Klop". On the plane of reality in "Banya" there exists a positive side of reality as well as the negative side of bureaucracy. This positive reality of the present also confronts the fantastic plane of the future but without any resulting grotesque effect, since this positive reality is living in hope of such a future and moving towards it, sharing its final aims. It also contrasts strongly with the petrified reality of the bureaucrats which holds everything back to the past. The grotesque shift arises as a result of the confrontation of the fantastic future with the negative reality only. It only confirms the fact that for the grotesque the confrontation of two elements which exclude each other is essential.

**2. The elements of comedy and tragedy in Mayakovsky's grotesque structure.**

**A. Comedy and its devices.**

**B. The satirical function.**

**C. The tragic element.**

In Mayakovsky we find a distinctly comic form of grotesque structure. All the conflicts are resolved comically; everything is destroyed by laughter. All the situations and conflicts in Mayakovsky's plays are built on the shift of the various up to the point of the ridiculous, on the reduction of the so-called "significant". The characters make pretensions to significance, indeed to reality, and the collapse of their intentions reveals their extraordinary worthlessness. Principally intended "by looking after his own interests to raise the standards of the whole proletariat", "to bring it closer to culture", but the future

#### A. Comedy and its devices

In our introduction we have already mentioned that we intended to treat the grotesque as a form of the comic. This conclusion follows from the history of the concept and from the form that the grotesque takes in the works of Mayakovsky, Bulgakov and Schwartz. The grotesque is a form of the comic but the comic element in the grotesque does not represent a simple accumulation of comic situations, images, verbal means and so on. As we have already mentioned, the comic in the grotesque is notable for its complexity and has two levels. On the surface the comic component of the work seems frivolous and unassuming and we do not at once sense the serious and tragic depth of the implausibly funny constructions. One can say that in the grotesque work two tendencies interact: one strengthens the superficial lightness of the comic by introducing traditional devices of comedy, the other plays the opposite rôle destroying this outer lightness and frivolity and strengthening the tragic side of the same comic constructions. Our task is to find out which tendency prevails in the grotesque work of Mayakovsky, Bulgakov and Schwartz. What are the comic devices they employ? What is the relationship between the comic and the tragic in their works? How tense is this relationship between the comic and the tragic?

In Mayakovsky we find a distinctly comic form of grotesque structure. All the conflicts are resolved comically; everything is destroyed by laughter. All the situations and conflicts in Mayakovsky's plays are built on the shift of the serious on to the plane of the ridiculous, on the reduction of the so-called "significant". The characters have pretensions to significance, indeed to sublimity, but the collapse of their intentions reveals their extraordinary worthlessness. Prisytkin intends "by looking after his own comforts to raise the standards of the whole proletariat", "to bring it closer to culture", but the future

refuses to accept him even as a human being. Pobedonosikov imagines himself a genuine leader of the state apparatus and would like to bureaucratize the whole planet, but the time machine throws him overboard, refuses him even a short journey into society of the future. The significant in Mayakovsky is the falsely significant, the significant of negative nature that should be reduced and ridiculed. The reduction of the falsely significant is one of the sources of Mayakovsky's comic. It is achieved not only through situation but is at the basis of the characterisation and of the language, thus proving that the comic element in Mayakovsky's plays is predominant. Here are, for example, some of the character's statements containing the same comic reduction of the falsely significant, Prisyarkin: «Я против этого мецанского быту-канареек и прочего...Я зеркальным шкафом интересуюсь»(p.223). The exalted needs of Prisyarkin are reduced to "a wardrobe with a mirror". Bayan: «Вот, вот! Так, так, тихим шагом, как будто в лунную ночь в мечтах и меланхолии из пивной возвращаетесь»(p.232). By using the sublime, romantic words (лунная ночь, мечта, меланхолия) together with the low (ПИВНАЯ) Mayakovsky reduces these pretentious words as used by philistines.

The high society Prisyarkin is dreaming about is reduced to a place where «скульптур и ваз разных всегда до черта наворочено»(p.232 ). The same principle of comic reduction can be seen in the characters changing their names (In Prisyarkin's and Bayan's case it is the other way round). The humble Prisyarkin becomes the falsely sublime Pierre Skripkyn. The uncouth-sounding Bochkin becomes the falsely poetic Oleg Bayan. This parallelism alone reinforces the effect of the comedy. The ridiculously sounding name Pobedonosikov is built up on the comic contrast of the pretentious pobeda, and the anticlimactic nosik with

the ironic reduction of the historical Pobedonostsev.

The post Pobedonosikov occupies (Glavnyi nachal'nik po upravleniyu soglasovaniya - Chief Coordinator) sounds important and impressive, but when abbreviated it is reduced to Glavnachpups - pups - the triviality of the doll.

We might extend the number of our examples into the sphere of pure language. Foreign words, for example, when used by philistines are likewise reduced. Prisyukin and his cronies misconstrue most foreign words through false etymology. Thus these words are reduced: «хортё» is equated with «картё», «цедура» with «дура», «эпиталама Гименея» with «гималаи», "petite histoire" with «шиссуар» etc. The false significance of newspaper clichés and bureaucratic terminology is similarly ridiculed as when they are used by philistines in an inappropriate context: «покупать сельдей в дискуссионном порядке», «целовать с чувством классового достоинства», «жениться в организованном порядке» (Клор, р.222,237). Pobedonostikov to his wife: «плечом к плечу или навстречу солнцу коммунизма, боролись со старым бытом» (р.330); «Надо напоминать раньше! В следующий раз я буду рассматривать это как прорыв и ослабление супружеской дисциплины». (р.343). One can say that such terminology is reduced by Mayakovsky to mere verbal garbage.

Thus the technique of reduction is the source of many comic effects in Mayakovsky's plays. But this technique is only partly responsible for the comedy of Mayakovsky's plays.

In the sphere of pure language, comic effects are constantly produced by the juxtaposition of words, phrases and sentences, which are stylistically incompatible. Thus many phrases are constructed according to the law of the grotesque - combination of words belonging to different lexical classes, which are normally incombinate. Many of the phrases used by characters in Mayakovsky's plays are completely

absurd in their accumulation of incompatible words: «Революционный примивный трамвайный звонок колоколом должен гудеть в сердце каждого рабочего и крестьянина»(p.295); «Невоздержанные ухаживания без серьезного стажа и служебного базиса»(p.319); «древнее незапятнанное пролетарское происхождение»(p.220); «классовое возмущенное, князское и уопительное торжество»(p.224); «Что же это? За что мы старались, кровь проливали, когда мне, гегемону, значит в своем обществе в новозвученном танце и растанцеваться нельзя?»(p.264). Or here is another type of absurd, built on the hyperbolic accumulation of words: «Я должен представить циркуляры, листеры, копии, тезисы, перекошки поправки, выписки, справки, карточки, резолюции, отчеты, протоколы и прочие оправдательные документы при хотя бы вещественных собаках (Ваауа,р.342). The emergence of the nightmarish «вещественные собаки» seems the result of this absurd accumulation.<sup>1</sup>

Mayakovsky, in his plays, employs almost all the possible devices of comic speech. One of the commonest is the juxtaposition of different meanings of the same word which often takes the form of the confrontation of the literal meaning with the figurative one. Here are a few examples: the word «красный» (in the sense of 'revolutionary') is confused with its literal meaning (the colour) in Prisyurkin's perceptions (in "Klop"). There is confusion between the bureaucratic «увязать», «согласовать» (in the sense of 'coordinate the problem' etc.) with its literal meaning (in the sense of 'tie up somebody', 'reconcile somebody with something'). Pobedonosikov's admonitions to his wife are built on the same principle: «Ты должна помнить про партийную этику и не выносить сора из избы. (figurative meaning) Кстати, ты пошла бы в избы, то есть в квартирку и убрала бы, вынесла сор (literal meaning) и уложила вещи.»(p.330). Such examples

<sup>1</sup> Н.Т.Панченко «Баня» Маяковского.Творческая история,средства комического» 1: Вопросы советской литературы,т.VI,1957,р.89.

abound in both Mayakovsky's plays and are partly responsible for the formation of puns and strong auditory comic effect. Compare, for example, the last speeches of Pobedonosikov and Optimistenko which abound in puns as a result of playing with different meanings of the words, «аппарат», «время», «лицо».

Победоносиков: «Итак, товарищи, мы переживаем то время, когда в моем аппарате изобретен аппарат времени. Этот аппарат освобожденного времени изобретен именно в моем аппарате, потому что у меня в аппарате было сколько угодно свободного времени...Аппарат прекрасный, аппарату рад - рад и я и мой аппарат».(p.344)

Оптимистенко: «В свою очередь беру слово от лица всех и скажу вам прямо в лицо, невзирая на лица, что нам все равно, какое лицо стоит во главе учреждения, потому что мы уважаем только то лицо, которое поставлено и стоит, но скажу великодушно, что каждому лицу приятно, что это опять ваше приятное лицо. Поэтому от лица всех подношу вам эти часы, так как идущие часы будут к лицу именно вам, как лицу, стоящему во главе».(p.344)

Such confrontations of words are not however used for their own sake. Mayakovsky does not merely wish to play with words or produce purely auditory comic effect. In Mayakovsky's case where we are dealing with the genre of comedy and where the author is restricted in his use of descriptive language these peculiar combinations of words and phrases serve as an important means of building comic characters. Indeed, such language is the main means of creating "the artificial people" in "Banya". It is through their comic language that the characters acquire their grotesque qualities of artificial automata.

Pobedonosikov's speeches and those of others consist of combinations of incongruous words, phrases and sentences. The comic

quality of their speech is reinforced by the absurdity of the conclusions. Mayakovsky himself said "The laughter is caused by the eccentricity of conclusions"<sup>1</sup>. This "eccentricity of conclusions" which in Mayakovsky often has a fantastic nature, is another source of his comedy. On the phosphorescent woman's remark that it is beyond human understanding (in Russian «за границей человеческого понимания») Pobodnosikov draws such a conclusion: «Ах, за границей! Значит, надо с ВОКСом увязать. Самую мельчайшую ведь надо растолковывать. Сами ни малейшей инициативы не могут проявить. Товарищ Мезальянсова, типография откладывается. Поднимайтесь вверх для немедленной сверхурочной культурной связи». (p.323)

Mayakovsky's comedy is very strong in auditory effects, it abounds in words and word combinations created to be ridiculous in sound as well as in sense.<sup>2</sup> The auditory effects of Mayakovsky's language only emphasize the distinctly comic form of his grotesque plays. Here are a few examples of how he achieves these effects:

- 1) By playing with paronyms: «паразитальный паразит».
- 2) By oxymoron type puns: «водкой питающееся млекопитающее».
- 3) By deliberate distortion of words either as a result of wrong stress or false etymology: «цедура» - «дура»; «петит итуар» - «писсуар»; «кортек» - «картёк»; «гименей» - «гималай» etc.
- 4) By transposition of parts of words with subsequent correction: «рациолярий он канцелизировал» - «канцелярий он рационализировал».

<sup>1</sup> В. Маяковский, в. 12, р. 112.

<sup>2</sup> For a full analysis of Mayakovsky's comic speech v.: Волков А.Р. «Мастерство художественного использования лексики и фразеологии в драматической сатире Маяковского «Клоп» и «Баня» in Ученые записки Черновицкого ун-та вып. 13, т. 52, 1958. and Н. Шумилов «Речевые средства сатиры и юмора в драматургии Маяковского» in Уч. зап. Великолукского пед. ин-та, т. 3, 1958.

5) By the formation of utterly ridiculous abbreviations like «завглавнач - главначшунс», in which it is impossible to restore the connections between words forming the abbreviation «заведующий, главный начальник».

6) By the senseless accumulation of Russian words in Pont-Kitch's speech in imitation of the sound of English: «Дед свел в рай трам, из двери в двери лез и не дошел туго. Дуй Иван. Червонцы?» (p.286) is a sound imitation of "That's well, all right. I am very and very pleased and I shall to go. Do you want (chervontsy)?"<sup>1</sup>

7) By parodying of popular songs in whose rhythmical system such words as «проводежда», «профбилет» unexpectedly appear:

Съезжались к вагсу трамван-  
там красная свадьба была...  
Иених был во всей проводежде,  
из блузы торчал профбилет» (p.239)<sup>2</sup>

8) By introduction of vaudeville-type couplets, or recitative of the comic opera in the speech of a character. Моментальников: «Эчеленца, прикажите, аппетит наш невелик.»<sup>3</sup>

9) By comic alternation of litotes and hyperbole in the scene of Rozalie Pavlovna bargaining for herrings (Mayakovsky skillfully parodies the logic of the two traders):

Розалия Павловна: Сколько стоит эта килька? (litotes)  
Равносчик: Эта лососина стоит 2.60 кило.(hyperbole)  
Розалия Павловна: 2.60 за этого шпрота-переростка.(litotes)

<sup>1</sup>Р.Райт, «Двадцать лет назад». In «Маяковскому Сборник воспоминаний и статей», гослитиздат, Л. 1940, p.125. Chervontets is a coin.

<sup>2</sup>In Rostotsky's opinion Mayakovsky parodies the song «Стояли у церкви кареты, там пынная свадьба была». See Б.Ростоцкий «Маяковский и театр». М. «Искусство» 1952, p.176.

<sup>3</sup>The words are taken by Mayakovsky from the comic opera «Каморра» Е.Эспозито. See Ростоцкий, ibid, p.295.

Разносчик: Что вы, мадам, всего 2.60 за этого кандидата в осетрины (hyperbole)

Розалия Павловна: 2.60 за эти маринованные корсетные кости. (litotes)  
Емты! Дельфины! (hyperbole) А ну, покажи, а ну сравни твою улитку. (litotes) (p.225)

The distinctly comic form of Mayakovsky's grotesque is intensified through the introduction of the elements of buffoonery and circus. Indeed, his plays are full of outer comedy of physical action, that is, of buffoon's poses, gestures and movements. Thus the wedding scene of Prisyupkin and Elsevir Renaissance is pure buffoonery, and it is partly expressed through the author's remarks: «Парикмахер с вилкой лезет к посаженной маме»; «Шафера оттаскивают»; «Танцат Баяна к роялю»; «Бухгалтер разнимает, подлевая, пытаюсь крутнуть ручку кассового счетчика, с которым он вертится как с нарманкой»; «Шафер разнимает и набрасывается на клавиши»; «Грохает гитарой по затылку»; «Парикмахер нацеливает на вилку волосы посаженной матери». (pp.236, 239, 240).

Mayakovsky also widely uses the device of the circus. The critic Rostotsky talks about the closeness of some scenes in Mayakovsky's comedies to circus performance.<sup>1</sup> The scene of catching the bedbug, in his opinion, has all the attributes of circus performance including the necessary circus equipment: «Лиди с сетками <sup>откружат</sup> место. Пожарные разнимчивают лестницу, Лиди карабкаются гуськом.» (p.260) And the whole episode of the final scene (in "Клоп") is given in the manner of circus, illusionist (conjurer) with the Bengal lights and other spectacular external effects: «Посредине на пьедестале клетка, задрапированная материями и флагами...Музыка сыграла ту, освещение бенгальское. Отдлиннувая толпа приближается, онемев от восторга.» (p.272)

<sup>1</sup> В.Ростоцкий, op.cit.p.193.

Mayakovsky's play "Banya", as its title already suggests, is "a drama with circus and fireworks". No wonder that Pobedonosikov here directly performs the function of juggler:

Режиссер: «Товарищ Победоносиков, возьмите в руки какие-нибудь три-четыре предмета, например, ручку, подпись, бумагу и партмаксимум и сделайте несколько хонглерских упражнений. Бросайте ручку, хватайте бумагу - ставьте подпись, берите партмаксимум, ловите ручку, берите бумагу - ставьте подпись, хватайте партмаксимум, Раз, два, три, четыре.»(p.311) And in the final scene of "Banya", all the characters «like tumblers in the manner of circus are thrown out of a time-machine»<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the above-mentioned devices of buffoonery and circus is pure entertainment, to make the funny funnier and propaganda more enjoyable; in Mayakovsky's words «сделать агитацию более веселой со звоном»<sup>2</sup>. About "Banya" Mayakovsky said that he wanted it to be both "balagan" and "Petrushka".

We have tried to analyse Mayakovsky's comedy without referring it to the two-plane structure of his grotesque: to the plane of the real and to the plane of the fantastic. It is not difficult to notice, however, that the most typical devices of his comedy are concentrated on the plane of the real. It is on this plane that Mayakovsky prefers to deal with philistinism and hureaucracy as social categories in all their variety.

Taken separately, the plane of the fantastic (the future in "Klop" and the phosphorescent woman in "Banya") is far less comic in representation. In fact, the phosphorescent woman is devoid of

<sup>1</sup> Б.Ростоцкий, op.cit. p.249.

<sup>2</sup> В.Маяковский, op.cit.v.12,p.396

any comedy; she is utterly humourless like the positive reality that draws towards her in "Banya". It is partly true of the solemnly serious picture of the future in "Klop", though Mayakovsky tries to enliven it with effects of auditory and outer comedy (puns, elements of the circus, etc.). The comedy on the plane of the fantastic becomes apparent when the attributes of the real plane (Prisytkin, the bedbugs, the bureaucrats) come into contact with the fantastic and thus reveal their absurdity (which, of course, follows the law of the grotesque).

#### B. The satirical function

Mayakovsky's laughter, as it emerges in the comedies, is clearly directed against negative bureaucrats and philistines whose pretensions to importance deserve to be ridiculed. Both are satirised, punished with laughter, made to look ridiculous, against the background of a future society. The comic grotesque of Mayakovsky's plays is closely associated with social satire - Mayakovsky's main intention. Everything in his plays yields to a satirical interpretation. When, in "Banya", Mayakovsky creates the fantastically artificial characters of bureaucrats, it is clear that he is picking out artificiality as the essence of bureaucracy whose form of existence is alien to life. In the grotesque situation of epidemics breaking out in the society of the future as a result of Prisytkin's resurrection, Mayakovsky's purpose is primarily satire, to show in a satirical light the danger of philistinism even for such a purified and sterilised society as that of the future. Satire is the main task, and it absorbs and organises everything (grotesque structure and comic form) in both plays. It also explains the deliberate display of factual material

in both plays. Mayakovsky's purpose, as we remember, was that the reader should recognise and identify these facts as quickly as possible and then join the struggle against philistinism and bureaucracy. No wonder that the staging of "Banya", for example, was augmented by additional slogans and in one of the versions of "Banya" there was a direct appeal to the audience: *Голос из публики: «Товарищи граждане, что же это за безобразие! Сами укатили, а бюрократов оставили! Они же опять по учреждениям разползутся. Товарищи, все из театра. Все на чистку.»*<sup>1</sup>

The strikingly comic form of Mayakovsky's grotesque with its satirical tendency and its strong didactic flavour deprive it of the sense of the alienated world. The world we face in Mayakovsky is too similar to our own, and though it is a ridiculous world, it never becomes ridiculous enough to be a reality of its own to which the laws of our reality are inapplicable. And then Mayakovsky never lets himself nor his characters be carried away too much by the ridiculous world he depicts. In "Banya", for example, there is always a distance between the reality of the positive characters and the absurd reality of the bureaucrats. Though the so-called positive characters experience all the unpleasantness of bureaucracy, they clearly separate it from their life and expose it directly: *«Да пойми же ты, дурья голова! Это тебя надо распросаявить и куда следует и куда не следует. Люди горят работать во всю вселенную, а ты слепая кивка, канцелярскими разговорами мочишь на их энтузиазм.»* (p.305)

At first glance Mayakovsky's grotesque is not complicated by anything but his desire to ridicule philistinism and bureaucracy. See, for example, his numerous statements in the process of writing his plays.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> В. Маяковский. *op.cit.* v.11, pp.191-212-354.

<sup>2</sup> В. Маяковский. *op.cit.* v.12, pp.

Having set himself the task of satirising the negative aspects of life, of ridiculing them with laughter, Mayakovsky subordinates all his means to this task. Everything should be clear, there should be no deviations: "As far as a direct indication as to who is a criminal and who is not is concerned, I have this propagandistic tendency... I like to say outright who is a scum and who is not."<sup>1</sup> The clarity of his intention, the stability of his outlook, his strong didacticism weaken the grotesque making it too one-sided. Mayakovsky's satire is directed only at specific negative phenomena or negative characters, at those who are "scum". (This is understandable, because if Mayakovsky were to direct satire at everybody and everything it would inevitably destroy the straightforwardness of his satire, it would complicate it with other motives. In this Mayakovsky differs from Bulgakov whose satire and ironical laughter often spreads to everything and everybody, including the author himself).

This might lead us to question whether the name 'grotesque' is justified in relation to Mayakovsky's plays. Would it not be better to apply some other name, or perhaps to specify the term 'grotesque' as a satirical one (as some critics prefer to do<sup>2</sup>)? We will continue, however, to use the term 'grotesque' in relation to Mayakovsky's plays; after all, the structural features and stylistic devices of both plays had all the essential elements of the grotesque. The fact that the grotesque style of Mayakovsky's plays does not always reflect his perception of reality was the direct result of his

<sup>1</sup> В. Маяковский, *op. cit.* v. 12, p. 380.

<sup>2</sup> Б. Мильявский, *op. cit.* p. 96.

satirical intentions (his didacticism, his strong desire for audience recognition of what he considered an absurd reality in his plays). And though the grotesque structure and style of both plays were left intact, the nature of his grotesque had undergone changes, as we have mentioned; it became one-sided. The tragic element in it was particularly affected. (The presence of both elements, tragic and comic, is essential for the genuine grotesque. See Introduction). One can not say that the tragic element has completely disappeared, but it became less clearly outlined and at times one has to make an effort to discover it.

### C. The tragic element

But if the tragic element exists, what contributes to the appearance of tragedy in Mayakovsky's grotesque? After all, as we remember, the form of his grotesque is strikingly comic, and the combination of sharp satire with an extremely comic form undoubtedly destroys any hint of drama. As a result, such dramatic moments as the fire or Zoya's suicide ("Klop") are devoid of any tragedy. Compare, for example, the immediate remark of the fireman on the fire in ("Klop"):

«Ну и ликвидация. Прямо, театр, только все действующие лица сгорели». (p.343)

The tragic element is present mainly in the subcontext of Mayakovsky's plays, in the associations they evoke with reality.

As we remember, the conventional solution of all conflicts and contradictions given as a fait accompli prevents the appearance of tragedy. But on the other hand, for the deliverance of society from philistinism and bureaucracy, Mayakovsky relies on the fantastic forces of the future. This fact can lead the reader to the serious

thought that Mayakovsky did not see any forces capable of opposing the numerous bureaucrats and philistines in real life. The parallels which emerge with real life, the comparison of Mayakovsky's plays with his poetry, the tragic end of Mayakovsky himself might confirm the reader in the correctness of his conclusion. Indeed, while solving his conflicts conventionally, Mayakovsky nevertheless leaves the parallels with reality open, we may say, he even directs the spectator to them. "Klop" ends with Prisyarkin's scream as he sees in the audience his numerous doubles. Similar serious and tragic parallels can be found in "Banya", where the reader is brought to the serious conclusion that Pobedonosikov and his bureaucrats are defeated, but not with the efforts of the positive forces of Chudakov and Velosipedkin who seem to be rather useless. The association with reality where bureaucracy flourishes is also left open. The strongest element of tragedy, however, is present in the final scene of "Klop". One can say that we have a tragic impression on the basis of comic combinations. Despite the purely comic details which surround the scene, Prisyarkin's cry, addressed to the audience, produces a far from comic effect: «Граждане! Братья! Свои! Откуда! Сколько Вас! Когда же вас всех разморозим? Чего же я один в клетке? Родные, братья, покажите ко мне! За что же я страдаю? Граждане!» (p.373)

At the moment of triumph when we have already become accustomed to the thought that Prisyarkin is an animal and his place is in the cage, Prisyarkin's human cry makes his comic character lose its simplicity for a moment. Prisyarkin sees his doubles, he identifies himself with the audience, and the laughter in the audience stops involuntarily. Perhaps the spectator sees himself in Prisyarkin and has to think over the seriousness of the parallel.

We may also say that the scene leaves a tragic impression on another account. As we remember, the grotesque in Mayakovsky's plays has a primarily satirical intent. However, Mayakovsky's play on deeper penetration into its imagery somehow loses its simplified, merely satirical, tendency and only comic effects. It can be perceived more tragically if we examine the play in connection with Mayakovsky's poetry written on the same subject and approximately at the same period. "The theme of his verses almost always was his own experiences", says Lila Brik<sup>1</sup>, and Roman Jacobson adds that this relates to all his poems including his advertising jingles<sup>2</sup>. Mayakovsky himself asserts: "'Klop' is the theatrical variation of the main theme on which I wrote verses and poems"<sup>3</sup>. "Klop" particularly calls for comparison with the poem "Pro eto". In this autobiographical poem the grotesque served primarily to convey the poet's vision of the world, to express the complex attitudes of the poet entangled in the net of Soviet philistinism, where even Marx «ТАЩИТ ОБИВАТЕЛЬСКУЮ ЛЯМКУ». The grotesque of the poem "Pro eto" was primarily inclined towards the tragic. In the poem, Mayakovsky found his double among numerous philistines:

«Но самое - странное  
по росту, по коже,  
одеждой сама походка моя.  
В одном узнал  
близнецами похожи  
себя самого -  
сам я».<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Л. Брик. «Маяковский и другие стихи». Знамя, 1940, в. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Р. Якобсон «Новые строки Маяковского». in «Русский литературный архив», под редакцией М. Карповича и Д. Чикевского. Нью-Йорк. 1956, p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> В. Маяковский. op. cit. v. 12, p. 188.

<sup>4</sup> В. Маяковский. op. cit. v.

There is no direct suggestion in "Klop" that Prisyarkin is Mayakovsky's double, that he includes the author himself. The author's inclusion into the image of Prisyarkin occurs because of the echoes between "Klop" and his poetic works, and also as a result of the treatment as parody of some themes of his own poetry. (Compare, for example, the elements of parody in the sales jingles in the first scene)<sup>1</sup>. If Prisyarkin includes Mayakovsky himself, then Prisyarkin's idiotic thoughts of a refined life, roses, dreams, of his "deserved rest" "by the quiet river", become the caricatured comic depiction of the tragic thoughts of Mayakovsky who finally failed to restrain his own tragic personal desires in his poetry and life and who, "cruelly ridiculed" in Prisyarkin's "rebellion in the name of personal happiness"<sup>2</sup>. In other words, Prisyarkin's caricatured thoughts become the reverse side of Mayakovsky's declarations. As a result of all these, the satirical function of "Klop" becomes more complicated and satire mingles with another function - the grotesque as a means of expressing the author's view of the world - namely that of Mayakovsky's fear of philistinism ("byt"), in which everybody, including the author himself, becomes entangled. The tragic side increases, of course. It appears that this complication of the satire with other motives, the complication of comedy with tragedy in "Klop", occurs unintentionally through the echoes between "Klop" and Mayakovsky's poetry. No matter how we interpret this final ending of the play, the tragic element of this

<sup>1</sup>Р.Якобсон. *op.cit.* pp.196-198.

<sup>2</sup>Р.Якобсон. «О поколении, растратившем своих поэтов» in «Смерть Владимира Маяковского». Берлин 1931, p.21. See also Edward J. Brown "Russian Literature since the Revolution". London, 1969, pp.63-64.

scene is apparent. No wonder that many sensed the seriousness of the final scene, and many attempts were made to deprive the final words of Prisyypkin of their drama. Tairov - the director of the Kamerny Theatre - suggested, for example, that the second half of the play should be presented as Prisyypkin's dream, and the last words of Prisyypkin should be addressed, not to the audience, but to the actors on the stage.<sup>1</sup> Soviet critics always took a very negative attitude to all attempts of theatre directors (particularly those of the West) to strengthen the tragic impression of the last scene.<sup>2</sup> The impression of the last scene in "Klop" reminds one of the final scene in Gogol's "Revizor", which Slonimsky analyses in "Technika komicheskogo u Gogolya". One can see that in Prisyypkin's final words we observe the same universalisation ("tyaga k vseobshemu"), which strikes us in the words of the gorodnichy: «Чему смеётесь? Над собой смеётесь!» This is, in Slonimsky's opinion, the essential feature of grotesque humour: "Something that was funny for a moment becomes sad"<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> А.Я.Тайров «Клоп» in «Записки режиссёра».М.1970,pp.384-393.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, З.Паперный «К вопросу о Присыпкинe» in «Вопросы литературы», 1959, N.5, А.Метченко, «Против субъективистских истолкований творчества Маяковского» in «Коммунист» 1957, N.18.

<sup>3</sup> М.Слонимский «Техника комического у Гоголя», Петроград, 1923, pp.12-13.

### III Bulgakov

#### 1. The structural features of Bulgakov's grotesque.

- A. The presentation of everyday reality  
(the plane of the real).
- B. The presentation of the fantastic  
(the plane of the fantastic).

A. The presentation of everyday reality (the plane of the real)

When we move on from Mayakovsky to characterize Bulgakov's grotesque, the first thing that strikes us is the difficulty of separating these two planes (the phantastic and the real). They intertwine so closely that sometimes it is difficult to say where the latent fantastic of the real plane ends and where the open fantastic of the fantastic plane begins. In trying to define Bulgakov's grotesque we have to introduce these two terms. We will use the term "latent fantastic" in reference to the real plane, and "open fantastic" in reference to the fantastic plane. Although heterogeneous, the fantastic and the real elements are treated by Bulgakov as homogeneous, belonging to the same plane. They interlock from the very beginning. What makes the interlocking of these two heterogeneous planes in Bulgakov's grotesque possible? (As we have seen in Mayakovsky, <sup>we found,</sup> they were opposed to each other, they excluded each other in everything, there was nothing in common between them. The intersection was made possible only by Mayakovsky's own desire (to place Prisyptkin in the future, or to confront bureaucrats with the phosphorescent woman of the future).

In Bulgakov's case, the opposite is true: the real and the fantastic elements were drawn towards each other, they interlock and merge on the surface without the author's apparent participation. Bulgakov approximates both planes in the following way. Firstly, the everyday life to which we are used has practically no element of the fantastic in it, or at least we do not see it. Therefore, in order that this ordinary life which is devoid of everything unusual

or fantastic may be combined better with the fantastic. Bulgakov adds to it a fantastic coloration by finding something absurd and illogical in our everyday life, in other words, by finding the latent fantastic. As a result, a natural transition to the open fantastic is made possible, allowing the natural emergence of the grotesque. Secondly, in order to make easier the transition of the open fantastic into the latent fantastic of everyday life, this open fantastic is itself drawn into close contact with everyday life, is elaborated with details of it. As a result of the mutual penetration of these heterogeneous elements they merge naturally, and we lose sight of where the latent fantastic of real life ends and the open fantastic begins.

We will try to differentiate between these two planes. Let us start by examining how Bulgakov depicts the real plane, and how he reaches the fantastic of everyday life before the appearance of the open fantastic in it. In our analysis we will refer to the following works: "Rokovye yaitsa" (1924); "D'yavoliada" (1924); "Sobach'e serdtse" (1925); "Blazhenstvo" (1934); "Ivan Vasil'yevich" (1935); and "Master i Margarita" (1939)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> All quotations are given from the following editions: "Rokovye yaitsa", Flegon Press, London, 1971; "D'yavoliada", Flegon Press, London, 1970; "Sobach'e serdtse in Student", Flegon Press, London, 1968; "Master i Margarita", Posev, 1969; "Ivan Vasil'yevich, Munchen, 1964; "Blazhenstvo" in "Zvezda Vostoka", 1966, N.7, pp.75-107. In the interests of brevity, the following Bulgakov's works are sometimes referred to by their Russian initials, thus (PH) for "Rokovye yaitsa"; (D) for "D'yavoliada"; (CC) for "Sobach'e serdtse"; (E) for "Blazhenstvo"; (HB) for "Ivan Vasil'yevich", and (MM) for "Master i Margarita".

Without doubt there is a certain similarity between Bulgakov and Mayakovsky in the depiction of the real plane. They both like exaggerations and distortions of proportions at the expense of the integrity of the picture. But in Bulgakov's case, these distortions and exaggerations slowly lead to the appearance of something strange and unusual in the real plane itself, reality itself acquires a fantastic character.<sup>1</sup> It is helped and finally achieved by the following means: 1) In the depiction of contemporary reality, Bulgakov usually emphasises the humbler aspects of reality and reduces the exalted and sublime, ignoring the whole and over-emphasising one feature often of minor importance. This contributes to the creation of a general atmosphere of strangeness. This is also a shift towards the alogism necessary for any grotesque. A typical example is "The House of the Writer" in "Master i Margarita", which is related to the plane of reality. Written in the best traditions of satirical literature it is reduced by Bulgakov mainly to the restaurant, and the conversations of the venerable writers are reduced to eulogies on food. It is not by chance that their thoughts circle only around «порционных судачков а натирель, стерляди в серебристой кастрюльке, стерляди кусками, переложенными раковыми шейками и свежей икрой, янц-кокотт с шампиньоновым пюре в чашечках, филейчиков на дрождов с трюфелями, перепелов по-генуэзски»(ММ.р.74-75).

<sup>1</sup>We have noticed a similar shift towards the grotesque in "Klop" in the scene of the wedding, and in "Banya" in the creation of characters of artificial people and their activities.

One can not fail to remember Gogol's descriptions of the everyday meals of his "Starosvetskie pomesh'iki", but Gogol dealt with the most prosaic people and tried to poeticize them through the use of elevated style which produces an obvious discrepancy with the object of the narration. In Bulgakov's case the object is obviously sublime - the poetical world of Moscow - but it is reduced to the rather base aspect of life, to what is usually ignored by the inspiration of the poet. No wonder that the poet himself turns out to be «срумяногубый гигант, златоволосый, пшеницкий Амвросий-поэт», «гастроном-Амвросий» (p.74) «Помните, Амвросий» - Bulgakov addresses the poet Ambrose with the long tirade of gastronomic dishes and answers himself: «По губам вашим вижу, что помните...» (p.75).

2) Very often Bulgakov concentrates his attention on the absurdities of life and on their alogism. He may stress the absurdity of some event, the strange behaviour of a character, the deliberate alogism of his own statement, the partial or complete absence of motivation. In "Master i Margarita", Bulgakov accentuates absurdities but absurdities of the most familiar aspects of our life which we fail to notice. Korovyev and Begemot, visiting the restaurant of the "House of the Writer", are stopped at the entrance by a woman in front of whom lies «толстая конторского типа книга, в которую гражданка неизвестно для каких причин записывала входящих в ресторан». Both are surprised at this absurd procedure: «Чтобы убедиться в том, что Достоевский писатель, ну уж ли же нужно спрашивать у него удостоверение? Да возьмите вы любых пять страниц из любого его романа и без всякого удостоверения вы убедитесь, что имеете дело с писателем. Совсе не удостоверением определяется писатель, а тем, что он пишет». (p.444, MM). The alogism of the real plane seems utter

absurdity for the devil, yet for the inhabitants of the real plane it is mundane normality. It is true that in "Master i Margarita" the devil and his associates mostly reveal these paradoxes, people themselves being so used to the absurdities of their life that they simply do not notice them. But the fantastic characters who have the power to accomplish miracles are surprised at the very fantasticality of everyday life. Sometimes, however, even realistic characters have to express surprise at the fantastic nature of surrounding life and people's behaviour. Ivan, in "Master i Margarita", is astounded by the behaviour of the strange cat who tries to get into the tram and buy a ticket. But on talking about this fantastic event, Bulgakov cannot help noticing also that: «Гораздо сильнее (Иван) был поражен поведением кондуктора. Та, лишь только увидела кота, лезущего в трамвай, со злобой, от которой даже тряслась, закричала: - Котам нельзя! С котами нельзя! Брысь! Слезай, а то милиция позову! Ни кондуктору, ни пассажиров не поразила самая суть дела: не то, что кот лезет в трамвай, в чем было бы еще полбеды, а то что он собирается платить» (p.66, MM).

In "Master i Margarita", we are presented with another paradoxical thought: the reality of the madhouse is much more reasonable than the contemporary reality of Moscow life: at least commonsense logic, some kindness and truth can be found there. See, for example, how strange and absurd is the behaviour of the editor whom the Master confronts after handing him his book: «Он смотрел на меня так, как будто у меня шея была раздута флюсом, как-то косился <sup>в</sup>угол и даже сконфуженно хихикал. Он без нужды мял манускрипт и кричал. Вопросы, которые он мне задавал, показались мне сумасшедшими.» (p.181, MM)

On the other hand, after his four-month stay in the madhouse, the

Master concludes: «И знаете ли, нахожу, что здесь очень и очень неплохо».(p.189). The madhouse seems to have a beneficial effect on Ivan Besdomnyi, whose eyes become open while in the madhouse: «Знаете, пока я лежал здесь, мне многое стало ясно.»(p.469) «Я уж разбикаюсь теперь, вы не бойтесь».(p.470). It is in the madhouse that Ivan's reasoning acquires its logical forms and his most sensible decisions (like his decision to stop writing bad poetry) come to him. Indeed, Ivan's behaviour in the reality of Moscow is more reminiscent of that of the madman than his behaviour in Stravinsky's asylum. All this contributes to the creation of the absurdity of the plane of reality.(No wonder that the only refuge from the mad reality of Moscow for decent people turns out to be the madhouse).

In Bulgakov's story "D'yavoliada", alogism is elevated to a principle for describing reality, the construction of characters, style and composition. Unobtrusively, he directs our attention to something unusual, so that gradually the logical and causal connections of the reality break down and we find ourselves in a world of staggering confusion. In a story begun realistically, Bulgakov suddenly stresses something that is obviously out of place, namely the dead chicken with the broken neck with which the cashier, who has gone to fetch the office wages, returns:«...вернулся через четверть часа с большой мертвой курицей со свернутой шеей. Курицу он положил на портфель, на курицу своей правой руку и молвил: «Денег не будет!...» потом...взмахнул курицей, крикнул: «Пропустите, пожалуйста!» и, проломив брешь в живой стене, исчез в дверях.» (Д,р.6)

Such alogism is not as striking as that which comes later, but it prepares the ground for new absurdities and makes a certain shift towards the grotesque easier. It is impossible logically to

understand all the happenings in "D'yavoliada". All attempts to motivate the events in the story are deliberately prevented by the author. Thus, the attempt to motivate all the happenings with the hero's madness turns out to be rather strained. Maybe Korotkov is highly nervous or sensitive, but it does not seem so. In Bulgakov's story Korotkov is somewhat vague. The author attaches to Korotkov various epithets: «наивный Коротков», «этот комик Коротков», «нежный тихий блондин Коротков», «осторожный Коротков», «хитрый Коротков», «недальновидный Коротков», etc. All these epithets so contradict each other that the real image of Korotkov disappears.<sup>1</sup>

In Bulgakov's story, Korotkov goes mad, not because of his disturbed mind, but because of the absurd reality which drives him to insanity and suicide. To understand why Korotkov is taken for Kolobkov (his double) would be also rather difficult, so the attempt to motivate all the confusions with the likeness of heroes to each other would obviously collapse. Korotkov is «нежный тихий блондин», and Kolobkov is «худенький с чёрными словно прилепленными усиками». The reader is left with bewilderment as to why the black-haired girl takes him for her lover and the old man for his colleague, when the two are dissimilar. There are many such alogical absurdities in "D'yavoliada". We can understand them only if we look at them as at the essence of the newly-established Soviet bureaucratic apparatus, where chaos and disorder prevailed and things, that are impossible to motivate from the point of common sense, happened. The dismissals of people from their jobs, for example, occur in "D'yavoliada" with such speed that the reader is left with the impression that all Soviet institutions are involved in this absurd game. The life is utterly absurd and senseless. The senselessness of surrounding life leads to absurd

<sup>1</sup> Е. Мустангова «М. Булгаков», Печать и Революция», N 4, 1927, p. 85.

remarks and questions, to equally absurd answers, to mutual misunderstandings and to a loss of desire to understand each other. All this creates a sort of vicious circle in which normal causal explanations are inapplicable. The accumulation of absurdities leads to the characters seeming to change their rôles; their actions and movements do not always correspond to their appearance. Thus in this example from "D'yavoliada":

«На верхней площадке попался маленький лет 16 и странно закричал:

- Куда ты? Стой!

- Не бей дяденька, - сказал толстяк, съехившись и закрыв голову руками.»

Each of the characters behaves in a way that, according to logic, is more appropriate to the other. "D'yavoliada" is not an exception. Bulgakov's other works, such as "Rokovye yaitsa", "Sobach'e serdtse", "Master i Margarita", are built on the same principle of piling up the absurdities, accumulating the rumours, until we are faced with an approaching catastrophe. In "Sobach'e serdtse", the rumours start from gossip and mere curiosity and finally: «Что в Москве творится - уму не постижимо человеческому. Семь сухаревских торговцев уже сидят за распространение слухов о светопреставлении, которое навлекли большевики. (p.49)...28 ноября 1925 года в день преподобного мученика Стефана, земля налетит на небесную ось». (p.50, CC).

Everything is intensified in Bulgakov. Lights do not simply go on but blow up, words leap out, a character does not merely become angry but becomes enraged or white hot (остервенился, ввбеленился), he does not go into a crowd but thrusts himself or plunges in (вжмается<sup>с</sup>, вонзается), he does not come out of a crowd but unhitches or tears himself out (отцепляется, выдирается). Subsequently, the

characters do not part but uncouple (расцепляются). Professor Persikov does not merely talk but howls, yelps or hisses, and if he shouts then it is usually hysterically or in a rage, and in his eyes there is not merely joy but rapacious joy. Characters move in such an abrupt manner that it is difficult to imagine how they are orientated in reality. «Персиков мотнулся так, что чуть не попал под автомобиль на Моховой и яростно ухватился за газету».

(РЯ, p.29) «Проломив брешь в живой стене, исчез». (Д, p.6)

«...на ходу ввинтился в автобус». (ММ, p.65) «...ткнул бумагу так, что чуть не выколол ему и последний глаз.» (Д, p.12).

There are the few features which particularly contribute to the general intensification of the atmosphere. The telephone, for example, is an active participant of the growing intensification. It starts ringing at the most intense moments and in the end bursts into ceaseless ringing, thus becoming part of an absurd reality. In "Sobach'e serdtse", the telephone ringing is registered at first in phrases like: «мякие дробные звоночки» (p.15), «рассмшной звонок» (p.18), and then becomes stronger: «неприятно и неожиданно прозвонел телефон» (p.36), «сегодня было 82 звонка. Телефон выключен» (p.47), «оглушительный трезвон» (p.58), «опять, как оглашенный, загремел телефон» (p.59), «звонки следовали один за другим» (p.80), «целый день звонел телефон, звонел телефон на другой день» (p.83). The same happens in "Роковые уайты": «мягко прозвонел телефон» (p.27), «начались звонки» (p.28), «на другой день ему пришлось выключить у себя телефон» (p.34), «затрещал телефон» (p.67), «звонили непрерывно» (p.92). Radio and doorbell play a similar rôle.

The general atmosphere of alogism and absurdity is strengthened

in Bulgakov's works by numerous repetitions of the words:

«невероятный», «странный», «чудовищный», «необъяснимый», «страшный», «страннейший», «невиданный», «нестественный», «сверхъестественный», «несусветный», «невероятных размеров», «невероятнейшей величины», «необычайной толщины», «необыкновенной толщины» etc.

The hearing up of highly irrelevant epithets of secondary importance such as «бывший», «куриный», also in the end serve the same purpose of disintegrating the reality of the real plane. They distract the reader's attention from more important details. The constant repetition of the epithet «бывший» in "Rokovye yazitsa" gives the impression that not only is everything rather unreal, but it does not even seem to belong to the present. Time seems in the process of disintegration as well. «В уездном захватном городке, бывшем Троицке, а ныне Стекловке, ... на бывшей Соборной, а ныне Персональной улице, вышла женщина. Женщина эта, вдова бывшего соборного протопрея бывшего собора Дроздова...» (РЯ, р.31). «Яйца показывались и в стеклянных витринах магазина бывшего «Сыр и масло» Чичкина в Москве» (р.32), «бывшее имение Шереметьевых», «кривой бывший садовник бывших Шереметьевых» (РЯ, р.66), «...сел на бывшую оттоманку» (р.72), «До чего они (звуки) были уместны над рощами и бывшими колонами Шереметьевского дворца» (РЯ, р.72). Similarly, the repetitions of the epithet «куриный» finally overshadows the rest and becomes dominant in the description of the Moscow of 1928, the whole picture of which is built around the words «куриный» and «яйца». (куриная комиссия, куриный вопрос, куриные события, куриная катастрофа, куриные перья, куриные смерти, куриная чума, куриное мясо; Чрезвычайная комиссия по борьбе с куриной чумой, антикуриные прививки, etc.) The function of these words is to prepare us for

the introduction of the open fantastic, which then seems less fantastic and merges better with the *latent* fantastic of the real plane. In "Rokovye yaitsa", the accumulation of these words increases as the fantastic catastrophes such as the cosmic proportions of the fowl pest epidemic and the invasion of reptiles approach. Finally, we are faced with a purely fantastic picture of the consequences of the fowl pest epidemic: «На крыше «Рабочей Газеты» на экране грудой до самого неба лежали куры и зеленоватые пожарные, дробясь и искрясь, поливали их керосином. Затем красные волны ходили по экрану, неживой дым распухал и мотался ключьями, полз струей, выскакивала огненная надпись «Сожжение куриных трупов на Ходянке.» (РЯ, р.49).

The numerous repetitions of indefinite pronouns and adverbs: «кто-то», «что-то», «какой-то», «зачем-то», «почему-то», «куда-то», «где-то» etc., play a similar rôle. They bring a general vagueness to the disorder of everyday life, deprive it of its concrete features and the characters of their motivations and of consistency in their actions. As a result, the alogism and strangeness of the real plane where a man does something or goes somewhere without knowing why increases. In the same way the strangeness of reality is intensified by the abundance of words expressing unexpectedness: «вдруг», «неожиданно», «неволью», «немедленно», «мгновенно», «моментально», «внезапно», «тотчас», or whole phrases «вдруг как бы сорвавшись с цепи», «как из под земли», which are applied to the characters' actions and behaviour. The speed of the characters' changing their poses, the alacrity of their transformations on the plane of reality matches the speedy metamorphoses on the fantastic plane.

«В ту же минуту в кабинете появился бледный юноша с портфелем.

Лицо Дыркина мгновенно покрылось улыбковыми морщинами». (Д, р.50)

«Коротков влетел до самого верха, хотел увидеть красавицу с камен<sup>н</sup>ыми, у нее что-то спросить, и увидел, что красавица превратилась в уродливого сопливого мальчишку.» (Д, р.25)

«Приличнейший тихий старичок, одетый бедно, но чистенько, старичок, покупавший 3 миндальных пирожных в кондитерском отделении, вдруг преобразился. Глаза его сверкнули боевым огнем.» (ММ, р.441)

«Миг и с ним произошла метаморфоза. Глазки его засверкали победным блеском, он вытянулся, хлестнул правой рукой через левую, как будто перекинул невидимую салфетку, сорвался с места и боком, косо, как пристыженная, покатила по лестнице.» (Д, р.34)

«...выпал громадных размеров кот, в тигровых кольцах и с голубым бантом на шее, похожий на городского. Он упал прямо на стол в длинное блюдо, расколол его вдоль, с блюда на пол, затем повернулся на трех ногах, а правой замахнул, как будто в танце, и тотчас просочился в узкую щель на черную лестницу. Щель расширилась, и кот сменился старушечьей физиономией в платке.» (СС, р.60)

«Спасите - заревел Кальсовер, меняя тонкий голос на первый свой медный бас. Отступившись, он с громом упал вниз затылком: удар не прошел ему даром. Обернувшись в черного кота с фосфорными глазами, он вылетел обратно.» (Д, р.40)

One can not, at times, be sure as to which plane to relate these metamorphoses: to the plane of the real or to the plane of the fantastic.

Words and phrases expressing extreme degrees of intensity such as the epithets «бешеный», «адский», «хищный», «яростный»,

«пронзительный», «комарный», «огненный», the superlative degrees of adjectives: «тоскливейший», «опаснейший», «страннейший», «длиннейший», «неприятнейший», «густейший», adjectives with corresponding verbs: «крайне возбужденный», «крайне сконфуженный», «неестественно сильный», «крайне неприятный», «крайняя степень раздражения», «крайне обижено», overemphasised employment of verbs: «завывать», «рычать», «пр<sup>н</sup>зительно кричать», «вить», «шипеть», «рывать», with expressive coloration of intensity exaggerate reality to the point when the appearance of the open fantastic becomes absolutely inevitable. Words like «все», «весь», «каждый», in their all-embracing totality, and likewise the words «ни один», «никто», «нигде», in their total negation, provide an almost cosmic scale for the appearance of the open fantastic and approaching catastrophe: «Окно светило бешеным электрическим светом» (ММ, р.291), «Пылала бешеная электрическая ночь» (РЯ, р.97), «Кальсонер бешено начал тувить его в спину с воплем» (Д, р.35), «адские взрывы хохота» (ММ, р.68), «адское освещение» (ММ, р.68), «Мальчики рычали и вили между шумом колес» (РЯ, р.49), «Завыл вдруг в рупоре на крыше неприятнейший тонкий голос» (РЯ, р.28), «Вся Москва встала...» (РЯ, р.93), «Горели все окна в квартирах...» (РЯ, р.97), «вили все парозовы...» (РЯ, р.98), «Остервеневшая Москва заперла все двери, все окна» (РЯ, р.97), «По минутно искаженные лица выглядывали в окна во всех этажах, устремляя взоры в небо, во всех направлениях изрезанное прожекторами» (РЯ, р.97), «Все окна были открыты... Из всех окон, из всех дверей, из всех подворотен, с крыши, чердаков, из подвалов и дверей вырывался хриплый рев полонеза из оперы Евгений Онегин» (ММ, р.70), «Не спал ни один человек» (РЯ, р.97), «На улице не оказалось ни одного человека» (ММ, р.11), «Под утро, по совершенно бессонной Москве, не потушившей ни одного огня...» (РЯ, р.98), «Никто не пришел под липы, никто не

сел на скамейку» (ММ, р.12), «Ни одна свежая струя не проникала в открытые окна». (ММ, р.75)

As a result, everyday reality becomes frightening and illusory. See, for example, how the description of the communal flat borders on the fantastic: «В громадной, до крайности запущенной передней, слабо освещенной малюсенькой угольной лампочкой под высоким, черным от грязи потолком, на стене висел велосипед без шин, стоял громадный ларь, обитый железом, а на полке над вешалкой лежала вмятая шапка, и длинные ее уши свешивались вниз». (ММ, р.6). «Плахую влажным теплом, и, при свете углей, тлеющих в колонке, он разглядел большие корыта, висящие на стене, и ванну всю <sup>в</sup> черных страшных пятнах от сбитой эмали...» (р.68). «Очутился в кухне. В ней никого не оказалось, и на плите в полумраке стояло безмолвно около десятка потухших примусов. Один лунный луч, просочившись сквозь пыльное, годами не вытираемое окно, скупо освещал». (ММ, р.68).

ММ

The most familiar objects, such as the trams, become sinister and turn into «наполненные светом обледеневшие ящики», which make «омерзительный скрежет на морозе» (ММ, р.188), and it seems that at any moment something really incredible and absurd could happen, and that reality, already disrupted, will disintegrate even further and «в пустынном безотрадном переулке», «в адском освещении крайне запущенной передней», or «в пахнувшей нефтью черной воде мех изломанных змязгов береговых фонарей» something unexpected and inexplicable will appear.

In the construction of Bulgakov's characters, we observe the same tendency of stressing alogism and strangeness. Many of Bulgakov's characters are caricatures, nevertheless preserving some similarity

to characters from real life. Persikov, in "Rokovye Yaitsa", is a caricature not of any particular professor but more of the idea of the absent-minded professor in general. Some of Bulgakov's characters have a grotesque coloration and sometimes acquire a genuine grotesque quality. Among them we should differentiate puppet-type and mask-type characters. By puppet-type characters we mean characters with mechanical movements, alacrity of gesture and speech, while on the other hand mask-type characters are distinguished by their lifelessness and immobility. Of course, some characters may combine the qualities of both: the mechanical movements of the puppets and the lifelessness of the masks. Bulgakov often creates puppet-type characters through mechanisation of movement, gesture and speech. In "Dyavoliada" particularly, this mechanisation is deliberately stressed and exaggerated. The mechanisation of movement and gesture, for example, is achieved by frequent use of perfective verbs of instantaneous action with adverbs to correspond: «немедленно», «сразу», «выхрем», «мгновенно», etc., or by the use of verbs not quite appropriate to the character (particularly variations of the verb «летать»):

«Кальсонер с треском расчеркнулся на бумаге, хлопнул по ней печатью и ткнул ему». (Д, р.12). «Неизвестный вырвал из рук Короткова бумагу, мгновенно/е». (Д, р.12). «Немедля вынул чистый лист бумаги и в 3 минуты сочинил». (Д, р.13). «Коротков выхрем сбегал с лестницы». (Д, р.19). «на ходу вырвался из трамвая» (Д. р.20), «... вплотную налетел» (Д. р.12), «...мгновенно разлетелись в разные стороны» (Д. р.13), «...как молния Коротков вылетел на площадь» (Д. р.54).

Mechanisation of the characters' speech is achieved by the frequent use of verbs of instantaneous action («рявкнул», «пискнул», «ахнул» etc.) imparting abruptness to the speech, or by senseless

repetitions or sudden senseless remarks: «Молчать! - рявкнул Дыркин, хотя Коротков ещё ровно ничего не сказал.» (Д. р.50).

This process becomes more complete when the character's speech begins to resemble that of a broken machine. A character may suddenly slip into mere senseless verbiage. Korotkov's dialogue with the fair-haired man (D'yavoliada), culminates in tirades of absurd advertising clichés to which the latter reverts as if something has gone wrong with his mechanism and the words which have been programmed in his head have come out at the wrong moment. The shift towards the grotesque (the appearance of something artificial, alien) is particularly noticeable here: «Товарищи! Без истерики! Конкретно и абстрактно изложите письменно, срочно и секретно. Полтава или Иркутск? Не отнимайте времени у занятого человека! По корридорам не ходить! Не плевать! Не курить! Разменом денег не затруднять! - выйдя из себя загремел блондин.» (Д. р.47). (Mayakovsky uses a similar device in "Banya" in constructing the characters of "artificial people".) Sometimes the mechanized marionettes in Bulgakov's works constitute one impersonal mass-automaton, which moves and acts as one: «хором закричали женщины» «... вскричали все и в том числе недалёковидный Коротков»... (Д.р.6). «Канцелярия тотчас зашумела и разбежалась» (Д.р.16), «В это мгновение часы далеко пробили 4 раза на рыжей башне, и тотчас изо всех дверей побежали люди с портфелями.» (Д.р.26).

The culmination of the character's mechanisation seems to be the complete identification of the hero with an automaton wound up with a key. Such is the appearance of the mechanical secretary in

"D'yavoliada": «Он музыкально звякнул ключом в замке, выдвинул ящик и, заглянув в него, приветливо сказал: «Пожалте, Сергей Николаевич! И тотчас из ящениого ящика выглянула причесанная светлая, как лань, голова и синие бегакшие глаза. За ними изогнулась, как змеиная, шея, хрустнул крахмальный воротничок, показался пиджак, руки, бржки, и через секунду законченный секретарь, с писком «Доброе утро», вылез на красное сукно.» (Д.р.46).

Similarly, Bulgakov may deliberately lay bare the puppet nature of his character by stressing its marionette-like movements or by naming the actual mechanism installed in it: «Вместо ответа молодой человек поклонился профессору 2 раза на левый бок и на правый, а затем его глазки колесом прошлись по всему кабинету, и тотчас молодой человек поставил в блокноте знак.» (РЯ.р.24) «...Послышалось за дверь странное мерное скрипение машины, кованое постукивание и в комнату вошел...» (РЯ.р.27) «Левая его, механическая нога шелкала и громыкала. Он по-военному поклонился профессору и выпрямился, отчего его нога пружинно шелкнула.» (РЯ.р.27) «...скорбно говорил механический человек» (РЯ.р.29) «длинные беседы с механическим толстяком» (РЯ.р.54) «Дыркин вскочил на пружине из-за стола.» (Д.р.50)

The second type of character in Bulgakov which approaches the grotesque is the mask-type character distinguished by lifelessness and immobility: «Сонла, тяжело ступая, массивная фигура мужчины в белом кунтуше. Седоватые отвисшие усы виднелись на его мраморном лице. Мужчина, улыбаясь необыкновенно вежливой безжизненной гипсовой улыбкой, подошел к Короткову.» (Д.р.36) «Пестрый румянец чуть проступил на мраморном человеке.» (Д.р.37). The culmination of the character's lifelessness is its complete identification with the statue: «Коротков подбежал к колоннаде и тут увидел хозяина.

Тот стоял на пьедестале уже без улыбки с обиженным лицом...

Хозяин стоял без уха и носа, и левая рука у него была отломана.>

(Д.р.39) Sometimes the mask is something indefinite, diffused:  
«очень толстый и розовый, в цилиндре встретил Короткова.» (Д.р. )

The numerous repetitions of the word «бритый» in Bulgakov's masks is striking: «Вынырнул молодой человек с гладко-выбритым маслянистым лицом. Поражали вечно поднятые словно у китайца брови и под ними ни секунды не глядящие в глаза собеседника агатовые глазки.» (РЯ.р.23) «Его бритое круглое лицо, налитое желтоватым студнем, являло приветливую улыбку.» (РЯ.р.26).

A character's appearance, when emphasised without the characteristics of the character himself, also results in, as Тулуанов suggests<sup>1</sup>, a kind of mask: «Один из них приятный, круглый и очень вежливый был в скромном защитном военном френче и рейтузах. На носу у него сидело, как хрустальная бабочка, пенсне.» (РЯ.р.39) «Низенький, совершенно квадратный человек, бритый до синевы, в роговых очках, в новенькой шляпе, не измятой и без подтеков на ленте, в сиреновом пальто и в лайковых рыхлых перчатках, стоял у прилавка и что-то повелительно мычал.» (ММ.р.438)

The effect of the character's artificiality is strengthened by Bulgakov's usual manner of talking about people as something inanimate and lifeless. It can be done in a straightforward manner:

<sup>1</sup> Д.Тынянов. «К теории пародии» in "O Dostoevskom Stat'1", Brown University, Slavic reprint IV, 1966, p.159.

«...втаски его в заветный кабинет и бросил на пухлый кожаный стул.» (Д.р.31) «И тотчас тяжелое тело Пантелеймона упало с табурета и покатилося по коридору.» (Д.р.17) «Второго Короткова первый и главный забыл в зеркале кабины и вышел один.» (Д.р.49)

A comparison may often pave the way for the resulting identification of the character with the object (be it inanimate or not):

«Кальсонер ускользнул, словно на роликах, скатился с лестницы.» (Д.р.19) (comparison) «...грозно выкатился на роликах страшный бритый Кальсонер.» (Д.р.59) (identification) «Этот голос был совершенно похож на голос медного таза.» (Д.р.11) (comparison). «...звякнул бешено стремящийся Кальсонер», «Хорошо! - грохнул таз.» (Д.р.31) (identification) «Как? - прозвенел два раза Коротков, совершенно как разбитый о каблук Альпийский Бокал.» (Д.р.16) (comparison) «...прохрустел осколками голоса Коротков.» (Д.р.17) (identification) «Напоминает трех соколов Алексея Михайловича сидели три совершенно одинаковых бритых блондина.» (Д.р.29) (comparison) «Что-то загремело в канцелярии, и соколы вскочили, как по команде.» (Д.р.33) (identification).

Equally, the first informative description of the character and his appearance may also help in further identification of the character with a part of his clothing or body: «Персиков застал на крыльце неизвестного ему гражданина в модном котелке.» (РЯ.р.42) «Навстречу Персикову поднялся второй котелок.» (РЯ.р.42) «Котелок быстро утихомирил Персикова»,...«на это котелок усмехнулся», (РЯ.р.42) «...согласился котелок», «...с любопытством спрашивал котелок.» (РЯ.р.64) «Обернувшись он увидел желтое круглое лицо владельца механической ноги.» (РЯ.р.29) «За ним, цепляясь за рукав, лез механический шар в одеяле.» (РЯ.р.35)

We may say that these characters are dehumanized through the device of synecdoche, the increasing number of which completely overshadows them. In "D'yavoliada", people and their movements are completely identified with birds. Sometimes this identification is already foreshadowed by numerous repetitions of the verb «лететь» with various prefixes, by comparison or by the character's name: «При страшном слове канцелярские брызнули в разные стороны и в миг расселись по столам как вороны на телеграфной проволоке» (Д.р.16) «Ай-яй-яй- загудел в отдалении, выглядывая из гробуха Скворец. Он нырнул, спрятался в гробухе и прикрлся страницей.»(Д.р.17) «Ни одного знакомого лица в хрустальном зале не было. Ни Дрозда, ни Анны Ефграфовны, словом, никого. За столами, напоминая уже не ворон на проволоке, а 3 соколов Алексея Михайловича, сидели 3 одинаковых бритых блондина.» (Д.р.29)

Names in general are of great importance for Bulgakov. Verbal masks<sup>1</sup> are often created by the character's proper name alone. Most names have strong etymological associations and contain evaluative effects. In this way, a whole gallery of writers is created in *Master i Margarita*, «Подложная», etymologically connected with «лозь» - lie, «беллетрист Бескудников» with «паскуда, паскудный» - mean, dirty, foul; «поэт Дзубратский» (the name suggests hypocrisy), «критик Абабаков» is connected with «бабакать» - jabber, «Поклевкина» with «клевать» - to peck; «виднейшие представители повстического подразделения Массолиета, то есть Павианов» (suggests arrogance), «Богохульский» (blasphemy), «Сладкий» (sickly-sweet), Ориман» («орать» - yell).

<sup>1</sup> Д.Тынянов, op.cit.p.169.

In contrast to puppets and mask-type characters, the environment is animated. This animation sometimes is deliberately stressed (particularly in "Д'яволиада" and "Роковые яйца"):

«Дверь в кабинете взвыла и проглотила <sup>3</sup>нейизвестного». (Д.р.12)

«закричала за стеклами мотоциклетка, выстрелила 5 раз и закрыв дымом окна, исчезла.» (Д.р.19) «Лифт остановился, выплывнул человека с портфелем, закрылся сеткой и опять ушел вниз.» (Д.р.23) «Свет взлетел над крышей университета, на небе выскочили огненные слова.» (РЯ.р.28) «Слепymi дырами глядели заколоченные окна.» (РЯ.р.49)

«Лишь машинка безмолвно улыбалась белыми зубами.» (Д.р.38)

«Солнце сладостно лизало его с одной стороны.» (РЯ.р.16) «Машины рывкали и бегали по всей Москве.» (РЯ.р.98).

At times the border between the animate and the inanimate world in Bulgakov is obliterated. Thus the author, in describing reality, does not make any distinctions between animate and inanimate imagery. He often confronts these heterogeneous elements with the result of increasing confusion: «Коротков открыл первую стеклянную перегородку и увидел за нею какого-то человека в синем костюме... Во втором отделении на столе было полное собрание сочинений Шеллера-Михайлова... В третьем царил дробный грохот и звоночки.» (Д.р.21) The verb «бежать» usually related to animate images, spreads to inanimate as well: «По огромной, изгрызанной лестнице побежали в таком порядке: первым, черный цилиндр толстяка, за ним - белый исходящий петух, за петухом - канделябр, пролетевший в верхке над острой белой головкой, затем Коротков, шестнадцат<sup>и</sup>летний с револьвером в руке и еще какие-то люди». (Д.р.53)

In "Роковые яйца", Bulgakov makes parallel usage of the same words like «завить», «кричать», «рычать», «квакнуть», «шипеть»,

«брякать», in relation to animate and inanimate worlds: «закричал мальчишка и, вжимаясь в толпу на тротуаре, вновь завыл» (РЯ, р.28) «завыл вдруг в рупоре на крыше неприятнейший и тонкий голос» (р.29) «очень часто тревожно завывая, пронеслись шипящие машины» (р.48) «закричал таксомотор и врезался в гущу» (р.30) «шипел он» (р.30) «тихо с шипением отозвалась трубка» (р.67) «наборщики странно хохотали» (р.97) «хохотал и плакал, как накал, рупор» (р.48) «Персиков и взял трубку и квакнул» (р.71) «трубка наквакала ему самое любезное» (р.64). Thus in "Rokovye Yaitsa" the border between animal and human worlds seems to be almost obliterated. While the humans are compared to animals, characterised through animal imagery and thus reduced to the level of lower creatures, many of the animals are personified and raised on to the level of humans by ascribing to them human habits, attitudes or tastes. Professor Persikov's description is given in the same key as the description of the amphibians he preoccupies himself with. The author accentuates Persikov's «скрипучий, тонкий, квакающий, голос», «квакнул Персиков», (р.59) «Подобно тому как амфибии оживают после долгой засухи, при первом обильном дожде, ожил профессор Персиков в 1926 году», «лежал на диване...вспоминал суринамскую жабу». (р.8) And here are some examples of animals raised to the level of humans: «Тараканы куда-то провалились, показав свое злобное отношение к военному коммунизму». (р.7) «В ее (лягушки) потухающих глазах были явственные слова: «Сволочи вы, вот что.» (р.12) «Жабы спали и ничего ему не ответили.» (р.14) «Вид у ужа был такой, словно тот собрался куда глаза глядят, лишь бы уйти» (р.63) «Глава в зелени (about snake) тотчас же загорелась непримиримой ненавистью к этой опере.» (р.81)

Such is objective reality - the real plane - as Bulgakov shows it. As we have seen this world is full of absurdities, it is a world which is often back-to-front with things animated and people shown as things or reduced to the level of animals, and animals raised to the level of humans where the reality of the madhouse is more reasonable than contemporary reality. It is a world governed by fortuity. Fantastic catastrophes on a cosmic scale all are brought about by fortuitous and trifling accidents: the confusion of the eggs in "Rokovye yaitsa", the coincidence in the names "D'yavoliada". The world is disorientated and chaotic. Nothing should be taken seriously in this world: people can not control either external events or even the circumstances of their own lives. The logical regularities of life are deliberately distorted. It seems that the whole of the world is up in arms against Korotkov ("D'yavoliada"). Even the tram Korotkov takes every day: «вместо нестого маршрута пошел окружным путем, по седьмому, заехал в отдаленные улицы и там сломался.» (p.15). The house administrator, who could have issued Korotkov with the necessary document to prove his identity, dies fortuitously. Every fortuity creates an alogism, since it violates causal regularities. The accumulation of fortuities creates absurdity. As we have seen, many absurdities are present in Bulgakov's depiction of the real plane; they often acquire a fantastic character long before the appearance of the open fantastic itself. Here is not just one fortuity but the piling up of fortuities, not just one absurdity but a fantastic world of absurdity. The reality is so absurd and alogism is so strong that it becomes impossible for the author in trying to depict this world not to be influenced by it. We have the feeling that Bulgakov disrupts the

structure, the unity of the sentence, simply through apparent carelessness: for example, he introduces the word «во-первых», and somehow forgets the word «во-вторых» (РЯ,р.8). But the repetition of such cases shows that for Bulgakov this is a deliberate distortion of logical connections between sentences (the reflection of the material on the manner of depiction). This appears in the unexpected transitions, in the deliberate removal of words which, according to logic, would follow, in the deliberate introduction of inappropriate words, in the obvious alogism of comparison or conclusion. The piling up of alogical absurdities creates the open fantastic and causes the emergence of the grotesque.

B. The presentation of the fantastic (the plane of the fantastic)

Thus the open fantastic in Bulgakov is foreshadowed by the strangeness and alogism of everyday life. As a result, it seems less fantastic and sometimes can be looked at as the bringing to a logical end of all absurdities of the real plane. That is why it penetrates so naturally into the everyday life of the real plane since this life itself is moving towards it: in this life and its paraphernalia, in the behaviour and actions of its people, there is so much latent fantastic, so many paradoxes, that it hardly cedes anything to the open fantastic. In some cases Bulgakov directly identifies the latent fantastic of the real plane with the open fantastic of the fantastic plane. They fully coincide with one another. Bulgakov's identification of the description of the House of the Writer with hell may serve as an example: «Словом, ад. И было в полночь видение в аду... И плавится лед в вазочке, и видны за соседним столиком налитые кровью чьи-то бычьи глаза, и страшно,

страшно»... (ММ.р.79).

The description of the dancing writers on the plane of reality is not very far from the description of the devil's ball on the fantastic plane. In fact, both descriptions are very close. On the plane of reality: «И ровно в полночь что-то грохнуло, зазвенело, посыпалось, запрыгало...Покртые испариной лица как будто засветились, показалось, что охили на потолке нарисованные лошади, в лампах как будто прибавили свету, и вдруг, как бы сорвавшись с цепи, заплясали оба зала.» (р.78), and on the fantastic plane: «В полночь вдруг что-то грохнуло...На зеркальном полу неслыханное количество пар, словно слившись, поражая ловкостью и чистотой движений, вертятся в одном направлении, стеною шло, угрожая все смести на своем пути.» (р.335,343)

In some cases, the open fantastic is presented by Bulgakov as nothing but the result of our paradoxical reality. Hence the fantastic event in a Moscow office when its staff start singing one day and cannot stop themselves. The mania for organising clubs and societies is here brought to its logical end.<sup>1</sup> The same can be said about the fantastic transformation of the bureaucrat into an empty suit: «За огромным письменным столом с массивной чернильницей сидел пустой костюм и не обмакнутым в чернила сухим пером водил по бумаге. Костюм был при галстуке, из карманка костюма торчало самопишущее перо, и над воротником не было ни шеи, ни головы, ровно как из манжет не выглядывали кисти рук. Костюм был погружен в работу и совершенно не замечал той кутерьмы, что царяла кругом.» (ММ.р.238). The paradox here is that when he returns to his former self "the empty suit" puts his signature to all the resolutions he had made when he lacked a head.

<sup>1</sup> В.Лакшин Роман М.Булгакова «Мастер и Маргарита»,Новый мир N 6,1968,р. 250

Nikanor Ivanovich's dream in "Master i Margarita" belongs to the fantastic plane since the dream assumes the existence of a reality other than the reality of the real plane. The form of the dream allows strange combinations of incombable elements; it has its own laws. But in Bulgakov it is approximated to reality and by its absurd nature reveals the essence of absurd reality, copying the trials of 1937. Thus the absurd laws of the dream become the laws of reality (reality itself is developing according to the laws of the absurd). A rather paradoxical thought suggests itself: alogism is not just inherent in a dream (which is only natural), but is part of our reality which itself is like a nightmarish dream (which is utterly unnatural).

The fantastic element in Bulgakov is constantly accompanied by naturalistic details of everyday life which are acceptably convincing and which, of course, draw it closer to contemporary reality, this often being achieved by the exact definition of the place and time of the action and by specifying all related details. All fantastic events like the invasion of the country by giant reptiles, Korotkov's adventures in the labyrinth of a Soviet office, or the adventures of the Devil and his associates in Moscow are given with protocol exactness of place and time. Fantastic events always take place in a familiar world, in a room or in a street full of people. Even Margarita's flight on a broom above Moscow loses its fantastic character completely due to the specification of all the details of the flight and the precise naming of the streets. We are given the impression that Margarita is flying on something real, so natural are all the mistakes she makes during her flight: «Как только каким-то чудом, затормозившись, она не разбилась насмерть о старый покосившийся фонарь на углу.» (ММ.р.298)

This perceptibility of the fantastic is further strengthened by indications of the everyday life of the times. During the flight the invisible Margarita looks through a window and the familiar picture of the life of a Moscow communal flat is revealed to her:

«Увидела кухню. Два примуса ревели на плите, возле них стояли две женщины с ложками в руках и переругивались...» - «Свет надо тушить за собой в уборной, вот что я вам скажу Пелагея Петровна,» - «говорила та женщина, перед которой была кастрюля с какой-то снедью, от которой валил пар, а то мы на выселение на Вас подадим.»

(ММ.р.299) Margarita's arrival at the devil's flat is given with the observance of all the everyday details which were typical for that time. Entering the gateway she notices: «Томящегося в ней человека в кепке и высоких сапогах, вероятно, поджидающего кого-то... второго, до удивительности похожего на первого человека встретили у местного подъезда...третий, точная копия второго, а стало быть первого, дежурил на площадке 3 этажа.» (р.316)

Bulgakov's novel "Master i Margarita" is full of topical indications of the times, full of associations with the thirties, the period of the purges, terror, the numerous arrests of innocent people. The devil and his associates talk in a language which suggests their good knowledge of the period. «Роман о ком?» - asks Voland the Master - «Вот теперь? Это потрясает... И Вы не могли найти другой темы.» (р.363)

«Да,- заговорил после молчания Воланд, - его хорошо отделали.»(р.361)

«Нет документа, нет и человека, - удовлетворительно сказал Коровьев.»(р.366)

«Да,сдаюсь,-сказал кот, но сдаюсь исключительно потому, что не могу играть в атмосфере травмы со стороны завистников.»(р.327)

«Слушай, мессир, - сказал кот, если Вы находите, что нет размаха, и я немедленно начну держаться того же мнения.» (p.351)

«Вот что мне непонятно,» - Margarita asks one of the devils:

«Неужели снаружи не было слышно музыки и вообще грохота этого бала?»

And Koroviev's reply obviously relates to contemporary reality:

«Конечно, не было слышно, королева, это <sup>надо</sup> /делать так, чтобы не было слышно, это поаккуратнее надо делать.» (p.352).

Among the long list of professions and positions of the guests at Devil's ball, the prisoners, informers and detectives (people of very modern professions familiar to Moscow of the thirties) are present.<sup>1</sup>

Bulgakov's open fantastic is constantly reduced by details of everyday life. Voland's ability to increase any space (the open fantastic) is given parallel to the adventures of the man who is constantly exchanging flats and who manages, by way of various machinations, to increase his living space (the latent fantastic). The purpose of this parallel is to increase the latent fantastic of our life and also to reduce the open fantastic of the fantastic plane. Similarly, Voland arranges the disappearance of people and Bulgakov gives hints of the disappearance of people on the plane of contemporary reality (from Berlioz's flat).

During the characters' confrontations with the devil they continue to observe a normal process of reasoning and apply common-sense logic to fantastic events. Bulgakov follows the whole of Berlioz's logical reasoning about Voland's identity. However hard he tries Berlioz is unable to produce any explanation. The open fantastic quality of the event increases. But it is deliberately undermined by Bulgakov in the next chapter when we find out that

<sup>1</sup> Л. Ржевский «Пилатов грех» in Прочтение творческого слова, New York, 1970, p.20:

Berlioz, whose life «складывалась так, что к необыкновенным явлениям он не привык», lived amidst the most fantastic events (latent fantastic) which have left no trace in his mind. The portrait itself of the devil - the ruler of darkness - is obviously given on the reduced plane of everyday life. As a rule Bulgakov accentuates his «грязное заштопанное белье», «истершийся старый засаленный халат». The all-powerful Satan suffers from rheumatism and grumbles like any ordinary old man: «Голова разболелась, а тут еще этот бал»... «Мне посоветовали множество лекарств, но я по старинке придерживаюсь бабушкиных средств». (p.322) All the fantastic events are described by Bulgakov as if he were an eyewitness, which also strengthens the persuasiveness of the fantastic element.

However, as a rule in Bulgakov we find two tendencies interacting. On the one hand he strives for the plausible persuasive reproduction of all events; on the other hand we can also observe him striving to destroy this plausibility. For example, his recording of exact time and place is sometimes countered by the absurdity of their exactness even to the second of time and of excessive or irrelevant details or by the false commentaries Bulgakov deliberately refers to: «Двадцать секунд в пыльном хрустальном зале Альпийской Розы царило идеальное молчание... На двадцать первой секунде молчание лопнуло». (Д.р.16)

«Ни в одной квартире Москвы, насчитывавшей 4 миллиона населения, не спал ни один человек, кроме неосмысленных детей». (РЯ.р.97)

«Театр имени покойного Всеволода Мейерхольда, погибшего, как известно, в 1927 году, при постановке Пушкинского «Бориса Годунова».. (РЯ р.50)

In "Master i Margarita" we have the impression that the author

tries to preserve all details of the thirties, yet at the same time he disrupts the picture of reality of the thirties introducing details of the twenties. (for example, confiscation of the gold from population belonging to the twenties is given together with the existence of currency shops which clearly belonged to the thirties.<sup>1</sup>) In "Rokovye yaitsa", Bulgakov aims at a scientific description of the reproduction of amoeba through the use of all the necessary scientific details and he tries to preserve scientific plausibility. Yet at the same time he employs a pathetic tone and uses a vocabulary which is incompatible with the subject of description and can only destroy this apparent plausibility and seriousness (see also p. 102-103 of this thesis). The description of the operation in "Sobach'e serdtse", which Bulgakov gives in the form of the diary in all clinical details, is countered by the deliberately violent terms which, of course, prevents the reader from taking it seriously and makes one look for some hidden meaning:<sup>2</sup> «Борменталь набросился хищно... затем оба заволновались, как убийцы, которые спешат.» «Нож вскочил ему в руки, как бы сам собой, после чего лицо Филиппа Филипповича стало страшным.» «Борменталь, как тигр, бросился зажимать.» «Филипп Филиппович стал положительно страшен. Сипение вырывалось из его носа, зубы открывались до десен.» «Филипп Филиппович зверски оглянулся на него...» «злбно заревел профессор. Лицо у него при

<sup>1</sup> Л. Ржевский, op.cit.p.196.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps because of these unusually violent terms applied, some people interpret the scene as a metaphor of revolution. See, for example: Proffer Ellendea "The Major Works of Mikhail Bulgakov". Indiana University, Ph.D. 1971, p.80.  
On "Rokovye yaitsa" see p.103 of this thesis.

этом стало, как у вдохновенного разбойника.» >...тут же Филипп Филиппович отвалился окончательно, как сытый вампир.» (СС. pp.40-41)

The alogical usage of the word и даже (Gogol's word), produces a similar impression. We have the feeling that the author's attempt to give a serious account of what has happened is undermined by this mocking word as if he were warning us not to take what he has previously said too seriously: «И без того худой Финдиректор как будто еще похудел и даже постарел, а глаза его в роговой оправе утратили свою обычную колючесть и появилась в них не только тревога, но даже печаль.» (ММ.р.136)

«Оркестр не заиграл, и даже не хватил, а именно, по омерзительному выражению кота, урезал какой-то невероятный, ни на что не похожий по развязности своей марш.» (ММ.р.166)

«А затем председатель, какой-то расслабленный и даже разбитый, оказался на лестнице.» (ММ.р.127)

«...Поэт узнавал все больше и больше интересного и полезного и про египетского Озириса, благостного бога и сына Неба и Земли, и про финкийского бога Фаммуза, и про Мардука, и даже про менее известного бога Вицли -Пуцли.» (ММ.р.14)

To what extent does Bulgakov's world of absurdity (on both the real and the fantastic planes) correspond to contemporary reality itself? Is there any similarity between them? Of course, the factual material is present in Bulgakov, it is felt sometimes even in the most incredible situations. But on the whole this documentary material is transformed in Bulgakov to such an extent that it makes it difficult to trace this material as closely as in Mayakovsky. This is, of course, largely the result of their different intentions, treatment and approach to the material. Mayakovsky's purpose was

that the spectator should recognise familiar things as soon as possible in order to satirize and ridicule them. Bulgakov's purpose (this is particularly noticeable on the fantastic plane in "Master i Margarita") is to conceal this actual material, to conceal any too obvious associations and parallels with existing reality, to cypher the facts to the point of complete unrecognizability (compare Bulgakov's treatment of the devil and his associates and the parallels that emerge with Stalin and his associates)<sup>1</sup>. This is why recognition of indications of the twenties and thirties happens more slowly in Bulgakov, and does not always lead to exact correlation with the facts. We have to remember that Bulgakov's novel saw the light only in the sixties when the obviousness of some indications of the times has faded or been distorted by propaganda for the Soviet reader. But it confirms on the whole Mayakovsky's deliberate intention of displaying the documentary basis as much as possible, and Bulgakov's intention of hiding it.

Side by side with the open fantastic which brings associations with contemporary life, we find another open fantastic in Bulgakov which is difficult to explain. Such a fantastic plays a rôle opposite to that played by the *latent* fantastic in reducing fantasticality. This "difficult" open fantastic strengthens

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Piper D. "An approach to Bulgakov's 'The Master and Margarita'", in Forum for Modern Language Studies, University of St. Andrews, vol. 7, 1971, pp. 134-157.

fantasticity in those places where the boundary between the fantastic and the real seems to be obliterated, and brings back the open fantastic which had been reduced by the latent fantastic, and which had almost lost its fantastic character. It is also possible that such a fantastic acts as a diversion for the censorship: it distracts the censorship from that fantastic which brings definite associations with contemporary life. "Master i Margarita" abounds in such fantastic for fantastic sake. «Под ветвями верб, усеянными нежными, пушистыми сережками, видными в луне, сидели в два ряда толстомордые лягушки и, радуясь как резиновые, играли на деревянных дудочках бравурный марш...Прозрачные русалки остановили свой хоровод над рекою и замахали Маргарите водорослями, и над пустынным зеленоватым берегом простонали далеко слышные их приветствия. Нагие ведьмы, выскочив из-за верб, выстроились в ряд и стали приседать и кланяться придворными поклонами.» (p.312)

«На остров обрушилась буланая открытая машина, только на шоферском месте сидел не обычного вида шофер, а черный длинноволосый грач в клеенчатой фуражке и перчатках с раструбами.» (p.313)

«Присмотревшись к нему, профессор сразу убедился, что этот воробей - не совсем простой воробей. Паскудный воробышек припадал на левую лапку, явно кривлялся, волоча ее, работал синкопами, одним словом, - приплясывал фокстрот под звуки патефона, как пьяный у стойки, хамил, как умел, поглядывая на профессора нагло.» (p.270)

A grotesque structure as a mixture of the fantastic and the real can take the form of an intersection of the time aspects. In Mayakovsky, as we remember, the future and the present excluded each other, and there were no actual points of contact between them

and their intersection was built on stressing their distinction. This corresponds to the general structure of Mayakovsky's grotesque. We do not mean the so-called "positive reality" of "Banya", since it has nothing to do with the grotesque. Bulgakov's play "Ivan Vasil'yevich" is built on the intersection of past and present, likewise his play "Blazhenstvo" is built on the intersection of the present and the future. Past and present also intersect in his novel "Master i Margarita". Both plays and the novel correspond to Bulgakov's general principle of the structure of the grotesque. Bulgakov's technique is usually based on an attempt to reveal the absurdities common to both times. Consequently the time planes do not merely intersect, but partly coincide in some common feature or absurdity. In "Ivan Vasil'yevich", we are not completely sure which absurdities are worse, those of the past or those of the present. It is true that against the new background of the present many features of the past seem cruel and absurd. Take, for example, these remarks from the past:

«Иван Грозный:(about inventor) / меня тоже был такой...крылья сделал ...Я его посадил на бочку с порохом, пушай полетает»(p.30)

«Дьяк:(about Prince Miloslavsky) Повесили на собственных воротах третьего дня перед спальней по приказу царя.»(p.52)

«Дьяк:(about interpreter) Был у нас толмач-немчин, да мы его андись в кипятке сварили.»(p.56)

But equally, the present looked at from the point of view of the past seems absurd and ridiculous. Here are some remarks by Timofeef:

«Отравить? У нас это не принято. И кильками в наш век гораздо легче отравиться, нежели водкой.»(p.29)

Timofeef (on Ivan the Terrible's question:«князь ли он?»)

«Какой там князь! У нас один князь на всю Москву и тот утверждает, что он сын кучера.» (p.29)

The people of the present who are transported into the past bring much more harm there than Ivan the Terrible to the present. We are presented with the rather paradoxical thought that the source of all vices is our present, not the distant "damned" past.

The same is true of "Blazhenstvo". On the one hand the time aspects, present and future, are two mutually exclusive poles. It is only natural, therefore, that many things of the present (attributes of the twenties) become sheer absurdities against the background of the future. Bunsha's activity as a house administrator, for example, takes the form of a ridiculous pointless game: «Утром встанет, начнет карточки писать, живых запишет, мертвых выкинет. Потом на руки раздает, неделя пройдет, отберет их, новые напишет, опять раздает, потом опять отберет, опять напишет.» (Б.р.88) On the other hand, the present and the future coincide with each other as a result of some mutual paradox. The coquetish and capricious behaviour of Aurora, the woman of the future, her love of romantic adventures, the adherence of the people of the future to good clothing, balls and champagne, obviously bourgeois indulgences from the point of view of the present, seem almost a paradox when attributed to the future. (compare the opposite treatment of the theme in Mayakovsky's "Клоп"). Here is how Bunsha reacts to such things: «Все это довольно странно. Социализм — совсем не для того, чтобы веселиться. А они бал устроили. И произносят такие вещи, что ого-го-го... Но самое главное, фраки... Надел бы фрак, да, на общее собрание пришел бы! Вот бы я посмотрел, какого он происхождения, интересно бы знать.» (Б.р.86) Here the man of the present is

surprised to find phenomena which had become obsolete in his own life flourishing in the future.

It is necessary to mention a polemic that went on between Mayakovsky and Bulgakov. According to Milyavsky<sup>1</sup> "Banya" presents a counter argument to Bulgakov's "Bagrovy ostrov", since both authors included the discussion of their own plays being played in their plays and thus expressed their attitude to the Party's interference in artistic matters. Mayakovsky was not basically against such interference (he himself after all expressed more than once his negative attitude to the staging of Bulgakov's plays<sup>2</sup>). Mayakovsky was more irritated by the conservative approach of some party bureaucrats to theatrical productions. Bulgakov was repelled by the idea of any interference by the party into a writer's work. Thus, if Mayakovsky makes a comedy out of the servile attempts of a producer to please the party bureaucrats, Bulgakov gives his dramatist a tragic intonation and deeply sympathises with the author of a banned play. From the polemics between "Banya" and "Bagrovy ostrov", one can extend the thread to Bulgakov's "Blazhenstvo", which contains views contrary to Mayakovsky's on a future communist society. The picture of Mayakovsky's future, ideal in all respects, contrasts with Bulgakov's far from ideal people of the future: perhaps it was Bulgakov's pessimistic outlook that people would never change.

<sup>1</sup> В. Мильявский, *op.cit.* p. 241-253. See also В. А. Сахновский-Панкеев «Булгаков», in «Очерки истории русской советской драматургии», 1934-1943, Изд. Искусство, 1966, pp. 122-143.

<sup>2</sup> В. Маяковский, v. 12, *op.cit.* pp. 301-305.

In Bulgakov's plays, the grotesque relates mainly to the situations. It does not penetrate the construction of characters or their language. None of the characters is ridiculous enough to be called grotesque. In both plays we also have two motivations for the transition to the grotesque, science fiction and dream. Both motivations weaken the strangeness of the happening and prevent us from treating both plays as genuine grotesque plays. Nevertheless, due to the grotesque in composition, we are confronted for a time with a strange reality of intersected times. In this mixed reality, people of the present change places with the people of the past ("Ivan Vasil'yevich") and are found to be unsuitable for the epoch of Ivan the Terrible. And the representatives of the present become the source of dangerous contamination such as theft, lying and debauchery in the society of the future. However, they are in time proclaimed inferior and are isolated for treatment by the Institute of Harmony. Of course motivation in the form of a dream makes it possible for Bulgakov to prevent all catastrophic consequences. But the effect of the strangeness and unusual angle of vision on the familiar aspects of our life remains. No wonder that the hero in "Ivan Vasil'yevich" discovers on waking up that the theft he dreamt about did actually take place.

We find the same principle of intersection of time aspects in "Master i Margarita" in whose structure one can separate three time planes, the present, the thirties in Moscow, the past, the ancient story of Pilate and Yeshua and the external plane, concerned with apparently in every detail the same Stalin's techniques and the unsolved problems of good and evil. The correlation of these three planes to the contemporary plane of time that in the external plane is very interesting. As far as time is concerned, we are particularly interested in Bulgakov's treatment

of past and present, which obviously intersect and partly coincide with each other in their common problems and conflicts. The obvious resemblance between these two planes is observed constantly. Take, for example, the emphasis on the theme of cowardice and fear and of responsibility for one's own actions. Let us recall the fear experienced by Pilate and the traces of fear scattered about Moscow of the thirties. The obvious resemblance of Pilate's thoughts about immortality (pp.40,47) and the Moscow poet's thoughts on the same subject (p.94). The words of proconsul Pilate addressed to Caesar «самый дорогой и самый лучший среди людей»(p.383) with their resemblance to those commonly addressed to a contemporary unmentioned tyrant also destroy the illusion of ancient time. Pilate's complaints about Jerusalem during Passover could easily apply to Moscow: «Но эти праздники!...Каждую минуту только и ждешь, что придется быть свидетелем неприятнейшего кровопролития. Все время тасовать войска, читать доносы и ябеды, из которых к тому же половина написана на тебя самого! Согласитесь, что это скучно!...»(p.384). Of Pilate's words about Jerusalem: «все в этом городе вероятно. Я готов спорить, что через самое короткое время слухи об этом пополазут по всему городу»(p.409), seem to be taken from the real plane of contemporary Moscow where the rumours do actually spread with a fantastic speed.

Take, as another example, the murder of Judas organized by Pilate and performed by the secret police chief Атрапац, but nevertheless presented as if none of them knew what happened. This murder apparently in every details reproduces Stalin's technique and is more relevant to the contemporary plane of time, than to the ancient. D.Piper<sup>1</sup> demonstrates that the murder of Judas is, in fact, the

<sup>1</sup>D.Piper, op, cit. p. 143.

murder of Kirov. Bulgakov also seeds the present with associations with ancient times. Here the author again seems deliberately to destroy the objectivity of one aspect of time, thus introducing to the modern plane phrases related to the ancient plane of time. The words belonging to Pilate's thoughts «БогИ, богИ, даЙте мне яду» (p.79,33,34)(ancient plane of time), suddenly appear in the description of the House of the Writer (modern plane of time). On another occasion, Matthew the Levite's knife, belonging to the ancient plane of reality, is mentioned in the Torgsin scene (contemporary plane of reality). The same is true of the words «При душе нет покоя», which are repeated three times, once by the Master (modern plane of time), once by Pilate (ancient plane of time), and once by Woland (eternal plane). We can not ignore all this apparent trivia since with their help, two such distant time planes are approximated to one another. What at first glance seem apparent trivia and mere carelessness on the part of the author is used intentionally and is a part of a thoughtfully constructed system.

**2. The elements of comedy and tragedy in Bulgakov's grotesque structure.**

- A. Comedy and its devices.**
- B. The relationship between comedy and tragedy.**
- C. The grotesque as a reflection of the author's vision of reality and its influence on the tragic element.**

A. Comedy and its devices.

As is the case with Mayakovsky, Bulgakov's grotesque is distinctly comic and any number of comic devices can be found in his work. His comedy can relate to both: the plane of reality and the plane of the fantastic. But it predominates on the plane of reality which is presented as a comic one, though one can never say that it is pure comedy since it can deteriorate into tragedy at any moment. We will try to explore the comedy devices of Bulgakov and see what contributes to the appearance of the tragedy in his grotesque.

The comic outcome of apparently significant situations, the sudden shift of the serious on to the plane of the ridiculous is typical of Bulgakov's grotesque structure as well. As in Mayakovsky's case, at the basis of it lies the same principle of reduction of the false significant (sublime) but unlike Mayakovsky, Bulgakov places the reduction of the significant contiguous to its opposite - the exaltation of the insignificant (the low). In Mayakovsky's plays the exaltation of the insignificant was absent since such elevation would contradict the satirical intention of the author. Besides, in the elevation of the low (insignificant) aspect of life lies the irony which is fundamental to Bulgakov. Of course Bulgakov's exaltation of the low does not suggest his approval or praise for this aspect of life, nor does his reduction of the significant necessarily result from a negative attitude towards it. Whereas Mayakovsky does not reduce genuinely significant concepts, it is part of Bulgakov's method to do this. For Bulgakov, the significant is not only something that pretends to be sublime and therefore should be reduced and ridiculed; that which is truly

significant and sublime can also be reduced by Bulgakov. Reduction of the significant and exaltation of the low are for him means of avoiding extremes, unnecessary pathos, sentimentality or anger. They both result from his ironic attitude to reality: "to the ironist, everything is relative, nothing absolute"<sup>1</sup>. This is very true of Bulgakov and his method. Bulgakov pokes fun at everything and everybody, he mocks the opposite forces (Persikov and Rock ["Rokovye yaitsa"]), Korotkov and the Soviet bureaucratic machine ("D'yavoliada"), the dog-man Sharikov and his creator Preobrazhensky ("Sobach'e serdtse"), he mocks all the themes including those sacred to a Soviet reader.

In "Sobach'e serdtse", Professor Preobrazhensky expresses ideas which are very dear to Bulgakov, yet the mockery is felt in every word applied to the character's depiction: «Филипп Филиппович вошел в азарт. Ястребиные ноздри его раздувались. Набравшись сил после сытного обеда, гремел он подобно древнему пророку, и голова его сверкала серебром.»(p.30) «Тяжкая дума терзала его ученый со взлизами лоб.»(p.71) The irony and mockery do not necessarily follow from his negative attitude to the ridiculed phenomena. They stem from his vision of the world, his free interpretation of reality, his refusal to perceive this reality as something that was given (fixed) once and for ever. Bulgakov's method was noted in Soviet criticism of the twenties. Elsberg<sup>2</sup>, for example, talks about Bulgakov's reduction of tragedy and farce

<sup>1</sup> Worcester, "The art of satire", 1960, p.168.

<sup>2</sup> И.Эльсберг, «Булгаков и МХАТ» «На литературном посту», N.3, 1927, pp.44-49.

and elevation of farce to tragedy. Similar remarks were made by Mustangova<sup>1</sup>. Both critics took a very negative attitude to this method.

Here are a few examples showing how Bulgakov presents what is significant and serious (not merely the pretentious and negative), on a reduced level. Ivan the Terrible ("Ivan Vasil'evich") (the significant) is presented on the level of everyday life and has to occupy himself with family squabbles (the low). "The House of the Writer in "Master i Margarita" is reduced to the restaurant and the writer's activity to gluttony. Everything strange and horrifying is shown on a reduced comic level. Indeed, we find a strong tendency towards comedy in Bulgakov's presentation of the fantastic plane. The horrific descriptions of monstrous reptiles and snakes are accompanied by ridiculous imagery which somehow diminishes their monstrosity. «К нему присоединилось короткое сипение, как будто высочилось масло и пар из паровоза... и над Александром Семеновичем оказалось что-то напоминающее по высоте московский столб. Но только это что-то было раза в три толще столба, и гораздо красивее его, благодаря чешуйчатой татуировке.» (РЯ.р.80). The horrifying moment of Berlioz's death is given parallel to the comic description of the cat which sits at the bus-stop and brushes its moustache. The hair-raising moment of Rokk's meeting with the giant snake concludes with a ridiculous phrase, reducing the seriousness and tragicality of the situation:

<sup>1</sup>Е.Мустангова «М. Булгаков», «Печать и Революция», N.4, 1927, pp.81-87.

«Ему показалось, что мороз ударил внезапно в августовский день, а перед глазами стало так сумеречно, точно он глядел на солнце сквозь летние штаны.» (РЯ.р.81). Similarly, the description of Madame Rokk's death (she is swallowed by the giant snake) is given through the words which are hardly appropriate to the situation: «Высоко над землей взметнулась голова Мани, нежно прижавшись к змеиной щеке...Затем змея, вывихнув челюсти, раскрыла пасть и разом надела свою голову на голову Мани и стала налезать на нее, как перчатка на палец.» (РЯ.р.82). Due to these words, the tragicality of event is disappearing, what we are facing is really a comic spectacle. In "Master i Margarita", the description of the devil and his associates are given on a level of pure comedy. Their activities in Moscow are presented as pure buffoonery. The devils are amiable characters, their clownish costumes, tricks and brawls reduce the idea of a devil as a sinister force.

As we have already mentioned in Bulgakov we find examples of the elevation of the low (insignificant) - the other source of the comedy, since it ennobles and exalts objects least of all entitled to it. The false character of this elevation is the source of irony for Bulgakov. Persikov's amphibians (in "Rokovye yaitsa ") definitely belong to the low plane. But Bulgakov describes their reproduction in such an exalted (almost pathetic) style, uses so many words which are inappropriate to what is actually happening under the microscope that as a result another plane of reality shows through. Through the language the red ray becomes the symbol of proletarian revolution and the amphibians the numerous proletariat:

«Сер<sup>е</sup>нькие амебы, выпуская ложноножки, тянулись в красную полосу и в ней (словно волшебным образом) оживали. Они лезли стаями и боролись друг с другом за место в луче. В нем шло бешеное, другого слова не подобрать, размножение. Ломая и опрокидывая все законы, известные Персикову, как свои пять пальцев, они почковались на его глазах с молниеносной быстротой...Среди рожденных вылались трупы погибших в борьбе за существование. Побеждали лучшие и сильные. И эти сильные были ужасны.»(РЯ.р.17)

By falsely exalting the low (amphibians), Bulgakov reduces the significant, sublime (proletarian revolution), a point Soviet critics were quick to note. Here is Ershov's comment on the cited passage: "This is a malicious lampoon on the Revolution. The red light stimulates the growth and reproduction only of the lowest species. It influences them only in a certain direction: they become 'vicious' and 'voracious', fiercely struggling for existence. In the process of this struggle one half of the 'little grey creatures' gobbles the other, paving the road of their success with the bodies of the weaker. And in order that 'the devil knows what' should not happen in the world, it becomes necessary to take extreme measures including the destruction of 'the growing generation of the swamp.'"<sup>1</sup>

The false elevation of the low as a rule has the effect of parody. In "Rokovye yaitsa", Bulgakov, by describing Rokk's adventures in an exalted (pathetic) style, parodies the sublime pompous words of literary style of the twenties which glorify the heroes of the revolution. This parody effect is achieved by

<sup>1</sup> А.Ф.Ершов «Советская сатирическая проза 20<sup>х</sup> годов» М-Л. 1960,р.214.

Bulgakov's false exaltation of Rokk , by Rokk's inappropriateness as a hero and by the comic contrast between his prerevolutionary activities in a cosy cinema "Volshhebnye grezy" and his "revolutionary feats": «Великий 1917 год, переломивший карьеру многих людей, и Александра Семеновича повел по новым путям. Он покинул «Волшебные грезы» и пыльный звездный сатин и бросился в открытое море войны и революции, сменив флейту на губительный маузер. Его долго швыряло по волнам, неоднократно выплескивая то в Крыму, то в Москве, то в Туркестане, то даже во Владивостоке. Нужна была именно революция, чтобы вполне выявить Александра Семеновича.» (РЯ.р.72)

By falsely raising Rokk and his activity, Bulgakov reduces by parody effect the "revolutionary activity" of revolutionary heroes of pseudo-literary style of that time. The heroic march of the legendary Red Cavalry ( in "Rokovye yaitsa"), is described in an exalted style and at first glance it seems in correspondence with the object of description. But the march is directed against reptiles and ostrich detachments and there is an obvious discrepancy between the mighty Red Cavalry and its adversary: the activity of the Red Cavalry is reduced to farce, a comic spectacle. In "D'yavoliada", the nonentity Korotkov, at the end of the story, is raised on to a pedestal as a hero. Bulgakov describes his battle with billiard balls as a soldier's unequal combat against a surrounding enemy. The pathetic style of heroic novels with its heroic terminology does not accord with the humble Korotkov and inevitably produces a comic effect: «Орлиным взором окинув позицию, Коротков поколебался мгновение и с боевым кличем: «вперед!» вбежал в бильярдную...Отвага смерти хлынула ему в думу. Цепляясь и балансируя, Коротков взобрался на столб парашюта, покачнувшись на

нем, вытянулся во весь рост и крикнул: «Лучше смерть, чем позор!» (Д.р.55). All these «орлиный взор», «окинув позиции», «боевой клич», sound ridiculous when applied to Korotkov, to the state he is in and as with the Red Cavalry they parody the numerous pathetic descriptions of revolutionary feats. Here again we observe in the end a deliberate reduction of the material. Falsely raising Korotkov to the level of a revolutionary hero, and by pathetically describing his combat, Bulgakov reduces, brings down from his pedestal the pseudo-revolutionary hero and his feat.

Bulgakov's comedy devices are, in many ways, similar to those of Mayakovsky, but of course they are extended in Bulgakov to the author's narrative as well. As in the case of Mayakovsky, Bulgakov's comedy is always based on some incongruity. For comic effect, Bulgakov juxtaposes words, phrases and sentences, which are stylistically incompatible, he groups together the most dissimilar objects and attributes, and treats them as if they were comparable. Thus the bases of his most common comedy devices are: 1) an incongruous juxtaposition of human and animal imagery: «Непосредственно вслед за жабами, опустошившими тот первый отряд голых гадов, который по справедливости назван классом гадов безхвостых, переселился в лучший мир бессменный сторож института старик Влас, не входящий в класс голых гадов»...«Власа нужно было кормить мукой, а жаб мучными червями.» (РЯ.р.7) (For more examples of this kind, see page 80 of this study). 2) A deliberate introduction in the most inappropriate context of words of tenderness such as «нежный», «нежно», «нежнейший», «сладко», «задушевный». These words are indicators of comedy for Bulgakov. They often restore comedy to the situation and perhaps

warn the reader not to take too seriously what the author actually says with such seeming conviction: «Бронский нежно и почтительно поклонился окну.» (РЯ.р.43) «Но когда его отводили спать, очень нежно и мелодически ругался скверными словами.» (СС.р.75), «Высоко над землей взметнулась голова Мани, нежно прижавшись к змеиной щеле.» (РЯ.р.82), «...жалобно горели китайские фонарики в неживой, задумчивой зелени.» (РЯ.р.50), «Александр Семенович нежно открыл контрольные стекла.» (РЯ.р.74), «Откуда валюту взял? - задумчиво спросили у Никанора Ивановича.» (ММ.р.203), «Но котелок быстро утихомирил Персикова, нежнейшим голосом нашептал, что профессор напрасно беспокоится.» (РЯ.р.42). 3) ludicrous comparisons: «Ухватил Короткова поперек туловища и легонько прижал к себе, как любимую женщину.» (Д.р.19), «Вообще он напоминал ангела в лакированных сапогах.» (РЯ.р.39), «Взмахнув портфелем, треснул им Дыркина, словно блин выложил на тарелку.» (Д.р.35), «Папироса Борменталюпала падушей звездой.» (СС.р.51). 4) different kinds of overstatement such as specification of unnecessary details, ridiculous exactness of description to the point of absurdity, false commentaries, comic contrast: «С Персиковым все вообще разговаривали или с почтением и с ужасом, или же ласково усмехаясь, как маленькому, хоть и крупному ребенку.» (РЯ.р.55), «У меня тетка в Полтаве под 43 градусом широты и 5 долготы.» (Д.р.46), «В крупном зале, где было всегда почему-то не изменяясь 5<sup>6</sup>мороза... читал цикл лекций..«Пресмыкающиеся жаркого пояса.» (РЯ.р.8),

" Заграничная пресса шумно, жадно обсуждала неслыханный в истории падеж, а правительство советской республики не поднимая никакого шума, работало, не покладая рук.» (РЯ.р.53), «Пьеса писателя Эрендорга «Курий дох» в постановке ученика республики Кухтермана.»

(РЯ.р.50). "Rokovye yaitsa" particularly abounds in overstatement; Persikov's tirades on chickens and chicken diseases perhaps sound understandable to the specialist-zoologist, but the reader is bewildered by the absurd piling up of one irrelevant detail on another. 5) The transposition from one style to another, usually from the solemn to the ridiculous or vice versa, is another source of comedy for Bulgakov. The description of the night in Sovkhoz "Krasny luch" is built on such transposition. In the middle of this poetic description, Bulgakov suddenly refers to the chess section of Izvestia, and this immediately shatters the lyricism of the preceding lines, just as the Sovkhoz driver's reference to Rokk «А хорошо думит, сукин сын» shatters the lyrical mood evoked by Rokk's flute playing. We have already mentioned that Bulgakov likes to introduce the sublime pathetic style in the most inappropriate context when we were describing his exaltation of the insignificant. But as well as whole passages, he introduces single sentences or even individual words from an inappropriate style, for example, the comic description of the cat's combat with the GPU men given with all comic details is suddenly interrupted by a pathetic sentence with the use of inappropriate words as far as the cat is concerned: «Теперь уж не могло идти речи о том, чтобы взять кота живым, и пришедшие метко и бешено стреляли ему в ответ из маузеров в голову и живот, в грудь и в спину.» (ММ.р.433). The comic description of the restaurant of "The Writers House", given in the style of a satirical novel, is interrupted suddenly by a passage belonging to a different stylistic level (pompos words of an elevated style): «И было в полночь видение в аду. Вышел на веранду черноглазый красавец с княжальной бородой, во фраке и царственным взором окинул

свои владения. Говорили, говорили мистики, что было время, когда красавец не носил фрака, а был опоясан широким кожаным поясом, из-за которого торчали рукоятки пистолетов, а его волосы воронова крыла были повязаны алым шёлком, и плыл в Карибском море под его командой бриг под чёрным гробовым флагом с адамовой головой.» (ММ.р.79).

The collision of different styles increases the comic effect.

6) In comparison with Mayakovsky, we do not observe in Bulgakov so much use of such grotesque devices of comedy as the collision of figurative and literal speech or the juxtaposition of different meanings of the same word (though some of his puns are built on this principle). Bulgakov's dialogue (particularly in his plays), contains less of the eccentric conclusions which cause laughter in Mayakovsky's plays. If the absurdity of conclusions is present (as in "D'yavoliada"), it can be explained by the author's intention to show the senselessness of the bureaucratic world. Indeed, a lot of dialogue in "D'yavoliada" consists of an absurd exchange of irrelevant remarks and inappropriate questions. It causes laughter, but the effect of this laughter is hardly comic.

On certain occasions the alogism penetrates the author's narrative and the author's absurd remark or conclusion results in comedy. Indeed, sometimes Bulgakov says one thing but concludes the opposite: «Одет был молодой человек совершенно безукоризненно и модно в узкий и длинный до колен пиджак, широчайшие шаровары колоколом и неестественной ширины лакированные ботинки с носами, похожими на копыта.» (РЯ.р.57).

7) Sometimes the juxtaposition of words and phrases belonging to different lexical and stylistic orders is motivated as in the plays

"Ivan Vasil'evich" and "Blazhenstvo", where the language of one epoch juxtaposes the other. This inevitably involves a good deal of comic misunderstanding among the characters. The most comic situations involving the characters of the past and present are built on such lexical confrontations. See how ridiculously Miloslavsky's slang sounds on the background of Ivan the Terrible's times: «Прому очистить царскую жилплощадь» (p.51), «Не приставай к царю» (p.51). «Какой паразит осмелился сломать двери в царское помещение» (p.50), «Я от него отмежевался» (p.53), «Это типичный перегиб» (p.60), «Браво! Аминь! Ничего не в силах прибавить к вашему блестящему докладу, кроме одного слова - аминь!» (p.59). Or the house administrator Bunsha trying to impress the Tsarina: «Царица: Пресветлый государь, княже мой и господин! Дозволь рабыне твоей, греемой милостью твоею...» «Бунша: Очень рад познакомиться. Позвольте вам представить - дьяк... и гражданин Милославский. Прому вас к нашему столику. (pp.62-63).

Auditory effects in Bulgakov's works, on the whole, are less eccentric than those of Mayakovsky, but as in Mayakovsky they intensify the comic side of Bulgakov's grotesque. One example of auditory comedy in Bulgakov is the pun which is made either by playing with words, one of which denotes a name: Рокк-Рок, роковой, Кальсонер - кальсоны, Артур - Артурч - Артур Диктатурч; «Товарищ Птаха-Поросок (Bird-Piglet). Persikov says: «Поедешь прямо в отдел животноводства к этому заведующему Птахе и скажешь ему прямо, что он - свинья», and further: «это какая-то скотина а не птаха.» (РЯ.р.93), or by using ambiguous-sounding words which call forth another meaning: for example «домовой», used by

Bulgakov in the meaning of house-manager calls forth its original meaning of "pixie"; «зоологический сторож» used in the meaning of an attendant who guards the zoo suggests the meaning of an attendant being of some zoological species.

The majority of puns in "Rokovye yaitsa" are built on ambiguous usage of words «яйца»: «Все граждане, владеющие яйцами, должны в срочном порядке сдать их в районное отделение милиции» (РЯ.р.49) Рокк: «Заграница, разве это наши мужицкие яйца» (РЯ.р.67). The jokes of the clowns: «Я знаю отчего ты такой печальный! - Отциво? - пискливо спрашивал Бим. - Ты зарыл яйца в землю, а милиция 15 участка их нашла.» (РЯ.р.51).

Like Mayakovsky, Bulgakov likes to ridicule monstrous abbreviations of words of the sort so common in Soviet Russia, or to create his own names for governmental organizations with the effect of parody: «Чрезвычайная комиссия по борьбе с куриной чумой» probably parodies «Чрезвычайная комиссия по борьбе с контрреволюцией». «Красный ворон» is formed by analogy with «Чёрный ворон»: hence the ridiculous-sounding abbreviations: «Доброхим, Доброкур, Главцентрбазспимат.»

The most typical device, however, and that which gives genuinely comic form to Bulgakov's grotesque is buffoonery. It is present in all his works, including his last novel "Master i Margarita". We have already noted that Bulgakov's technique is dramatic. We may now state that this theatrical performance is, as a rule, of a farcical comic nature and at times it is real buffoonery with clowns and carnival masks where everybody is involved and everybody gets his share of brawling and fighting. Bulgakov introduces buffoonery

in various forms: 1) In the presentation of characters. The majority of Bulgakov's characters, as we recall, have no pretensions to being real. They are puppets, marionettes, wearing comic masks, dressed in the ridiculous attire of clowns, sometimes carnival dress or a sort of period costume which has nothing to do with the reality Bulgakov is describing: «Тело неизвестного было облачено в расстегнутый, сшитый из серого одеяла френч, из-под которого выглядывала малороссийская вышитая рубашка, ноги в штанах из такого же материала, и низеньких с вырезом сапожках гусара времени Александра I.» (Д.р.11), «Массивная фигура мужчины в белом кунтуше.» (Д.р.36) (for the description of the characters, see pp. 72-78 of the present thesis). Many of the characters are real buffoons. Thus Koroviev and Begemoth, for example, are typical circus clowns. They are presented as a carnival pair («дикови<sup>н</sup>ая парочка», «неугомонная парочка», one is extremely tall and thin, the other short and fat). They are not only dressed in a corresponding style, but even equipped with unnecessary household utensils, the typical paraphernalia of carnival clowns. Here is the clownish appearance of Koroviev: «На маленькой головке жокейский картузик, клетчатый кургузый пиджачок. Гражданин ростом в сажень, но в плечах узок, худ невероятно, и физиономия, прошу заметить, глумливая.» (ММ.р.65), and next to it the comic description of Begemoth: «...перед Воландом предстали Коровьев и Бегемот. Но теперь примуса при толстяке не было, а нагружен он был другими предметами. Так под мышкой у него находился небольшой ландшафтик в золотой раме, через руку был перекинут поварской, наполовину обгоревший халат, а в другой руке он держал цельную семгу в шкуре и с хвостом. От Коровьева и Бегемота несло гарью, рожа Бегемота была в саже, а

кепка сильно обгорела.» (ММ.р.454).

2) Bulgakov accentuates the clownish gestures, poses and movements of his buffoons, their whimsical grimaces, facial expressions. These poses, movements, grimaces, may be applied not only to buffoons who carry out the comic spectacle; even the most pompous characters are not spared and may be caught either with a ridiculous expression on their face or in a most ridiculous buffoon pose.

«Все как заостенели за столиками с кусками стерляди на вилках и вытаращив глаза.» (ММ.р.81)

«Совершенно пораженный Филипп Филиппович застыл в кресле.» (СС.р.81)

«Глаза Филиппа Филипповича сделались совершенно круглыми.» (СС.р.54)

«Продавцы за рыбным прилавком как окаменели со своими ножами в руках.» (ММ.р.439) «Швейцар выпучил глаза.» (ММ.р.436) «...саркастически кривя рот, во весь голос орал бывший регент.» (ММ.р.437)

«Из коридора со скрежетом выехала скамеечка и на ней вытянулся, балансируя, Филипп Филиппович в синих с полосками носках.» (СС.р.64)

«Филипп Филиппович горделиво поднял плечи и сделался похож на французского древнего короля.» (СС.р.77)

«Филипп Филиппович растопырил ноги, отчего лазоревые полы разошлись, возвел руки и глаза к потолочной лампе в коридоре.» (СС.р.82)

«Я извиняюсь - задремал длинный и приложил увловатую руку к уху как тугоухий.» (ММ.р.64)

«И опустился на скамеечку. Задняя ее ножка тотчас с треском подломилась, и буфетчик, охнув, пребольно ударился задом о пол. Падая, он поддел ногой другую скамеечку, стоящую перед ним, и с нее опрокинул себе на бржки полную чашу красного вина.» (ММ.р.260)

«Панкрат появился в дверях, как будто поднялся по трапу в опере.» (РЯ.р.59)

3) Bulgakov's buffoons not only move in the ridiculous manner of the clown, they are involved in the action. They arrange mystifications, cause confusion and provoke uproar. The whole of "Ivan Vasil'yevich" is built on mystifications resulting from mistaken identity. The house-administrator Bunsha is taken for Ivan the Terrible, and the other way round, the thief Miloslavsky mystifies Prince Miloslavsky. (Miloslavsky and Bunsha are also a comic pair contrasted to one another: the quick, ready-witted thief Miloslavsky who performs the picking of pockets and breaking of locks like conjuring tricks, and the slow-witted, humourless Bunsha)

The buffoons - Koroviev and Bege<sup>n</sup>moth in "Master i Margarita" - turn all the Soviet institutions of the thirties upside down producing disorder and involving as many people as possible in the comic spectacle. In the Torgsin scene, where they provoke chaos, the comic metamorphoses, <sup>r</sup>hawling, fighting and throwing things at each other involve the whole shop and everybody participates:

«...произошло чудо. Приличнейший тихий старичок, одетый бедно, но чистенько, старичок, покулавший три миндальных пироженных... Вдруг преобразился. Глаза его сверкнули боевым огнем; он побагровел, швырнул кулечек с пирожеными на пол и крикнул: - Правда! - детским тонким голосом. Затем он выхватил поднос, сбросив с него остатки погубленной Бегемотом шоколадной эйфелевой башни, взмахнул им, левой рукой сорвал с иностранца шляпу, а правой с размаху ударил подносом плашмя иностранца по плешивой голове. Прогатился такой звук, какой бывает, когда с грузовика сбрасывают на землю матовое железо. Толстяк, белея, повалился навзничь и сел в кадку с керченской сельдью, выбив из нее фонтан селедочного рассола. Тут же стряслось и второе чудо. Сиреневый, провалившись в кадку, на

чистом русском языке без признаков какого-либо акцента вскричал: «Убивают! Милицию! Меня бандиты убивают!» - «очевидно, вследствие потрясения, внезапно овладев до сих пор неизвестным ему языком.» (ММ.р.441) «Публика, сразу подняв отчаянный крик, шарахнулась из кондитерского назад, смяв более не нужного Павла Иосифовича, а из-за рыбного прилавка гуськом со своими отточенными ногами рысью побежали к дверям черного хода продавцы.» (ММ.р.442), «Сиреневый гражданин, выдравшись из кадки, весь в селедочной хижке, перевалился через семгу на прилавке и последовал за ними.» (ММ.р.442)

4) Bulgakov's buffoonery is characterized by the speed of the metamorphoses which leave an impression not of the theatre but of the cinema.<sup>1</sup> "D'yavoliada" is also full of coloured metamorphoses, very quick and sharp in contrast: «Лицо Короткова сменило зеленую плесень на пятнистый пурпур.» (Д.р.16) «...негромко выкрикнул Коротков, становясь из пурпурного белым, как горностаи.» (Д.р.17) «...сказал толстяк, <sup>с</sup>тряхнувшись рукой перекрестился и превратился из розового в желтого.» (Д.р.49) «Никак нет, - ответил толстяк, меня розовую окраску на серенькую.» (Д.р.49)

5) Sometimes, the device of buffoonery is laid bare by Bulgakov. Such is the scene of black magic spectacle in "Master i Margarita", where Korov'yev and Begemoth perform conjuring tricks directly on the stage incited by Voland. The black magic spectacle starts with

<sup>1</sup> Е.Замятин «О сегодняшнем и о современном», in Лица, op.cit.p.217.

the question: Скажи мне, любезный Фагот, как по-твоему, ведь московское народонаселение значительно изменилось?...изменились ли эти горожане внутренне? Любезный Фагот, покажи нам для начала что-нибудь простенькое.» (ММ,р.154), and the clown<sup>1</sup>s eagerly create a situation and, by provoking audience reaction and involving them in the spectacle, make it possible for Voland to answer it and give his final conclusion: «Они люди как люди...Любят деньги, но ведь это всегда было...Человечество любит деньги, из чего бы те ни были сделаны: из кожи ли, из бумаги ли, из бронзы или золота. Ну легкомысленны...ну что же ...и милосердие иногда стучится в их сердца...обыкновенные люди...в общем,напоминают прежних, квартирный вопрос только испортил их.» (ММ,р.160). The devil's numerous audiences with a long file of Moscow scoundrels are presented in the same theatrical manner: the bed in Berlioz's flat is his chair on the stage, and the bored Voland is amused by Korov'yev and Begemoth who bring the human scoundrels into his presence and then carry out his verdict.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>А.Вулис «Советский сатирический роман» (Эволюция жанра в 20-30<sup>е</sup> годы), Ташкент, 1965, р.264

B. The relationship between comedy and tragedy.

Unlike Mayakovsky, the comedy and tragedy in Bulgakov's grotesque are very closely intermingled. We are almost never given only comedy or tragedy, it is always tragicomedy. A tragic impression emerges in spite of the use of comic devices and an event, tragic in its essence, deteriorates into pure comedy. In "Master i Margarita", despite the comic treatment of the devil and his associates, it is with the devil that the most naturalistic descriptions of violence, brutality and murder are connected. The beheading of Berlioz and Bengalsky, the beating up of Varenucha, the murder of Baron Meighl, are perhaps devoid of tragedy in its true sense (most of the characters hardly deserve to be pitied), yet the naturalistic description of their cruel treatment produces, if not tragic, very unpleasant impressions on the reader. In fact, the reader in "Master i Margarita" can never get used to violence - the instances are spaced so that the reader has just been laughing at a scene and has forgotten the last brutal moment when he is again forced to confront an unpleasant description.<sup>1</sup> Tragedy and comedy alternate in "Master i Margarita". The tragic tonality of the scenes connected with the tragedy of the Master and his book disrupt the comic tonality of caricatured scenes of Moscow life, the comic buffoonery which the devils arrange in Moscow runs parallel to the deeply tragic ancient scenes describing Jeshua's execution and Pontius Pilate's suffering after it.

Similarly, "Rokovye yaitsa" and "D'yavoliada" are full of the most naturalistic descriptions of violence, presented as a rule with a strong inclination towards comedy. The author seems to enjoy creating a comic effect by treating his characters cruelly and then

<sup>1</sup>Proffer Ellendea, op.cit.p.320.

at the most inappropriate moment, when they experience pain or their suffering reaches its highest point, applying to them the most ridiculous imagery. Ridiculous comparisons are applied to Korotkov precisely at such moments: «Несколько мгновений он перебирал ногами, как горячая лошадь, и зажимал глаз ладонью.» (Д.р.9)

«Коротков вонзился в коробку лифта, сел на зеленый диван напротив другого Короткова и задыхал, как рыба на песке.» (Д.р.54)

«...пожал ему руку так, что тот встал на одну ногу, словно аист на крыше.» (Д.р.31). This, as we have mentioned, equally relates to the characters with whom the author seemingly sympathises and whom he actually satirises. If the author disapproves of his character, it is not surprising that he punishes them with laughter for their stupidity, their arrogance, their interference with Persikov's experiments, as he does with Rokk. But if the author's sympathies are on the side of the characters, if the characters are the victims, surely the author should abandon his ironic treatment towards them. Persikov, for example, is the innocent side, and his lynching by an infuriated crowd should leave a genuinely tragic impression. But is it really so? As we have already seen, Persikov and his activities were described in caricatured amphibia-like manner. The author obviously does not intend to take him seriously. Even his death is described in a mock heroic terminology: «Персиков, стоящий, как белое изваяние»...«распростер руки, как распятый.» (РЯ.р.103).

The same is repeated in "D'yavoliada", where a man dies against a generally comic background because of a small bureaucratic mistake in an official paper. The death of this little man lost in the labyrinth of the Soviet bureaucratic machine should leave a strong tragic impression (and there is a strong sympathy towards Korotkov

as towards Persikov on Bulgakov's part), yet Bulgakov does everything to reduce this man to a mere nonentity and to deprive his death of any drama. He deliberately stresses comic elements such as discrepancy in style and intonation of the final episode which is bound to bring a comic note to Korotkov's death. This, of course, undermines the tragic element. The reader is never sure that the author is not pulling his leg and even in the most violent and cruel episodes cannot sympathise too long with any of Bulgakov's characters.

However, we have mentioned that the tragic intonation in Bulgakov is nevertheless quite strong. If so, what constitutes the appearance of the tragic element despite the author's repeated attempts to present everything as pure comedy? In terms of structure one can say that on the plane of reality tragedy often appears with the emergence of the *latent* fantastic. The disintegration of reality, for example, which is closely connected with the *latent* fantastic, is usually rather frightening and leaves a tragic impression. When in "Master i Margarita" we are confronted with the *latent* fantastic of our reality as a result of juxtaposition of the Devil's activities with those of humans, such as making people disappear, the effect of it is anything but comic, since the reader immediately establishes associations with 1937, despite the comic representation of events.

Bulgakov may create a tragic impression by the unexpected changing of his point of view. The introduction of a serious tone in the description of Persikov's death creates such a shift towards drama, even though the reader is reluctant to take it seriously: he is alert since he was already deceived by the mock-serious descriptions of previous tragic events. Here, however, Bulgakov drops all his comic devices, his verbal irony, and the impression

is close to serious drama. The caricatured amphibia-like professor suddenly becomes human. In "D'yavoliada", at the very end Bulgakov abandons his mocking tone and in a strikingly realistic manner describes Korotkov's death. Freed from all ironic details, this description is very moving: for the moment we feel the tragedy of Korotkov's death: «Солнечная бездна поманила Короткова так, что у него захватило дух. С пронзительным победным кликом он подпрыгнул и взлетел вверх. В миг перерезало ему дыхание. Неясно, очень неясно он видел, как серое с черными дырами, как от взрыва, взлетело мимо него вверх. Затем очень ясно увидел, что серое упало вниз, а сам он поднялся вверх к узкой щели переулка, которая оказалась над ним. Затем кровавое солнце со звоном лопнуло у него в голове, и больше он ровно ничего не видал.» (Д.рр.57-58).

Another very similar shift takes place in the restaurant scene where, in the middle of a comic marionette show performed by the puppet-figures of writers, there suddenly appears a lyrical digression and we hear the sad voice of the author who, it seems, deliberately destroys the wholeness of the picture when he reminds us of his own presence: «Но нет, нет! Лгут обольстители|истики, никаких Карибских морей нет на свете, и не плывут в них отчаянные флибустьеры, и не гонится за ними корвет, не стелется над волною пушечный дым. Нет ничего, и ничего не было! Вон чахлая липа есть, есть чугунная решетка и за ней бульвар...И плавится лед в вазочке, и видны за соседним столиком налитые кровью чьи-то глаза, и страшно, страшно... О боги, боги мои, яду мне, яду...» (ММ.р.79)

C. The grotesque as a reflection of the author's vision  
of reality and its influence on the tragic element

There are also several features of Bulgakov's method which contribute to the appearance of a tragic impression of his grotesque. First of all, there is the fact that his grotesque stems from his vision of the world. To make this point we have to compare Bulgakov's method with that of Mayakovsky. In Mayakovsky's case, as we remember, social satire was the main function of his grotesque (though as we have seen, it was complicated by other than satirical motives in "Klop"). Bulgakov is also a sharp satirist and his works abound in satirical scenes. Indeed, sometimes when the factual material is more evident and associations with reality are strong, the satirical tendency becomes prevalent. "Rokovye yaitsa" and "D'yavoliada" are both concerned with satirical exposure of bureaucracy of the newly-formed state. "D'yavoliada" indeed takes to the limit the senselessness of the bureaucratic machine and "Rokovye yaitsa" ridicules the stupidity and pseudo-enthusiasm of semi-literate government officials. The philistine in all his forms is another target of Bulgakov's satire, and in "Master i Margarita" he comes under attack when his mean desires are exposed by the devil and he is completely crushed by the unusual circumstances. Satire is also the main function of grotesque situations in "Ivan Vasil'evich" and "Blazhenstvo", when once again the philistine demonstrates his pettiness and inability to resist anything unusual. But, as opposed to Mayakovsky, Bulgakov's grotesque is never limited to a satirical function. Bulgakov's grotesque is closely connected with how the author sees the world and how he interprets it. Bulgakov

perceives life as full of paradoxical situations, he sees the fantastic, the tragedy and comedy of the most everyday things in our life. "Life is far cleverer at making up things than the cleverest liar"<sup>1</sup> - such is his own assumption. It is not, of course, that his life was any fuller of the fantastic than the life of his contemporaries, though Paustovsky says that "Hoffmanniada has accompanied Bulgakov through his lifetime".<sup>2</sup> But Bulgakov sees fantasticality and tragicomedy of the situation and tends to interpret it accordingly. Here, for example are his own comments on his personal experience concerning his play "Blazhenstvo": "An event exceeding the bounds of reality occurred in connection with my play "Blazhenstvo". A room in the 'Astoria'. I am reading. The theatre director, he is also the producer, is listening and expressing his full and evidently genuine delight; He says that he is going to produce it, he promises money and says that he will come to have supper with me in forty minutes. In forty minutes he comes back, has supper, does not say a word about the play, and then vanishes into thin air and is never seen again. There is some suggestion that he has passed into the fourth dimension. That is the kind of miracle that happens in this world."<sup>3</sup> And this is a typical example of the

<sup>1</sup> М.Булгаков «Силует», from his introduction to В.Слезкин «Роман балерины», 1928, p.11.

<sup>2</sup> К.Паустовский «Книга скитаний» «Новый мир», N.11, 1963, p.90.

<sup>3</sup> From his letter to Попов from 10 July 1934 in Советские писатели (автобиографии), v.3, N.1966, p.99.

latent fantastic such as we find in his works. No matter how funny and absurd the situation is, we can not but sense the tragic subcontext of it. We can say that Bulgakov was artistically pre-disposed towards the grotesque.

Most of Bulgakov's works reflect, to some extent, his personal experiences. The fantastic adventures of Korotkov may well have sprung from Bulgakov's own experience when he served in Glavpolitprosvet<sup>1</sup> (Korotkov serves in Glavtsentrbaзспимат), and was actually paid, not in money, but in sacks of dried peas (Korotkov is paid in boxes of matches). Bulgakov's own experience in search of a disappearing organisation during NEP, described in "Zapiski na manzhetach"<sup>2</sup>, the sensation experienced by him personally of actually losing his mind during this search seems to anticipate the tragic fate of Korotkov. The sinister howling tramcars, as described in "Master i Margarita", were evoked by the noisy tramcars under his own window in Bolshaya Pirogovskaya where the author used to live.<sup>3</sup> Even the flat at 302bis Sadovaya Street which is visited by the devil is nothing but the flat Bulgakov used to live in at 10 Sadovaya Street with all the details such as the mirror in the dark hall,

<sup>1</sup> Советские писатели (автобиографии), op.cit. p.90.

<sup>2</sup> М.Булгаков «Записки на манжетах», «Россия», 1923. N.5.

<sup>3</sup> С.Ермолинский «О Михаиле Булгакове. Воспоминания» in Театр, 1965, N.9, p.82.

the candelabra with china glass candlesticks on which Begemoth swings.<sup>1</sup> Bulgakov, as we see, always seems to start from actual experiences and concrete objects yet, processed by his imagination, these experiences and objects are transformed fantastically, grown to universal proportions. Everything is illusive and unreal, yet it is concrete and convincing at the same time. And the boundary between the two is very vague indeed. Thus Bulgakov seems to be very much involved in the improbable events described in his books and stands quite close to his characters. Perhaps because of this the tragic side of his grotesque (based at times on personal experiences) is stronger than Mayakovsky's. Mayakovsky, after all, always preserves a distance between himself and his ridiculous characters particularly in "Banya". "Klop", of course, is a different matter. There, through association with his autobiographical poem "Pro eto", his personal disappointments can be traced and the sense of tragedy increases.

Bulgakov's ability to give a fantastic coloration to his descriptions, to discover the comedy of the situation and its tragic side (or the other way round) can be traced in his most realistic works, like "Belaya gvardia" and "Beg", where the author tries to reproduce reality in the bounds of plausibility. But even here the author can not preserve his verisimilar tone for long. The most characteristic epithets here are «СТРАННЫЙ, НЕЕСТЕСТВЕННЫЙ». Kiev, in Bulgakov's words lived «СТРАННОЮ НЕЕСТЕСТВЕННОЙ ЖИЗНЬЮ, которая очень возможно уже не повторится в 20м столетии.» All sorts

<sup>1</sup> В. Лёвшин «Садовая, 302-бис» in Театр, N.11, 1971, pp.110-120.

e of fantastic transformations are affected through metaphor. Pictures, statues, come to life and converse with characters. Also in "Beg", the atmosphere is intensified to the extreme degree and though there is no open fantastic as such Bulgakov persistently pursues the action as if on "the edge of reality"<sup>1</sup>. The tone of both works, "Belaya gvardia" and "Beg" is tragic and full of the sympathy for the dying cause of the Whites, yet Bulgakov constantly disrupts this tragic atmosphere and introduces his buffoon-type characters precisely at the most tragic moments. Kaverin is right, without doubt, when he says that "On reading 'Beg' I noticed that at the sad moments I suddenly wanted to laugh and at the funny moments I felt sad"<sup>2</sup>.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the reality depicted in Bulgakov's works is usually in process of disintegration. It is illusory and hardly stabilized. The effect of this disintegrating reality is at times rather frightening and leaves a tragic impression on the reader. Bulgakov was often reproached that Soviet reality in his works appears before his readers as unstable and illusory. It was said that his refusal to perceive Soviet reality as stable follows from his outlook as a fellow-traveller.<sup>3</sup> Of course, to some extent the critics are right. After all, Soviet reality of the

<sup>1</sup> К. Рудницкий «Михаил Булгаков» in Вопросы театра. Сборник статей и материалов, 1966, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> В. Каверин, «Заметки о драматургии» in М. Булгаков, «Драмы и комедии», М. Искусство, 1965, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Литературная энциклопедия, 1930, т. 3, p. 32.

twenties was rather unstable, the breaking up of the old and reorganization of the new were in progress. And then Bulgakov's "free interpretation" of the already unstable Soviet reality could never lead to stability. On the contrary, this already unstable reality can only disintegrate further and become even more illusory, which is exactly what happens in Bulgakov. (If reality itself is already unstable and the regularities are distorted in it, then Bulgakov, with his inclination towards the grotesque depiction of life, is free to add even more fantastic forms, to make fortuity regularity, to develop fantastic consequences from a trivial event).

Bulgakov also was never a very active supporter of the new and never took an active part in Soviet reorganisation. As a man he had been formed before the revolution and he came from a family not exactly sympathetic to the revolution. Though he understood the inevitable death of the old world, he preserved his sympathy for it. (See, for example, his numerous passages relating to the past in "Belaya gvardia", "Rokovye yaitsa", "Sobach'e serdtse").

Some of these remarks infuriated Soviet critics who maintained that Bulgakov is a writer of counter-revolutionary philistines who hides in the citadel of cosy flats and soft furniture, whose whole ideal is in the past.<sup>1</sup> A similar attitude to Bulgakov was taken by Mayakovsky, who considered Bulgakov's works to be harmful to the reader, and who put Bulgakov's name in the dictionary of obsolete words of the society of the future in "Klop".<sup>2</sup> Mayakovsky's negative

<sup>1</sup>И.Эльсберг, op.cit.p.47.

<sup>2</sup>В.Маяковский, op.cit.v.12,pp.301-305.

attitude to Bulgakov primarily follows their different treatment of the past. Mayakovsky hates the past as a symbol of all things that are supposed to be gone or will disappear. If he hates NEP, <sup>is because</sup> so NEP is the revival of the past in the present and therefore hateful for Mayakovsky. For Bulgakov there is no such distinction, for he treats both past or present ironically. He applies his method of all-round irony to everybody and everything that surrounds him including himself. He mocks not merely what he hates or dislikes, but what he loves and sympathises with. As we have already seen, Bulgakov's attitude to the characters with whom he obviously sympathises, such as Persikov in "Rokovye yaitsa", Korotkov in "D'yavoliada", Preobrazhensky in "Sobach'ye serdtse", is full of irony. He simply can not resist mocking them along with everyone else. This ironic mockery was an essential part of Bulgakov's personality and his approach to life, a self-protecting mask which enabled him to face the numerous unpleasantnesses of his life. According to Petelin<sup>1</sup>, even the most scandalous attacks of his critics he treated with a certain perverse pride collecting and displaying abusive reviews of his works.

Such mockery extended even to Stalin. Paustovsky<sup>2</sup> describes how, in 1930, while waiting for a reply to his letter from Stalin, Bulgakov used to amuse his friends with fanciful descriptions of Stalin's reaction to his letter. In this Bulgakov again seems to be the opposite of Mayakovsky who, in the words of Sinyavsky, knew

<sup>1</sup> В. Петелин, М.А.Булгаков и «Дни Турбиных» in Огонёк, 1969 N.11, pp.25-27.

<sup>2</sup> К. Паустовский, «Книга скитаний» in Новый мир, 1963, N.10, p.91.

very well what he could laugh at and what he could not.<sup>1</sup> As a result, on reading Bulgakov's works, one is left with the feeling of ambivalence. Such ambivalence disrupts the satirical impact of Bulgakov's grotesque even when his purpose is to satirise a certain aspect of life. The ambivalent spreading of irony on opposing forces is, of course, the means of avoiding censorship. It is one thing when irony is directed only at Soviet reality, it is another when it penetrates everything. But this ambivalence deprives the reader of a sense of stability and he cannot quite make up his mind what the author's actual intention was since, if the author refuses to take anything seriously (e.g. Korotkov or Persikov's deaths), then both the Soviet bureaucratic machine and Party's interference which caused both deaths can hardly strike us as evil. But due to this ambivalence Bulgakov's grotesque acquires its genuine qualities: everybody and everything including the author and the reader are drawn into the alienated world where there are no real values and everything turns out to be the opposite of what one might expect. The author's vision of reality becomes very close to that of today's "theatre of the absurd" with its cultivation of grotesque.

The most typical grotesque device Bulgakov uses is to show reality as the theatrical performance with marionette figures whom the author manipulates. It has been noted in Soviet criticism<sup>2</sup>, that in his novel "Belaya gvardia", and subsequently in "Dni Turbinykh",

<sup>1</sup> А.Синявский «Что такое социалистический реализм» in «Фантастический мир Абрама Терца», Международное литературное содружество, 1967, p.433.

<sup>2</sup> Ж.Эльсберг, op.cit.p.49.

25 a  
 Bulgakov shows the actions of the white soldiers as a comic spectacle with its heroes performing a masquerade. Despite the generally negative attitude to both works, this feature of Bulgakov was considered ~~to his~~ merit. But as soon as Bulgakov applies the same method in depicting Soviet reality, he is immediately branded as a counter-revolutionary. In "Rokovye yaitsa", he shows the bolsheviks' actions as a farcical spectacle and we find the theatrical image in "Master i Margarita", where the whole reality of Moscow is presented as a black comedy with marionettes controlled by the devil. This theatrical imagery which we frequently find in his works follows his perception of life, his free interpretation of reality. "Bulgakov is a born playwright<sup>1</sup>" is a typical remark made by many who knew him. "Bulgakov perceived life as action. For him life was always an act, an unexpected turning point, a discovery. The acuteness of his feeling as a dramatist was stunning in the most real sense of the word"<sup>2</sup>.

The device of showing life as a theatrical performance makes it easier for the author to manipulate his point of view. After all, if it is the author himself who directs the spectacle, he is free to add anything he likes to it: comedy or tragedy. And Bulgakov changes his point of view always in the direction of tragedy (whether he achieves his tragic impression is another matter. We have tried to show previously that his method of all-round irony is an obvious obstacle to it.)

<sup>1</sup> К. Паустовский «О Булгакове» in Театральная жизнь 1962, N.14, p.29.

<sup>2</sup> In Советские писатели, op.cit.p.99.

The tragic impression is often aimed at through the associations the reader establishes with reality. In "Master i Margarita", the theatrical spectacle is entrusted to the devil, it is he who pulls the strings. The spectacle as we remember is built with the help of comic devices. The fact that Bulgakov names the devil and his associates is bound to deprive the spectacle of tragic intonation. It is one thing when we confront something mysterious which is named and explained, it is another when we confront something inexplicable, nameless and sinister. Nevertheless, the serious impression is preserved and it is often achieved by a juxtaposition of the devil's activities with those of humans. The Devil performs magic tricks on humans by sending them to remote parts, arranging their disappearances, driving them mad. But who performs such tricks in parallel episodes in real life, who governs all their actions when there are no fantastic forces whose presence can explain everything? One can only guess. Thus, Bulgakov's picture of the world in "Master i Margarita" fully corresponds to paradoxical reality. It calls for associations with this reality and these associations are very tragic and serious. Of course, to some extent, all the problems Bulgakov touches in "Master i Margarita" are already tragic in their essence. What are good and evil, how are they related to one another, is the existence of evil inevitable? It is not by chance that the plane of antiquity develops in parallel to the plane of modern reality, since the manifestations of good and evil in past and present are comparable. Bulgakov underlines the existence of similar conflicts and themes on the plane of antiquity. Their parallel existence in both time planes leads the reader to the rather tragic thought that perhaps no solution is possible.

The black comedy spectacle of "Master i Margarita" finishes with the triumph of justice (with the help of fantastic forces). This triumph of justice with the help of the devil, the conventional solution of all the conflicts in "Master i Margarita" only increases the general tragic impression of the novel however. What is this conventional solution of all the problems really leading to? The Master and Margarita are reunited, the Master's manuscript is restored to him, and scoundrels, cowards and informers punished, all with the devil's help. These solutions of the conflicts by magic forces are illusory. (It is not by chance that Bulgakov gives in parallel more real solutions. The Master dies in an asylum and Margarita at home from a heart-attack.) The conventional solution of all the problems, the triumph of justice by magic in the novel, only sharpens the tragic perception of parallel themes in present-day reality. The themes of cowardice and crimes against one's conscience, and the theme of losses that can never be brought back, become more acutely tragic when applied to reality, when there is no magic force to bring them back, to change what can not in reality be changed. And the buffoonery of comic spectacle in "Master i Margarita" seems to be purely comic only on the surface. Though it is very comic in its form and contributes a great deal of pure comedy to the novel, when applied to reality (though it seems inapplicable) it becomes an exact reflection of life in Moscow in the thirties. And if in the novel we view the devil's tricks on the purely comic level since the characters are merely puppets on strings which the devil and his associates pull for their own amusement, then on the plane of contemporary reality, Stalin's and his associates' manipulations of

the people, the real disappearing acts and arrests, the ridiculous trials they arrange (like the one parodied in Nikanor Ivanovich's dream), produce such a tragic effect that the comic spectacle becomes a horrific menace. In such a way all the conflicts, though solved conventionally, are left open: the cowards, informers, emerge in the end of the novel and continue their existence, and everything stays as it was.

Let us compare also the conventional solution of catastrophic events with the help of nature's fortuitous whim ("Rokovye yaitsa"). (It is pure coincidence that there is frost on the fatal August 19-20, otherwise the whole of mankind would perish). Reality is not so lucky with such fortuitous events.

#### IV. Schwartz.

1. The structural features of Schwartz's grotesque.
2. The function of Schwartz's grotesque.
3. The elements of comedy and tragedy.

1. The structural features of Schwartz's grotesque.

One of the reasons we have chosen to analyse Schwartz's grotesque is the nature of its fantastic element, that of the fairytale. As Yu.Mann comments: "The grotesque is close to literary forms of the folk tradition - fable, fairytale. The closeness of the grotesque to the fairytale is confirmed by the fact that some grotesque works were based on fairytale and half-fairytale subjects (for example, Rabelais and lubok-style books about Gargantua); others themselves took the form of the fairytale (Satykov-Shchedrin's fairytales). One can observe the closeness of the grotesque to fairytale in Soviet literature in Schwartz."<sup>1</sup> Schwartz's plays are only superficially fairytales. The plots are usually borrowed from Hans Christian Andersen. The characters come straight from fairytale: a three-headed dragon, ogres, giants, cats and bears, Sleeping Beauty, Tom-Thumb, Little Red-Riding Hood, Baba-Yaga, good and evil spirits, witches and vampires people his fantastic world. Even the room occupied by the scholar (in "Ten") was previously occupied by Hans Christian Andersen. The events that take place are purely fantastic (a brave knight saves a beautiful girl from a dragon["Drakon"]). Andersen's king who wore no clothes strides the streets and is exposed by a little boy ("Golyi Korol"), the shadow separates from the body of the scholar and leads a separate existence ("Ten"). All the attributes of the fairytale seem to be present: the magic carpet, the invisible hat, the water of life and the talking pot. Lancelot fights the dragon with a magic

<sup>1</sup>Yu.Mann, op.cit.p.104.

sword, the decapitated scholar is revived by the magic water of life. We can even trace devices typical of fairytale: the fairytale device of retardation, for example, is clearly seen in "Drakon" (the animals' conversations and Elza's friends' meetings slow the action down in the manner of fairytale). Or in "Ten'", Schwartz, several times, uses the mystical number seven so common in fairytales: «завещание было запечатано в семи конвертах семью сургучными печатями и скреплено подписями семи тайных советников» (p.245), or further on «завещание короля вызвало семь банкротств, семь самоубийств и все ценности упали на 7 семь пунктов.» (p.259). The water of life can be found «за семью дверями, за семью замками.» (p.300).

Yet Schwartz's fairytale world turns out to be only a facade, and beyond this facade the other world exists, that of contemporary reality with all its contradictions, its complexity and confusion. Having entered Schwartz's superficial world of the fairytale, we discover that the situations and events contradict those of fairytale; the characters, their psychology, their actions and remarks, are strangely modern and approximated to our world. We notice strange transformations happening to the fairytale characters and we observe the constant intrusion of contemporary life's logic into their actions and their way of thinking. As a result of this intrusion, grotesque shifts occur. Two closely interlocked planes can be distinguished in Schwartz's grotesque structure: that of fairytale and that of reality. In our analysis we shall concentrate on the two Schwartz plays: "Ten'"(1939), and "Drakon"(1943)<sup>1</sup>. The choice

<sup>1</sup>The quotations are given from: Е.Шварц, Пьесы, Ленинград, 1960.

can be justified by their complexity and subtlety in comparison with his early plays. In both plays the illusion of a fairytale world is destroyed almost immediately. In "Ten", the girl (Anuntsiata) says to the scholar: «Вы не знаете, что живете в совсем особенной стране. Все, что рассказывают в сказках, все, что кажется у других народов выдумкой - у нас бывает на самом деле каждый день. Вот, например, Спящая Красавица жила в пяти шагах ходьбы от табачной лавочки - той, что направо от фонтана. Только теперь Спящая Красавица умерла. Людоед до сих пор жив и работает в городском ломбарде оценщиком. Мальчик с пальчик женился на очень высокой женщине, по прозвищу Гренадер, и дети их - люди обыкновенного роста, как вы да я. И знаете удивительно? Эта женщина, по прозвищу Гренадер, совершенно под башмаком у Мальчика с пальчика.» (Т.р.236).

This world which is opposite to fairytale seems to be very close to the contemporary one, and the scholar contradicts Anuntsiata only to confirm the fact: «Ваша страна - увы! - похожа на все страны в мире. Богатство и бедность, знатность и рабство, смерть и несчастье, разум и глупость, святость, преступление, совесть, бесстыдство - все это перемешано так тесно, что просто ужасаешься. Очень трудно будет все это распутать, разобрать и привести в порядок так, чтобы не повредить ничему живому. В сказках все это гораздо проще.» (Т.рр.237-238).

In the same way, the fairytale facade of talking cats and knights errant in "Drakon" collapses as soon as we hear the father of the girl who is going to be eaten by the dragon the next day saying: «У нас очень тихий город, здесь никогда и ничего не

случается.» (Д.р.312) This submissive attitude would sound rather unnatural in the world of the real fairytale. Equally ridiculous would be his indifferent answer to the question of Lancelot about the dragon: «Ах, это...Но ведь мы так привыкли к нему. Он уже 400 лет живет у нас.» (Д.р.312) But in our modern reality we can find plenty of examples of people's indifference to the power of a dictator. As Charlemagne, the father of the doomed girl, describes events to Lancelot and analyses them, it turns out that the world we are facing is obviously out of tune with fairytale. This world becomes more and more approximated to our world. We hear, not the words of a fairytale character, but those of a modern man brain-washed by the system - «Он так добр» - says Charlemagne about the dragon, beside himself with admiration, and explains to Lancelot the dragon's kindness: «Уверю Вас. Когда нашему городу грозила холера, он по просьбе городского врача дохнул своим огнем на озеро и вскипятил его. Весь город пил кипяченую воду и был спасен от эпидемии.» (Д.р.313). This explanation of the dragon's kindness belongs to the plane of fairytale. But this fairytale plane is disrupted by the other explanation of the dragon's kindness which is quite a departure from fairytale and which belongs rather to the plane of reality:

«Ланцелот: А что он еще сделал доброго?»

Шарлемань: Он избавил нас от цыган.

Ланцелот: Но цыгане - очень милые люди.

Шарлемань: Что вы! Какой ужас! Я, правда, в жизни своей не видал ни одного цыгана. Но я еще в школе проходил, что это люди страшные...Это бродяги по природе, по крови. Они-враги любой государственной системы, иначе они обосновались бы где-нибудь,

а не бродили бы туда-сюда. Их песни лишены мужественности, а идеи разрушительны. Они воруют детей. Они проникают повсюду. Теперь мы все очистились от них, но еще сто лет назад любой брнет обязан был доказать, что в нем нет цыганской крови.» (Д.р.314)

This explanation is so contemporary that as a result we recreate in our imagination not a flame-breathing monster but a modern dictator, and the fairytale country acquires the features of a modern totalitarian state.

Schwartz's characters are very different from traditional fairytale. We are accustomed to think of fairytale characters either as all good or as all bad. Schwartz humanizes both of them and brings them out of their world of fairytale into our own reality. And if Schwartz's world contains the opposite of that of the fairytale, if it is really our world, the characters obviously have to adjust themselves then to the world of reality; and they undergo changes. On the plane of the fairytale the dragon has all the attributes of a fully-fledged dragon: sharp claws, scales, fire-breathing and three heads, and this corresponds to the law of fairytale. What contradicts the laws of fairytale is the fact that he has been living among people so long that he sometimes turns into a man himself and drops by just like an old friend. Thus, on the plane of reality the dragon assumes human form and becomes: «пожилой, но крепкий молодец, белобрый человек с солдатской выправкой. Волосы ежиком. Он широко улыбается. Вообще обращение его, несмотря на грубоватость, не лишено некоторой приятности.» (Д.р.316). On the plane of the real, Schwartz gives us the fairytale image of a three-headed dragon literally and

because of this the dragon becomes a generalized symbol of the dictator. The dragon's three heads represent three possible forms of dictatorship. On his second appearance, the dragon assumes the form of: «серьезный, сдержанный, высоколобый, узколицый, седенный блондин, не лишенный вежливости.» (p.317), and on his third he is: «крошечный мертвенно-бледный пожилой человечек.» (p.336).

We see that on the plane of the real the dragon in its human form is quite a decent sort, he can be polite and pleasant in his manner and even the roaring noise he makes is not devoid of some musical qualities unlike the roar of the fairytale dragon. Thus the villain in the fairytale is more accomplished, the ferocity of his outer appearance fully corresponds to his ferocious psychology and language. And what happens to the ogre Pietro ("Ten") is that in the play he turns out to be a slim, youngish man whose outward appearance sharply contrasts with the traditional appearance of an ogre. His occupations are also quite ordinary: he is the owner of furnished apartments and he also works as a valuer in a pawnshop. He has quite a modern, pretty daughter. The ogre's conversations and quarrels with his daughter are given by Schwartz as ordinary family scenes. The deliberate emphasis on the everyday ordinary character of their relationship creates a grotesque shift. Schwartz's ogre is the modern scoundrel who eats people, not literally, but figuratively (his occupations provide him with ample opportunity). Only his ferocious anger and his constant threats remain from the ogre of the fairytale. But his anger does not, in a strange way, bring any harm to anyone and his threats are left unfulfilled.

metaphors where the figurative sense of the word is destroyed.

The metamorphosis affects the executioner in "Ten'" who, from the terrible executioner of the fairytale, is transformed into the first courtier - a grey-haired man with a beautiful sad face. This is a hyper-sensitive, sentimental man with a kind heart who loves talking about humanity and almost falls ill because of his compassion for the poor canary which has caught a cold. During the execution he puts white gloves on and does not forget to warn his interlocutress: «Я скоро вернусь и расскажу Вам, как я спас жизнь моим бедным кроликам.»(Т. р.298). The princess in "Ten'", unlike a fairytale princess, has a pessimistic outlook on life: «Все люди-лжецы», «Все люди-негодяи», «Все на свете одинаково», «В конце концов мне все безразлично». (Т. pp.250-251). So it seems that everything is really much simpler in a traditional fairytale, at least more logical, than in Schwartz's world where everything is mixed up and strange phenomena (like the dragon, the ogre, the princess, the executioner) are possible. All of this corresponds to reality and leads to certain modern associations. Thus the fairytale personage losing his fairytale quality temporarily coincides with modern man and then returns again into the bounds of fairytale. On the one hand he is a fairytale personage and due to his fairytale nature has the right not to make his actions and behaviour conform with the conventions accepted in reality. On the other hand the personage is clearly modern and therefore he must act according to the law of reality.

These two opposite tendencies constantly interact in Schwartz, one or the other prevailing. As a fairytale personage the doctor from "Ten'" has the right to speak the language of realised metaphors where the figurative sense of the word is destroyed.

This is justified by the fairytale facade of Schwartz's world. Here is what he says to his patient: «Все-таки я выслушаю вас. Нет, не надо снимать скруток; у меня очень чуткие уши. Так. Вдохните глубоко. Тяжело вдохните. Вдохните с облегчением. Посмотрите на все сквозь пальцы. Махните на все рукой. Пожмите плечами.» (Т.р.264) The whole passage is built on literal readings of metaphors: «смотреть сквозь пальцы» ("to turn a blind eye"), and «махать рукой на что-л-» ("to wave goodbye at something"). But here is the doctor's medical conclusion: «Да, он здоров. Но дела его идут плохо. И пойдут еще хуже, пока он не научится смотреть на мир сквозь пальцы, пока он не махнет на все рукой, пока он не овладеет искусством пожимать плечами.» (Д.р.264) The phrase is built on the preservation of the literal meaning of a metaphor. The contrasting usage of the same expressions on different levels in a literal and figurative sense creates a grotesque shift.

The doctor's image divides into two. His later monologues are brought up to date and sound as if they came from the mouth, not of a fairytale personage, but a man who has already suffered much; his reasoning is sound, his disappointment in society is understandable, his motivations of his actions are very modern, his time-serving in society is rationalised by his desire to survive and by the fact that he has a large family, but his dissatisfaction with himself is clear. Here are his concluding words: «Сытость в острой форме внезапно овладевает даже достойными людьми. Человек честным путем заработал много денег. И вдруг у него появляется зловещий симптом: особый, беспокойный, голодный взгляд обеспеченного человека. Тут ему и конец. Огнем он бесплоден, слеп, жесток.» (Т.р.266) There is

a sharp contrast and discrepancy between the language of realised metaphor and the speech of a reasonable man, who, from his own experience, knows what life is about, who is desperate in his attempts to change life: «А вы хотите жить для того, чтобы как можно больше людей сделать счастливыми? Так и дадут вам чиновники жить! Да и сами люди этого терпеть не могут. Махните на них рукой. Смотрите сквозь пальцы на этот безумный, несчастный мир.»(Т.р.281).

This obviously relates not only to the characters, their behaviour and actions, but to the situations as well. Thus the battle of the dragon with Lancelot is presented on two levels as a fantastic combat of the brave knight with the monster (here the dragon appears in its traditional form as a monster with three heads who breathes flame and roars threateningly and Lancelot, on this plane, is equipped with fairytale paraphernalia: an invisible hat, a magic carpet, and a magic sword). The fantastic picture of the battle is very convincing as fairytale, and on this level does not differ much from the fantastic descriptions of other fairytales. But the battle becomes equally convincing on another level when it takes the form of a real military battle, one that took place quite recently. On this level the picture of the battle is formed from the reactions of the people to the event which is happening and from the commentaries on the battle by the mayor of the town and his son. All the details on this level belong to the plane of reality and fully correspond to the law of reality: not one of the humans witnessing the battle doubts the victory of the dragon (the dictator). The humans demonstrate extraordinary indifference to their own fate. Their reactions

to anyone who challenges the established order and their peace of mind are hostile but they change their views with great alacrity showing their great adaptability to circumstances completely opposite to the ones at which their enthusiasm was initially directed.

However, metamorphoses alone can not be responsible for the grotesqueness of Schwartz's plays. The most important thing is that the characters and situations preserve their double nature, and appear in both their forms. The grotesque effect lies in the quickness of transformations from the plane of fairytale to the plane of reality and the other way round and in the unexpectedness of these transformations. The words of Meierkhold seem to be relevant here: "Is it not the task of the theatrical grotesque to hold the spectator with a permanent dualistic attitude towards the action on the stage which switches its movements with contrasting brush-strokes. The main thing in the grotesque is the constant striving of the artist to switch the spectator from one plane which he has just perceived to another which he has not expected."<sup>1</sup> Likewise, Schwartz successfully manages to hold the spectator's and the reader's dualistic attitude to the characters and the situations in his plays. Confronted with the familiar genre of the fairytale in Schwartz's plays, we expect to see a fairytale-like world but instead we are faced with modern reality. But as soon as we are reconciled to the modern nature of Schwartz's world, he breaks this illusion of contemporary reality and reintroduces the world

<sup>1</sup> В.Мейерхольд, op.cit.p.226

of fairytale. For the spectator one plane follows after the other, but the impressions of neither lasts for long.

Fairytale attributes are felt particularly strongly at moments of strong association with reality when we are close to the recognition that we are dealing with our modern world. At these moments the dragon-dictator turns into a fantastic lizard and the magic flying carpet and invisible hat appear. However, this typical fairytale paraphernalia is also affected. The fantastic flying carpet, for example, is modernised, it is not just an ordinary magic carpet but is more reminiscent of a flying machine: each corner of it has a specific purpose. The two mule drivers explain to Lancelot how to fly it: «Это угол высоты, на нем выткано солнце. Это - угол глубины, на нем выткана земля, это-угол узорных полетов, на нем вытканы ласточки. А это - драконов угол. Поднимешь его - и летишь круто вниз, прямо врагу на банку.» (Д.рр.343-344). The invisible hat is approximated to an ordinary hat, it is made by a hatter and can even be a problem for him: «Как только вы ее наденете, так и исчезнете, и бедный мастер вовеки не узнает, идет ли она вам или нет. Берите, только не примеряйте при мне. Я этого не перенесу.» (Д.р.344) - the hatter laments presenting it to Lancelot.

We can now draw some general conclusions about the structural features of Schwartz's grotesque: in comparison with Mayakovsky and Bulgakov the point of departure in Schwartz's grotesque is the fantastic element of fairytale. Indeed, the fantastic plane with its indication of the genre of the fairytale (its traditional fairytale subject, devices typical of the fairytale and fairytale characters) is clearer and further developed than the real. The

plane of reality is represented:

1) by details of everyday life with the help of which are transported into the plane of reality such fairytale characters, situations and events as are least of all appropriate to it, for example the dragon, the ogre and the executioner;

2) by the concentration on things which are as a rule ignored by fairytale, for example, the character's way of thinking, on the motivation of their actions which is possible in the modern world but not in that of a fairytale. The first minister expresses surprise at his assistant's eagerness to act in the following manner: «Вы собираетесь действовать, пока вас еще не оформили? Да вы с ума сошли. Вы не знаете что ли, что такое канцелярия?» (Т.р.262). The princess justifies people's lies to her: «Может быть, вам и не лгут; у вас всего одна комната, а мне вечно лгут.» (Т.р.250) The ogre reacts to the scholar's loss of shadow: «Да ну? Проклятый климат! И как его угораздило? Пойдут слухи. Подумают, что это эпидемия.»(Т.253) A woman laments on the rising prices during Lancelot's battle with the dragon: «Подумать только! Война идет уже целых 6 минут, а конца ей еще не видно. Все так взволнованы, даже простые торговки подняли цены на молоко втрое.» (Д.р.348) Elza's friend urges Elza into an unwanted marriage, motivating it in the following way: «Ты сможешь делать людям так много добра! Вот например, ты можешь попросить жениха, чтобы он уволил начальника моего папы. Тогда папа займет его место, будет получать вдвое больше жалованья, и мы будем счастливы.» (Д.р.370)

3) by indications of the times leading to associations with contemporary regimes (numerous examples in "Ten" and "Drakon" can be related to Nazi Germany or Stalin's Russia or any totalitarian state).

In "Ten'", for example, there is the conversation between the Doctor and the Scholar which evokes a sense of terror familiar to people of Hitler's Germany or Stalin's Russia:

«Ученый: Вы все слышали и не вменялись?

Доктор: Что вы! Ведь он чиновник особо важных дел. Вы разве не знаете, какая это страшная сила? Я знал человека необычайной храбрости. Он ходил с ножом на медведей, один раз даже пошел на льва с голыми руками, - правда, с этой последней охоты он так и не вернулся. И вот этот человек упал в обморок, толкнув нечаянно тайного советника. Это особый страх. Разве удивительно, что и я боюсь его.» (Т.р.280)

The scenes between Charlemagne and his "friends" in "Drakon" recall the acts of mutual distrust and betraying of one's friends so common in those years:

«Шарлемань: Здравствуйте, господа! (Молчание) Вы не узнаете меня?

1-й горожанин: Конечно, нет. Со вчерашнего дня вы стали совершенно неузнаваемыми.

Шарлемань: Почему?

Садовник: Ужасные люди, Принимают чужих. Портят настроение дракону. Это хуже, чем по газону ходить. Да еще спрашивают - почему?

2-й горожанин: Я лично совершенно не узнаю вас после того, как ваш дом окружил страх.» (Д.рр.348-349)

The third act of "Drakon", when the Burgomaster is in full power recreates the personality cult of any dictator. The act opens with the preparations for the welcome of the President of the free city:

The language of fairytales and contributes to the atmosphere of the grotesque. Nevertheless, since the point of departure for the subject

«Генрих: Отлично! Стойте. Вставим здесь что-нибудь такое...

гуманное, добродетельное...Победитель дракона это любит.

(Щелкает пальцами) Стойте, стойте, стойте! Сейчас, сейчас, сейчас! Вот! Нашел! Даже птицы чирикают весело. Зло ушло - добро пришло! Чирик-чирик! Чирик-ура! Повторим.» (Д.р.358)

«Горожане: (тихо). Раз, два, три. (Громко) Да здравствует победитель дракона! (Тихо) Раз, два, три. (Громко) Да здравствует наш повелитель...» (Д.рр.358-359)

The scene demonstrates to what absurdity the cult of personality can go. The methods of spying and informing as used by the President of the free city must be familiar to people of any dictatorial state. Here are some remarks from the conversation of the Burgomaster with the gaoler:

«Тюремщик: Ага. Значит, не сахар, которые пьют?

Бургомистр: Нет, отчего же. Сахар. Еще чего пьют?

Тюремщик: Стыдно сказать. Президент - скотина. Его сын мошенник...

Президент (хихикает басом)...не смею повторить, как они выражаются. Однако больше всего пьют букву «Д».

Бургомистр: Вот чудачки. Дался им этот Ланцелот. А о нем так и нет сведений?

Тюремщик: Пропал.

Бургомистр: Птиц допрашивал?

Тюремщик: Ага.

Бургомистр: Всех?»

All these features in building up the plane of reality destroy the illusion of fairytale and contribute to the appearance of the grotesque. Nevertheless, since the point of departure for Schwarz

is a fairytale, the tendency to destroy the world of fairytale interacts with another - that of restoring its boundaries. One is constantly reminded of the fairytale facade and it finally prevails over reality. The characters, with their fantastic qualities, in the end still remain fairytale characters. Indications of the times never become so concrete that they can be applied only to certain particular events, to a precise reality. The fairytale country is too indefinite to be related to any real country. The genre of the fairytale gives Schwartz the opportunity of avoiding direct parallels with Soviet reality. The factual basis is felt less in Schwartz in comparison with Mayakovsky or Bulgakov. In "Drakon" we can hear a protest against autocracy in whatever forms it is clothed. Similarly in "Ten'" hypocrisy and falsehood are exposed regardless of the country they belong to. Of course, all this can be explained partly by the fact that overloading with factual material (bringing obvious associations) would create censorship difficulties and perhaps Schwartz's fairytales would lose that sense of proportion necessary for the preservation of the genre of fairytale itself.

## 2. The function of Schwartz's grotesque.

How can we explain and justify the appearance of a heterogeneous element - that of the plane of reality in Schwartz's fairytale world? Does it follow the laws of fairytale? We think that the presence of contemporary reality in Schwartz's world of fairytale with the resulting emergence of the grotesque can be explained firstly by his personal assumption that the fairytale

(the fantastic) and reality are very similar to each other, that one little trifle is often enough for them to cease being different from one another.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, in Schwartz's opinion the fairytale has to undergo changes to bring it up to date. "Fairytale does not have the right to be stupider and naiver than its time, to frighten people with fears which were horrible only in the past and not to notice the hideous things which are particularly dangerous today"<sup>2</sup>. Schwartz's vision of reality was characterised by the intertwining of the real with the fantastic: "That vision of reality which was characteristic of him demanded the intersection of reality with the fantastic"<sup>3</sup>. From the reminiscences of those who knew him Schwartz has always been drawn towards the fairytale even in his early so-called realistic plays ("Undervud" "Priklyuchenie Gogenshaufena"): "the fairytale as if against my will burst into them". "It never occurred to me that I was in any degree writing a fairytale. I was profoundly convinced that I was writing a purely realistic play"<sup>4</sup> - wrote Schwartz about his early play "Undervud".

<sup>1</sup> «Мы знали Шварца». Изд. Искусство. М.-Л. 1966. п. 89.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> «Мы знали Шварца». op. cit. p. 77.

In this play despite the realistic surroundings, life-like situations and events (the action concerns the plan to steal a typewriter. The crime is prevented thanks to a little girl who warns the public) the characters, particularly the little girl and her stepmother, remind one of fairytale (Cinderella and her stepmother, for example). Being restricted only to this resemblance, the characters do not, however, acquire a double nature and the play does not maintain a two-level structure which would give us the right to call it grotesque.

Schwartz's grotesque also includes a considerable element of satire. But due to the vagueness of the setting and of the nationality of the heroes, his satire never can be applied to any actual country or directed against any actual persons. Of course occasionally Schwartz indicates quite clearly that his intention is to satirize Nazi Germany. In "Drakon", for example, we find a lot of indications that the Dragon's image alludes to Hitler (for example, the Dragon's prosecutions of gypsies compares with Hitler's of the Jews). Nevertheless, we cannot preserve the impression that the Dragon is Hitler for very long. The Dragon's image is too generalized. Schwartz never mentions, for example, how the Dragon is dressed, leaving it to the reader or spectator to supply their own portrait of the dictator. The names of the characters in both plays are not just of German origin but also of Italian and Spanish. For once there are no Russian names or any indications of a Russian background. Schwartz deliberately avoids making parallels with Russia. But it is precisely because of the universal nature of his satire that the parallels appear. The German reader of the play may recognise in the scene of the Dragon's battle the German method of reporting Hitler's defeats favourably to the German people,

the Russian reader will substitute Russia for Germany and recognize the same techniques etc. Schwartz's satire is usually of a political nature and it is clearly directed against dictatorial states past, present or future.

3. The elements of comedy and tragedy in Schwartz's grotesque structure.

Schwartz's grotesque structure is distinctly comic. As with Mayakovsky and Bulgakov, reduction lies at the basis of his comedy. Schwartz's kings, dragons, ogres and princesses are transported on to the plane of reality, surrounded with details of everyday life, humanised and transformed into modern scoundrels. Thus they are reduced to the level of modern nonentities. (This comic technique of reduction relates only to the fairytale villains, and not to heroic characters opposed to them. The positive characters, though humanised, are never trivialised in the same way as the villains. Schwartz humanises them by endowing them with qualities of a modern Don Quixote<sup>1</sup>. These qualities do not transform them into comic characters but rather add a strong element of tragedy to everything they do or say). The reduction of fairytale villains by means of their transportation on to the plane of reality is one of the sources of Schwartz's comedy. At the basis of this comic reduction lies the sharp discrepancy between that to which we are already accustomed and whose recognition we think we are prepared for and that which we find in Schwartz's which appears before us to our surprise. Transformations of fairytale villains and the details surrounding them are so unexpected that they

<sup>1</sup>А.Лебедев. «Сказка есть сказка» in Театр N.4, 1968, pp.72-77.

immediately evoke laughter. Confronted with this outward apparent alogism we laugh and only later do we discover that this transformation is quite natural and justified.

Schwartz's comedy includes a great deal of funny situations, characters and linguistic means which are funny precisely because of their two-levelled structure: two kinds of situations, two sides of the character (on the planes of reality and of fairytale), come into contact or two layers of language are contrasted to one another. The shift towards the grotesque in Schwartz's language is particularly strong in the following cases: 1) In phrases built on a confrontation of figurative and literal meaning.

Pietro and Cesar Borgia are two ogres and two modern scoundrels at the same time. Their speech reflects both sides of their characters:  
«Пьетро: Я съем его при первой возможности.

Цезарь Борджиа: Надо будет его съесть. Да, надо, надо. По-моему, сейчас самый подходящий момент. Человека легче всего съесть, когда он болен или уехал отдыхать. Ведь тогда он сам не знает, кто его съел, и с ним можно сохранить прекраснейшие отношения.»

(Т.р.254) Or here is another example: «1-ий горожанин: Это обман зрения, мальчик!

«Мальчик: Вот я и говорю, что обман. Я сам часто дерусь и понимаю, что к чему.» (Д.р.351) («Обман зрения» as optical illusion (figurative meaning) and the word «обман» in its literal meaning - a lie.)

The phrase «потерять голову» (to lose one's head) in the figurative sense is contrasted with the literal meaning:

«Принцесса: А что сказали бы вы, если бы жених ваш потерял голову?» (literal)

«Гайный советник: Это он от любви, принцесса.» (figurative)(p.302)  
and remarks of other characters:

«Цезарь Борджиа: Потерять голову в такой важный момент!

Пьетро: Болван. И еще при всех! Пошел бы к себе в кабинет  
и там терял бы что угодно, скотина.» (Т.р.303)

2) In phrases built on the realisation of a metaphorical expression  
as a result of its literal reading and the consequent destruction  
of figurative speech: the ministers in "Ten'" understand each other  
«с полуслова»:

«Первый министр: Как здоровье?

Министр финансов: Отвраща.

Первый министр: Дела?

Министр финансов: Очень пло.

Первый финансов: Конкуре.» etc. (Т. р.258)

The Minister of Finance ("Ten'") cannot move a finger literally  
without the help of his valets, who carry him on to the stage  
and when ordered give him poses according to his moods:

«Придайте мне позу, располагающую к легкой, остроумной болтовне»(p.268)

«Лакеи, обнять ее и придайте мне позу крайней беззаботности»(p.270)

«Придайте мне позу полного удовлетворения происходящими  
событиями» (p.291)

«Придайте мне позу крайнего возмущения» (p.291) «позу крайнего  
удивления» (p.269).

In "Drakon" Schwartz realises the metaphorical expression  
«раздвоение личности» (splitting of the personality). Thus the  
Burgomaster literally has two halves of his self who speak in  
different voices:

«Бургомистр: Поздравляю вас, господа, у меня началось раздвоение личности. (Басом) Ты что же это делаешь, старая дура? (Тоненько) Не видишь, что ли, председательствую. (Басом) Да разве это женское дело? (Тоненько) Да я и сама не рада, касатик. Не сажайте меня, бедную, на кол, а дайте огласить протокол. (Своим голосом) Слушали: О снабжении некоего Ланцелота <sup>у</sup>оружием. Постановили: Снабдить, но скрепя сердца.» (Д.р.335)

Occasionally the Burgomaster's reason disappears and he literally looks for it:

«Бургомистр: Поздравляю вас! У меня зашел ум за разум. Ум! Ау! Отзовись! Выйди!» (Д.р.324)

The muledrivers, in "Дракон", literally think as one because they «с малых лет работали вместе и так сработались, что и думаем, и говорим, как один человек. Мы даже влюбились в один день и один миг и женились на родных сестрах-близнецах.» (Д.р.343).

3) For the sake of comedy Schwartz often destroys the meaning of a word by restoring its original meaning and creating logic from the original meaning of the same word:

«Садовник вырастил чудесные анютины глазки, которые курятся, подмигивают и даже умеют читать.» (Д.р.333)

«Ланцелот: Вы учили львиный зев кричать «Ура президенту»?»

«Садовник: Да, только, прокричав, львиный зев каждый раз показывал мне язык.» (Д.р.378)

Sometimes the same effect is achieved through analogy evoked by the meaning of the word or phrase: «У меня сегодня распустились чайные розы, хлебные розы и винные розы, Посмотришь на них, и ты смт и пьян.» (Д.р.348)

«А вот вина такие старые, что впади в детство и прыгают, как маленькие в своих бутылках.» (Д.р.371)

4) The unexpected usage of words through false etymology results in a comic impression: «Каждый раз, как вы идете на службу, вам выдаются подъемные, а когда вы идете домой - отпускные. Соберетесь в гости - вам дадутся командировочные, а сидите дома - вам платятся квартирные.» (Д.р.362) As with Mayakovsky and Bulgakov, Schwartz's comedy is intensified by auditory effects. In addition to realised metaphors, various combinations of incongruous words and the resulting puns, a large number of auditory effects are achieved by other methods. Here are a few examples:

The auditory comedy of the governess's language (Голый король) who talks in Russian by building phrases according to the laws of German grammar like: «Вннъ руки фон карман», «А я сплв нет», «Хотим мы идти. Дышать надо нос через», «Плохой мальчишка ты есть», «Не нос тереби. Стой прям.»

The auditory comedy of the Burgomaster's speech consisting of an accumulation of senseless sentences which have no connection whatsoever with each other: «За мной, воскликнул аист, и кинул змею своим острым клювом. За мной, сказал король, и оглянулся на королеву. За мной летели красютки верхом на няжных тросточках. Короче говоря, я послал за вами, господин Ланцелот.» (Д.р.330).

Auditory comic effects resulting from the use of children's counters or songs (like those in the language of the Burgomaster in "Drakon").

«Раз, два, три, четыре, пять, вышел рыцарь погулять...Вдруг дракончик вылетает, прямо в рыцаря стреляет...Пиф-паф, ой-ой-ой, объявляю заседание закрытым.» (Д.р.336). The Burgomaster sometimes talks at the speed of a tonguetwister: «(скороговоркой) Потрясенные и взволнованные доверием, которое вы, ваше превосходительство, оказываете нам, разрешая выносить столь важные решения, просим вас занять место почетного председателя. просим два, Просим раз,/просим три. Сокрушаемся, но делать нечего. Начнем сами. Садитесь, господа. Объявляю заседание...» (Д.р.335)

It is, as we see, in the characters' individualised speech that comic effects are particularly strong.

Is there tragedy in the grotesque fairytales of Schwartz?

We know that the conventions of fairytale oblige Schwartz to reduce the tragedy, to bring everything to a happy ending. Nevertheless, despite the genre of the fairytale a serious, tragic element is apparent in Schwartz's fairytales. We have already mentioned that the unexpected transitions from the fairytale plane on to the plane of modern life and vice versa was the main source of comedy in them. But the same shift from fairytale to reality contributes to the appearance of tragedy. The metamorphoses affecting the executioner, doctor ("Ten") and Lancelot's battle with the dragon, may serve as examples.

The material, the themes and problems Schwartz raises, provide opportunities for the appearance of tragedy and serious thought. One can look at Schwartz's fairytales as allegorical interpretations of how he sees the world. He obviously does not simplify this

Schwartz says that "Some of his fairytales are too optimistic to

world, but sees it in all its complexity and interlacing contradictions of good and evil. In "Ten'", we are presented with an external struggle between good and evil that goes on in life. This struggle with destructive evil forces personified by the shadow is full of tragedy. It is true that Schwartz's "Ten'" contains an optimistic view (as opposed to Andersen's tale where the Shadow subordinates the scientist to its will and brings about his destruction), the triumph in Schwartz is temporary, the evil forces cannot prevail for ever: for the existence of evil good is necessary just as for the existence of good evil is necessary. (The conclusion is rather paradoxical: «Зачем им воскресать хорошего человека?» asks Anunsiata, «чтобы плохой мог жить», answers Mulia). But this optimistic view with its paradoxical twist is disrupted by the tragic thought of people's adherence to everything false in life. And even more tragic are the parallels they bring with present-day reality. Similarly, in "Drakon", Schwartz presents as a genuine tragedy the problem of the relationship between the people and dictator. The thought that the people need a dragon, that they are happy with their tyrant without noticing the horror of their situation, is full of tragedy on its own. The associations of this thought with the fascist domination in Germany or with the cult of Stalin in Russia only deepen these tragic effects.

We have mentioned that on the surface Schwartz's fairytales are optimistic, as fairytales should be. This superficial optimism however has a strong inclination towards tragedy. Lebedev says that "some of his fairytales are too optimistic to

raise man's hopes. A note of 'optimism at all costs' which is close to despair is heard in them at times."<sup>1</sup> And this optimism is particularly strongly expressed in Schwartz's positive characters, such as Lancelot and the Scholar. What is it that makes these characters so tragic? Lebedev says that they have much of the modern Don Quixote in them.<sup>2</sup> They throw themselves into battle, knowing that most likely they will perish, they fight evil knowing that they will be destroyed by it. In fact, they cannot but perish or be destroyed, since such is the presentation of reality of the real plane, which can only lead to their deaths. And they die very realistically just as real people would do in such circumstances. All this intensifies the tragic element of Schwartz's fairytales.

Nevertheless we are dealing with the genre of fairytale, and the conventions of fairytale demand a happy ending, so Schwartz's characters come to life. But the reader (spectator) who has already witnessed the complexity of the reality behind the fairytale facade can hardly believe in it. And then the conflicts in Schwartz are left open and practically unresolved. Despite the happy ending that the conventions of the fairytale demand, the main task of removing the dragon from the people's souls is only in prospect and this is the most difficult task since the thought that the dragon is rooted in every human soul is basic to Schwartz's play. In "Drakon", all hopes are in the future: Lancelot says:

<sup>1</sup> A. Lebedev, op.cit. p.41.

<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp.42-44.

«Работа предстоит мелкая. Хуже вышивания. В каждом из них придется убить дракона...С вами придётся повозиться.» (Д.р.380)

Of course Mayakovsky also counts on the future, but the disappearance in the future of all negative sides of life is given as a fait accompli. Whether they disappear for Schwartz is an open question. The same is true about "Ten'", where the Scholar and Anunsiata<sup>t</sup> leave a horrifying but strangely familiar world where obviously there would be no changes after their departure.

Of course one can say that superficially in Schwartz's plays the fairytale plane dominates the plane of reality, which is why the tragic element can not last too long. As soon as associations with reality become too obvious, they are immediately interrupted by the fairytale plane, so it is often difficult for us to preserve the tragic impression for a prolonged period. We might even laugh at the fact that we took a fairytale character too seriously having recognized him as a modern person. But the opposite is also true: having finished laughing, we nevertheless return to serious thought and start pondering on what has just happened and on why such a view of things was possible. The complex reality comes back to us and again we face tragic parallels with our own lives from which we had just deluded ourselves that we had escaped.

## V Conclusion

We conclude that the structure of the grotesque in the works of all three writers follows the general principle of a combination of two mutually exclusive elements: the fantastic and the real.

There are differences, however. In Mayakovsky's plays the heterogeneous elements of his grotesque structure (the fantastic and the real) mutually exclude each other and have no actual point of contact, while Bulgakov draws the same elements together so that at times they coincide. This difference in the structural features of the grotesque of the two authors is closely related to their intentions, and in Bulgakov's case to his vision of the world. Mayakovsky's intention was to satirise the present, to show its complete unacceptability for the future, thus it was not Mayakovsky's purpose to look for similarity or points of contact. Hence also the form of Mayakovsky's grotesque is intentionally comic and the tragic element is reduced to a minimum.

As we have seen, Bulgakov's intention can never be limited to a satirical one. His grotesque often stems from his vision of reality and his personal experiences. It reflects to a larger degree than Mayakovsky's a rather pessimistic outlook. Thus the relationship between comedy and tragedy is more complex in Bulgakov. They are rarely isolated from one another, we are nearly always given tragi-comedy.

Schwartz's grotesque differs from Mayakovsky's and Bulgakov's in the nature of its fantastic element: that of fairytale. Schwartz takes the plane of the fantastic as his point of departure and by endowing it with the attributes of our reality makes it real. It is

the fantastic plane of the fairytale that becomes reality, unlike the real in Bulgakov and Mayakovsky that becomes fantastic.

This structure results partly from Schwartz's vision of reality in which the fairytale and the real are very similar to each other. While being very comic and, superficially at least, optimistic, Schwartz's grotesque fairytales reveal a strong tendency towards tragedy.

As earlier defined the term "grotesque" is most applicable to Bulgakov. In complexity of structure and in proximity of comedy to tragedy Bulgakov has found the most totally integrated combinations of "phenomena that cannot be met together in real life".

## VI Afterword

It is clear from what we have said that the grotesque in its essence is alien to realism, and especially so to the official doctrine of socialist realism. One need only recall the critical bombardment which the works mentioned in this thesis have suffered: Mayakovsky's plays were banned from the repertoires of Soviet theatres from 1929 to 1955, Bulgakov's name disappeared from Soviet literature, and only Schwartz's "innocent" children's fairytales found their place on the Soviet stage. This is no accident, since at the basis of the grotesque lies a subjective approach to reality, and the writer who applies the method of the grotesque deforms reality according to his subjective wish. As we have seen, the grotesque is often closely connected with the author's personal vision of this reality which does not necessarily coincide with the vision demanded by official doctrine. This strong element of subjectivity which makes the author abandon concrete forms of reality and allows him to escape into his unfettered imagination is alien to socialist realism, which demands that the author submit his vision to that of the majority and to restrict his imagination to a "historically concrete" depiction of reality as in Novichenko's definition: "there is no socialist realism outside historically concrete thought"... "the reality observed by the artist is historically concrete, and the reflection

and the refraction of this reality in the artist's consciousness are historically concrete"<sup>1</sup>. In a recent attack on the grotesque disguised under the title of "Strannaya prosa"<sup>2</sup>, the author writes: "Strange prose in the form in which it exists today simply does not fit into the Literature and Art of Socialist realism, since one can not talk seriously about partymindedness, national and civic character and historicism as applied to strange prose."

Despite present-day interest in the grotesque, there is still some mistrust of it. Some critics (Yu.Mann, D.Nikolaev, Fradkin) try to justify its presence in Soviet literature on the grounds that the whole of literature in the twentieth century is drawn towards conventional forms and the grotesque is one of them; others do not reject the grotesque outright, but surround their recognition of it with such numerous reservations that it amounts to negation. Kovalev, for example, allows the use in socialist realism of conventional forms (including the grotesque) in the composition or in the construction of characters, but he hastens to assure us: "but now the application of conventional forms is becoming restricted. Realist writers reject many traditional literary conventions. They are consciously trying to convey the content of reality in the forms of reality itself and to reproduce life's verisimilitude."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Л.Новиченко «О многообразии форм и стилей в литературе социалистического реализма» В.Л.1959, N.5, p.60.

<sup>2</sup> В.Мехенков «Странная проза» in Октябрь, 1972, N.7, p.202.

<sup>3</sup> В.Ковалёв «О художественной условности в литературе» in «Вопросы советской литературы» VIII, М-Л, 1959.

Novichenko declares that "not every conventional form is acceptable to us. We are against modernist formalistic conventional forms which are based on subjective arbitrariness and deformation of reality, against conventional forms which are cultivated by the Western decadent writers Osborne and Beckett, since their conventional form is either a feverish mirage, a phantasmagoric distortion of reality, or a means of embodying their capricious sophist wisdom".<sup>1</sup> One wonders how the grotesque can be founded on anything but subjective arbitrariness and the author's deformation of reality.

Socialist realism with its compulsory demand for optimism cannot tolerate the emphasis on tragedy in the grotesque. All attempts by the critics to ignore the tragic in the grotesque, to reduce it to nothing, distort the essence of the grotesque. Sakhnovsky-Pankeev sounds paradoxical when, on the one hand he rightly suggests: "One encounters the grotesque in its pure tragic or comic form extremely rarely. Grotesque never evokes carefree gaiety. Bitter laughter is its natural reaction", and on the other hand he draws the ridiculous conclusion that "The bitterness of the grotesque fades only in Soviet comedy. Here it has the opportunity of freeing itself from the tragic, since the grotesque image is now perceived in an optimistic perspective."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Л.Новиченко, op.cit.p.59.

<sup>2</sup> В.А.Сахновский-Панкеев «О комедии», Л.1957,р.103.

The grotesque image often includes a considerable element of allegory, reticence and ambiguity; it often opens up the possibility of more than one interpretation and it benefits if the author, without trying to become intent only on ridiculing the depicted world, expresses ambivalence towards this world. From the point of view of Socialist realism, this is unacceptable: "In a grotesque image there can not be any vagueness or reticence. It demands a precise ideological position from the author."<sup>1</sup>

Resort to the grotesque as in the twenties and thirties remains a rather dangerous practice for Soviet writers. Recent events concerning Sinyavsky are a sad example. The grotesquely fantastic world of Sinyavsky - his subjective vision of the world - was recognized as a deliberate distortion of Soviet reality. His ironic attitude towards his surroundings including the sacred figures of Lenin and the Party brought angry rebukes similar to the ones Bulgakov used to hear.<sup>2</sup> Aksenov's use of the grotesque in his stories "Zatovarennaya Sochkotara", "Pobeda", in his play "Vs'e v prodazhe" and recently in his story "Randevu" was frowned upon<sup>3</sup> and the Strugatsy brothers' introduction of the grotesque

<sup>1</sup> В.А.Сахновский-Панкеев, op.cit.p.107.

<sup>2</sup> Д.Еремин «Перевертыши», Известия, 13 января, 1966.

<sup>3</sup> И.Соловьева «С преувеличениями и снобидениями» in Литературная газета, май 1, 1968

in their science-fiction stories with the subsequent weakening of science-fiction motivation was seized upon by the critics.<sup>1</sup> Mezhenkov even blames Bulgakov's "Master i Margarita" for the increasing number of the grotesque works in Soviet literature.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that despite severe criticism writers continue to show interest in the grotesque in their writings proves, one might suggest, that they are not content with the old forms of socialist realism, that socialist realism has outlived itself and can not offer anything new. Sinyavsky seems to be right when he writes: "I put my hope on phantasmagoric art with hypothesis instead of purpose and with the grotesque instead of descriptions of everyday life. It most completely corresponds to the spirit of modernity. Let the distorted images of Hoffmann, Dostoevsky, Goya, Chagall and the most socialist Mayakovsky and many other realists and non-realists teach us how to be truthful with the help of the absurd fantastic."<sup>3</sup> Whether this will come true remains to be seen.

<sup>1</sup> И. Краснобрыкий «Двуликая книга» in Журналист, N.3, 1969, pp.56-57.

<sup>2</sup> В. Меженков, op.cit. pp.189-203.

<sup>3</sup> А. Смявский, op.cit. p.445.

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