The Moral Personality of Mikhail Bulgakov

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Introduction

Of the many Russian writers of the twentieth century none produced more arresting works than Mikhail Bulgakov. Primarily known in his own time as a playwright, Bulgakov's renown today is largely for *the Master and Margarita*, a novel many consider a contemporary literary classic. Bulgakov's tale, which intertwines a historical narrative of the crucifixion of Jesus with one of the Devil visiting modern Moscow, encompasses themes that recur throughout his writings, many of which involve clear criticisms of the Soviet regime. When one notes that Bulgakov wrote during Stalin's reign one cannot fail to recognize his extraordinary courage, particularly given the severe persecution of writers at that time.[1] Increasingly susceptible to bouts of anxiety as he grew older – to the point that he would not venture in public without accompaniment – Bulgakov nevertheless possessed deep resolve as an author. From the moment as a young man when he decided to become a writer to his final years when he secretly wrote *the Master and Margarita*, Bulgakov maintained a steadfast commitment to what he believed was his calling as an artist.[2] Such integrity was not without costs. The majority of Bulgakov's works were censured or banned during his lifetime, as not only his writings, but he himself, became the object of political disapprobation. A society supposedly organized along rationalist lines for purposes of justice attempted nothing less than to crush the spirt of one of its greatest writers. Clearly something was amiss in such a society, and questions occur to anyone not only interested in Bulgakov, but in the more general relations of literature, morality, and politics. What is the role of an author? What are the implications of this role for society? And what can the work of Bulgakov reveal to us about these things?

The answers to such questions involve the consideration of a variety of factors, many of which have been studied by scholars. Among the more commonly examined are those that relate to Bulgakov's biography, the assumption being that the facts of Bulgakov's life clarify his stories.[3] There is some truth to such interpretations – Bulgakov's tales do exhibit autobiographical tendencies – yet such approaches do not always capture the moral themes of his writings as fully as they could. Bulgakov's writings contest the Marxist ideology that justified Soviet authority, particularly in terms of its claims to provide a scientific account of social relations. For present purposes, I will examine these issues by first briefly considering how Marxism was manifest in the context of the Soviet Union, and what type of literature this led to. Then I will explore Bulgakov's concerns by focusing on how he treats the themes of nature, chance, and conscience, each of which recurs frequently in his stories. I will conclude by considering how Bulgakov's stories exemplify how writers have a responsibility to convey the arbitrary and sometimes disconcerting circumstances of our lives, as well as the importance of choice that these circumstances frequently involve. With this in mind, let me now begin.

Marxism, the Soviet Union, and Socialist Realism

The period of 1891 to 1940 that encompasses Bulgakov's life also encompasses one of the most turbulent times in Russian history. The revolutionary fervor that increasingly swept the nation in the latter half of the nineteenth century culminated in the overthrow of the Tsar in the twentieth and eventual seizure of power by the Bolsheviks. Unlike their ideological competitors, the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks did not consider the lack of industrial development within Russia to preclude the establishment of a Marxist regime. Rather, the Bolsheviks believed it possible to use the mechanisms of governance to facilitate industrialization and spark a global revolutionary movement. At stake was not only the future of Russia, but what would become the

dominant understanding of Marxism internationally.[4] It pays, then, to review some of Marx's core ideas.

The heart of Marx's position is ostensibly a concern with justice. As he sees it, the principle issue involves the exploitation of workers and their labor, which he takes to be a capacity that defines humanity.[5] Marx elaborates his view with an ambitious understanding of history, which provides the context for human relations. As he portrays it, history is defined by successive stages of development, where humanity progresses by using its productive powers to shape itself and its environment.[6] Yet such a process does not evolve gradually, but as a result of revolutionary moments, themselves a reflection of social schisms prompted by the division of labor. In effect, there are those who labor and those who exploit them. The ability of the latter to do so depends upon their possession of the means of production that facilitate labor and the objects it creates. At particular junctures in time, the tensions between exploiter and exploited do not simply lead to innovations in modes of production, but entail crises that violently transform the system. When such moments occur, new social relations arise that reflect these changes.[7]

Marx's focus upon the means of production as the engine of historical change involves a type of determinism. Essentially, his position takes historical change to be a necessity, as transformations of the means of production automatically entail broader social change.[8] Such a position carries implications for the concept of choice, for it restricts the area within which individuals can be said to be autonomous as they find their behavior governed by their material conditions. Indeed, for Marx it is social classes rather than individuals that are the subjects of history, and for him notions of personal freedom or individual liberty are ideas that keep workers from recognizing their true interests. While there is some ambiguity in his writings about the scope of individual agency, he nevertheless makes clear that the economic conditions that define

social classes are determinative of beliefs and actions. Art, literature, culture, and religion all express the relations of production that define a particular era, and are not to be regarded as *sui generis* forms of activity.[9] Similarly, politics is an activity best understood in relation to class relations, and primarily as a form of deepening conflict between workers and owners.[10] The determinism of Marx's position makes itself most fully felt at this point, as capitalism is taken to generate the most unremitting form of class conflict. Because of the increasing impoverishment of workers – whose ranks Marx says continually grow because of the nature of industrial production – a revolution to end their subjugation is unavoidable or, in his words, "inevitable."[11] At that point, once the workers have seized the means of production for themselves, history will come to an end, as there will be no further class distinctions to draw: the exploited will have destroyed their exploiters.

Although much more can be said about the details of Marx's position, the rough account above provides the general groundwork for the Bolshevik position. While the intellectual authors of Bolshevism are various, it is well known that Bolshevik policy was determined by Lenin, whose personal views were indistinguishable from the party's official position.[12] Whether or not Lenin's interpretation of Marxism diverges from what Marx truly believed, it remains the case that notable silences in Marx's writings created a space for Lenin to construct what Richard Pipes characterizes as the template of twentieth century totalitarianism.[13] Central to the Bolshevik view was the role of the party itself, which was regarded as the vehicle for revolution and the steward of what followed. The "dictatorship of the proletariat" was the justification for the state the Bolsheviks erected, as they gradually centralized power. As part of the centralization process, not only were curbs placed upon the autonomy of regional and local actors, a succession of economic plans were instituted to industrialize the nation. Although the

plans themselves varied over time – from restricting the economy to opening it up to restricting it again – the key assumption was that economic activity could be rationally organized and controlled. Given that all other aspects of life – particularly culture – were thought to be determined by economics, those areas were to be brought under the control of reason as well. As Lenin makes clear, "The whole of society will have [to] become one office and one factory …" with the concomitant enforced discipline and habituated behavior that such a transformation requires.[14]

The result of the Bolshevik view was the establishment of a set of institutions that centralized power in the hands of the party. In effect, despite bodies that were nominally deliberative (and often fluid in terms of formal nomenclature) it was the head of the party who determined government policy. As noted, this authority extended over all aspects of society, including literature, which became increasingly subject to political oversight. The process culminated in the 1930's, when "socialist realism" was made the official doctrine for all literary endeavors. Gradually implemented through various public pronouncements, the doctrine itself distilled particular ideas attributed to Stalin (who assumed control of the party in the wake of Lenin's death). Among these is his assertion that "writers are the engineers of the human soul," a statement that assumes literature's general value is didactic and pointedly indicates how writers are to regard their craft.[15] More particularly, socialist realism demanded that literature portray reality from the perspective of the proletariat, meaning that it should be "revolutionary" and "objective."[16] In other words, socialist realism required that authors write about the proletariat successfully overcoming all obstacles as it fulfilled its historical mission on the road to communism. Emphasis was to be placed upon class identity rather than that of the individual – something that influenced how protagonists could be depicted – while communism's triumph

over capitalism was to be extolled. The effect of such a doctrine was to narrow the range of subjects for writers, as well as clarify how those subjects should be treated. Whatever the aesthetic merits of particular works of socialist realism, it is certain that the promulgation of the doctrine justified a deleterious censorship. Given the potential consequences of ignoring the requirements socialist realism – which could entail imprisonment, exile, or worse – the abject self-abasement of authors before its demands became the norm. As James Billington explains it, socialist realism was a "device for humiliating … intellectuals by encouraging the debilitating phenomena of anticipatory self-censorship."[17] It is within this context that Bulgakov's writings must be situated and his achievements evaluated. For Bulgakov not only wrote great works of literature, he wrote works of literature that directly challenged the Soviet Union's core tenets. That he did so was well understood by the authorities, including Stalin himself, who took a direct interest in Bulgakov's work. Indeed, a letter from Bulgakov led to an unprecedented personal phone call by Stalin that proved fateful for the former.[18] This exchange therefore provides a suitable moment to turn our attention to Bulgakov.

A Literary Portrait

In the letter Bulgakov wrote on 28 March 1930 he describes his increasing impoverishment, and requests that he either be allowed to leave the Soviet Union or given a job. When Stalin asked him directly if he actually wanted to leave Russia, Bulgakov answered, "I have thought a great deal recently about the question of whether a Russian writer can live outside his homeland. And it seems to me he can't."[19] The prudence of the reply is obvious and Bulgakov's discretion was apparently well received. For as a result of their conversation he was appointed to the staff of the Moscow Art Theatre. Although the reasons for Stalin's phone call are open to speculation, what is certain is how Bulgakov's letter articulates his vision of himself

as a writer.[20] He portrays himself and his work in terms of three characteristics: a struggle for freedom of the press against censorship; a satirical approach that depicts the "innumerable unsavory aspects of our everyday life;" and "the persistent portrayal of the Russian intelligentsia as the finest stratum of our country."[21] Clearly what he terms "my literary portrait" is at odds with the dictates of socialist realism, as it challenges the restrictions of subject matter, idealization of daily existence, and requirement that protagonists be proletarian. But there is more to Bulgakov's portrait than this, as what he says invokes a deeper critique of the Marxist foundations of the Soviet Union. As mentioned previously, nature, chance, and conscience are recurring themes in Bulgakov's stories, and each can be shown to draw out his concerns about freedom, the unsavoriness of daily life in the nation, and the role of the intelligentsia. I will therefore take each in turn to clarify what Bulgakov's concerns are.

The Depiction of Nature

The treatment of nature within Bulgakov's writings hearkens to a view where nature is regarded as possessing a moral order. While religion in Russia is associated with the tenets of Orthodoxy, the attendant spiritualism has been deeply influenced by a native form of paganism that predates Christianity. As Ellis Sandoz puts it, "The divinity of the cosmos found expression in old Russian mythology primarily through symbolisms venerating the Sun and Fire, Clan, and Mother Earth."[22] The influence of the last has proven particularly strong, as the leitmotif of "Mother Earth" runs well into modern times. The connotations are multiple: the land nurtures its population maternally; provides for their needs with its fecundity; and even exhibits the mercy and redemptive love of a mother toward her wayward children. Each of these themes is repeatedly found in Russian literature and involves a depiction of nature that invests the world

with an immanent divinity that grounds the moral life. From this perspective, the measure of a person partially lies in how responsive they are to the land and all it contains.[23]

This vision of nature as an order that orients the individual morally is one the Soviets disregarded. From the Soviet perspective, nature provides the materials the proletariat uses to shape itself and its environment. It is a position that not only departs from the traditional Russian view, but justifies a conception of science that treats nature in utilitarian terms, as nothing more than a vehicle for other purposes.[24] That it lent itself to perversions of science during the time of Stalin is clear from the theories of Trofim Lysenko and Olga Lepenshiskaya, whose respective views about genetics and cell reproduction were championed not because they were true, but because they fit Marxist dogma. Lysenko's argument that genetic mutations are solely the result of environmental factors directly contradicted the findings of Gregor Mendel (who proved that they were hereditary), while Lepenshinskaya's study of mitogenetic rays led her to reassert the long discredited idea that live cells can spontaneously generate from inorganic material. Both Lysenko and Lepenshinskaya were amateurs in their respective fields, but received positions at the highest academic levels because they fit the Soviet glorification of the working class and eschewed "bourgeois" science. Each used their appointments to root out their critics ruthlessly, while simultaneously engaging in various forms of self-promotion in the popular press. Each also set back the study of genetics and biochemistry within the Soviet Union for decades, as their ideas became official doctrine.[25]

It is not hard to discern the figures of Lysenko and Lepenshinskaya in two of Bulgakov's more famous stories: *The Heart of a Dog* and *The Fatal Eggs*. Both are satirical accounts that skewer the pseudo-scientific work of the Stalinist era; one by portraying the creation of the "new man" of the communist future, the other by dramatizing the consequences of a "red ray" that

quickens cell reproduction. The brevity of the tales belies their complexity, for as others note, each story displays a concern for the hardship people endured in post-revolutionary Russia, as well as links to previous stories and writers, notably the grotesqueries of Gogol.[26] However, what I wish to highlight is Bulgakov's portrayal of nature, for both of these stories illustrate how the attempt to manipulate nature for political purposes yields abominations. In the case of *The Heart of a Dog*, the insertion of a human pituitary gland and testicles into a dog results in an anthropomorphized canine that can repeat the slogans of Bolshevism, but whose behavior is alternately impudent or supine. With *The Fatal Eggs* the attempt to use a microscopic red ray to accelerate cell division leads to monstrous reptiles that threaten environmental catastrophe. Bulgakov's savaging of Soviet science is unmistakable, which explains why *the Fatal Eggs* was harshly reviewed upon publication while *The Heart of a Dog* was banned from print. Yet, there is a more positive vision of nature underlying each tale, one that gestures toward the more traditional view.

The horrific consequences that Bulgakov portrays depend upon a realization that the experiments have defied the natural order. What the reader notes is expressed in the stories by various characters, who serve to voice the discomfort we ourselves feel. For instance, the medical assistant who helped transplant the human organs to the dog records in his journal: "His smile is disagreeable and somehow artificial."[27] Similarly, the laboratory assistant in *The Fatal Eggs* observes the effects of the red ray upon a frog and exclaims: "This is just monstrous, you know!"[28] The reproach expressed in both reactions involves the implied affirmation of a natural order that has been transgressed. More importantly, in both tales the resolution of the dilemma involves nature reasserting itself. In *The Heart of a Dog*, the scientist removes the human pituitary gland and testicles, and the dog naturally reverts to its normal form. As the doctor

explains it, “Science has not yet found the means of turning animals into people. I tried, but unsuccessfully, as you can see. He talked and then he began to revert back into his primitive state. Atavism.”[29] In *The Fatal Eggs*, the monstrous reptiles that the red ray creates are destroyed not by the Soviet military, but by the severe cold of the Russian winter. Such an ending calls to mind the defeat of Napoleon, whose posturing as a champion of the Enlightenment mirrors that of the Bolsheviks regarding the scientific veracity of Marxism. That the peasantry ultimately destroys the chamber that creates the red ray also deserves notice, as their reaction is not one of ignorance, but an intentional rejection of the technology that endangered them. The people traditionally associated with “the land” are the very people to put an end to further threats caused by the scientific manipulation of life. Bulgakov’s point is anything but subtle.

The Role of Chance

The accidental occurrence of significant events is a trope that regularly recurs in Bulgakov’s stories. The discovery of the red ray in *The Fatal Eggs*, for example, occurs when a professor returns from an interruption to continue a study he is conducting. Similarly, the disaster that follows the ray’s use is the result of a mix-up, when it is mistakenly applied to reptile eggs rather than chicken eggs. The literary effect of these moments is clear: when something unexpected happens it upends the plans and expectations of whomever the random occurrence befalls. Yet there is also a deeper meaning to such accidents that defies the determinism associated with Marxism. For not only does Bulgakov’s use of unanticipated events heighten the drama by suddenly challenging his characters, his reliance upon such scenes contests the assumption that meaningful moments are causally structured in an inevitable way. Put differently, the intelligibility of the narrative allows the reader to understand what happens,

but does not support the supposition that human actions are predictable. As readers we can see how one event shapes another. This, however, does not justify the belief that understanding how something occurs allows us to know unerringly what will happen next. Characters find themselves faced with chance events, the ambiguity of which challenges them.

One of the more explicit instances of the role of chance in human lives occurs at the opening of *The Master and Margarita*. There, in the opening chapters, a discussion takes place in a park between a literary editor named Berlioz (who is also the head of Moscow's literary association); Bezdomny, a poet whose pen name literally means "homeless;" and a figure named Wotan, who is the Devil. Among the issues they discuss is how much control a person has over their own lives. In true Soviet fashion, Berlioz insists that man controls both his own life and the things of the earth. Wotan's response is worth quoting at length:

> I'm sorry … but in order to be in control, you have to have a definite plan for at least a reasonable period of time. So how, may I ask, can man be in control if he can't even draw up a plan for a ridiculously short period of time, say a thousand years, and is, moreover, unable to ensure his own safety for even the next day?[30]

Wotan then obliquely forecasts Berlioz's death by slipping on spilt sunflower oil and falling under the wheels of a streetcar, the obvious irony being that Berlioz could not even guarantee his own safety for the remainder of the evening.

Although he places the words in Wotan's mouth, Bulgakov's challenge to the Marxist view of history is clear. There is the obvious slight upon the idea of rational planning as evinced in Bolshevik policies, which depended upon a succession of Five Year Plans. But there is also an acknowledgement of the importance of chance in human affairs. A small sequence of events, beginning with the broken liter of sunflower oil and culminating in Berlioz losing his footing, are all defined by a series of accidents which upset Berlioz's plans for the night (to put it mildly).

That Wotan makes his prediction after a series of astrological calculations suggests that mishaps are an integral part of nature and human existence.[31] That they prove fatal suggests that such ordinary incidents can carry great weight, undercutting whatever intentions we otherwise have. It is not difficult to see the gauntlet being thrown here: there is nothing inevitable about the course of history. In response to the claims that history has a direction and that the proletariat is its chosen agent, Bulgakov simply points out that no one can guarantee the future, not even their own. Things happen – some of which are random – and these events can be as portentous for our lives as anything we claim to know.

The Individual's Conscience

That individuals face unexpected events provides a context for their decisions. As Bulgakov illustrates, our choices sometime depend upon contingencies that cannot be foreseen. The corollary to such situations involves the individual and their beliefs, desires, and aspirations. What decision an individual makes turns upon what they think, feel, and hope to achieve. Such things, in turn, revolve around personal experiences as much as social class or economic self-interest, something that again challenges the creed that people's interests are primarily driven by material factors. It is not that such things are unimportant; Bulgakov's sensitivity to his own economic plight precluded him from asserting that socio-economic situation is unimportant. However, it *is* to say that Bulgakov indicates how economic considerations do not capture *all* the facets of choice-making. Pride, honor, love, and similar sentiments have their own weight in our decisions, and need to be seen as autonomous sources of human behavior. A couple of examples should clarify this.

"The Fire of the Khans" is one of Bulgakov's earlier short stories, and deals with the wake of the Russian Revolution. After their victory, the Bolsheviks confiscated and redistributed property, as well as claimed large aristocratic estates for the state. Many Russians of varied backgrounds fled the country seeking safety in exile. In this particular story, Bulgakov portrays a prince descended from the Khans who stealthily returns to his manor, which is being used as a museum to educate youth about the decadence of the nobility. After revealing himself to the few remaining family staff members that still tend to the grounds, he learns his personal rooms are to be converted into lecture halls while his library is to be taken by the state. With this information, he then locks himself into his study and pours over his old papers and family documents. What had originally been a secret visit meant to recover personal papers becomes something more sinister, as the prince discovers a manuscript left by an official which recounts the history of the manor. As his wrath is roused, he makes the decision to burn everything rather than let it be used for purposes that impugn his honor. As the prince justifies it: "They've gone and trampled on me, on my living flesh as if on a corpse … [But] I can still sense and feel everything. I can distinctly feel pain, but above all I feel angry."[32] With that he sets fire to the study and adjoining rooms, and then disappears into the darkness as the mansion burns behind him.

Perhaps a more poignant moment comes in the pages of *The Master and Margarita*, in an exchange between Woland and Margarita. Having served as the hostess of a Witches' Sabbath given by Woland for the damned Margarita is allowed one wish. Margarita's desire is to have a woman who had murdered her child because she could not feed it freed from one of her torments. Woland's surprise embodies the reader's, as one anticipates Margarita's wish to be about her lover, the Master. Unable to grant mercy to the condemned because of who he is,

Woland turns the request back on Margarita; it is within her purview as hostess to make such a decision. "But really," he says, "what sense is there in doing what is supposed to be the business of another, as I put it, department? And so, I will not do it, but you shall."[33] She does, and thus the woman is spared one bit of suffering in the afterlife. It is a scene that exhibits both an unexpected moment and a choice that reflects something other than economic considerations, in this case compassion. When Margarita is told that her wish still remains to be used, she then asks for the liberation of the Master from the asylum he is in. Her reason for doing so, unsurprisingly at this point, is love. With this Bulgakov punctuates the fact that the sources of human behavior can be deeply personal, reflective of relations that are highly individualistic, and driven more by the heart than by the mind.

Appraisal and Conclusion

The question remains as to what the role of the author is, as well as what the implications of this are for society. My brief portrait of Bulgakov provides an outline of how he viewed these issues and what we might learn from him. As seen, Bulgakov regards freedom of the press, a satirical depiction of the "unsavory" aspects of life, and a concern with the intelligentsia as the key components of his life as a writer. If we take freedom of the press to mean the freedom of expression, then it seems that Bulgakov regards his role and responsibilities as an author to be able to call attention to those parts of existence which are troubling, particularly as seen from the vantage of the thoughtful individual. Bulgakov is undeniably summarizing his concerns about his own life as a writer, but his is not merely a subjective account reflecting personal experience. It is, instead, the distillation of a personal experience that exhibits an effort to be truthful about what are arguably universal concerns. The unsettling parts of human life abound across era and culture, and those who are sensitive to such things should be able to portray them without fear of

censorship. That Bulgakov's greatest work contains a realistic depiction of Jesus' crucifixion is not only an act of political courage (given that the Soviet Union at that time officially denied the existence of Jesus), but one that shows how recurrent cruelty has been historically. That the ending of the tale involves Jesus and Pontius Pilate resuming their debate about the goodness of humanity within the setting of eternity indicates that there is no end point to such issues. Rather, there is the ongoing discussion between contrary views by those most expressive of them. The task of the writer, then, is to convey such things honestly so that society might be more responsive to them.

As regards the particulars to which society should respond, the themes I have explored provide a few of the aspects of our experience that need accounting. As Bulgakov indicates, nature is not something that simply provides the material for human labor. Instead, it is part of the grounds of human existence that requires respect in its own right. Similarly, our lives are subject to forces – sometimes felt to be malevolent – which are not always within our control. Consequently, our decisions need to be attentive to those things that potentially elude, or even defy, us, and should reflect that fact that we choose as we do from the most varied motivations. While Bulgakov never ties freedom of expression to the individual's conscience, it is not difficult to see how such a link can be made. Subject to a multitude of considerations, the individual chooses as best they can. Such choices, however, require genuine freedom of expression, or some sort of outward manifestation, otherwise they cannot be regarded as meaningful. While Bulgakov does not provide a philosophical defense of freedom in the face of totalitarianism, he does bring to life freedom's importance by illustrating its significance not only for himself, but for humanity. In those unexpected moments where unplanned things occur, we find ourselves at liberty to make decisions that we otherwise could not make. What seems to be

a devilish chaos actually proves to be a moral opportunity. The ties between nature, chance events, and individual conscience are never articulated in a discursive way – never presented formally as a system – yet this does not matter. The greatest authors often point out paths that they then leave to their readers to explore.

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[1] For a general account of this period and its tenor, see: Isaiah Berlin, "Soviet Russian Culture," in *The Soviet Mind: Russian Culture Under Communism*, ed. Henry Hardy (Washington, DC: the Brookings Institute, 2004), 130-165.
[2] Bulgakov was educated as a doctor, and formally practiced as a physician during the Russian Revolution. He felt, however, that his true calling was to be a writer, and thus changed professions. See: J. A. E. Curtis, *Manuscripts Don't Burn: Mikhail Bulgakov: A Life in Letters and Diaries* (New York: Ardis Publishers, 1991), 3-7.
[3] See, for example: Andrezy Drawicz, *The Master and the Devil: A Study of Mikhail Bulgakov*, trans. Kevin Windle (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001); Edythe Haber, *Mikhail Bulgakov, the early years* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Leslie Milne, *Mikhail Bulgakov: A Critical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Anatoly Smeliansky, *Is Comrade Bulgakov Dead? Mikhail Bulgakov at the Moscow Art Theatre*, trans. Arch Tait (London: Methuen Drama, 1993); and Colin Wright, *Mikhail Bulgakov: life and interpretation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978).
[4] For a good review of these issues, see: Neil Harding, "The Russian Revolution: an ideology in power," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Political Thought*, ed. Terence Ball and Richard Bellamy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 239f.
[5] See, for example, Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, v. 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books, 1976), 565f.
[6] Marx's views on history recur throughout his writings. A representative sample can be found in selections from *the German Ideology*, as found in *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, edited and translated by Loyd Easton and Kruth Guddat, 419f. Cf. Marx, *Capital. v. 1*, chapter 7.
[7] Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. Frederic L. Bender (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988), 55f.
[8] Marx, *the German Ideology*, 462.
[9] Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, 73. Cf. Marx, *the German Ideology*, 414, 438.
[10] Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, 75.
[11] Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, 64-66.
[12] For more on the sources of Bolshevism see: Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), pp. 406f. For more about Lenin's central role within the party see: Richard Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).
[13] Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 150.
[14] Vladimir I. Lenin, *State and Revolution* (NY: International Publishers, 1932), p. 84. For a fulsome study of the idea of rational planning by the Soviets, see: Michael Ellman, *Socialist Planning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
[15] Herman, Ermolaev, "Socialist realism," in *Handbook of Russian Literature*, ed. Victor Terras, (London: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 429.

[16] James Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), p. 535.
[17] Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, 535. For more about the mechanics of how Soviet censorship worked (especially in regards to Bulgakov) see: Steven Richmond, " 'And Who Are the Judges?': Mikhail Bulgakov Versus Soviet Censorship, 1926-1936," *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 33, no. 1 (2006): 83-107.
[18] For more on this see: Smeliansky, *Is Comrade Bulgakov Dead?*, 170-172; and A Colin Wright, "Bulgakov, Stalin, and Autocracy," in *Bulgakov: the Novelist-Playwright*, ed. Leslie Milne (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995), 39-49.
[19] Curtis, *Manuscripts Don't Burn*, 111.
[20] Smeliansky argues that Stalin called Bulgakov to distract the artistic community from Vladimir Mayakovsky's suicide. The Futurist author-poet had taken his life four days before Stalin's phone call to Bulgakov, and literary circles were aflame with speculation as to why. Stalin's unprecedented contact with Bulgakov immediately pushed the discussion of Mayakovsky to the background, as attention shifted to the reasons for Stalin's call. The conclusion of Smeliansky's discussion is that Stalin's act was a shrewd one meant to foster the image of a benign and concerned ruler rather than an iron-fisted dictator. See: Smeliansky, *Is Comrade Bulgakov Dead?*, 169-174.
[21] Mikhail Bulgakov, *Diaries and Selected Letters*, trans. Roger Cockrell (Richmond, UK: Alma Books, 2016), 91-98.
[22] Ellis Sandoz, *Political Apocalypse: A Study of Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2000), 26.
[23] Sandoz regards the relationship between Dmitri Karamazov and Grushenka in Dostoyevsky's *the Brothers Karamazov* as embodying the "Mother Earth" ideal (p. 186), but one could extend that position to Tolstoy's idealized view of the peasants and even Pasternak's depiction of Lara in *Doctor Zhivago*.
[24] Ellman, *Socialist Planning*, 368f.
[25] For more on this, see: William deJong-Lambert, *The Cold War Politics of Genetic Research: An Introduction to the Lysenko Affair* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); John Grant, *Corrupted Science: Fraud, ideology and politics in science* (Wisley: Facts, Figures, and Fun, 2007), 270f.; and Yvonne Howell, "Eugenics, Rejuvenation, and Bulgakov's Journey into the Heart of Dogness," *Slavic Review* 65, no. 3 (2006): 545-549.
[26] Edythe C. Haber, "The Social and Political Context of Bulgakov's 'The Fatal Eggs'," *Slavic Review* 51, no. 3 (1992): 497-510; Leslie Milne, "Gogol and Mikhail Bulgakov," in *Nikolay Gogol: Text and Context*, ed. Jane Grayson and Faith Wigzell (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), 109-126; and Irina Shiova, "Reflections of Soviet Reality in 'Heart of a Dog'As Bulgakov's Way of Discussion with the Proletarian Writers," *New Zealand Slavonic Journal* 39 (2005): 107-120.
[27] Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Heart of a Dog*, trans. Michael Glenny (London: the Harvill Press, 1968), 64.
[28] Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Fatal Eggs*, trans. Hugh Apling (London: Hesperus Press Limited, 2003), 19.
[29] Bulgakov, *The Heart of a Dog*, 127. The "atavism" statement is interesting in itself, as the atavistic change was not towards becoming a canine again, but towards becoming more criminal (as the "donor" of the pituitary gland and testicles was a thief). It is also a direct repudiation of Lysenko's views, as it ties the changes directly to genes and not the environment.
[30] Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*, trans. Dian Burgin and Katherine Tiernan O'Connor (New York: Vintage International, 1995), 8.
[31] The passage reads: "He took Berlioz's measure as if intending to make him a suit and muttered something through his teeth that sounded like, 'One, two … Mercury in the Second House … the moon has set … six-misfortune ... evening-seven …' Then he announced loudly and joyously, 'Your head will be cut off!'" (Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*, 10)
[32] Mikhail Bulgakov, "The Fire of the Khans," in *Notes on a Cuff and Other Stories*, trans. Roger Cockrell (Croydon: Alma Books Ltd., 2104), 69-70.
[33] Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*, 242.