

# The Author, the Devil and the Master

---

By Clare Kelly

For my Capstone project it took me some time to decide what I would be focusing on as there were many possible ideas that came to mind of topics or works of literature that I would be interested in looking at in depth. The way I finally picked what I would focus on, was deciding what sort of project I was interested in doing as I have always loved the creative writing part of English, but couldn't see myself writing a story that was also a literary analysis. After deciding to do a sort of hybrid creative and scholarly project with poetry as the creative aspect, I decided I would focus on Russian author and playwright Mikhail Bulgakov's delightfully chaotic and thought provoking novel *The Master and Margarita*.

While I have only read it through start to finish once, this is a book that I will read again in the future to hopefully notice new details that capture my attention. For this project there were a number of themes or details I wanted to focus on and needed to spend some time deciding which to focus on and analyze more fully. The goal of my project was to take a closer look at several specific topics and use outside sources to try and learn more about what could have been the motivation behind all of the details used. Some of what I will be focusing on caught my attention not only as a reader, but a writer as well with how Bulgakov brilliantly works in details, descriptions and references into his work that add more to the scene the more you are able to catch and understand. The goal of my project was to combine poetry with literary analysis in the hopes of adding to the analysis, as well as keeping those ready my project engaged while encouraging those people to give Mikhail Bulgakov's fantastic novel a read themselves.

## **Classical Demonology**

Symbols of the devil, details of demons

Hidden in front of your eyes

Mixed in amongst the organized jumble of words

Be sure to pay attention, always thinking and watching

Not all is as it seems, there is more meaning to those words

As somethings,

Some details, and some words carefully picked

Mean more than most might know on their own

Mischievous Behemoth, the talking cat waiting for a streetcar

Head of his walking stick a black poodle

Clothing impossible to miss in the crowd of conformity

A style not seen as acceptable for the region they appear

Fagot dressed in checks, pince-nez cracked

Foreign interpreter, not a chance

Flourishing gestures voice raised and laugh loud

Clownish temperament that does not fit

A leg causing pain, fractured bone, injured in a fall from on high

There they are, more hidden away

Find what you can, details of the devil

After all you may have heard many times before

The devil is in the details

“...and under his arm he carried a walking stick with a black knob shaped like a poodle’s head.”

(Bulgakov, 6)

“ ‘Meaning,’ he replied, ‘that if I were a real chairman, I would have seen immediately that he was an evil power! How else can you explain it? The cracked pince-nez, his being dressed in rags...What kind of a foreign interpreter looks like that!’ ” (Bulgakov, 133)

“Right out of the mirror stepped a short, but unusually broad-shouldered man. He was wearing a bowler hat and had a fang sticking out of his mouth, which made his already loathsome face look even uglier. To top it all off, he had fiery-red hair.” (Bulgakov, 69)

Mikhail Bulgakov is a writer who I admire greatly for his masterful storytelling, the development of characters and attachment between characters and the reader, as well as how much detail Bulgakov is able to work into his writing. The way that he is able to add it all in however is not overwhelming, it isn't all added in as a giant chunk of words that you read at the introduction of a character. Something that Bulgakov tried to do, was add as many references to classical demonology as he could and whether or not you are able to see those details for what they are, each add to the story wonderfully and help bring the characters to life. Most of the references are details that have to do with the physical appearance of Woland or the members of his retinue, or the way that they dress and act compared to what would be considered to be acceptable or normal in the place they appear.

When it comes to Woland, there are several details that have a connection to classical demonology and two of the most prominent of them are the walking stick with the black knob in the shape of a poodle's head, and the injured leg that was said to have happened during the fall from Heaven. A black poodle was said to be one of the signs of Satan, so to have Woland carry with him almost everywhere a walking stick with the handle shaped like a poodle's head it is a subtle hint at who he really is. There are several moments where attention is drawn to the grip of his walking stick in the way that Woland moves or a position that he will settle in, which could be done deliberately to see if there is any connection made or reaction. “Then he lowered his gaze, to where the windowpanes were turning dark in the dusk, gave a condescending smile, narrowed his eyes, placed his hands on the knob of his walking stick, and rested his chin on his hands.” (Bulgakov, 6) Unfortunately for those Woland is interacting with, they never seem to make that connection and even if the reader does not either, the added detail helped visualize the character and gives him a bit more personality in the moment. And of course for me, I have for some reason always loved the look of walking sticks, and how they can change how a character

moves and interacts with other characters or the environment they are in, so getting to read how Bulgakov works it into the story subtly was entertaining for me.

As for the injured leg, I found it to be interesting during the story that at certain points a character would encounter Woland in the apartment that was his temporary home during his stay, and his vampire maid Hella is tending to his injured knee. “One naked leg was folded beneath him and the other was stretched out on the stool. Hella was massaging the knee of this dark leg with a smoking salve.” (Bulgakov, 217) And later after Hella is called away, the brave Margarita offers to take over with the treatment of his leg before the grand Satan’s Ball that will happen at midnight with Margarita as the host Queen.

‘My leg has flared up again, and now there’s this ball...’ continued Woland.

‘Allow me,’ said Margarita softly.

Woland stared at her intently and then moved his knee over to her.

The salve was as hot as lava and burned Margarita’s hands, but she did not flinch and rubbed it into his knee, trying not to cause him any pain. (Bulgakov, 220)

In my opinion, giving Woland an injury to his knee and including times where it is being treated and taken care of is more than just an added detail of classical demonology. Having injuries such as this is something that nearly all humans would be able to relate to, and in a way it makes Woland seem to be more human seeing him laying down and having his knee be tended to. When first reading through there are certain details that I did not catch and the injury to Woland’s knee was one of them, but the scenes where he is being treated for pain are still scenes that stuck with me. In those moments, the devil is humanized in a way that many, including myself, are able to relate to and I felt a little sympathy for the devil as I knew what pain like that could feel like, and how it could impact my ability to carry out the various tasks I needed to for that day. It is the details like this and these moments the Bulgakov added, that really add to the impact of this story on the reader, and I hope to be able to catch more of these moments when I read through the novel once more sometime in the future.

The other element of classical demonology that was worked into the story I am going to address briefly, is the habit of the demons to dress in a way that goes against what is considered to be acceptable and normal at that time and place the demon is. For this I pulled two examples

of ways that two of Woland's retinue, Azazello and Korovyov, are described by people seeing them for the first time. In all the places that the both of them appear, they seem to specifically dress in a way that sets them apart from those around them and it is especially impressive when Korovyov manages to do so in the theater they are about to perform in. At the start Korovyov is not introduced when he appears for the first time to the editor Berlioz in an incorporeal form, easily startling and scaring the editor, making the man believe he is suffering from heat stroke. Later on right before the editor's death, Korovyov is the one who appears to him at the turnstile this time in solid physical form, guiding the arrogant editor towards his death, just as Woland had predicted. Whether it was in his incorporeal form or corporal form, as shown in the second quoted passage Korovyov knows how to make an impression, not necessarily a good one, on those he meets while working alongside Woland or independently to wreak havoc.

As for Azazello, what sets him apart in how he looks, is a little more focused on his literal physical appearance unlike Korovyov where it is his clothing that sets him apart in a crowd. He appears as a shorter man who is unusually broad-shouldered, there is a fang that sticks out of his mouth making his already loathsome face look even uglier. Then on top of all that, Azazello has fiery-red hair which by itself might not be so out of place, but when combined with the rest of his physical appearance it certainly does not do him any favors. What is interesting to me, is that unlike Korovyov, Azazello is literally a demon and what sets him apart from the humans around him is his physical body, whereas Korovyov who was once a human and has a human soul, mainly is set apart by his clothing and behavior. This could have been done unintentionally by Bulgakov, but the way that these two members of Woland's retinue deliberately stand out is different related to what they are and what their true form may look like. Again this could be me making connections that are not there, but nevertheless the details of how they look and the way that their clothing and physical appearance changes over the course of the story depending on the situation add wonderfully to the world that Bulgakov is building for the reader to enjoy.

## Characters Observations and Descriptions of Woland

A tall man dressed fully in gray  
Gray beret cocked rakishly over an ear  
Tucked under an arm a walking stick  
Black knob shaped like a poodle's head  
His mouth slightly crooked, jaw divided in two  
Platinum crowns on the left, gold crowns on the right  
Right eye black, vacant and dead  
“like the narrow eye of a needle, like the entrance  
To a bottomless well of darkness and shadow.”  
Left eye green and completely mad glinting with mischief  
Piercing to the depths of any soul  
Condescending smile and narrowed eyes watching the world  
Hands placed on the knob of the walking stick  
An eye glinting in madness focused on one  
Practically squealing in curiosity shaking a hand taken forcefully  
Laughing with an unsmiling eye focused on the other  
To another the suit is all black along with the beret  
A smile to ignite the sparkle in his eye  
Staring intently before moving a knee over towards the other  
Sword for a cane, lean heavily limping away  
Low somber voice, a foreign accent there then gone and back again  
Staring silently and unsmilingly at the man  
Moments before a roaring laughter, thunderous and unsurprising  
The black magician from the shadows sprawled out  
Down low surrounded by cushions, down low a shorter distance falling  
A sudden attack, from nowhere a tongue lashing  
But what for?  
Second-grade fresh how absurd

To begin with, the subject was lame in neither foot, and he was neither short, nor hugely tall, but simply tall. As for his teeth, the left ones had platinum crowns, the right—gold. He was dressed in an expensive gray suit and wore foreign-made shoes of the same color.

A gray beret was cocked rakishly over his ear, and under his arm he carried a walking stick with a black knob shaped like a poodle's head. He looked to be a little over forty. Slightly crooked mouth. Smooth-shaven. Dark brown hair. Right eye black, left—for some reason, green. Black eyebrows, but one was higher than the other. In a word—a foreigner. (Bulgakov, 6)

“and it was only then that the friends had the sense to look straight into his eyes, whereupon they decided that his left eye, the green one, was completely mad, and the right one was vacant, black and dead.” (Bulgakov, 34)

Woland is the devil, literally the devil, and while spending his time in Moscow with the help of his retinue havoc is wreaked on the corrupt and the hypocritical. Then in addition to that, Woland and his demonic entourage are also exposing the corruption of the Soviet bureaucracy, the literary elite, as well as the moral decay of individuals who are part of that society. He has a very specific goal, there is a reason Woland has come to Moscow and in a city full of citizens who do not believe in either God or Satan. But while there working to complete this task, Woland makes sure to spend time out in the city and creates situations that allow him to interact with the citizens, which does at times lead to confusion. Specifically when it comes to how Woland looks from his clothing, to his manner of acting and moving or the way that he looks physically. One of the details that is focused on over the course of the story are the two colors of Woland's eyes, and the specific emotion each of the colored eyes have during different interactions. Within Woland's first interaction with the poet Ivan and editor Berlioz, for most of it the foreign professor is sitting between the two friends and each of them seems to have a specific eye fixed on them. Woland's left eye which was fixed more on Berlioz is green and completely mad while the right eye which was fixed more on Ivan is black, vacant and dead.

Out of all the characters in Bulgakov's novel, Woland is my favorite as well as the one that is described the most over the course of the story, the one that felt the most like someone that might bump into you on the street. For being the devil, Woland is remarkably human looking in how he is unique but can still blend into the background and be as hard to describe for witnesses

as is normal in real life. When he is first introduced at the start of the story, those people in the park who see him and later describe him to authorities are very inconsistent in what they say, and none of them are very close to how Woland actually looks. They are not able to accurately describe what Woland looks like or agree on his physical appearance, and this could have been done deliberately by Bulgakov for a number of reasons. This includes the reason that stood out to me, which is it being because as the devil, a being that is seen as the manifestation of evil and temptation, Woland looks the way each person would expect him to. The devil could be said to be charming, given how he is normally thought to be trying to tempt those he interacts with into sin, so each person sees Satan in the way that they would expect this being of evil to look. The devil plays into their assumptions and looks how they think he would, or he looks the opposite of what they believe is right, but no matter which it is because Woland is able to cause that confusion deliberately.

Afterward, when, frankly speaking, it was already too late, various agencies filed reports describing this man. If one compares them, one cannot help but be astonished. For example, one says that he was short, had gold teeth, and was lame in his right foot. Another says that he was hugely tall, had platinum crowns and was lame in his left foot. Yet a third notes laconically that he had no distinguishing characteristics whatsoever.

We should add that all of the reports were worthless. (Bulgakov, 5)

Another possible explanation is that Woland looks how he wants to and what people see is a combination of how he actually looks, and that each person's mind fills in certain gaps or adds details specific to what they want to believe. When Woland is actually described, which I have included in the first passage quoted after the poem, the reader learns that the professor does not fit any of the three descriptions offered, but instead fits all of them in some way. He wasn't hugely tall or very short or even of average height, just tall and while Woland did have crowns on his teeth they weren't all one kind, and were split down the middle with the left half being platinum while the right were gold. I found it to be interesting that the descriptions of Woland given by the witnesses were all useless, but also did hold a note of truth.

Then as noted in the second main quoted passage above, it isn't until some time into their conversation that the editor Berlioz and the poet Ivan think to look Woland straight on in both

eyes at once. Up until this point from their positions sitting on either side of Woland, they have only been seeing half of his face at a time which gave them only half of his expressions. This was an interesting decision to make on Bulgakov's part, but for a character who is literally the devil, the spit is his looks could have been done deliberately as a way to confuse others, or to show that there are different types of evil. Chaos and calm, evil can exist in either environment and it can be done in a flashy in your face way or in a way that can seem much more subtle as shown in the metal type of Woland's crowns. The teeth on the left side of his mouth are covered in gold crowns, with gold being a metal that can be considered more flashy or meant to stand out when used as jewelry, and the teeth on the right have the platinum crowns that might be seen as more normal or expected. Then you add the color of Woland's eyes and the side of the face that they are on, and the crowns and their type of metal can seem a bit more deliberate a decision on Bulgakov's part. The flashy gold crowns have the mad green eye, while the slightly more normal platinum crowns are matched with the eye that is described as being vacant, black and dead.

Whatever Bulgakov's inspiration or reason for making Woland look the way he does, the detail offered to the readers at the start of the story stay with you as they are brought back as new characters interact with Woland for the first time. And each time that these details or observations are there to be analyzed, there can sometimes be a slight change in how Woland appears or what is or is not mentioned. This could be taken to mean that the details not mentioned are no longer there, or that for whatever reason are not the main focus of the character meeting the devil in disguise. Whatever the reason, Bulgakov brings his charming devil to life throughout the story in a way that does not feel forced, or with all the detail shoved into one paragraph to get it out there for the readers. Instead, Woland gets built over the course of the story and with each new interaction, a new part of this thoughtful and strangely honorable devil is revealed to the reader and to the limited honorable characters bit by bit.

## **The Devil's Accent**

Standing out in a crowd of harmony  
Always easy to see  
Theatrical and overdone movements  
Gestures grand, facial expressions all too clear  
Tone rising up, cascading back down  
Excited up, bitter back down, practically squealing aloud  
Where did he come from? Who the devil might know  
Could be a German, an Englishman?  
How can you tell the where when it,  
The guide you are normally given to use for all,  
Isn't always there for you to hear sentence to sentence  
More likely French, maybe a Pole?  
No he's not English  
Speaking softly and there it goes again with eyes wide  
Somehow disappearing and no longer there  
Come lean in closer now, he is starting to speak  
Listen closely there may be a clue  
His voice sounding out in the open space  
“without any trace of the accent  
which seemed to fade in and out,  
the devil knows why,”

“He began to speak softly and as he did, his accent somehow disappeared.” (Bulgakov, 12)

“They both leaned towards him, one on either side, and he said, without any trace of the accent which seemed to fade in and out, the devil knows why,” (Bulgakov, 35)

One thing that is noted to change at times throughout the novel, is the devil's accent which can be seen as a deliberate action on the devil's part that is intended on confusing and unnerving those he is speaking with. He is the devil after all. This is something that I found to be

very interesting, especially when combined with the question the poet Ivan and the editor Berlioz struggle with after seeing Woland for the first time, the question of where Woland is from. Before even speaking to them in perfect Russian, the way that Woland is dressed, his physical appearance and the way he was acting in Patriarch's Ponds. Their guesses include Woland being an Englishman, a German, French, Polish, and at one point the editor Berlioz begins to think uneasily that the strange and possibly mad foreigner, is not actually a foreigner and that there is something else going on. Then before the end of the first chapter when asked directly where he is from and if he is German, Woland responds as follows, "'Who, me?' replied the professor and suddenly grew pensive. 'Yes, I suppose I'm a German.'" (Bulgakov, 12) As someone who writes stories of my own, I was really curious about why Bulgakov decided to specifically add in at a few different points in the story that Woland's accent changed or disappeared completely. Since that is not something I have done before I found it really interesting when it first happened, then even more so when it happened again a few chapters later.

In my opinion, it is little details like that which makes a story much more interesting and memorable, because the characters and world are being built in a way that feels very real because of all the layers. This includes the parts that don't seem to be quite right, that don't make sense you could say, which act as a clue for the reader that something is not quite right, or that a situation or character are not what they seem or claim to be. Having a character that is the devil speak with an accent that comes and goes and isn't always the same, serves as a way to confuse the reader slightly, and also provides a reason for the interacting characters to be unsure or slightly uncomfortable. Having Woland's accent come and now without any reason or warning might not be the most important thing or have much relevance on the story, but it does add to the

persona of Woland that the devil is putting on, giving those interacting with him something to think about and question.

In combination with Woland's accent coming and going with no clear reason, there are times within the first and third chapter that it is noted when the quality of Woland's Russian changes. At the start when first beginning to talk with Ivan and Berlioz, it is noted that he speaks fluent Russian yet with a foreign accent neither man seems to be able to place at that time, then a little later into their interaction both the poet and editor question how fluent the foreign professor seems to be in Russian. Before properly introducing himself to the pair some time into their conversation, the poet and editor make an excuse to speak to each other away from the professor and one idea that comes up, is that the strange man is actually a spy, a Russian emigré who's managed to get back. That he is playing the fool to pump them for information, which after going back as the reader does not really make sense since at this point, the only thing they had been discussing for the most part is whether or not God and Jesus exist. Back to how well Woland is able to speak Russian, in the third chapter after the reader gets the first of the Jerusalem chapters told by Woland to Ivan and Berlioz, before his accent fades away again Woland's Russian is no longer fluent. "“Oh, no! There is someone who can confirm it!” retorted the professor in broken Russian with total self-assurance and suddenly, with a mysterious air, he motioned the two friends to come closer.” (Bulgakov, 34) Woland messing with Ivan and Berlioz, deliberately keeping them off balance. Again, he is the devil and the devil needs no real reason.

## **The Devil and his Demonic Retinue Enforcing Justice**

Nothing makes sense in what it means  
How could this be? Why would this happen?  
Enforcing something they are not, they don't represent  
The Devil is evil, the Devil is Satan, the Devil means nothing good  
The wicked face justice for what they have done  
Their sins brought to the light, an exposé, fitting punishment  
Be careful what you say, not all is as it seems  
Not all offenses will be taken lightly, not all will be allowed  
Curse with the devil, the Devil will answer  
Call for the devil to take you  
Take you the Devil shall, if not the Devil another  
Following the Devil are many demons, tricksters, enforcers  
Enforcers of what? Many left wondering  
Of justice, righting the wrongs, bringing sins to light  
Call for an exposé they may  
But be careful, beware, you will get what you wished for  
Not in the way you wished  
Words with their power not to be taken lightly  
Money may be power, but not power that counts  
When the Devil strolls into town, demonic parade, evil entourage  
Catalyst for death, bringer of chaos  
In the final act all justice is performed and concluded  
Not all need to fear the Devil, the Devil is not evil  
The sinners fear the devil, a liar and father of lies  
No need to fear the Devil good people  
Loving hearts need no punishment, the world is punishment enough

‘The marquise...’ mumbled Korovyov, ‘poisoned her father, two brothers, and two sisters because of an inheritance...Her Majesty is delighted!...Lady Minkina!...Ah, how lovely you look! She’s a bit nervous. Why was it necessary to burn the maid’s face with a curling iron? Naturally that sort of behavior can get you murdered...Her Majesty is

delighted! Your Majesty, a minute of your attention! Emperor Rudolph, wizard and alchemist...Here's another alchemist-he was hanged...Ah, here she is! Ah, what a marvelous brothel she had in Strasbourg!...We're delighted to see you!...' (...)

'Delighted to see you!...This twenty-year-old rascal, a dreamer and an eccentric, was remarkable for the strange fantasies he had since childhood. A certain young woman fell in love with him and he went and sold her to a brothel...' (Bulgakov, 229-230)

'You were always an avid proponent of the theory that after his head is cut off, a man's life comes to an end, he turns to dust, and departs into nonbeing. I have the pleasure of informing you in the presence of my guests (...) that your theory is both incisive and sound. (...) There is even a theory that says that to each man it will be given according to his beliefs. May it be so! You are departing into non-being, and, from the goblet into which you are being transformed, I will have the pleasure of drinking a toast to being!' (Bulgakov, 233)

'By the way, Baron,' said Woland, suddenly lowering his voice and speaking chattily, 'rumors are circulating regarding your extraordinary inquisitiveness. They say that this, matched with your no less developed talkativeness, has begun to attract general attention. Moreover, spiteful tongues have dropped the words 'informer' and 'spy.' And, in addition, there is an assumption that this will lead you to a sorry end in less than a month. And so, to save you the bother of a tiresome wait, we have decided to come to your aid and to take advantage of the fact that you wrangled yourself an invitation here with the express purpose of eavesdropping and spying on everything you could.' (Bulgakov, 234)

Having the devil and his retinue of demons be the ones who dish out fitting punishments and enforce justice is an idea that would be seen as strange to many different belief systems, as when it comes to the devil within Christian and Catholic teaching, the devil is not the one who punishes those who do evil. The devil, as a force of temptation and evil, is here on earth trying to

tempt individuals and groups away from God and to do evil. That hell is the devil's punishment after the end times for his actions, and that the devil's goal is to drag as many people down with him as possible. Something that is very different from the charming, complex and strangely honorable Satan given to readers in Mikhail Bulgakov's novel. Throughout the course of the story, there are many times when Woland or more likely one of his retinue use their abilities to cause something to happen as a punishment for those they interact with.

One man who, even after being warned multiple times by his secretary, would not stop using phrases like "the devil take me", literally then disappears and leaves behind an empty suit at his destination, still working away. Then there is also the time a group of people are made to all suddenly burst out into song after an interaction with Korovyov, the self proclaimed ex choir master. Throughout the story, many different things happen to the citizens of Moscow, but nothing ever is done to a person that has done nothing to deserve any sort of punishment, as the devil and his retinue are not here for those who have wronged on one. That is made clear when Margarita and the Master are not punished or judged for what they might have done, but instead are granted peace together after death.

I found it interesting that the judgement of actions and enforcing of justice did not happen all at once at Satan's Ball towards the end of the novel, even if there were some characters that were made to face justice there. Instead, throughout the story starting at the very start, there are moments where characters are made to face the actions they have committed while still alive, and often it turns out to be quite amusing for the reader. Not all of what happened is on the bigger more serious side with the punishments and offenses, but the things that happen are meant as punishments of a sort for those who are in power in one way or another and abuse that power.

At the black magic show that Woland and his retinue put on, they at one point open up a fashionable clothing store for the ladies who all rush to change their clothes out for the latest updates and the more expensive dresses, clutches, makeup and more. However, this is all a trick with a delayed reveal, as after the show when all those who had attended are making their way through the streets to return home, and suddenly all of the fancy new clothing that the women had replaced their own evening clothes with just disappeared. Which then leaves a large group of women, including a fair amount of wealthier women, running down the streets of Moscow at night naked or in their underclothes.

The first of the main passages quoted above goes to show the type of people that have been invited and are attending Satan's Ball, all of whom are there and have been in Hell for very real reasons. There are those who killed others for their own gain, a woman that burned the face of a maid with a curling iron, a woman that ran a very popular brothel, a woman who after a secret and forced relationship with her boss, men who sold women to brothels suffocated the baby that was born as a result of that relationship and so much more. All of this is narrated by the trickster character Korovyov, who is the only member of Woland's retinue who participates in wreaking havoc and bringing about justice within Moscow, without actually committing any physical harm or violent acts. At the start of Satan's Ball when Margarita is starting her duties as the Queen of the Ball, she stands at the entrance to the ball and all the guests must walk past her in order to enter. By her side, is the clownish Korovyov who introduces each guest as they approach, and he manages to quietly tell her information about each of the guests that mainly include what they did during their lives that resulted in them being sent to Hell, while also warmly greeting each lady and gentleman.

When it comes to the ball however and the quoted passages above, the two main characters that face judgement for their actions are two men that had abused their power in different ways, and definitely abused their standing for their own gain. The editor Berlioz and the Baron who is said to be a spy, that asked many questions of those visiting Moscow for various reasons and passed along the information he learned for his own gain. Both of these men are judged at Satan's grand ball, and even if only one of them was actually dead at that time, neither of them make it out alive and face punishment for what they did in life, or the way that they lived. For Berlioz especially though I found his end to be rather fitting, as he was a man who was very adamant in his belief that God, Jesus and Satan did not exist, and that there was no afterlife either once one had passed on. Therefore, that is exactly the afterlife that he gets, after having been brought back to life for a moment at the ball to be addressed one last time by Woland, before he is banished into the nothingness he believed came after death.

Having the devil and his retinue be the ones who bring about justice and enforce it in the way that Bulgakov writes is not something I have seen in many stories before to my knowledge, and I do not know if it is something that I will have the chance to see again. Whether or not this is used in other writing or forms of storytelling, the way that Bulgakov writes it into the story and builds up suspense at some points is masterful in how it is the perfect amount of detail and information without going too far. There are many different cases where Woland or one of his retinue are involved in some smaller prank or punishment inflicted on different citizens of Moscow while they are still alive.

Each of those cases are written wonderfully and serve as a way to to only further the plot, but also to help give certain characters and the demons in Woland's entourage more depth, more

of a personality. Not that it ever occurred to me that writing a character essentially pranking another as a form of judgement and punishment could also serve as character development. One aspect of this project that I enjoyed greatly were the times I learned techniques useful to a writer while also being drawn further into the entertaining and lively story Bulgakov created.

## Meaning of “good” and “evil” Relating to Life

What is good, what is evil?  
Good and evil twisted together intertwined  
Can't have one without the other  
What is good if there is no evil  
Nothing, nothing at all, nothing for eternity  
Uninvited and unexpected, welcome and unwelcome  
“Spirit of Evil and Sovereign of Shadows,”  
Not to be wished well  
“refuse to acknowledge the existence  
of either shadows or evil.”  
Take the time to think, ponder for a while  
“What would your good do  
if evil didn't exist, and what would earth look like  
if all the shadows disappeared? After all,  
shadows are cast by things and people.”  
Shadows come from all things living or not  
To take them away would take away all things leaving nothing  
Leaving only light behind, Spirit of Evil  
Take the Master to grant him peace  
Not earned the light, only earned peace  
The thunderstorm is coming to finish what was started  
No further services the Devil requires of his retinue  
A black cloud cut off half the sun to later cover completely  
Enveloping the city “Everything vanished as if it had never existed.”  
Good and Evil, Shadows and Light, thunder shook the city  
The Devil ceasing to be visible in a storm's darkness  
Good and Evil hand in hand  
Good and Evil forever by your side  
On your shoulder  
The Devil and the Angel

‘No sooner do you appear on the roof than you blab nonsense, and I’ll tell you what it is —it’s in your intonation. You pronounce your words as if you refuse to acknowledge the existence of either shadows or evil. But would you kindly ponder this question: What would your good do if evil didn’t exist, and what would the earth look like if all the shadows disappeared? After all, shadows are cast by things and people. Here is the shadow of my sword. But shadows also come from trees and living beings. Do you want to strip the earth of all trees and living things just because of your fantasy of enjoying naked light? You’re stupid.’ (Bulgakov, 305)

Good and evil have always been two concepts that can be seen as having many different meanings, and many times those meanings will be different or depend to some degree on the people or situation that is being analyzed or considered. Mikhail Bulgakov’s novel is interesting in how nearly all of the main characters, and arguably possibly the most important characters within the story, are the devil and his demonic retinue. Nothing and no one could possibly be considered to be more evil than the literal devil and his demonic helpers, after all the devil isn’t referred to as the Spirit of Evil or the Prince of Darkness for nothing. But within Bulgakov’s novel, he shows brilliantly that there are two sides to every story and that there could be no good, if evil did not also exist.

The passage quoted above stood out to me from the very first time I read *The Master and Margarita*, and still continues to be one of the passages from something I’ve read that makes me think long after having read it. Commonly people want the good without the bad, they want to be treated kindly and fairly, they want good interaction and good moments, and no one ever really wants to deal with anything bad. But if time is taken to stop and think, it brings up a question I believe Bulgakov might have been trying to shine a light on throughout the story, but specifically

in the passage quoted above. Is the good in life really worth anything without the bad? How can you know that something is good or that you are being treated kindly, if you've never had to deal with the bad in life or had someone treat you poorly? If there was no bad in the world, how can there then be good? Just like with what Woland was saying about the shadows, everything in the world has a shadow, even living things and good beings, but if you were to take away all the shadows, you would also have to take away what creates the shadows. What are you left with, if there are no more shadows, if there is no more good? How do you know something is good, when there is no bad to compare it to?

Treat others how you want to be treated is something I have been told since I was little, as far back as I can remember, and this is one of the first phrases that came to mind after originally reading the passage about good and evil and about shadows. All we do in life will have a reaction that causes good or bad things to happen depending on how those we interact with are able to respond to how we decide to act. The good you put out in the world, has its way of finding its way back to you, and what goes around, comes around. But we are not going to be judged purely on the bad or the good that we do. When it comes to the Master and Margarita, two people who truly love each other despite all the hardship that comes with it, the love that they have in the end does not truly amount to much. As it is because neither of them have done enough good to get into Heaven, or enough bad to be sentenced to punishment in Hell, but these two humans in love have suffered much for each other. Because of the suffering they went through at the hands of others, they are reunited before the end of their lives, and then in death they are reunited and allowed to live together happily forever. If there had been no evil, no shadows, no bad, how would this ending for the Master and Margarita been possible? Would it have been possible?

After all, neither of them had done enough good to get into Heaven, but neither of them had been wicked enough to go to Hell. So without the evil in the world, without the bad and without the existence of Hell, what would their end have turned out to be?

We are all born with the ability to choose how we will act, what we will do, the way that we will behave and interact with those we encounter throughout our life. What I believe Bulgakov is trying to say, is that we need the good and the bad, the righteous and the evil or the damned for the world and the actions we decide to make to truly mean something. Why would people be motivated to do good for others, if there was no possible punishment, no bad things for them to face after the end of their life on earth? Without evil, the world loses all meaning, all reasons for doing good unto others disappears into the air, just like all things would disappear if the shadows were removed. One cannot exist without the other, and if it could, would it even be worth it to rid the world of all evil when any sort of good would lose all meaning, emotion and value to others and to the one committing the good deed?

## **The Devil is the Embodiment of Evil**

What are we always told about the truth of things

Which are to be believed, which to be ignored

What means more to one, less to another

Nothing good comes from some

But nothing good can come from any

The Devil is evil

The Devil is a liar

The Devil will lead nowhere that good can go

Who is to speak of this? Why be believed?

What right grants them the power

To say what shall be, what is to be, what is and always will be

Embodiment of Evil father of lies

The Sovereign of Shadows, a spirit of evil

Nothing is one thing, nothing is simple

Good and bad are hand in hand

Pain is life, life is pain

Those who say otherwise have something to gain

The Devil isn't righteous, the Devil isn't wicked

The Devil is simply the Devil

It's humanity that's vicious

“ ‘Exactly so, thank you,’ said the magician slowly, in a deep bass. ‘A much more important question is: have the Muscovites changed on the inside?’ ” (Bulgakov, 101)

‘What is your command, Messier?’ asked Fagot of the man in the mask.

‘Well,’ the latter replied pensively, ‘they are like people anywhere. They love money, but that has always been true... People love money, no matter what it is made of, leather, paper, bronze, or gold. And they are thoughtless... but, then again, sometimes mercy enters their hearts... they are ordinary people... On the whole, they remind me of their predecessors... only the housing shortage has had a bad effect on them...’

(Bulgakov, 104)

One thing that is challenged within Mikhail Bulgakov's novel, is the traditional thought of the devil as simply the embodiment of evil and the one that tempts humans into committing sin that leads them down to hell. When first meeting Bulgakov's charming devil, the reader does not know that this strange foreigner Woland, a professor of black magic and traveling historian, is the devil. And while it is not explicitly said that Woland is in fact the devil within that first encounter, it is made fairly clear that he is not simply a normal person or someone that belongs in an insane asylum either. Woland is not trying to tempt the poet or the editor into committing any sins, he simply had joined them in their conversation about how God and Jesus did not exist, to ask them questions on their beliefs and the proofs for the existence of God. There is not much that can be said is an act of evil during that encounter, not even when Woland predicts the coming death of the editor since he does not cause it, he simply predicts what will happen and later it comes true as Woland said.

In the passages quoted above, Woland and his retinue are putting on a black magic show at the theater and as an introduction once they are on the stage, Woland begins to speak with Korovyov who at the time is addressed as Fagot, asking about the people of Moscow and if they have changed or not. Woland's focus is not on the way that the city has changed, he does not care about the differences in technology like automobiles at that time compared to when he was last in Moscow, or anything else like that. There is something specific that Woland is interested in, and while the audience is very confused thinking that this discussion must be part of the opening to a trick, Korovyov happily joins in the conversation while the rest of the devil's retinue there on the stage wait quietly to begin. What Woland is interested in that goes against the common

perception of the devil simply as the embodiment of evil, is how the people of Moscow have changed over time, on the inside.

Then as the show progresses and a few tricks are performed, the opening discussion between Woland and Korovyov is revisited now that Woland has had the chance to observe the people of Moscow and their reactions and demands relating to the tricks his retinue perform. Woland is sure to make note of what he has observed after Korovyov asks what Woland would have him do regarding the victim of one of their magic tricks that involved a little audience participation, said victim the theater's emcee Bengalsky, and the demon cat Behemoth. What Woland announces to the assembled crowd before giving his decision regarding the fate of the emcee Bengalsky, is how little he believes the people of Moscow to have changed in the time since his last visit.

‘Well,’ the latter replied pensively, ‘they are like people anywhere. They love money, but that has always been true... People love money, no matter what it is made of, leather, paper, bronze, or gold. And they are thoughtless... but, then again, sometimes mercy enters their hearts... they are ordinary people... On the whole, they remind me of their predecessors... only the housing shortage has had a bad effect on them...’ (Bulgakov, 104)

Woland sees that the people still love money which has always been true, and that people have always loved money no matter what it was made of. He also notes that the people are thoughtless and that there are times that mercy enters their hearts as seen in the case of them calling for Bengalsky to be returned to how he had been physically before falling victim to Korovyov's tricks. Woland sees that they are just ordinary people and that the housing shortage has had a bad effect on them, but in general they are the same. He is not there to tempt them, he is not there trying to do evil. Woland is interested in seeing how the people have changed in the unknown number of years it has been since he last visited the area, what I thought when reading this

chapter was that mainly, Woland was curious. The devil did not come simply to judge, to tempt others to torment, he does not seem to be interested in acting the way that the devil would be expected to act, it is like he is consciously acting in a way that is nearly the very opposite of what is expected of Satan.

Woland is curious, he wants to interact with humanity and see how they have changed, from his very first appearance he is not trying to trick anyone into doing evil or cause anyone harm. The devil is simply out for a walk in a park and has a conversation with Ivan and Berlioz about the existence of God, Jesus and the devil, that they started and Woland joined a little later after overhearing them. It could be argued that this trip to Moscow is like a vacation for Woland, and he is just looking to have a little fun and trying to find ways to take up his time, and during those excursions to find new things to do or people to observe, he comes across those who are in need of a lesson or some humbling.

Woland is the devil, and he does punish some of those that he comes across, but the punishments could always be argued to be fair, and chaos for chaos's sake is not his goal. Bulgakov's devil is not the traditional embodiment of evil that most readers would expect him to be, instead this version on Satan is a rather charming and strangely honorable, wisecracking and sarcastic gentleman, who brings chaos to a city that refuses to believe in his existence, or in the existence of God. The being that they do not believe exists has come for a bit of fun, to see how much people have changed in the time he was away, and to bring about honesty and judgment for those who have done wrong and deserve it. A very complex kind of devil, who is truly the devil,, but not the embodiment of evil and sovereign of shadows the world has made him out to be.

## **The Professor and Black Magic Specialist Woland**

A traveling professor, Historian, the foreign artist

Consultant, Scholar and polyglot of a great many languages

“Performs Black Magic With An Exposé In Full”

Professor Woland with a black eye mask and perfectly cut tailcoat

This is the foreign artist?

The silent magician sitting on the couch by the large black cat

A master of conjuring technique, not superstitions or “magic”

Perform the tricks, dazzle audiences, expose the secrets

Commanding softly, a quick conversation

Russian flawless like a native

Messire is confused, for delight he did not express

Controlling the performance yet no tricks he performs carefully watching

Broken Russian with total self-assurance, mysterious air beckoning

Eyes the opposite, absently searching

Bizarre he is found, simply a madman he must be

Bitterly alone, always alone

Sudden familiarity shocking from the sick man, the madman

Laugh which scares the birds, fly sparrow fly

Guard the mad German dear young poet

Suddenly recovered, the Professor suddenly cheerful

Nothing good it means for you

“ ‘So, you’ve been invited here as a consultant, Professor?’ asked Berlioz.

‘Yes, that’s right.’

‘Are you a German?’ queried Bezdomny.

‘Who, me?’ replied the professor and suddenly grew pensive. ‘Yes, I suppose I’m a German.’ he said.

‘Your Russian is first-rate,’ observed Bezdomny.

‘Oh, in general I’m a polyglot and know a great many languages,’ answered the professor.

‘And what is your field?’ inquired Berlioz.

‘I’m a specialist in black magic.’ (...)

‘And...and is it in that capacity that you’ve been invited here?’ Stammered Berlioz.

‘Yes, it is,’ affirmed the professor, and he went on to explain, ‘Some authentic manuscripts of the tenth century master of black magic, Gerbert of Aurillac, have been discovered here in your State Library. And I’ve been asked to examine them. I’m the only person in the whole world who’s qualified to do so.’

‘Ah! So you’re a historian then?’ asked Berlioz with great respect and relief.

‘Yes, I’m a historian,’ confirmed the scholar and added, apropos of nothing, ‘This evening some interesting history will take place at Patriarch’s Ponds.’ (Bulgakov, 12)

When the reader is first introduced at Patriarch’s Ponds to the charming devil in Mikhail Bulgakov’s novel, it is as the foreign Professor, traveling historian and black magic specialist Woland. At first, and even before talking with him, both the editor Berlioz and the poet Bezdomny are not quite sure where the foreigner is from, all they seem to be able to decide on for sure is that the man is a foreigner. There are thoughts on his clothing, his physical appearance, the way he is behaving and how intently this stranger is taking in everything around them in the park, as if he had never been there before. Then after Woland joins their conversation and continues speaking with them, neither man is able to decide where this strange foreigner originally is from, or what reason he might have to be there in Moscow. While the man is able to speak in fluent Russian much to their confusion, he still speaks with a foreign accent that neither the poet or the editor seems to be able to place. At the start of their conversation that the foreigner had joined, neither man could have been said to like the professor, as Berlioz took an interest in the foreign man, while Bezdomny found him to be loathsome from the moment he

opened his mouth. Then as the conversation continues it is repeated in a few places that the young poet Bezdomny wants nothing more than for this strange and annoying foreigner to go away and leave him and Berlioz in peace.

This was slightly amusing to me evermore than it originally had been once getting through the end of the third chapter after Berlioz met his fate, but it was also interesting. This character of the professor Woland, this persona that the devil is putting on that very much stands out in Moscow at that time, is one that the devil has adopted intentionally for the purpose of his visit, but it could also be that it is how he typically appears when interacting with humans. Of course the persona and way he behaves would have changed slightly overtime, but Woland very much still acts at times in a way that would not be considered normal or acceptable at this time in Moscow. Which similarly to with the coming and going of his accent and ability to speak Russian, could very easily be something that the devil is doing deliberately as a way to mess with those he is interacting with. At the times Woland is meeting with someone who is corrupt and will later on at some point face some sort of punishment or be the victim of Korovyov, Azazello or Behemoth's tricks, the way he behaves would typically be considered to be unsettling and unusual. But when interacting with those that have not done anything to warrant judgement or punishment, those that are pure in heart or in mind to the level that the Master and Margarita are, then they are always treated with kindness and with respect.

The persona that the devil adopts is an interesting one, especially when taking into account how the devil typically might be portrayed, and while Woland does at times stand out and go against what is considered normal or polite in Moscow at this time, in some ways he seems to be better than people are. Those that Woland encounters and later ends up passing

judgement on before a punishment happens either by him or one of those in his retinue, are normally the people who care about themselves and not those they encounter. Like the editor Berlioz they might be caught up in their own sense of self importance or the power that they believe they hold, power that is used not to help others, but to use others for selfish reasons. But then there is Woland, the strange and quite possibly mad foreign professor of black magic and traveling historian. A man that despite being the literal devil, shows more humanity than some of the humans he encounters. This persona of the traveling professor is an interesting one as he is the devil, but seems to be more human in his complexity than most might admit.

## **The Devil and his Retinue Bring About Honesty**

Who would have thought they would bring truth  
Honesty comes from the most unexpected of places  
Their way may be unusual, unnatural, unexpected  
Their way may be wrong, not fully lawful  
But the truth will set you free  
Not always in the way you would think  
Be careful what you wish for  
Watch what you say  
For the Devil is always listening  
And his entourage is ready to play  
Those who think only of themselves can never escape  
The fate that finds them in many different ways  
Call for the truth and the truth will come  
But your own secrets will never be safe from the light  
You wish to shine on others  
The Devil may be evil  
His retinue may play tricks  
But those who take and take will face their fate  
In rides the Devil followed by his demons  
Drag truth into the light with shadows shrinking away  
From the darkness none can escape  
No matter the mask they don and even in dreams, it all is torn away  
In the blinding light of day

‘Yesterday evening Arkady Apollonovich was at a meeting of the Acoustics Commission,’ declared Arkady Apollonovich’s wife very haughtily, ‘but I don’t understand what this has to do with magic.’

‘*Oui, madame!*’ confirmed Fagot. ‘Naturally, you don’t! As for the meeting, which, to set the record straight, was not scheduled for yesterday, and then when he got to Chistye Prudy, where the Acoustics Commission meets, he let his driver go (the whole audience grew hushed) and went by bus to Yelokhovskiy Street to pay a visit to Militsa

Andreyevna Pokobatko, an actress in a touring regional company, and he stayed there for about four hours.’ (...)

Arkady Apollonovich’s young relative suddenly let out a low-pitched, terrifying laugh.

‘That explains everything!’ she exclaimed. ‘And I’ve had my suspicions for a long time. Now I know why that third-rater got the part of Luisa!’ (...)

The vile Fagot, alias Korovyov, cried out, ‘Here you have, respected citizens, the kind of exposé which Arkady Apollonovich so persistently asked for!’ (Bulgakov, 108)

One theme that I found to be rather amusing throughout the book that never failed to make me smile, was how quite possibly all of the honesty that occurred throughout the story, was brought about in some way by the devil Woland and his demonic retinue. The idea that the devil and his demons, beings that would normally only be considered to be evil and as spirits of mischief and lies, are the ones that are bringing honesty into the world is, in my opinion, rather interesting and funny.

At the start of the story the devil arrives in Moscow and first speaks with the editor Mikhail Berlioz and the young poet Ivan Bezdomny which ends unfortunately for both editor and poet in different ways. But throughout their conversation, honesty is in a way, a main theme in what is being discussed before and after Woland makes his appearance and joins the conversation. Berlioz is giving young Ivan a lesson on how Jesus Christ never existed, and how there is no God and there is no devil either. When Woland joins the conversation he pushes the both of them to learn why they are atheists and what they think of the six proofs of Gods existence, before offering the existence of a seventh proof, the most reliable of them all. This seventh proof is not specifically explained, all Woland says is that they are about to get a

demonstration of it, but it can be inferred that the seventh proof Woland speaks of, is his very existence, since Woland is literally the devil.

Something I found interesting after going back through the first and third chapters of Woland's encounter with the poet and the editor that leads to the predicted death of the editor, is that throughout the entire conversation, Woland does not explicitly lie to them. Everything that Woland says, the evidence he offers, the story he tells of Pontius Pilate, Berlioz's predicted death and the exact manner in which it will occur, all of what he says is the truth. While Woland might not have explicitly told the two men that he is the devil, saying he is the devil is something that Woland doesn't actually almost at any point in the story. While he will tell the truth about many things and may not be completely hiding he is the literal devil, it isn't something he specifically says when talking with various characters throughout the story.

Another example of honesty brought about by the devil was partially in a dream Nikanor Ivanovich, the corrupt chairman of a house committee, had after an encounter with Korovyov. This encounter ended with Nikanor taking a sort of bribe in Soviet money at Korovyov's persistent insistence.

'Almighty God,' Nikanor Ivanovich began, 'sees everything and that is the path I should take. I never touched any foreign currency or had the slightest idea what it looked like! The Lord is punishing me for my sins,' Nikanor Ivanovich went on heatedly, buttoning and unbuttoning his shirt, and crossing himself. 'I took bribes! I did, but I took them in our own Soviet money! I took money for registering people in the apartment house, I won't deny it, it happened. Our secretary Prolezhnoyov is a fine one, that he is! Let's face it, everyone in the house management office is a crook. But I didn't take any foreign currency!' (Bulgakov, 133-134)

When going to see Woland who for the duration of his stay has begun living in the apartment that used to belong partially to the deceased Berlioz, Nikanor Ivanovich encounters Korovyov and deals with him instead of Woland. During that time, Nikanor Ivanovich is very much confused and is not able to fully keep up with the clownish and rapidly speaking Korovyov who has taken control of the conversation and the interaction. At the end as Nikanor Ivanovich is trying to take his leave and Korovyov is getting the payment due for the time spent living in the apartments, he passes off a bribe to Nikanor Ivanovich who tries to turn it down, but eventually takes it at the insistence of Korovyov. This is the money that later magically becomes foreign currency, leading to his arrest which serves as his punishment.

And finally to focus on the passage quoted above, at the black magic show put on by Woland and his retinue, it is billed as a black magic show that would be followed by an exposé, as magic is not real. After several tricks have been performed by Korovyov, Behemoth, Hella and Woland, there is a member of the audience, a man of the upperclass, that begins to demand an exposé be given immediately. After a bit of back and forth Korovyov agrees and begins an exposé as it had been demanded, although it is not on the topic that Arkady Apollonovich had wanted. The exposé is not on the tricks that had been shown to the audience, instead it is on the acts that Arkady Apollonovich himself had been committing. While Arkady Apollonovich and his wife are infuriated at Korovyov for what he has done, Korovyov is not fazed in the slightest as he gleefully proclaims, “Here you have, respected citizens, the kind of exposé which Arkady Apollonovich so persistently asked for!” (Bulgakov, 108) The devil and his retinue are here and they may not be trying to tempt everyone into committing evil acts, but you must be careful what you ask for. The devil will always be the devil.

## **The Master is the Author**

You put yourself in your work  
Sometimes more than might be expected or intended  
Little by little the story is made  
Little by little you take shape on the page  
When restricted no freedom, creativity then becomes required  
Shunned, disappointed, dissatisfied, repressed  
Censorship for the author, of the author, leads onward  
A manuscript torn and burned  
Cutting diagonally across the page before part fed to flames  
The Master who follows the creators lead  
“Manuscripts don't burn.” creativity lives on  
Suffering for the work they wish to create, the inspiration  
Inspiration that follows hidden in shadows  
In shadows it must remain, eyes watching ears listening  
But the wrong ones, the ones that would tear down the man  
To tear apart the Master, or the creator of an author in his likeness  
Dreams and inspiration gone, suffering taking center stage  
Wished happiness by the charming devil himself  
The downtrodden Master and Miraculous Margarita  
Woland Sovereign of the Shadows  
Behemoth and Korovyov with Hella and Azazello  
The Master is the author  
Bulgakov the creator

‘Let me have a look at it.’ Woland stretched out his hand, palm upward.

‘Unfortunately, I can’t do that,’ replied the Master, ‘because I burned it in the stove.’

‘Forgive me, but I don’t believe you,’ said Woland. ‘That cannot be. Manuscripts don’t burn.’ He turned to Behemoth and said, ‘Well now, Behemoth, let’s have the novel.’  
(Bulgakov, 245)

Something that caught my attention when reading *The Master and Margarita* for the first time, is how descriptive the writing was, especially when it came to life in Moscow as well as the effect rejection as a result of censorship had on the Master. I did not fully understand just how real many of the details from the novel were until starting this project and reading through multiple sources talking about the censorship the author Mikhail Bulgakov had to deal with during Stalin's rule. Censorship at this time was a very big thing, and it is something that all writers in the Soviet States had to deal with, and while some did conform to follow them, there are some writers like Bulgakov who in some ways fought back. One of the reasons that this descriptive novel could not have been published while Bulgakov was still alive, is because of how unerringly accurate the depiction of Soviet life in the 1930s, including the censorship of the Master's book on Pontius Pilate.

When we meet the Master, a book he wrote about Pontius Pilate was treated so savagely by the literati of the Soviet establishment that he burned all copies of the manuscript in fear and despair, and now sits in an asylum for the mentally ill broken and forgotten, no longer going by his name. Bulgakov found it nearly impossible to publish almost any of his work during this period, and at one point took the bound draft of his novel, cut the pages diagonally from top to bottom only keeping the spine and remaining parts of the pages to show that the work had once existed then burned the rest. So when taking this into account, it could be argued that the Master is a double of sorts for Bulgakov, or the Master could be a representation of what Bulgakov thought he might have become over time, or if things had gotten worse in some way. In the passage above, Woland asks the Master for the manuscript of his book on Pontius Pilate altering being delighted and amused that someone was writing such a book during that time. In response,

the Master informs Woland that it is not possible for him to offer a copy, since he burned the manuscript sometime before ending up in the mental institution. Since Bulgakov himself cut up and burned the manuscript of a novel he had been writing, having the Master do the same creates an obvious connection between the author and his character.

The passage quoted above contains one of the most well known lines from Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, and it is one that I feel really shows how the character of the Master really can be seen as a representation of Mikhail Bulgakov himself. "Manuscripts don't burn." (Bulgakov, 245) This is a line that has become famous and attached to the novel, and for very good reason given how important the manuscript of the story the Master had been working on before ending up in an insane asylum is. The second chapter of the novel is one of the Jerusalem chapters taken from the Master's novel, and this chapter is the story that Woland tells to the editor Berlioz and the poet Ivan while trying to convince them that God and Jesus, and then also Satan, do exist. The manuscript that the Master burned out of despair before Woland and his retinue even came to Moscow, and in a way it could be said, that it is entirely possible that the Master's idea for his novel and the later burning of that manuscript, are part of what called Woland to Moscow in the first place. No whether or not that is true and what Bulgakov intended, the Master is similar to Bulgakov in many ways that cannot be ignored when compared to the hardships and various events from the author's own life. You always end up leaving a part of yourself in everything you write, and sometimes the characters that you write take on more of you than what had been originally intended. Whatever the case in this work of fiction, there is a truth to it hidden amongst the pages that only those open to it and ready to put in the work to understand will find, and it is more than worth it to do so.

Work Cited:

- Bulgakov, Mikhail. *The Master and Margarita*. Translators Diana Burgin and Katherine Tiernan O'Connor. Ardis Publishers, 1995.

Work Consulted:

- Carroll, Alexandra Nicewick. *Reimagining Woland: The Shadow Archetype and the Paradox of Evil in "The Master and Margarita"*. *The Russian Review*, July 2015
- Curtis, J. A. E.. *A Reader's Companion to Mikhail Bulgakov's "The Master and Margarita"*. Academic Studies Press, 2019.
- Kennedy, Roisin and Coulter, Riann. *Censoring Art: Silencing the Artwork*. I.B. Tauris and Company Limited, 2018.
- Krugovoy, George. *The Gnostic Novel Of Mikhail Bulgakov Sources And Exegesis*. University Press of America, Inc. 1991.
- Milne, Lesley. *Bulgakov: The Novelist-Playwright*. Taylor and Francis Group, 1996.
- Nicholls, Angus. *Goethe's Concept of the Daemonic After the Ancients*. Camden House, 2006.
- Parker, Fred. *The Devil as Muse: Blake, Byron, and the Adversary*. Baylor University Press, 2011.
- Wright, A. C. *Satan in Moscow: An Approach to Bulgakov's "The Master and Margarita"*. *PMLA* Vol. 88, No. 5, October., 1973.