

UNIVERSITATEA „OVIDIUS” DIN CONSTANȚA
ȘCOALA DOCTORALĂ DE ȘTIINȚE UMANISTE
DOMENIUL: FILOLOGIE

TEZĂ DE DOCTORAT
VOCAȚIA METAMORFICULUI ÎN OPERA LUI
MIHAIL BULGAKOV

Coordonator științific

Prof. dr. habil. Marina Cap-Bun

Doctorand

Ganea (Buruiană) Alina Anamaria

Constanța

2025

Summary

Key words: *metamorphosis, fantastic, magic realism, time, space, inner self.*

Mikhail Afanasyevich Bulgakov was the firstborn in the Bulgakov family, where his father was a professor of theology and his mother was an educated woman who dedicated herself to raising the children. He grew up in an environment that emphasized science and culture, within a warm and balanced family setting alongside his siblings. The home atmosphere was enriched by relatives and family friends, all intellectually inclined and artistically gifted, where music, casual conversations, and discussions on philosophical or political topics were common—always in a jovial tone.

As for the external environment, his hometown, Kyiv, was a bohemian city with monarchist political leanings and a vibrant cultural and social life. The main streets buzzed with cafés and a relaxed atmosphere, frequently hosting theatrical and opera performances featuring famous plays and arias that the young Bulgakov watched and listened to with fascination. Raised in such a setting from an early age, he decided to pursue higher education in the field of medicine, a profession he practiced for a while. However, his love for literature prevailed, and he moved to Moscow full of hope, ambition, and an impressive dedication to his craft.

The young writer's expectations begin to fade once he comes face to face with the reality of life in Russia's capital, under the socialist regime promoted and established by Lenin and later continued with greater violence by Stalin. Mikhail Bulgakov struggles to find his place and faces significant material hardships, which eventually also impact his health.

Lenin rose to power in Russia by capitalizing on the existing dissatisfaction among the population, employing a clever strategy in which he positioned himself as a new kind of Messiah, promising a better life based on a false sense of social equity. Gradually, through techniques of mass manipulation, people came to accept the new order with little resistance. Despite the growing violence, the propaganda messages and the spread of Leninist policy across all essential branches of society led to widespread indoctrination. As a result, Stalin's rise—initially seen as a continuation of Lenin's path—was met with virtually no tangible opposition.

Stalin's regime became synonymous with escalating violence against his own citizens, the deterioration of living conditions, the establishment of gulags, the expansion of the secret police and the enforcement of strict censorship in order to maximize population control. The

armed conflicts during the Bolshevik Revolution, which Bulgakov witnessed, and later during World War II, left deep scars on the people, especially in a time when poverty was widespread and there was a vast disparity between the rich and the poor.

The regimes led by the two, especially by Stalin, waged battles on all fronts. Since freedom of expression was not a goal of the state, a special department was created to ensure that artistic works conformed to party standards—anything that didn't was banned. In this way, the professional, material, and personal lives of many artists were deeply affected. The lack of basic necessities, the censorship, the excessive control, and the entire socio-political context left a profound mark on the writer, whose works would bear the imprint of the harsh realities he lived through.

Mikhail Bulgakov's extended family included prominent members who held important positions—doctors, professors, priests, philosophers, and more. From an early age, he was exposed to books, studies, and various documents that contributed to the formation of his artistic style. To this was added the prolific era of the great Russian writers, whose works he devoured as a child. His main literary models were Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Gogol, and Tolstoy—titans of Russian literature—where the first is an undisputed representative of Romanticism, and the others of Realism. Among them, Bulgakov felt a special attraction to Gogol, as evidenced by several characters who bear his physical traits, literary allusions to Gogol's texts, and even an adapted play based on *Dead Souls*.

Realism was one of the most enduring and prolific literary movements, producing some of the most well-known authors and works. Along with the political movements, a paradigm shift occurs and written art tends to change, to evolve towards which favored the birth of a new aesthetic: Decadentism. The latter was not appreciated by the censors, and its followers were regarded as misfits. Nevertheless, they succeeded in creating an aesthetic shock in Russian literature, paving the way for another movement—its opposite—Acmeism, specific to the Russian space, which emphasized objects and their material existence. Each of these aesthetics, to varying degrees, can be found in Bulgakov's writings.

The totalitarian regime could not remain indifferent to the changes in the arts, and in response, a specific movement was created: Socialist Realism, which served political needs. Its language was rigid and formulaic, texts appeared to follow a set recipe, and ideas lacked originality. Unfortunately, many writers adhered to this system, forming a new literary class—the proletarian writers—who monopolized the book market and spread propaganda. During this time, quality literature continued to resist and persist despite the obstacles, giving rise to a new movement: Modernism. Since Modernism opposed Socialist Realism, there were few scholarly

studies on it at the time—these were, of course, banned to prevent people from accessing anything that might develop their critical thinking.

In addition to changes in the literary world, there were also significant transformations in the philosophical-religious sphere and in the sciences, where a notable surge in progress could be observed—an evolution that also influenced the writers' sources of inspiration.

All the changes that occurred over nearly half a century in Russia left many people disoriented, causing them to lose their faith, their values, and to feel lost in their search for balance or for something greater in which to believe and place their hopes. In those times, the Church and everything it represented was stripped of its meaning and devalued in principle, since there could not be two authoritative figures preaching at the same time. Thus, religiosity was removed to make room for the image of a new "Savior." Once this figure revealed his petty intentions and people had lost their connection with the divine, a reorientation began—toward myths, folklore, and pagan beliefs—which can also be felt in literature, including in the works of Mikhail Bulgakov. In this context, several definitions of myth were explored to understand how both the citizens of Moscow and writers related to them when choosing such an approach. I drew upon theories and ideas from researchers such as A. van Gennep, B. Malinowski, E. Durkheim, L. Lévy-Bruhl, E. Cassirer, C. G. Jung, M. Eliade, Georges Dumézil, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Luc Benoist, S. A. Tokarev, M. A. Lifshitz, and Leszek Kołakowski.

Mikhail Bulgakov did not remain faithful to a single aesthetic orientation, but instead shifted between them depending on the text, the theme, and the intended effect. If we compare the author's first novel, *The White Guard*, to his last, *The Master and Margarita*, we can observe a considerable difference in style—a maturing of his writing, a broader range of inspiration, and stylistic evolution. At the same time, he remained loyal to certain stylistic devices when dealing with meteorological phenomena, spatial representations, character construction, and biographical or political elements. From a form of realism sprinkled with symbolist motifs and descriptions in his early work, he gradually transitioned toward supernatural, grotesque elements belonging to the realm of the fantastic and magical realism.

The fantastic became a subject of critical attention, such as: Louis Vax in *L'art et la littérature fantastique*, Roger Caillois in *Au cœur du fantastique*, Colin Manlove in *The Fantasy Literature of England*, Jacques Finné in *La littérature fantastique* and Tzvetan Todorov devoting an extensive study to the phenomenon in an attempt to determine whether it could be classified as a literary genre. In addition to seeking a solid definition, he aimed to identify recurring elements of the fantastic within literary works, and his study remained comprehensive for a time. He emphasized that a text can be classified as fantastic if it meets a set of conditions:

the reader's hesitation when faced with the supernatural and their attempt to find a logical explanation, along with the reader's identification with the character. Todorov also proposed a series of themes and motifs specific to the fantastic, which later scholars expanded upon through their analysis of more literary works. This genre includes figures such as the devil, vampires, ghosts, witches, and other grotesque aspects. It also encompasses psychological disorders or madness, which can result in physical or spiritual deformities and fall under the domain of metamorphosis. Spatial elements—such as the apartment, staircase, street, house—and temporal elements—like the halting or repetition of time—also play a key role. In the fantastic, the distortion of space and time becomes a defining feature.

As time went on, a new phenomenon appeared on the literary scene: magical realism, which for a long time was confused with the fantastic. It's true that the two share similarities, but it is important to distinguish them correctly. The term was coined by art critic Franz Roh, though its most fertile ground for expression seems to be in Latin America, where most of the studies on the topic were also written. At first, there was confusion between the terms "marvelous realism" and "magical realism," and they were often used interchangeably. The first theorist to focus seriously on magical realism was Alejo Carpentier, who often substituted the word "magical" with "marvelous" and vice versa. Over time, as he encountered literary texts from beyond Latin America, he revised his definitions multiple times. Since Carpentier's ideas were sometimes vague or had theoretical gaps, later theorists sought to expand, clarify, or refine the concept. Among them were Angel Flores (*Magic Realism in Spanish American*) and Luis Leal (*Magic Realism in Spanish American Literature*).

With Irleamar Chiampi and Amaryll Chanady, magical realism became a fully recognized literary phenomenon with its own defining traits. Continuing in Todorov's analytical tradition, Chanady clarified the difference between the fantastic and magical realism by outlining specific criteria. Later, Charles W. Scheel distinguished between the terms "magical" and "marvelous" to avoid further confusion, emphasizing the role of the author's style—whether or not it leaned toward poetic expression. To reduce ambiguity between the fantastic and magical realism, Wendy B. Faris built upon the three conditions proposed by Chanady and added two more of her own. Subsequently, Anne Hegerfeldt and Camila Villate extended Chanady's framework with new premises: Hegerfeldt focused on the concept of hesitation, while Villate emphasized the "magic" itself—suggesting that, unlike in the fantastic, reality in magical realism is inherently magical. Even though magical realism was more commonly explored by Latin American writers, that doesn't mean it's absent from European literature. A key observation is that in totalitarian or authoritarian regimes, there is a notable

tendency to employ this literary mode. Russia fits this profile well, making it highly relevant to argue that Mikhail Bulgakov employed the same mechanisms as his Latin American counterparts.

In *The Master and Margarita*, from the very first pages, the reader is introduced to a fantastic world through nature itself, which foreshadows upcoming events and the appearance of strange characters. This is where the concept of hesitation becomes important, as the characters attempt to rationalize the bizarre events unfolding around them. The clearest example of this is the first chapter, where the calm of two proletarians, Ivan and Berlioz, is disrupted by sudden weather changes that announce the arrival of a mysterious man with a bizarre appearance and ominous objects or signs. The strange occurrences are attributed to fatigue, dizziness, or unease—since, when confronted with the fantastic, people instinctively try to find logical explanations in order to preserve their sense of balance.

The eruption of the fantastic is also present in other chapters, such as the one in which Ivan, the self-declared atheist poet, embarks on a frenzied chase after Woland and his entourage. He eventually ends up at Massolit, the writers' gathering, where—from his appearance, clothing, and speech—it becomes clear that Ivan is on the verge of collapse. He is ultimately committed to a sanatorium, where he repeatedly tries to reconstruct the logical sequence of events, but to no avail. Another character who encounters the fantastic is Nikanor Ivanovich, the building administrator on Sadovaya Street, who—like Ivan—is also institutionalized, unable to explain the presence of foreign currency in his home and attributing it instead to some sort of diabolical intervention. Another example appears during the black magic show, where the bizarre happenings and their consequences the following day are dismissed as the result of mass hypnosis. Many such examples can be found throughout the novel.

The novella *The Fatal Eggs* is a clear example of a text where the fantastic makes its presence felt—this time through grotesque elements and a terrifying surprise. From the hatched eggs emerge monstrous creatures—giant snakes that destroy and kill everything in their path. In that moment, the human characters are left stunned, petrified, unsure of how to react to such an event. Just as in the novel, nature becomes the writer's accomplice, signaling to the reader that something terrible is about to happen. The ending of the novella, like its entire narrative, is worthy of a horror film, as the crowd bursts into an uncontrollable wave of violence—as if all were suffering from a collective psychosis, a hallmark of the fantastic.

Todorov and other theorists emphasize the devil as a literary motif of the fantastic, and in *The Master and Margarita*, he is a central figure—the trigger for the entire plot. The demonic entourage led by Woland, the Prince of Darkness, includes Behemoth, Koroviev, Azazello, and

Hella. They appear in Stalinist Moscow and orchestrate a series of events that shake the established order to its core. Alongside their typical devilish activities—temptation and punishment—a pact with the devil occurs, in a unique manner, entered into by Margarita for reasons of love. The demons' presence does not carry an entirely negative or punitive charge. Rather, they serve as corrective agents for citizens who have fallen into moral ruin due to ideological indoctrination. In Bulgakov's novel, the devils function more as anti-heroes whose actions have a didactic purpose, not one of gratuitous evil.

In Bulgakov's other writings, the devil does not appear literally, but through literary references to the German poem *Faust*. In *Black Snow: A Theatrical Novel*, there is an episode in which the aria from *Faust* is sung by a neighbor of the protagonist — the one featuring Mephistopheles. In *Heart of a Dog*, the scientist aims to carry out a Faustian experiment. In *The Diaboliad*, although the title suggests the expectation of demonic involvement, the events only *seem* influenced by evil forces, as the saying goes, “the devil's hand is in it,” yet no active demonic presence is confirmed. What is certain is that in all these texts, Mikhail Bulgakov aspired to stage an infernal visitation, just like Faust—but only in his final novel did he fully unleash those extraordinary powers.

Another key motif of the fantastic is the motif of the dwelling, which, for Bulgakov, becomes a recurring element—almost an obsession—throughout his works. The issue of housing generates frustration due to the harsh and absurd rules of the Soviet regime, which mandated that multi-room apartments be shared with others. The higher one's rank or the more politically useful their profession, the more privileged their housing situation. As a writer who refused to conform to state doctrine, Bulgakov experienced firsthand the misfortunes of such housing policies. The infamous Apartment No. 50 in the building at 302-bis Sadovaya Street in *The Master and Margarita* is directly inspired by his personal experiences.

This apartment attracts Woland's attention and becomes the demons' operational headquarters. The apartment already had a bad reputation, as all its former residents met tragic fates—such as the sudden and violent death of Berlioz. The apartment meets an equally dramatic end: consumed by flames during a demonic intervention by Behemoth and Koroviev. Its fate is sealed, reflecting the misery the author himself endured in the very rooms that inspired it. Fictionally, he takes his revenge. Bulgakov's inability to adapt to Moscow's housing regulations has roots in his childhood in Kyiv, where home meant family, happiness, and comfort. For him, a home symbolized well-being, respect, and validation from the authorities. Being forced to live in nearly uninhabitable spaces filled with shortages drove him to depict, in his novel, a cursed apartment with infernal tenants—mirroring his real-life hardships.

In his other works: in *The Fatal Eggs*, the protagonist gradually has his apartment stripped from him, sparking anger and frustration. In *Heart of a Dog*, the doctor enjoys a privileged situation thanks to his profession, skill, and elite clientele—mostly political figures—allowing him ample living space, which also serves as his workplace. In *Theatrical Novel*, the protagonist, a debut writer clearly reminiscent of a young Bulgakov arriving in Moscow, lives in a poor, barely heated room that drives him to the brink of suicide—only to be saved at the last moment, in near-supernatural fashion, by an aria from *Faust* and the sudden arrival of a friend. In all these homes, strange, often supernatural events or major experiments take place, most ending in distress or even death for those involved.

The mirror is another motif that scholars consider specific to the fantastic, and Bulgakov makes ample use of it—either in its literal form or transformed into other objects. In *The Master and Margarita*, the mirror holds numerous meanings and appears in many scenes—most of them involving Woland's entourage or moments of character metamorphosis. A notable number of mirror appearances occur in the apartment of Stepan Likhodeev (Steopa) and Berlioz, particularly during the arrival of all the demons in the novel, who enter *through* the mirror. After this, they become the apartment's new tenants. Another significant moment is when Margarita applies Azazello's cream, a ritual that finalizes her pact and begins her transformation into a witch.

In *Theatrical Novel* and *Heart of a Dog*, the mirror serves to reflect an alternate version of the character. In the former, Maxudov sees an aged face marked by deceit and, in disgust, breaks the mirror—symbolizing his refusal to accept that side of himself. In the latter, Sharik looks at himself in the mirror twice as an animal and twice as a human or humanoid—a grotesque imitation of a real human being. The mirror forces the character to confront the depths of their soul, to see their flaws and shortcomings. It is a moment of self-confrontation—and in all cases, this reflection is rejected. In *The Fatal Eggs*, the mirror is part of a microscope—Bulgakov's original way of introducing it into the story. Through it, the red ray is discovered, which ultimately leads to the creation of monstrous creatures. This imaginative use of the mirror gives it new, layered meanings within the narrative.

Magical realism is another literary phenomenon that finds fertile ground in Mikhail Bulgakov's prose, especially in his novel *The Master and Margarita*. It is evident from the very first pages, when the natural and supernatural intertwine and are treated as perfectly normal. While others are unbothered by Berlioz's death or by the appearance of three strange demons—especially a cat that walks upright and speaks—Ivan is outraged and appears to be the only one reacting rationally. This is where the fantastic and magical realism overlap and coexist without

hesitation, with the two opposing codes being simultaneously accepted. Another example occurs during the black magic show: the presenter's head is torn from his shoulders, and the audience believes it's all part of the act. Despite the cruelty and grotesqueness of the scene, the spectators react sluggishly. Indoctrination has made them no longer able to distinguish the code of reality and normalizes the absurd.

As its name suggests, magical realism starts from classical realism—which Bulgakov also uses—and incorporates techniques such as attention to detail. This allows the extraordinary to be seamlessly integrated into reality. From the attire of the demonic entourage to the décor of the ominous apartment, Bulgakov offers meticulous descriptions, leading the reader to accept the presence of bizarre objects and appearances as ordinary. For instance, Koroviev's extravagant wardrobe sets him apart in any crowd, and when he is accompanied by Behemoth, things appear even stranger—yet the characters in the novel show no exaggerated reactions, which in turn encourages the reader to relax and accept the surreal.

Magical realism, like the fantastic, also alters space and time. However, the difference lies in the reaction: magical realism does not provoke surprise or demand logical explanations—everything is simply accepted as is. Such examples can be found in *The Diaboliad*, where the CENTRAPROV building, a symbol of Soviet bureaucracy, transforms before the eyes of the frustrated protagonist. He doesn't marvel at the surreal phenomena but instead presses on, determined to reclaim his identity. He moves through rooms that shift in size, walls that turn into dancers, and desks with drawers that reveal the heads of secretaries. Yet Korotkov doesn't question any of it; his only concern is the bureaucratic hassle of retrieving his papers. Eventually, all of this overwhelms his limited mind, pushing him into a frenzied state that ends in suicide. The story's aim is to critique the Soviet bureaucratic system—and magical realism is the perfect tool to do so.

A defining feature of magical realism is its political dimension, which is present throughout Bulgakov's texts. In *Heart of a Dog*, through the character Sharikov, he critiques the labor market and the ease with which one could forge a new identity. In *The Fatal Eggs*, he addresses education and the press, highlighting how poorly trained or entirely unqualified people were given key positions—reflected in the appearance of giant snakes. The press is also shown to serve political interests rather than truth, objectivity, or accuracy. Misreporting leads to the public storming Professor Persikov's lab and killing him. The press, tasked with delivering a scapegoat, does so willingly—demonstrating its complicity in a tragic manipulation.

In *Theatrical Novel*, another crucial aspect of the socialist program is addressed: censorship. The protagonist faces a life-or-death struggle as censorship and underpayment plunge him into an emotional and psychological collapse, nearly leading to his death. In *The Master and Margarita*, thanks to its broader scope, Bulgakov explores multiple sensitive topics: censorship, the proletariat, atheism, the secret police, housing issues, poverty, the insufficient pay for artists, the ban on publishing abroad, and mass indoctrination. He carefully highlights the many areas into which Soviet communism extended its tentacles, making it clear that freedom of expression had become a luxury most people could no longer afford.

Metamorphosis is a literary motif associated with both the fantastic and magical realism. It involves a series of physical and psychological transformations, which is why the psychoanalytic method is often applied—drawing on the theories of Freud, Jung, and Neumann. Within this framework, concepts such as the old ethic, repression, ego, self, consciousness, the voice, the shadow, the persona, and metamorphosis are defined and explored. The analysis initially focuses on three protagonists from Bulgakov's works—Professor Persikov from *The Fatal Eggs*, Professor Filippovich from *Heart of a Dog*, and the Master from *The Master and Margarita*—and is later expanded to two other novels: *The Life of Monsieur de Molière* and *Black Snow: A Theatrical Novel*.

The image of the scientist is examined in the first two novellas, where a Faustian inspiration can clearly be identified. The Master, too, follows a similar path, though his case is discussed separately due to its complexity. Professor Persikov, according to researcher Marietta Chudakova, was modeled after an acquaintance of Bulgakov. He discovers a red light ray that accelerates organism development, as seen in the giant snakes that emerge from eggs exposed to this ray. Although his discovery is groundbreaking and he earns the title of “scientist,” his work is not appreciated in the political context of the time and is ultimately forgotten.

In *Heart of a Dog*, the role of the scientist is taken up by Doctor Filipp Filippovich, who conducts an experiment that defies natural laws: by transplanting a human pituitary gland into a dog, he initiates a transformation from animal to human. This experiment soon brings the doctor nothing but trouble. He evolves from a cheerful man into a brooding figure plagued by moral conflict, and ultimately decides to reverse the process—even if it means sacrificing Sharik's life. This is a literal metamorphosis, as the dog becomes the human Sharikov, who successfully enters the workforce like any other citizen with proper papers. However, his intellectual development is crude, and he becomes a failed experiment. Both Persikov and Filippovich undergo profound inner transformations following their scientific pursuits—changes that leave visible marks on their physical appearance.

The Master's trajectory follows a similar pattern up to a point, then diverges. Bulgakov assigns him a different, though still intellectual, profession—that of a writer. The Master brings his creation to life through words and paper, only to have it rejected by the censorship office. This rejection leads to a deep depression, and he commits himself to a psychiatric clinic. Eventually, thanks to Margarita, he is brought back, and Woland facilitates a meeting with his own fictional character, whom he sets free through an act of forgiveness—symbolizing the Master's own self-forgiveness and a rediscovery of his identity. This marks a spiritual metamorphosis and inner reunification.

Metamorphosis becomes a deeply personal and intimate process for Bulgakov, who channels parts of his own self into his protagonists—an approach closely linked to the type of narrator he chooses. In novels featuring literary characters, Bulgakov favors a subjective or “falsely objective” perspective, with frequent intrusions, opinions, and personal reflections—clear signs of his emotional involvement. Writing was much more than a craft for Bulgakov; it was a liberating and purifying process, a way to cope with the artistic restrictions imposed under Stalin's regime. This explains why many of his characters strongly resemble real people, why so many are writers, or why multiple characters may embody facets of Bulgakov's own personality. For him, writing was psychological catharsis, an act where all mechanisms of the mind came into play.

The Life of Monsieur de Molière is intended as a biographical novel dedicated to the French playwright. However, Bulgakov doesn't maintain narrative distance. He speaks as a witness, inserting personal commentary whenever he sees fit. The choice to focus on Molière is not random—it has political implications. Molière enjoyed the protection of the Sun King, who appreciated and supported his work—just as Bulgakov hoped for support from Stalin. The book is not just a biography: through his commentary and storytelling, Bulgakov tackles two major themes—the image of power and immortality through art. The novel about the French playwright can be read as a direct manifesto addressed to the Soviet leader.

In *Black Snow: A Theatrical Novel*, the narrator speaks in the first person—a magazine editor who transitions into a writer, mirroring Bulgakov's own journey. The novel is considered a continuation of the novella *Notes on the Cuff*, and scholar Ellendea Proffer sees Maxudov as a younger version of Bulgakov. This intertwining of fiction and biography supports the idea that characters inherit traits from their creator. Bulgakov may also have inserted himself into the novel through another character—Miša Panin. The name "Miša" was his personal nickname, and the character's job (head of a literary magazine section) mirrors a position Bulgakov briefly held in real life.

The central theme, again, is the writer's condition under socialism. Both *The Life of Monsieur de Molière* and *Black Snow* emphasize how political forces shaped, limited, and often broke the creative spirit—while at the same time, offering writing as the only path to resistance, survival, and personal reconciliation.

In *The Master and Margarita*, the Master does not appear as a character in the first version of the novel; in fact, he only gains a voice in Chapter XIII. As a narrative choice, this mirrors Bulgakov's other works—occasional lines betray the author's own involvement. The Master is a complex character, with allusions in his portrait to other writers, such as Gogol, but he also carries traits borrowed from Bulgakov himself. Moreover, Bulgakov infuses multiple characters—Pilate, Ivan, Koroviev—with aspects of his own psychological and emotional makeup and frequently references the protagonist of Goethe's *Faust*.

The Master and Margarita is a novel within a novel: alongside the story of the demons and the love between the Master and Margarita, we find another narrative—the Master's manuscript about Yeshua, a reinterpretation of the crucifixion of Jesus. This structure creates multiple parallels between the Moscow narrative and the Jerusalem narrative. The first clear correspondence is between the Master and Yeshua. Both are portrayed in human terms, with weaknesses and flaws. Yeshua is depicted not as the biblical, divine Jesus, but as a human being with a fragile side—designed to resonate with Muscovites who had lost their religious bearings. To reach them, Bulgakov needed a Jesus figure who felt familiar—someone like them, not an untouchable model of perfection.

There are many parallels between the Master and Yeshua: both have mysterious pasts, appear suddenly, and trigger pivotal events. They share a disheveled physical appearance and signs of emotional exhaustion. Both are judged by society and accept their fates—Yeshua is crucified without protest, and the Master retreats voluntarily into a psychiatric clinic. They both carry a personal flaw: cowardice. Yeshua asks Levi Matvei to burn the scrolls containing his teachings, and the Master burns his manuscript. Ultimately, they are both linked through the concept of forgiveness: Yeshua, in his divine nature, grants peace to the Master, and the Master, in turn, forgives Pilate, who is finally allowed to rest and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

A consistent analogy has been made between Bulgakov's novel and Goethe's *Faust*, with their protagonists often compared. They are similar in intellect, both capable of creating works that scandalize public opinion, and both enter into pacts or relationships with the devil. However, the resemblance ends where *courage* begins. Faust is obsessed with knowledge, willing to sacrifice anything in his quest for absolute understanding, and seeks recognition from posterity. By contrast, the Master collapses after facing initial criticism and retreats from public

life. Their approaches are fundamentally different: Faust aspires to godlike omniscience and fame, while the Master accepts his mortal nature and desires anonymity.

Another important relationship is between the Master and Ivan, the young poet and protégé of Berlioz. Ivan is a novice poet, shaped by the socialist regime's indoctrination. Since he is still in the early stages of development, he is not yet completely consumed by the system—which is why he is the only one who reacts logically to Woland's accurate prophecy about Berlioz's death. He then begins his mad chase after the professor of black magic, plunging into the Moskva River—a moment rich in symbolic meaning. After surfacing, he changes into modest clothes and carries symbolic items: a candle, a small icon, and a box of matches. He hears an orchestra playing a love song for Tatiana—a name that is not coincidental, as Tatiana was the name of Bulgakov's first wife. Scholars believe Ivan is a young version of Bulgakov, reinforcing the theory that the author embedded parts of himself into his characters.

When Ivan later arrives at the Griboedov House like a prophet of old, the other writers commit him to Dr. Stravinsky's psychiatric clinic, where he meets the Master. Their meeting is essential for both: the Master is finally able to fulfill the destiny implied by his name, and Ivan is the one deemed worthy of salvation—the one who will pass on the teachings once the Master is gone. Ivan is permanently marked by the encounter and reassesses his life. He will eventually take on a respectable profession, but every full moon he will recall Margarita's arrival and the entire demonic experience. Chapter XIII offers deep insight into the Master's inner and intellectual construction, as well as the importance of his meeting with Ivan. The Master explains his moments of weakness and regrets abandoning the woman he loves. However, fear of political repression paralyzes him, and he decides not to endanger Margarita's life—unlike Faust, who risks everything.

Another parallel that can be considered is the one between the Master and Pilate. The former assumes the role of a new evangelist and, as a "voice"—a psychological concept explained by Neumann—or by divine gift, writes a new version of the conversation between Yeshua and Pilate. If Bulgakov's novel does not produce the desired effect in reality, the Master's novel within the novel may achieve that effect fictionally: a re-sacralization and awakening of the Muscovites' conscience. In this sense, the dialogue between the procurator and Yeshua plays a key role.

While some critics interpret Pilate as a Stalinist figure due to the power he holds and the decisions he makes, the similarity ends where Pilate begins to experience guilt and intense remorse for Yeshua's crucifixion. During his meeting with Caiaphas, he lacks the courage to defend his views on the mysterious figure and yields to the same appearances and bureaucratic

facades that had sustained his rule. His growing sense of guilt deteriorates his mental and physical health—a fact that Yeshua notices instantly—and he remains unrestful in the afterlife, condemned for millennia to relive his guilt in an endless loop. It is this psychological burden of regret that unites Pilate and the Master: both men succumb to cowardice, and both suffer deeply for the decisions they made under pressure.

Because their connection is primarily psychological, both characters are also sensitive to external forces, such as weather and celestial elements like the moon. Moonlight agitates them, revealing their inner demons and worsening their mental state. It is under the moon's influence, during a nocturnal scene, that the Master finally meets his own fictional character. From a distance, he observes his creation with detachment, a sign of emotional growth, and grants Pilate forgiveness—allowing him to finally escape the temporal and spatial loop he was trapped in as punishment for his inaction. Through Pilate's forgiveness, the Master also forgives himself, beginning a path of inner healing in the space provided by Yeshua and Woland, together with Margarita.

The Master and his Margarita are not admitted into Paradise for several reasons: possibly because Yeshua, in the Master's version, has too fragile and human a portrayal; or because of their alliance with the demons. Margarita's sacrifice—her pact with the devil and her acceptance of a lower spiritual form as a witch, a being of the shadows—may also be a contributing factor. Instead, they are granted a space at the threshold between Heaven and Hell, where they can spend eternity in peaceful seclusion. While they do not reach Heaven, they are rewarded with a quiet little house where no one will disturb them, where they will live without fear, free to reflect, to express themselves, and to create as they wish.

In Bulgakov's work, many characters—both primary and secondary—undergo physical and psychological transformations under the influence of external forces, negative sacrality, or absurd humor. In *The Diaboliad*, Bulgakov uses laughter as a weapon to devalue the state institutions, and the protagonist suffers as a result. Korotkov, a man of mediocre training and emotional limitation, is no match for the bureaucratic whirlwind in which Bulgakov throws him—full of endless, illogical departments packed with officials. His only goal is to retrieve his documents and face the person who fired him. But the transformation of space and characters completely disorients him, provoking reader laughter in the style of a parody. Since the entire novella falls under the sign of the comic, even the protagonist's death is not treated tragically—it becomes banal. With dark, sometimes grotesque humor, Bulgakov activates elements of the fantastic and magical realism, where the ill-prepared protagonist is swallowed by the storm of events.

In *The Master and Margarita*, the demonic characters provoke laughter through absurd or extreme situations and are the most prolific in terms of metamorphosis. First is Woland, whose name, of German origin, means "devil." He appears in different forms and attire throughout the novel. His first appearance—in the park meeting with the two literati—is marked by striking clothes, accessories, and physical presence. His second appearance is in Stepan's apartment, where he sets up his base of operations for his stay in Moscow, again dressed with symbolic accessories. The third key moment is during the black magic show, where he wears a black tailcoat and displays his powers—especially the ability to metamorphose—and shows a degree of leniency toward the crude, easily impressed spectators, who delight in the materialistic, violent spectacle. In Margarita's presence, Woland appears in his most vulnerable form: disheveled, visibly ill. With her, he no longer wears a mask. Bulgakov crafts him, like Yeshua, as a divine figure with weaknesses, distancing him from Goethe's Mephistopheles, who is more cold and calculating.

During the Walpurgis Night Ball, Satan appears in his usual disheveled attire, only to later display his powers before the guests by transforming into a figure worthy of being the ruler of Hell. At the end of the novel, when all the masks fall away, Woland reveals his true form—but Bulgakov leaves this appearance shrouded in mystery. Only his horse, seemingly made of cosmic elements—moon and stars—is described. Woland is prolific in terms of metamorphosis, but he is also endowed with other abilities: he is a polyglot, knowledgeable in Kantian philosophy, and a dual-natured being. His actions are not entirely evil; as we've seen in the cases of Margarita and the Master, he acts in their interest. The events in Moscow serve a higher purpose—to redirect its citizens back onto a righteous path. Woland is not like Mephistopheles, who seeks only to provoke suffering. Rather, he serves as a corrective force, using his own particular methods.

Behemoth is a high-ranking demon, associated with the biblical hippopotamus and with great influence in Hell. In the novel, he most often appears as a cat, though he behaves like a human—walking upright, dressing like a gentleman. He plays the role of the jester, acting with the aim of provoking laughter, sometimes going to extremes with a devilish delight. At the end of the novel, his true form is revealed: a thin, serious-looking demon who was once a page. His actions in Moscow, especially when paired with Koroviev, have a significant impact. He is responsible for the fire in the infamous apartment and for the theatrical performance in front of the authorities—fitting for his notorious reputation.

Koroviev-Fagot is more complex. His demonic origin remains a mystery, and many scholars have tried to decode it. Ion Vartic devoted a study to this demon, proposing that his

name may derive from “Caro,” an infernal messenger of doom. Vartic notes his checkered attire, reminiscent of Caro, and suggests that Koroviev may be Bulgakov’s double—a theatrical, whimsical, music-loving figure on one hand, and a brooding, melancholic one on the other. When the masks fall, Koroviev becomes a silent, dark demon—just as Bulgakov himself oscillated between elation and deep depression. Through psychoanalytic theory, we understand that Bulgakov projected aspects of his own psyche into his characters, which is why some of them remain enigmatic and difficult to define. Throughout the novel, Koroviev is constantly present in scenes that bring misfortune to Muscovites. He delights in provoking chaos, finding joy in seeing people exposed in their ugliest physical or spiritual states. He reflects the theatrical temperament of his creator, easily slipping into any role—but he shines most in over-the-top performances. In Margarita’s presence, however, he is composed and respectful, explaining what she must do and guiding her without malice. Koroviev is a vivid, colorful character who embodies Bulgakov’s humor and complexity, bringing sharp wit and surreal comedy to the novel.

Azazello is a fearsome, high-ranking demon mentioned in religious texts as violent and merciless. Unlike the others, he lacks a friendly or pleasant appearance. He is grotesque and frightening, bearing physical traits that signal his dangerous nature. He is one of Woland’s closest aides and is tasked with critical responsibilities—like sealing the pact with Margarita and overseeing the death of the lovers. During the ball, like the other demons, he undergoes a transformation and dons ceremonial attire. In the final scenes, his importance is affirmed when he appears in his original form: wearing shining armor with dark, piercing eyes.

There is little known about Hella. Her name is thought to be borrowed from Norse mythology. In the demon hierarchy, she holds a lower rank. She mostly serves Woland as a maid, but when dealing with humans, she can be cruel and merciless. Initially, she appears as a breathtakingly beautiful woman, but when she unleashes her powers, her true form is revealed—a corpse-like figure with signs of decay, enough to terrify even the strongest-hearted. Her actions lack humor or compassion. She is a mix of vampire and witch, with a personality to match.

Margarita occupies a unique role in the novel. There are moments when she leads the action, but in the Master’s presence, she tends to fade into the background. This contrast is deliberate and stems from the novel’s duality structure: light vs. darkness, good vs. evil, man vs. woman. According to psychological studies, the female psyche is more inclined toward mythical thinking, and through Margarita, many symbols and ancient myths are revived and re-

experienced. She is modeled after Bulgakov's third wife, as well as a woman whom he met by chance on the street—just as the Master meets Margarita in the novel.

Margarita may represent the anima for the Master, while he represents the wise old man archetype. Because the feminine principle merges the human and animal sides, as noted by V. Solovyov and C. G. Jung, she is predisposed to instinctual intelligence, emotional depth, and spiritual openness. She accepts the supernatural easily and embodies the archetypes of femininity. Margarita's mission is to revive long-forgotten myths and live through them. She is essential to the Master's fate: she rescues him from the asylum, restores his manuscript, and ensures a peaceful eternal life for him. Thanks to her sacrifice, devotion, perseverance, and love, the Master is saved. This is why some critics liken her to Levi Matvei, the disciple of Yeshua.

Margarita's journey must be analyzed as an evolutionary process. When she meets the Master, she is married to an important man and enjoys financial stability, but she is not happy. She surrenders to her love for the Master and suffers deeply when she can no longer find him. However, she has an archetypal dream that places her in the role of a 20th-century Isis, recreating the memory of her beloved through photographs and personal objects. Later, she can be compared to Psyche or Beatrice due to her capacity for self-sacrifice after making the pact with Azazello. Once she applies the demon's cream, Margarita temporarily abandons her human form to become a witch—one of the oldest archetypal feminine images, according to Carl Jung. The cream transforms her not only behaviorally but also physically: her features are intensified, and her gaze becomes sharper. She travels by moonlight, which does not trouble her but instead becomes a facilitator for her new identity.

It can be said that Margarita undergoes an initiatory process to fully become the witch destined to accompany Woland at the Walpurgis Night Ball. As part of this initiation, she experiences flight, symbolizing freedom and release—a horizontal ritual flight. She gains the power of invisibility, and her personality begins to change. Traits associated with witches start to surface: she becomes energetic, impulsive, impatient, furious. Her initiation is not yet complete—she must submerge herself in black water, symbolizing renewal, baptism into a new state, and spiritual transformation. Water, immersion, and baptism all carry powerful symbolic meaning. Upon emerging, she is welcomed and greeted under her new identity. One final step remains: the journey to Satan's Ball, where Koroviev informs her that she is a distant relative of Queen Margot of France—a detail that explains why she was chosen, as noble blood was required to accompany Satan. Koroviev explains her role, after which she meets Woland and the ball begins, where she performs her duties with grace. A particularly notable moment during

the ball is the arrival of Frieda, a woman condemned to remain in Hell for eternity. Margarita feels pity for her—proving that her witch form has not erased her human compassion. Woland refers to her as *maia donna*, evoking another archetypal image: the *mater dolorosa*, the grieving mother.

Because of all her sacrifices, Woland returns the Master to her. The two retreat to a basement cottage, and through Azazello's intervention, they enter a new phase of existence. Once again, Margarita must assume a new identity, this time for love of the Master. Together, they are withdrawn from worldly existence and granted eternity in peace. Margarita is polymorphic in the truest sense—her changes are psychological, emotional, and physical. These transfigurations require immense strength and courage, and Bulgakov makes her into a true heroine.

There is also a generous number of secondary and episodic characters in the novel who undergo metamorphosis to varying degrees, especially after contact with negative sacrality. Each receives a fate based on their servility to the system or to themselves. These characters often represent those Bulgakov clashed with in real life. For instance, Steopa Likhodeev, the director of the Variety Theater and Berlioz's apartment-mate, looks into a mirror and sees a deformed, exhausted man—a result of overindulgence and a life of excess. The demons' prank on him is meant to trigger a behavioral metamorphosis, a symbolic act of correction.

Nikanor Ivanovich is the building manager on Sadovaya Street—a domain that caused Bulgakov some of his greatest frustrations, being marked by corruption. Naturally, the character must pay, and he does—by being accused of bribery, specifically of accepting foreign currency. He is tempted by Koroviev, and when the police come to arrest him, witnesses note that his appearance has completely changed—he no longer looks like the man they once knew. He is committed to Dr. Stravinsky's clinic, and after a strange dream involving a theater and various demonic characters, he becomes neurotic, distancing himself from society and avoiding easy gains for the rest of his life.

Ivan Savelievich (Vareukha) is the Variety Theater's administrator—a man of dubious character. He becomes a target for the demonic duo, Koroviev and Behemoth, who bring him to Hella. The mere proximity to her makes him sense that great misfortunes are ahead. When she kisses him, Vareukha undergoes a complete transformation, becoming a grotesque creature like her. His human traits vanish, and he begins to act in accordance with his new status: that of a vampire. This is a lowly condition, as vampires are infernal beings who must feed on the life essence of others in order to survive. Vareukha becomes a persecutor of the

living, even of those he once held dear. In the final pages, his fate is revealed: he regains his identity.

Georges Bengalsky is the emcee during the black magic show. He is brutally punished by the demons—his head is ripped off during the act. Remarkably, he remains lucid and aware throughout the ordeal. He is punished for his tendency to distort or embellish the truth, and although his transformation is short-lived, it leaves deep psychological scars. Bengalsky ultimately leaves the theater world behind and retreats into a mundane existence. Alongside Varenuhka, he experiences one of the novel's most horrifying metamorphoses—which, if not softened by Bulgakov's signature humor, would be truly grotesque.

Grigory Danilovich Rimsky, the financial director of the Variety Theater, covets Stepa's position so intensely that he even wishes him harm—imagining himself in Berlioz's place. Such thoughts and emotions do not escape the attention of the devils. His punishment is tailored to his soul: first, Varenuhka, now a vampire, visits him, striking terror into his heart. Then, for an even greater effect, Hella appears in her transformed, hideous form, signaling the imminent danger of death. The terror they instill in Rimsky is so intense that it causes an instant physical transformation—his hair turns white immediately. Later, when he is seen again, he appears as an old man with white hair, meek and humbled—a far cry from the man he used to be.

Natasha is Margarita's loyal maid, who follows her mistress even in metamorphosis—she applies Azazello's cream and becomes a witch. She is the only character whose transformation is permanent, yet by her own choice. She remains with the demonic troupe in her new identity as a witch. Then there's Nikolai Ivanovich, who witnesses Natasha's transformation and has the cream applied to him, becoming a pig. This shows how transformations can break the laws of nature and cause a human to turn into an animal. At the man's insistence, Woland restores him to his human form, and he returns to his daily life—a decision he later regrets, wishing he had remained an animal, but in Natasha's company.

Birds also feature among the metamorphoses, joining the demonic troupe—such as the owl and sparrows, both carrying symbolic meanings. The owl is Woland's companion and, for one character, its flight nearby is a harbinger of death. The sparrow appears in several scenes; in one, it transforms into a human-like creature but still retains avian features. Bulgakov shows deep knowledge of folklore and symbolism, using ancient beliefs and legends to fuel the atmosphere of superstition—as seen with the doctor Kuzmin episode.

Naturally, the crow is not absent—more precisely, the raven—who drives the car taking Margarita to the ball. The bird can be seen as playing the role of Charon, while the car is symbolically assimilated to the ferry, and the payment is the pact with the devil. The vehicle

crosses the Moscow River, which may be a modern parallel to the River Styx, with the destination being a cemetery—symbolizing the world of the dead. Margarita must take a journey into the underworld to retrieve her beloved, just as many literary heroes must enter hell to gain knowledge or reclaim a loved one. Bulgakov cleverly modernizes this mythic journey. Another bird mentioned is the hen, which appears alongside Azazello. All of these birds form a group of psychopomps—creatures that guide souls into the afterlife. They act as messengers or intermediaries between worlds.

To maintain symbolic balance, a bird of light also appears—during the conversation between Yeshua and Pilate, Yeshua is accompanied by a swallow. As a symbol, the swallow carries positive meaning—its presence is a good omen, as seen when it relieves Pilate's unbearable headache. Bulgakov leaves nothing to chance, showing his attention to even the smallest symbolic creatures. Through the parallel between the two narrative threads, the novel creates a *coincidentia oppositorum*—with the Master's novel dominated by punitive sacredness, and Yeshua's story by positive sacredness.

There are further metamorphoses on a spatial and temporal level, which serve the literary phenomena of fantastic realism and magical realism. Time and space become tools through which the divine operates, blending together to form a timeless bridge between the sacred and the profane. In some ways, these two coordinates act as characters, designed so that events align both spatially and temporally, giving the text a parabolic, quasi-religious structure.

Between Jerusalem and Moscow, between biblical and socialist time, parallels emerge—with Woland as the link. He takes on a narrator's role, recounting the encounter between Pilate and Yeshua, a story later continued by Ivan and Margarita. Woland arrives in Moscow on a Wednesday, matching the day of Yeshua's arrest and his dialogue with Pilate. In the Moscow narrative, the unjust punishment of Yeshua is mirrored in Latunsky's rejection of the Master's manuscript. The Holy Week corresponding to Christ's Passion becomes, in socialist Moscow, the week of demonic punishment, during which characters like Ivan and Margarita endure trials and transformations. The crucifixion of Yeshua aligns with the departure of the protagonists and demons on Saturday night—representing the Resurrection Night, based on the Gregorian calendar. By the end of the novel, the two timelines merge, despite being separated by nearly two thousand years.

If we consider time in a meteorological sense, it is responsive to the presence of sacred figures. Weather and natural elements serve as foreshadowing tools, signaling events laden with symbolic or divine meaning. The appearance of the sacred on earth is marked by meteosensitivity, and through the novel-within-a-novel technique, natural events in one story

echo in the other. During Yeshua's crucifixion, a sudden and terrible storm darkens the sky. In Moscow, a similar storm occurs after Satan's ball, corresponding with Christ's crucifixion day.

Moving to space, attention must be paid to the architecture and layout of the two cities. For example, the Griboedov building—headquarters of the Moscow writers' union—corresponds to Pilate's palace, where Yeshua's fate is decided. The alleyways Ivan runs through in his pursuit of Woland echo those in Jerusalem, where Judas wandered before being assassinated in the Garden of Gethsemane. Moscow, on the European continent, can be seen by Bulgakov as a projection of a heavenly Jerusalem, if only it could be cleansed of its vices—especially those upheld by the ruling power. Just as Herod's will was carried out by Pilate in Jerusalem, so Berlioz, leader of MASSOLIT, implemented state directives in the literary world of Moscow.

In Moscow, several buildings are destroyed, often consumed by purifying and regenerative fire, as seen with the Griboedov building, the apartment on Sadovaya Street, a luxury clothing store, and the basement rooms on Arbat Street that once belonged to the Master and Margarita. These basement rooms can also be interpreted psychologically, symbolizing a descent into the subconscious—necessary for the character to confront inner turmoil and begin regeneration. However, when the fear of inspections arises, the rooms take on a negative, even toxic aspect, detrimental to the tenant's mental health. Thus, they too had to be destroyed by fire.

As for the place given to the Master and his beloved, many interpretations have emerged. Some suggest it lies on the border between Heaven and Hell, others compare it to the limbos of Dante's Purgatory, or the "locum refrigerii" from Christian theology—a place of transition or waiting. Biographically, it can be seen as the idyllic space Bulgakov himself yearned for. The small German-style house lies in neither Heaven nor Hell but serves a compensatory role, offering exactly what the Master needed. The elements of space and time are part of the novel's major themes and reflect the writer's documentary concerns and distinctive style.

A recurring element in Bulgakov's texts is music. A passionate music lover since childhood, Bulgakov uses frequent, subtle references to address another key issue in his critique of oppression. Unlike in Western Europe, in Russia music developed differently—reviving genres fading in the West and rejuvenating those of past centuries. The second half of the 19th century and first half of the 20th witnessed a flourishing of Russian classical music, led by "The Five": Mily Balakirev, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and Alexander Borodin, with Sergei Rachmaninoff as another prominent figure.

Several of Bulgakov's works, including the novels *Theatrical Novel* and *The Master and Margarita*, are rich with musical references. In *Heart of a Dog*, the protagonist frequently hums verses from *Aida*. *The Fatal Eggs* contains fewer references, but still mentions Wagnerian arias, while in *Theatrical Novel*, Maxudov is saved from suicide by hearing an aria from *Faust*. Musically, *The Master and Margarita* is the richest—it includes choristers, a chorus of creatures cheering the new Margarita, and the entire concert at Satan's Ball, which features a jazz band—a genre disliked by Soviet authorities for its spontaneity and improvisational nature, considered by some to be "inspired by the devil." The novel's final musical moment is the piano music heard from apartment 50, just before the police raid—closing the story on a triumphant note.

Due to communist oppression, very few of Bulgakov's works gained international recognition during his lifetime. Once his texts reached a global audience, they were subjected to much wider and more expert scrutiny. Receptions varied widely, and a large body of literary criticism emerged, particularly around *The Master and Margarita*, in countries such as France, the UK, Poland, and the United States. His work's influence extends beyond literature—there have been film adaptations, references in movies and series, stage adaptations, songs, comic books, animations, poetic and pictorial interpretations, and illustrations of great creativity.

Prominent international researchers include: Marianne Gourg, professor at the University of Paris since 2008, Georges Nivat, historian and translator, professor at Paris-Nanterre, Julie A. E. Curtis, professor of Russian Literature at Oxford, Ellendea Proffer Teasley, American author and expert on Bulgakov, Anthony Colin Wright, professor at Queen's University in Canada, author of the first English-language biography of Bulgakov (1978), Edythe C. Haber, professor emerita at UMass Boston, Peter Rollberg, professor at George Washington University, Marietta Chudakova, Russian literary critic and philologist, Françoise Flamant, French sociologist and feminist from the Musidora collective, and many more.

In Romania, Bulgakov is primarily known for *The Master and Margarita*, which entered Romanian literary culture in the late 20th century, following the country's political realignment. Early Romanian scholarship on Bulgakov focused mainly on this novel. Notable Romanian scholars include: Izolda Vîrsta, who produced a well-documented case study on Bulgakov's life, Ruxandra Cesereanu, Marta Petreu, Corin Braga, Virgil Mihaiu, Ovidiu Pecican, and Ion Vartic, professors and researchers from Cluj who retraced the characters' paths in Moscow, Stela Giurgeanu, writer, playwright, journalist, and editor at *Dilema veche*.

The depth of Bulgakov's themes has sparked interest far beyond literary studies. His work has inspired domains such as: music, illustration, animation, comic books, film or

painting. *The Master and Margarita* became a major source of inspiration in music, particularly in rock and roll and heavy metal, due to its demonic elements. A famous example is "Sympathy for the Devil" by The Rolling Stones, and Motörhead later released a cover on their album *Bad Magic* (2015). Numerous musicians and bands across the world, especially in Europe, have dedicated songs to Bulgakov's novel.

In film, the novel has been adapted multiple times. The most recent was directed by Mikhail Lokshin in 2024, achieving great success in the Russian box office—only to be banned days later. The novel also inspired comic books, where demons like Azazello, Koroviev, and Behemoth appear in Marvel's X-Men series. In visual arts, painters such as Sanya Kantarovsky and Laura Footes exhibited artworks drawn from *The Master and Margarita* in renowned galleries. Many artists across mediums have found lasting inspiration in Bulgakov's literary universe—proof of the enduring expressive power of his writing, continuously revived and reinterpreted.