



## **The Master & Margarita and Freedom of Censorship** Aleksandra Kudelina

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The Master and Margarita

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If he possesses a grain of wisdom, he will lay down his arms and name the unknown by the more unknown, *ignotum per ignotius* – that is, by the name of God. That is a confession of subjection, his imperfection, and his dependence; but at the same time a testimony to his freedom to choose between truth and error.

Carl Gustav Jung<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. by A. Jaffe, tr. by R. and C. Winston, New York, 1963, p. 352.

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## Introduction: Case Study "The Master and Margarita".

In 1928-1929 Mikhail Bulgakov began to work on the first version of *The Master and Margarita*, a satirical tale about the devil visiting Moscow.

In 1930, when his theatrical plays were banned, Bulgakov burned it. He wrote a letter to the central government and asked for permission to emigrate, since the hostility of the literary authorities made it impossible for him to live. He wrote, if emigration was not permitted, "and if I am condemned to keep silent in the Soviet Union for the rest of my days, then I ask the Soviet government to give me a job in my speciality and assign me to a theatre as a titular director."<sup>2</sup> Stalin himself answered this letter by telephone on 17 April, and shortly afterwards the Moscow Art Theatre hired Bulgakov as an assistant director and literary consultant. However, during the thirties, his own plays either were not staged at all or were quickly withdrawn. These circumstances are everywhere present in *The Master and Margarita*, which was Bulgakov's challenge to the rule of terror in literature.

The work on *The Master and Margarita* was renewed in 1934 and the last revisions were dictated to his wife a few weeks before his death in 1940 at the age of forty-nine.

For Bulgakov, there was never any question of publishing the novel. The mere existence of the manuscript, had it come to the knowledge of Stalin's police, would have cost the author his life. Yet the book was of great importance to him, and he clearly believed that a time would come when it would find its reader.

Twenty-six years after his death, in 1966, a hardly recognizable, censored version of the novel appeared in the literary journal *Moskva*, immediately creating a sensation. The novel breathed an air of freedom, artistic and spiritual, which had become rare indeed, not only in Soviet Russia.

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<sup>2</sup> A. Colin Wright, "The Master and Margarita," in *Reference Guide to World Literature*, second edition, ed. by Lesley Henderson, St. James Press, 1995. At URL: <http://www.masterandmargarita.eu/>

The novel is unusual, with the hero, the Master, appearing only towards the end of the first part, and Margarita not until Part Two.



It combines three different if carefully related stories:

- (1) the arrival of the devil Woland and his companions in contemporary Moscow, where they create havoc...
- (2) Margarita's attempt, with Woland's assistance, to be reunited with her love after his imprisonment and confinement in a psychiatric hospital and...
- (3) an imaginative account of the passion of Christ given the Hebrew name of Ieshua-Ha-Nozri from his interrogation by Pontius Pilate to his crucifixion.

Differing considerably from the Gospels, the latter consists of four chapters which may be regarded as a novel within a novel: written by the Master, related by Woland, and dreamed of by a young poet (Ivan Bezdomny or 'Homeless') on the basis of 'true' events. Correspondingly, the action takes place on three different levels, each with a distinct narrative voice: that of Ancient Jerusalem, of Moscow of the 1930s, and of the 'fantastic' realm beyond time...

The Case Study information is obtained from the: A. Colin Wright, *"The Master and Margarita,"* in *Reference Guide to World Literature*, second edition, ed. by Lesley Henderson, St. James Press, 1995.

The picture is a movie shot from the „Master i Margarita“ by Vladimir Bortko, 2005.

Both sources are to find at the URL: <http://www.masterandmargarita.eu/>

# 1 Freedom and Censorship

## 1.1 Censorship

*...She told me a strange, but funny story about the Devil visiting Moscow. I was listening and I was amused, but without really trying to remember the name of the novel nor its author. But the story never left me. It was saved in my brains forever.*

*One year later the images came back, and how! Another Russian friend of mine advised me to read *The Master and Margarita*, written by Mikhael Bulgakov. And so I did. With quite some dramatic consequences. I lost my heart in Moscow, it will stay there forever and I started learning Russian because, one day, I want to be able to read it in the original language...<sup>3</sup>*

These lines from a website devoted to the novel of Mikhail Bulgakov *The Master and Margarita* were written by a fan of this work and demonstrate the power of words which we so often experience while forgetting reality and departing into another fictional world of an interesting book and let it become a part of ourselves. Once the book is read, this emotional engagement fades away. We partly forget about it without realizing that we are no longer what we had been before the reading. We are changed so little that we do not notice it, but we are altered forever. By letting the discourse of the book integrate us we let it shape our individuality. We are in a way censored by another power than that coming from our intrinsic impulses, and with this we get partially devoid of the freedom for self-definition. Is this so bad?

I would say, no. No, because we feel still free and even more, we accept these processes as normal ones and are happy to lose our hearts or give them away as regard for a temporary fascination.

What are these processes then, when they gain the authority to determine our discourses on the one hand but let us feel free in our choice on the other hand, when they merge such opposites as freedom and censorship?

Censorship "turns freedom" here not by accident. Nowadays the differentiation of multiple individual interests is going along with the globalisation and universalization. The right of these multiple interests to be represented in this postmodern arena makes the theory acquire subversive features: breaking the rules to introduce a different order of things has become what we experience as freedom.<sup>4</sup>

The postmodern world in this connection evaluates a new type of rationality whose basic feature is the ability to "adapt momentarily to passing situations."<sup>5</sup> That is why a new theoretical approach to its phenomena is required. The deconstruction of theoretical notions has become popular and seems also

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<sup>3</sup> URL: <http://www.masterandmargarita.eu>

<sup>4</sup> Compare to: Freud / Lacan statement, "censorship is not primarily experienced as external pressure, but is generated from within". Quoted after Helen Freshwater, "Towards a Redefinition of Censorship", in: Beate Müller (ed.), *Censorship and Regulation in the Modern Age*, New York 2004, pp. 232.

<sup>5</sup> Dirk Baecker, "Why Systems", in: *Theory, Culture and Society* 18.1 / 2001, p. 61.

attractive in application to censorship. It has sense to empty the content of this category and replace it with another one that would suit our world of controversial evaluations and dialectic processes.

In most of the dictionaries,<sup>6</sup> censorship is referred to as superior power which suppresses certain discourses. In contradiction to this, such scholars as Annette Kuhn, Michael Holquist, Sue Curry Jansen, Richard Burt and Frederick Schauer speak about censorship as omnipresent, inevitable, necessary, and desirable.<sup>7</sup> They foreground such traits of censorship as its productivity as well as its interactive and regulative nature against the traditional view of one-sided relationship which places the censored object in an inert and passive position.<sup>8</sup> Freshwater points out the backgrounds for this complex view of censorship, regarding the ideas of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Freud and Lacan, who evaluated the idea of an omnipresent censorship.<sup>9</sup>

Censorship is then rather to understand as control which presupposes a certain order of things ruled by a set codex of laws, norms and rights. In this case, control is juxtaposed to the destructive chaos and forms a pejorative meaning. This distinction between non-conventional pejorative and non-pejorative traditional censorship is, however, in no way sufficient to be able to describe the ambivalent nature of the world in which we live and seems to be quite an ideal differentiation between *creative* (constitutive) and *damaging* (silencing) discourses of control. In the reality discourses would rather undergo continuous evaluation which takes a form of an interaction between them. In the course of the interaction discourses gain a chance to influence their partners and take control over them. Such a process gives the idea of discourses as changeable and evaluative structures, apart from understanding them as compositions of firmly fixed qualities.

These arguments become more obvious if one looks at the conception of intertextuality developed by Julia Kristeva<sup>10</sup>, who regards a text as an implementation of all existing texts. The texts are then exposed to defend themselves as unique creations against the majority of other texts. Kristeva distinguishes between dialogical and monological texts. Defining dialogical texts as those based on a disagreeing, she draws attention to the constitutive nature of a conflict. This demonstrates that *creativity* is a result of the dialectical relationship between discourses being controlled on the one side and showing

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<sup>6</sup> Apart from other dictionaries, where censorship is defined as „suppression of books, plays, or passages therein as sacrilegious, immoral, seditious, or otherwise objectionable“ (*Dictionary of World Literary Terms*, ed. Joseph T. Shipley, Boston 1970, p. 39) or as „official supervision/control of dramatic production and films/of the press etc.“ (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. Simpson and Weiner, Oxford 1989, pp. 1029-1030) and so forth, the *Metzler Lexikon der Literatur- und Kulturtheorie* records: „die jungste Zensurforschung systemtheoretischer Provenienz reagiert mit einem formell und funktional differierten Zensurbegriff auf die im Anschluss an M. Foucault entstandenen begriffsgeschichtlichen Theoreme, die literarische Zensur pauschal als Diskurskontrolle und „Instrument semantischer Herrschaft“ definieren (Guggenbühne 1996, S.27),“ in: *Metzler Lexikon der Literatur- und Kulturtheorie*, hrsg. v. Ansgar Nünning, 3. aktualisierte u. erweiterte Aufl., Stuttgart/Weimar 2004, pp. 720-721.

<sup>7</sup> Conception by Frederick Schauer: Frederick Schauer, „The Ontology of Censorship“, in: Robert C. Pots (ed.), *Censorship and Silencing. Practices of Cultural Regulation*, Los Angeles 1998, pp.147-168.

<sup>8</sup> Helen Freshwater, „Towards a Redefinition of Censorship“, in: Beate Müller (ed.), *Censorship and Regulation in the Modern Age*, New York 2004, pp. 225-245.

<sup>9</sup> Helen Freshwater refers to the following theoretical works of the noted scholars:

Foucault, Michel: *Discipline and Punish*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Penguin, 1977. // *The History of Sexuality*. Vol. 1. Trans. Robert Hurly. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Bourdieu, Pierre: *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Trans. Gino Raymond and Mathew Adamson. Oxford: Polity P, 1991.

Freud, quoted in *The Freud Reader*.

<sup>10</sup> Julia Kristeva, „Word, Dialogue and Novel“, in: *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, Columbia 1986, pp. 34-61.

critical resistance to this control on the other side. Monologue in this regard is much more exposed to represent discourses but not to constitute new ones or else to create new meanings.<sup>11</sup>

This approach to the controlling processes makes attractive the idea of censorship as taking place by means of *communication* between different powers rather than suppression of inferior powers by superior ones: the process, where discourses enter an equal relationship and under a constant interference undergo transformations of a selective and creative nature. The peculiar feature of this relationship is its *doubleness* in regard to the *perspective* of observation. So, why, speaking about censorship in the Soviet Union, and in particular about its application to *The Master and Margarita*, do we not speak about the counter technique of the novel? As a devastating satire of Soviet life, and of Soviet literary life in particular, the work censored the Soviet society and regime quite on the same level.<sup>12</sup> This view of double relation allows the idea of censorship as a relationship between discourses floating around and by cause and need entering a process of communication.<sup>13</sup> So long as discourses can freely "choose" their communicative "partners", the idea of *freedom of censorship* can be realised. It is quite obvious that according to the communicative rules one or the other side of communication will manifest itself as more powerful or *dominating*.

This description of censorship requires drawing a *temporal* aspect to its analysis, because a discourse, once silenced, may later reappear under conditions encouraging its existence. This happened also in the case of *The Master and Margarita* as well as many other works of the suppressed Soviet authors. They outlasted the Soviet regime and gained their fame and popularity only several decades later with their power of word conquering minds of contemporary public.

However, constituting a new conception of censorship, it is important to ask about the conditions which allow it to function in a *creative, regulative* or *silencing* way. While answering this question, it is particularly important to explore the situational *context* since it can determine what kind of force censorship turns to be from case to case. Due to its ambiguity, one and the same discourse in the process of its evaluation and transgression can function differently in different situations. This approach rejects the possibility of stating the definite behaviour of discourses which, being silenced, may at the same time silence the others, or being creative may possibly need to damage, or act as damaging in order to protect. If it is possible to pick out of this description that "bad" traditional censorship fixed in the dictionaries becomes a subject matter. After all, what is bad for me, can turn good for others.

In the postmodern world it becomes a matter of freedom for individuals to choose how to treat an existing order.

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<sup>11</sup> Kristeva defines dialogue as "transgression giving itself a law", for the conception see: *The Kristeva Reader*, (1986), pp. 34-61.

<sup>12</sup> In his letter to the Soviet Government Bulgakov cited one of his critics, Vladimir Blyum, who launched a severe attack on satire in *Literaturnaya Gazeta (The Literary Gazette)* and wrote: "Every satirist in the USSR violates the Soviet system", in: Riitta H. Pittman, *The Writer's Divided Self in Bulgakov's "The Master and Margarita"*, New York, 1991, p. 92.

<sup>13</sup> Compare to: Dirk Baecker who states: "Control cannot be mentioned without speaking of communication", in: Baecker (2001), p. 59.

## 1.2 Control and Domination

Dirk Baecker in his article "Why systems?" wrote about the slippery concept of the systems theory: "Sociology is not prepared to call a reproduction that we do not understand an effect of domination."<sup>14</sup> This may imply that it requires a separate approach to the observation of any system to be able to understand its forms of functioning and its ability to recreate itself. But it also questions whether the reproduction of a system, which we understand as control, is the same with what *domination* is.

With a look at the introductory chapter to this essay which demonstrates how censorship functioned in the Soviet Union in 1940es in the case of the Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*, it seems difficult to relate these facts to the non-conventional conception of censorship, already because of an obvious *domination* exercised by the system and experienced as suppression by an artistic creativity within it. Herewith a distinction between inevitable and necessary control and that one which is experienced as domination and restriction of our freedom becomes a problem. The question is where the line should be drawn to separate these kinds of control we may experience.

Since we believe in systems as recreating themselves on the basis of self-referentiality, isolation and displacement, exclusion and inclusion and since we believe in systems which "emerge, enable and constrain what is to happen, while being nothing else than the relationship between the actor and the phenomenon who both, however, are what they are thanks to that relationship"<sup>15</sup>, it is also logical to believe in the essentiality of omnipresent control as regulating, constitutive and creative force. It must however be different when this complex relationship represented as a kind of *communication* is disturbed and, as a result, one or more elements within it undergo the authoritarian will, what they refer to as suppression.

## 1.3 Soviet Censorship

The necessity to ask the censored author or artist about his or her experience whilst defending a strongly inclusive application of censorship, was in particular indicated by Helen Freshwater, whereby she pointed out that "without such consideration, we risk perpetuating procedures of exclusion."<sup>16</sup> Perhaps, exactly because of this necessity, every attempt to define what the term censorship actually signifies, makes us explore the cases when censorship is experienced as restrictive action of an authority violating the principle of privacy and independence of thought. But it depends, perhaps, also on the ambivalence of control itself, which is a structural necessity, on the one hand, but can always turn to be a damaging power on the other hand.

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<sup>14</sup> Baecker (2001), pp. 59-74.

<sup>15</sup> Baecker (2001), p. 68.

<sup>16</sup> Freshwater (2004), p. 225.

The Soviet censorship in literature from the inception to the dissolution of the Soviet state delivers a distinguishing picture of authors and artists having been either traditionally censored, that is in form of prepublication deletions, changes and insertions, or forced to self-censorship, that is "revisions effected by the author himself to adjust his work to the censorial demands of the day."<sup>17</sup> Besides of this prohibitive role of censorship, which manifested itself mainly in suppression of newspapers considered as hostile to the Communist government, there was an educative one, especially relevant for the censorship in literature: the Communist Party passed a doctrine of the so called "Socialist Realism" which, in contrast to the "critical" Realism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was meant to shape from the Soviet society a community of obedient and similarly thinking people. In 1934 the Soviet Writers Union passed the bylaws which officially reaffirmed the instructive mission of literature by obligating the writers to educate the masses in the spirit of socialism<sup>18</sup>. With this, any possible independence of thought and freedom of expression was undermined and any chance for artistic creativity to develop itself on a free basis was taken away. The system was urging the writers to depict "positive" characters and heroes of socialist construction. Control was emphatically converging into domination.

To define the difference between control and domination, I would like to suggest that control is the matter of liberal tradition, where it is applied to protect the morals and to support creativity within a society. Domination is, by contrast, the matter of authoritarianism which imposes its own moral and prohibits creativity as a dangerous discourse.<sup>19</sup> To test if domination is another kind of influence than that of control and that it contrastingly manifests itself in a lack of dialogue between discourses and in the existence of an authority who prohibits the dialogue and, instead, imposes his own "super" discourses, we will follow the tradition and ask the censored author, Mikhail Bulgakov, about his experience of suppression.

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<sup>17</sup> Herman Ermolaev, *Censorship in Soviet Literature: 1917 – 1991*, Lanham, Boulder, New York, London 1997, p. xiii.

<sup>18</sup> Ermolaev (1997), p. 259.

<sup>19</sup> I do not necessary mean to connect the notions „liberal“ and „authoritarian“ to the politics, although it is obvious that the distinction between democratic and authoritarian regimes will bring about correspondent differences into the conception of censorship. My point here is rather to extrapolate these terms to the field of communication, where relationship between the interacting powers can acquire "liberal" or "authoritarian" qualities.

## 2 The Master and Margarita

*The Master and Margarita* is a philosophical novel. Its philosophy is a response to the historical issues of the time. The nihilistic philosophical tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup> century influenced considerably the development of utilitarian altruism within the radical circles of the Russian intelligentsia in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It expressed itself in the idea of all-powerful human *ratio* and its capability to hedge human happiness and wellhood. As a result, religion as spiritual basis of social life was undermined in the Soviet Union. Instead, the authorities proclaimed the official aesthetics of atheism and the so called "socialist faith"<sup>20</sup>. Though socialists developed the ideas of serving society and wellhood of people, they considerably distorted their altruistic basis. As Riitta H. Pittman writes: "... socialist is not altruist. It is true that he seeks to increase human happiness, but he does not love the people, he loves his idea, that is the idea of human happiness."<sup>21</sup> Perhaps that's why, the Moscow of Bulgakov in *The Master and Margarita* is plunged into the depths of superstition and corrupt materialism, the non-believers of the Soviet capital being suddenly visited by the devil...

### 2.1 The Devil. Or did Jesus exist?

Non-believers don't only deny God, but they also deny the devil and with both of them the whole existence of an inner spiritual life. That is why the devil in the novel is not juxtaposed to God, but, on the contrary, he is directly related to the question "*Did Jesus exist?*" His dimension of spiritual and metaphysical forms an oppositon to the spiritually impoverished citizens of Moscow who enter the novel already at the very beginning, when the author introduces

"Mikhail Alexandrovich *Berlioz*, editor of a fat literary journal and chairman of the board of one of the major Moscow literary associations, called Massolit for short, and his young companion (...) the poet Ivan Nikolayevich Ponyrev, who wrote under the pseudonym of *Homeless*."<sup>22</sup>

First, the reader becomes a witness of a conversation between them:

*This conversation, as was learned afterwards, was about Jesus Christ.*

*The thing was that the editor had commissioned from the poet a long anti-religious poem for the next issue of his journal. Ivan Nikolaevich had written this poem, and in a very short time, but unfortunately the editor was not at all satisfied with it. Homeless had portrayed the main character of his poem - that is, Jesus, - in very dark colours, but nevertheless the whole poem, in the editor's opinion, had to be written over again. (...)*

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<sup>20</sup> Pittman (1991), pp. 1-28.

<sup>21</sup> Pittman (1991), p.21.

<sup>22</sup> Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*, tr. and with an Introduction by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, Penguin Books, 1997. I quote here and further from the e-edition at URL: [http://www.vanhellemont.net/margarita/media/archieven/Tekst%20Engels%20\(1997\).htm](http://www.vanhellemont.net/margarita/media/archieven/Tekst%20Engels%20(1997).htm) (that is why no pages quoted)

*It is hard to say what precisely had let Ivan Nikolaevich down – the descriptive powers of his talent or a total unfamiliarity with the question he was writing about - but his Jesus came out, well, completely alive, the once-existing Jesus, though, true, a Jesus furnished with all negative features.*

Now, Berlioz wanted to prove to the poet that the main thing was not *how* Jesus was, good or bad, but that this same Jesus, as a person, simply *never existed* in the world, and all the stories about him were mere fiction, the most ordinary mythology.

Jesus as “mere fiction, the most ordinary mythology” is a *perspective of Moscovites* in the novel of Bulgakov, the perspective drawn on the official communist culture and aesthetics. It is amazing, how simply the well-grounded arguments of Berlioz against the existence of God in this conversation are later unveiled by the devil who says:

*“But here is a question that is troubling me: if there is no God, then, one may ask, who governs human life and, in general, the whole order of things on earth?”*

*“Man governs it himself,” Homeless angrily hastened to reply to this admittedly none-too-clear question.*

*“Pardon me,” the stranger responded gently, “but in order to govern, one needs, after all, to have a precise plan for certain, at least somewhat decent, length of time. Allow me to ask you, then, how man can govern, if he is not only deprived of the opportunity of making a plan for at least some ridiculously short period - well, say, a thousand years - but cannot even vouch for his own tomorrow?”*

*“And in fact,” here the stranger turned to Berlioz, “imagine that you, for instance, start governing, giving orders to others and yourself, generally, so to speak, acquire a taste for it, and suddenly you get ...hem... hem ... lung cancer ... and so your governing is over!”*

*“You are no longer interested in anyone's fate but your own. Your family starts lying to you. Feeling that something is wrong, you rush to learned doctors, then to quacks, and sometimes to fortune-tellers as well. Like the first, so the second and third are completely senseless, as you understand. And it all ends tragically: a man who still recently thought he was governing something, suddenly winds up lying motionless in a wooden box...”*

Apart from the fact that the question put by the Satan – “who governs human life and, in general, the whole order of things on earth?” – alludes ironically to the topic of this essay, it introduces the main discourse of the novel, that is a plea of the artistic creativity under suppression. It is important that the artistic in the novel is not opposed to control. But it hates domination, cuts, abolitions as much as perverse additions and bare idealism of perfect socialist heroes. This suffering part of the artistic creativity constitutes another perspective of *The Master and Margarita* against that one of Moscovites, – the perspective of *the devil, artist* and holy *spirituality*. The latter example demonstrates how a tragical

circumstance of a cancer case from the perspective of Moscovites unveils as comic in the description of the devil.

This double perspectiveness is a method used by Bulgakov whilst treating subversive discourses<sup>23</sup> which enter the novel and make it a challenge to the Soviet moral. In this respect the dimension of the devil, the spirit of darkness, becomes of special interest.

Firstly, the descriptions of witnesses who claimed they saw him, confuse the picture of the Satan. The bootless efforts of the humans armed with their crowned *ratio*, while trying to describe the devil, appear poor and absurd:

*Afterwards, when, frankly speaking, it was already too late, various institutions presented reports describing this man [the devil]. A comparison of them cannot but cause amazement. Thus, the first of them said that the man was short, had gold teeth, and limped on his right leg. The second, that the man was enormously tall, had platinum crowns, and limped on his left leg. The third laconically averred that the man had no distinguishing marks. It must be acknowledged that none of these reports is of any value.*

Just as absurd is the picture of the person described by the friends, Berlioz and Homeless, who define the extraordinary strangeness of the newcomer's appearance as his foreignness – a hyperbolically presented comic fact of the Soviet reality, where people did not confide with the foreigners as the humans similar to them:

*First of all, the man described did not limp on any leg, and was neither short nor enormous, but simply tall. As for his teeth, he had platinum crowns on the left side and gold on the right. He was wearing an expensive grey suit and imported shoes of a matching colour. His grey beret was cocked rakishly over one ear; under his arm he carried a stick with a black knob shaped like a poodle's head. He looked to be a little over forty. Mouth somehow twisted. Clean-shaven. Dark-haired. Right eye black, left - for some reason - green. Dark eyebrows, but one higher than the other. In short, a foreigner.*

These examples show, that from the perspective of self-satisfied Moscovites the devil is diminished in the novel to the superstition. The world seems to obtain its normal order of things. The other perspective, on the contrary, exalts his dimension to the level of the spirit whose rule is supreme. The world turns correspondently upside down and acquires comic features. It is the perspective of the devil where the sarcasm of the novel is mostly settled.

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<sup>23</sup> Under "subversive discourses" I mean here the discourses ignored by the official soviet culture and therefore banned or treated as not existing, as for example religion, sex, foul language, personal "uncleanness" etc. For more information see: Ermolaev (1997), pp. 42-47, 89-95, 131-136, 173-176, 214-217, 252-255.

Another confusing circumstance is connected with the nature of the devil himself. The reader is aware of the metaphysical origin and therefore supranatural power of the Satan on the one hand, but, occupying a position in the "normal" world as Moscovites, has to account the Satan from their perspective as an usual man from blood and flesh. It is puzzling to get to know about the devil as Woland, Professor of black magic, who has documents and hires a flat in one of the Moscow buildings. This brings about the question if the devil can settle in the soul of everybody of us and justifies the interpretation of him as a schizophrenic syndrom of the citizens of Moscow.<sup>24</sup>

As next, the Professor of black magic, Woland, confusing his interlocutors, Berlioz and Homeless, firstly, with his scientific subject, secondly, with his ridiculous speeches about his breakfast with Kant, evokes one of the few sound thoughts coming to the poet Ivan:

*"Have you ever happened, citizen, to be in a hospital for the mentally ill?"*

The quoted excerpts show how embarrassing human judgements can be if they rely only on *ratio*-ruled part of consciousness. As in the case with the devil, the permanent error of those who meet him, is that some see only his supranatural qualities. The others prescribe him a mental illness. And the rest goes crazy themselves. So, the professor Woland approves Ivan's replique quoted above and predicts that later the poet will suffer schizophrenia himself. This is also what happens to the young poet from the moment he met the Satan. The devil is playing tricks with humans' minds. It is difficult to understand whether he is only an imagination, or one of those who govern our life and, "in general, the whole order of things on earth". Or is he both at one and the same time? This question deserves to have a closer look at, since it directly concerns the topic of censorship.

## 2.2 Who rules our life?

As Riitta H. Pittman consistently admits, "the question of who controls our lives is explicitly posed at least twice in *The Master and Margarita* and implicitly suggested throughout the novel."<sup>25</sup> In one of the excerpts discussed above (page 9), the poet Homeless informs the devil impatiently that people themselves rule their existence. Similarly, the hero of the Master's story, Pontius Pilate, reminds his prisoner, Ieshua-Ha-Nozri, that the decision upon the offender's life rests within the Procurator's power. In each case the protagonists' extravagant claim is swiftly deflated. As we have seen, the devil announces the indurability of human existence. In the case with Pontius Pilate, his prisoner, Ieshua, replies to the threat of the Roman procurator, his life was hanging by a hair:

*"You don't think it was you who hung it, Hegemon?" the prisoner asked. "If so, you are very mistaken."*

*Pilate gave a start and replied through his teeth:*

*"I can cut that hair."*

*"In that, too, you are mistaken," the prisoner retorted, smiling brightly and shielding himself from the sun with his hand. "You must agree that surely only He who hung it can cut the hair?"*

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<sup>24</sup> Pittman (1991), pp. 97-103.

<sup>25</sup> Pittman (1991), p. 15.

Similarly, in the devil's kingdom the episode concerning the chess-game with live pieces and the animated globe ridicules these illusory ambitions of humanity. This key motif of the novel opens a discourse of the dialectic between the logical and the emotional within human consciousness, which compete for the right to "govern" us. As Pittman suggests, this philosophical line of the novel was influenced by the work of Gershenzon and the ideas of Kant whose *Critique of Pure Reason* received a lot of attention within debating societies in Russia and came to be regarded as the anti-Marxist work.<sup>26</sup>

It is therefore not an accident that the devil recalls having breakfasted with Kant in the conversation with Berlioz and congratulates him for having repeated "in full" the thoughts of the great philosopher. In agreement with Kant, the editor has argued that "no proof of God's existence may be found in the realm of reason", while ignoring the possible existence of dimensions beyond reason. In contrast to this, Kant believed that thought is a synthesis of two sources of knowledge – sensibility (the realm of sensation) and understanding (the realm of concepts). His central idea concerns the mind's relation to the world and the necessity of a dialogue between these two.<sup>27</sup> Consistently, in *The Master and Margarita*, the devil remarks approvingly to Berlioz's arguments that the Gospels cannot surely be considered a reliable historical source, since almost nothing what is described in them ever took place. However he claims to have participated in those events himself. The Berlioz' and Homeless' idea of Gospels as myth is in this way opposed to the personal experience of the devil. The Kantian juxtapositions and his search for the central dualism (noumenal and phenomenal worlds) with certain adjustments emerge as inherent part of the philosophical foundation of Bulgakov's novel, which explores discrepancies separating the theory and practice of rationalism (or materialism), the idea and experience of God, and of the devil.<sup>28</sup>

Gershenzon was also seeking to identify the dialecticism within the human psyche ruled by logical and sentient, innate and extraneous, spiritual and mundane substances. He particularly stated the paradoxical relationship of inseparability and concurrent independence within these pairs, whereby only the *permanent interaction* between them in the form of *mutual control* warrants the functioning of healthy human existence.<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting that the philosophy of *The Master and Margarita* is consistent with a more empirical level of the social theory, which rounds up the ideas of human origin. The systems theory states that the "ecological" unity of "mind and nature" must be ensured by all systems seeking their reproduction in their environment, whereby this unity is not the unity of a whole but the unity of systems that are ecologically linked with each other, lacking any "super-system" to ensure and organize that ecology.<sup>30</sup> Systems are discourses which are closed, and therefore, separated from other discourses constituting their environment. A system can only function if it enters a dialogue with its environment. If we term logic and consciousness, rationality and spirituality, idea and experience as independent systems, that would mean that they are inherent parts of one whole and need each other for the further reproduction. It is another level of stating the problem that *The Master and Margarita* investigates.

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<sup>26</sup> Pittman (1991), p. 16.

<sup>27</sup> Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1984, pp. 57-61.

<sup>28</sup> Pittman (1991), p. 24.

<sup>29</sup> Mikhail Gershenzon, *Tvorcheskoye samosoznaniye* („Creative consciousness“), Moscow 1909, e-edition "Bibliotheka Vekhi" 2000-2004 at URL: <http://www.vehi.net/vehi/gershenson.html>

<sup>30</sup> Baecker (2001), p. 64.

Bulgakov's devil came to Moscow to revive the artificially broken dialogue between the inseparable discourses of human creativity – its rational and its artistic selves – and, bewildering the editor Berlioz and the poet Ivan Homeless with his felonies, in the end...

*... beckoned them both to him, and when they leaned towards him, whispered:  
"Bear in mind that Jesus did exist."*

## 2.3 Master and Margarita

Their story is a highly idealized and romantic layer of the novel. As the Master first met Margarita,

*"She was carrying repulsive, alarming yellow flowers<sup>31</sup> in her hand. Devil knows what they're called, but for some reason they're the first to appear in Moscow. And these flowers stood out clearly against her black spring coat..."*

Such was the picture the Master himself drew in the conversation with his neighbor, Ivan Homeless, in the psychiatric clinic, where he had got after the imprisonment for his novel "Pontius Pilate", the reason, by the way, which brought also the poet Homeless into the mental institution, after he had met the devil and heard the story from him about the fifth procurator of Judea, the equestrian Pontius Pilate.

The Master and Margarita constitute one whole in the novel and belong to the dimension of dreams, memories and imagination,<sup>32</sup> the dimension which was suppressed in the *ratio*-ruled Soviet morality. The reader comes to know Margarita through the memories and dreams of the Master, who does not stop to imagine the first time he saw her:

*She was carrying yellow flowers! Not a nice colour. She turned down a lane from Tverskaya and then looked back. Well, you know Tverskaya! Thousands of people were walking along Tverskaya, but I can assure you that she saw me alone, and looked not really alarmed, but even as if in pain. And I was struck not so much by her beauty as by an extraordinary loneliness in her eyes, such as no one had ever seen before!*

Pain, alarm and loneliness in the eyes of Bulgakov's heroine are an expression of her "other-worldliness,"<sup>33</sup> a trait which establishes her natural affinity with Woland's domain and separates her existence from the reality. As Pittman argues, "Margarita's existence can be identified as a conflict between art and life in the sense that her married life has been wholly devoted to duty, whereas the moments of happy contentment she has spent in the Master's company have been intimately linked with the conception of his novel"<sup>34</sup>, the work about Pontius Pilate. Margarita is in such a way an

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<sup>31</sup> The flower is known as "mimosa" in Russia and is a symbol of love. These flowers were really the first to appear in the Soviet Russia in spring and it has become a tradition for men to present the women with them on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, The Women's Day. Margarita holds them also in the picture on the page 3 of this essay.

<sup>32</sup> Pittman (1991), pp. 81-142.

<sup>33</sup> Pittman (1991), p. 133.

<sup>34</sup> Pittman (1991), p. 130

implementation of the idea of love as an essential part and an inspirational force for the artistic creativity, the idea in which Bulgakov strongly believed himself. On the other hand, according to N. Utekhin, Margarita's pact with the Satan as well as her transformation into a witch and the devil's queen represent the most tangible manifestation of the idea of *ethical freedom* in the novel.<sup>35</sup> Jung consistently believes that we must in certain circumstances have the courage and freedom "to avoid the known moral good and do what is considered evil, if our ethical decision so requires."<sup>36</sup>

The interpretation of Utekhin and the statement of Jung coincide at the point where they ascertain the inner world of humanity to claim its right for essentiality in the evaluative processes of the extraneous world, where the genuine knowledge is being constituted.

The emotional substance of the genuine knowledge, expressed in the figures of the Master and Margarita, is however artificially separated in the fictional reality of the novel from the mundane world. This corresponds to the situation of the empirical world of the Soviet state, where the discourses of rational and sentient were torn apart due to the official ethics and censorship applied to support it. As shadows of the realm of dreams, the lovers, according to a possible interpretation of the novel, had never existed as blood and flesh, and therefore it does not surprise that they have to leave the world for good. At the end of the story, due to the will of the divine and diabolic powers, the Master and Margarita are awarded with peace. A disciple of Ieshua-Ha-Nozri, Matthew Levi, is sent to the devil to tell him...

*"He has read the Master's work," said Matthew Levi, "and asks you to take the Master with you and reward him with peace. Is that hard for you to do, spirit of evil?"*

*"Nothing is hard for me to do," answered Woland, "you know that very well." He paused and added: "But why don't you take him with you into the light?"*

*"He does not deserve the light, he deserves peace," Levi said in a sorrowful voice.*

*"Tell him it will be done," Woland replied and added, his eye flashing: "And leave me immediately."*

*"He asks that she who loved him and suffered because of him also be taken with him," Levi addressed Woland pleadingly for the first time.*

*"We would never have thought of it without you. Go."*

The judgement of the divinity, that the Master "does not deserve light, he deserves peace" forwards the Master and Margarita into oblivion. It can not puzzle, if we believe in the statement about the artificially separated emotionality manifested in the realm of dreams and imagination where the Master and Margarita abide. Their lives and beliefs are completely detached from the reality, which, as it was shown above, demands a dialogue. They reject reality as much as reality rejects their spirit. Due to the law of the self-referentiality of the systems<sup>37</sup> represented by the novel's discourses of reality and myth, the communication fails to take place.

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<sup>35</sup>Nikolai Pavlovič Utekhin, „Istoričeskije grani večnyh istin. Master i Margarita M. Bulgakova“, („Historical borders of the eternal truth. The Master and Margarita of Mikhail Bulgakov“), in: N. P. Utekhin, *Sovremennyj sovetskij roman: Filosofskije aspekty*, Leningrad 1979, p. 222.

<sup>36</sup>C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. by A. Jaffe, tr. by R. and C. Winston, New York, 1963, p. 330.

<sup>37</sup>Baecker (2001), pp. 59-74.

On the other hand, the novel itself suggests a dichotomy which is implemented, according to Julia Kristeva's typology of discourses, not within monological, but within dialogical discourses and exists only in and through relationships, and therefore implies the "double language" and "another logic."<sup>38</sup> In a famous passage the devil tells Matthew Levi coming to ask him about the Master and Margarita:

*"...Kindly consider the question: what would your good do if evil did not exist, and what would the earth look like if shadows disappeared from it? Shadows are cast by objects and people. Here is the shadow of my sword. Trees and living beings also have shadows. Do you want to skin the whole earth, tearing all the trees and living things off it, because of your fantasy of enjoying bare light? You're a fool."*

Bare light is, in this way, a monological discourse and therefore nothing in the world, where the processes of cognition occur through the comparison. Light acquires sense only in the interaction with the darkness. Peace is, on its side, neither a monologue nor a dialogue. It is vacuum for not existing things. Since many critics, in consistence with the idea already mentioned above, interpret the Master as one of the voices (along with the satanic voice) in the schizophrenic state of the young poet Ivan Homeless, who on the contrary represents the fate of the real author confronted with the Soviet system,<sup>39</sup> it becomes clear, that the Master and Margarita are embedded in a monological discourse trying but failing to reach dichotomy. There are also many parallels drawn between the Master and the poet Ivan Homeless in the work. Ivan is even seen as the real author of the story about Pontius Pilate,<sup>40</sup> the Master being identified as his genuine creativity storming from inside him but dying as soon as it reaches the extraneous world. As the Master tells Ivan about his work, he concludes by saying the following:

*"When I came out into the world holding my novel, my life ended..."*

Perhaps, this is the reason why the Master does not deserve light, but peace. Light's prerogative, as it is emphasised in the novel, is a dialogue, like also that of the darkness, both of them having no sense without each other. It is not the idea of the spiritual as genuine knowledge and creativity in the novel. It is rather the belief that the knowledge may be sustainable only with instinctive sentient sources being supported by the logic. On the other hand, pure logic would make this world dull. It would deprive it from the beauty of spontaneous moments when emotions will rule supreme and Master will meet Margarita, and at the same moment he will fatally know that:

*"...all my life I had loved precisely this woman ..."*

## 2.4 Pontius Pilate

It is however important to admit that the novel communicates the optimistic philosophy of productivity possible also under conditions of censorship. The Master does not disappear without a trace. He leaves his work about Pontius Pilate whose main objective is to continue his failed intentions and break the wall of system's ignorance. Such was also the fate of the Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*,

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<sup>38</sup> Kristeva (1986), pp. 34-61.

<sup>39</sup> About Ivan's schizophrenia see in: Pittman (1991), 97-103.

<sup>40</sup> Pierre R. Hart, "The Master and Margarita as Creative Process", in : *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2, Summer 1973, p. 170.

whose subversiveness turned another side of the censorious relationship: being a philosophical reminiscence and concurrently a touching love story, the novel is also a devastating satire of the Soviet society. As a satirical work it defends its philosophy and censors the Soviet system as much as the latter did it with it.

Chudakova<sup>41</sup> suggests that Bulgakov's version of Jerusalem was a direct response to the Soviet doctrine of atheism, in particular to the atheism of Demyan Bedny, who wrote in the postscript appended to his 1925 edition of "The Flawless New Testament":

*I took the canonical texts of the Gospels as they exist and adhering meticulously to them I tried to show that Jesus was quite different from what we have come to imagine. I insist that on the basis of the Gospels only this alternative picture of Jesus can be given: he was a liar, a drunkard, a womaniser, and so on...*

*This realisation represents the first stage in our anti-religious campaign. – "Look how pitiful and abominable your god is!"*

*The second stage – "Neither a good god, nor a bad god ever existed. They are a nonsense!"*

*The account of how people dreamt up gods, including Christ, is clearly and convincingly given in many anti-religious books and books about the cultural history of mankind. If the reader having developed an interest in this matter, turns spontaneously to these works and progresses further along the path which signifies his liberation from the clutches of this church idiot, I shall wish him:*

*- Happy journey!<sup>42</sup>*

This philosophy is of course very similar to that adopted by Berlioz and Homeless at the beginning of the novel.<sup>43</sup> It demonstrates which indirect ways censorship took in the Soviet Union by aiming its actions against particular discourses. Growing generations of the Soviet era who were given to read only such books as this of Demyan Bedny also came to believe in this heresy and propagate it to their descendants. That was the reason why such works as the Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita* were regarded as dangerous by the system and excluded from the process of communication. This also explains why the existence of such works was so important to obtain the banned dialogue.

The interpretation of Gospels by Bulgakov seeks to create a counter-discourse to that established by the Soviet official moral. His Jerusalem is a careful historical account with the Roman politics and the figure of Pontius Pilate within it. According to the historical annals,<sup>44</sup> the Roman Procurator's office in Jerusalem has been historically verified as a necessary part of the peace keeping effort in Judea. Furthermore, it is known that there were two categories of Imperial governors, corresponding to two categories of provinces. The wealthy and important districts were supervised by governors of senatorial

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<sup>41</sup> Marietta O. Čudakova, *Žizneopisaniye Mikhaila Bulgakova. Pisateli o pisateljakh* (,Biography of Mikhail Bulgakov. Writers about writers'), Moscow 1988, p. 50.

<sup>42</sup> Demjan Bedny, "Novyj zavet bez izjana evangelista Demjana", (,The Flawless New Testament'), in: D. Bedny, *Sobranije sočinenij*, vol. 5, Moscow, 1965, p. 380.

<sup>43</sup> See excerpts on page 9.

<sup>44</sup> It is known that Bulgakov obtained his historical knowledge from the works of D.F. Strauss *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*; A. Drew, *The Myth about Christ*; F.W. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*; Renan, *Life of Jesus*.- Referred to by Pittman (1991), p. 149.

rank who held the title *legati propraetore*. The minor territories, like the one which included Judea, which required troops to keep order, were governed by men of equestrian rank who were called *procuratores*.<sup>45</sup>

The Brockhaus Encyclopedia notes that Pilate was the fifth procurator of Judea and remained in office over a period of approximately ten years (26-36 AD). He was known as cruel man, who felt contempt and hatred towards the Jewish people. The absolute sovereignty over Pilate's dominion rested, of course, with the Roman Emperor Tiberius.<sup>46</sup>

In the Master's story Pontius Pilate is rooted at the center of the struggle between the Jewish theocracy with the High Priest demanding his rights on the one hand, and the Roman State as the supreme idea dominating over Pilate's will, on the other hand. Pilate's position is highly precarious because of the guarantees given by the Roman Emperor that the occupying forces will not in any circumstances violate the sanctity of the Jewish religious law. These guarantees provided the local authorities with the means of manipulating the power of the Roman representative to their own advantage. So, as Ieshua with his rebellious ideology appears in Judea, the High Priest of Jerusalem gives Pilate no choice: he insists that Ieshua must be executed.

Who is Ieshua in the Master's story? As Pittman interprets it, "Ieshua's philosophy emulates the presumptions prompted by the rhetoric of the radical Russian intelligentsia at the turn of the twentieth century: ... man is good and malleable; evil resides in external conditions; through corrective action evil can be eradicated and mankind will reach the state of perfection (communism)."<sup>47</sup> However, Pittman admits that there is a significant difference between ideologies of the Russian intelligentsia and that of Ieshua: while the latter acknowledges the existence of a higher spiritual authority as the final arbiter of human destinies, the former regarded the temporal powers as omnipotent in every respect. The conflict between reason and spirituality repeats in the dialectic relation between Ieshua and Pilate. Ieshua's ideas cannot reach the understanding of Pontius Pilate who is a Roman soldier and whom life has taught to suppress the metaphysical aspects of experience. But they penetrate his consciousness and attract him to the truth which they contain. Nevertheless, Pontius Pilate is well aware that if he lets himself be associated with an advocate of the vagrant, it will cost him his life or provoke a war between Rome and Judea which then may cost thousands of lives.

This situation of Pontius Pilate is, of course, reminiscent to that one settled within the Soviet Union. The possibility of an author to relate himself freely to the phenomena<sup>48</sup> of reality was disturbed and could function only through the authority as mediator. In most cases it is, however, difficult to outsource the authority of mediation. So, for Pontius Pilate it is both a dilemma of the Roman state, dominating over him, as well as a deep ethical problem of preventing the possibility of the bloody strife between two peoples, which draws him in such unpalatable incident as the sentencing of the Jesus. The Bulgakov's Jerusalem opens us another side of the Bible story: perhaps, Pontius Pilate chose to sacrifice his own comfort in order to save millions of people from massacre.

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<sup>45</sup> Priscilla Conwell Deck, *Thematic Coherence in Bulgakov's Master and Margarita*, Ph. D. Thesis, Brandeis University: Ann Arbor 1977, p.158.

<sup>46</sup> *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie*, völlig neu bearb. 19. Aufl., vol.17, Mannheim 1992, p. 172.

<sup>47</sup> Pittman (1991), p. 152.

<sup>48</sup> About freedom of "actors" to relate themselves to the phenomena, see page 6 of this essay.

## 2.5 Setting free...

It is interesting, how optimistic and easy the novel *The Master and Margarita* establishes its subversiveness out from the discourses of suppression and abolition in the Soviet reality, as if the author knew, due to the crowned instinctive knowledge, that his work would outlast the system which censored it. In the end he is setting his heroes free: the Master is reunited with his love, Margarita, and his pain is freed from the burden of existence. As an implementation of the genuine creativity of the poet Ivan, he is forwarded into oblivion. Ieshua's sufferings lose any sense since he does not believe in physical pain and is presented as pure spirituality. His dimension is pure light.

Both the Master and Ieshua are only "shadows", parts of divided selves, only one-sided figures which acquire sense only when they reach interaction with their opposites: light with darkness and spirituality with reason. Their dialogue is the first step on the way to creation and reproduction. And this dialogue is implemented in the figures of Ivan Homeless and Pontius Pilate, who suffer from the burden of the forced monologue within their systems and try to trespass it.

Ivan, who at the beginning of the novel is possessed with the reasoning the world, gets back his second self at the end. He is no longer the poet Homeless. He is now identified by his full name, Ivan Nikolaevich Ponyrev, and designated as Professor at the Institute of History and Philosophy. He will no longer deviate from the official line and has been made to believe that his acquaintance with the devil and all following events came about as a consequence of a hypnosis. However, his mind's erratic wanderings recur at the full moon when the story about Pontius Pilate returns to life in his dreams and he is tortured by the image of the "vagrant" Ieshua being executed at the order of the procurator of Judea:

It is always one and the same thing that awakens the scholar [Ivan Homeless] and draws pitiful cries from him on the night of the full moon. He sees some unnatural, noseless executioner who, leaping up and hooting somehow with his voice, sticks his spear into the heart of Gestas, who is tied to a post and has gone insane. But it is not the executioner who is frightening so much as the unnatural lighting in this dream, caused by some dark cloud boiling and heaving itself upon the earth, as happens only during world catastrophes.

*After the injection, everything changes before the sleeping man. A broad path of moonlight stretches from his bed to the window, and a man in a white cloak with blood-red lining gets on to this path and begins to walk towards the moon. Beside him walks a young man in a torn chiton and with a disfigured face. The walkers talk heatedly about something, they argue, they want to reach some understanding.*

These interlocutors in the Ivan's dream, who are no other than Ieshua and Pilate, are symbolically embedding the restored dialogue which is so essential for the continuity of life.

*The Master and Margarita* itself created in times of the Soviet censorship, executes the same function. The novel renewed the banned communication between discourses which were artificially separated as official and unofficial. Bulgakov asserts the idea that it is perhaps possible to manipulate humans taking them their freedom to choose between good and evil, right and wrong, but it is not possible to exterminate the truth. This is expressed in *The Master and Margarita* in one very simple

statement: *manuscripts don't burn*. Being interrogated by the devil, why Margarita calls him a master, the latter says smiling:

*"...She has too high an opinion of a novel I wrote."*

*"What is this novel about?"*

*"It is a novel about Pontius Pilate." Here again the tongues of the candles swayed and leaped, the dishes on the table clattered, Woland burst into thunderous laughter, but neither frightened nor surprised anyone.*

*(...)*

*"About what? About what? About whom?" said Woland, ceasing to laugh. "And that - now? It's stupendous! Couldn't you have found some other subject? Let me see it." Woland held out his hand, palm up.*

*"Unfortunately, I cannot do that," replied the Master, "because I burned it in the stove."*

*"Forgive me, but I don't believe you," Woland replied, "that cannot be: manuscripts don't burn." He turned to Behemoth<sup>49</sup> and said, "Come on. Behemoth, let's have the novel."*

*The cat instantly jumped off the chair, and everyone saw that he had been sitting on a thick stack of manuscripts.*

Manuscripts don't burn... Perhaps, here lies the answer of the suppressed author, whom we traditionally asked about his experience with censorship.

"It is stupendous!" exclaims the devil. – It is stupendous, we may conclude. It is amazing that such an author, knowing that he writes a forbidden work and knowing that it may cost him his life, still keeps doing it. It must perhaps really be a torture for an artist to be unmercifully silenced. Or, better to say, it becomes not possible to silence him. Because the genuine artistic creativity knows no limits and can suffer no restrictions.

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<sup>49</sup> Behemoth is the giant cat, who accompanies Woland and who finds demonic pleasure in challenging people and putting everything in a blaze with a primus stove 😊

### 3 Conclusion

To return to the theoretical questions of "censorship", it will require perhaps only a short look back. How many faces the category of censorship may have shows, for example, the novel of Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*. With regard to this novel it would not be a mistake to state that censorship deserves its dialectic and ambivalent nature which is and must be hard to define. Summing up the most important issues, I would relate the following of them to constitute a concept of *freedom of censorship*:

1. The dimension of censorship lies within the notions of *communication* and *control* through communication. There is a need for *all-inclusiveness* within the communicative process since everyone is to get the right to protect his / her options against the options of the others within the limits of own power and that one imposed by the extraneous discourses.
2. Communication is an *interaction*, and this means that participating actors are always influenced, that is censored, by their partners. Censorship is therefore always a *double-side relationship*.
3. *Domination* is a consequence of the disturbed communication and is to be regarded as an abnormal state of things.<sup>50</sup>

It is, however, not to forget, that control is an important function of censorship. It is obvious that in the course of communication the participating discourses may gain or lose power, so that control can in the end acquire different forms, whereby authority, domination and even suppression is never known to turn "good" or "bad" side of the coin. Paradoxically, these must not necessarily be bad intentions which forward the will to burn, exterminate and damage. The ideas of happiness, protection and eradication of the evil can relate to censorship as much as the will to dominate. But these ideas try to colour the world in black-white. They claim to know the answers to all questions, which is quite a dull circumstance.

But thank God, the world is full of puzzles! Thank God, we'll never guess in it, who rules our lives and the whole order of things on earth. With opened minds and with opened hearts we will be able to judge upon it in eternal dialogue which will hopefully never stop.

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<sup>50</sup> I developed these theses with a significant reference to the systems theory. However, they cannot be interpreted as answers to the questions of control and domination placed within the systems theory itself and are only to be regarded as based on the case study of "the Master and Margarita".

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