



**Analysis of Koroviev's (Fagot's) Character in Bulgakov's  
"Master and Margarita"**  
Dudka

On the Custom Papers Network is published this short paper from an author known as Dudka, describing the Koroviev character in The Master and Margarita and written as a term paper for a High School, 11th grade level in 2006.

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The Master and Margarita

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Koroviev, alias Fagot, is one of the minor characters in Michael Bulgakov's book *Master and Margarita*. Being part of Woland's band, Koroviev is the superior one of the devil's subordinates. In the novel, Moscow citizens see this character as the "interpreter" (Bulgakov, 107) and the secretary of the famous foreign artist and the "specialist in black magic" (15) Professor Woland. Koroviev is also said to be the former regent of a church choir, "ex-choirmaster" (48). However, in reality this person is no one but a demon and a knight, right hand of the devil himself. Fagot's main purpose, function is to help Woland, or what's more interesting the author himself, to expose the substance of negative phenomena in human society, to show it to everyone.

In the beginning of the novel we first meet Koroviev in form of Mikhail Alexandrovich Berlioz's hallucination, which he sees while sitting on the bench in the Patriarchs' Ponds Park. According to Mikhail's first impression, Koroviev was a see-through strange citizen, "with a jeering expression on his physiognomy" (4). However, when Berlioz meets him next time, we see that he materializes and is "not made of air" (48) any more. Fagot points the way to turnstile to the editor, in fact showing him the way to his death. So even from the first pages of the book we see Koroviev as someone who helps to execute the sentence of the devil, to punish people for their sins and vices. One of those people is Berlioz, who is doomed to death because he presumptuously denied the existence of God and Devil. There was nothing sacred for this man, therefore he should be punished and Koroviev shows him the way. After Berlioz's death we find Koroviev sitting in the bench with the Professor and for the first time introducing himself as his interpreter. Then we see Fagot together with the tomcat Behemoth and Woland, running away from Ivan Nikolayevich Homeless who is chasing them. However, they easily managed to escape due to some "unnatural" (54), magical tricks that proved their supernaturalism.

Later we meet Koroviev in the Chapter 9, "Koroviev's Antics", after the devil's band had occupied the apartment Number 50 in "No. 302-b Sadovaya Street" (105). There our interpreter plays a role of a mock temper. First, he makes the house chairmen Nikanor Ivanovich Bosoy to take the bribe and then squeals on him. However, the most interesting thing about their meeting and conversation is not only the way Koroviev successfully tempted the chairman to take the forbidden at that time dollars, nor the way he acted afterwards. What's the most significant, is the way Fagot answer's Bosoy's question about his name. Readers find out that his name, like Woland's nationality is not important or tentative, when the interpreter answers: "my name ... is ... well ... let us say, Koroviev" (107). Therefore, it becomes obvious that it's not his real name, nor the interpreter's profession is the true purpose of him coming to Moscow.

Further in the book, during the black magic show this demon also gives to people in the audience free money and clothes, which then disappear leaving all the fools naked. He and his master tempt them as well, playing on one of the greatest people's weaknesses - avarity, greed for money and free things that they can get without doing anything. Greedy Moscow citizens easily fell into devil's trap, so Koroviev and Co punished them for this vice. And this is when Fagot's main function of unmasking the truth comes into place. He shows the real, true people as they are without masks, revealing their dark secrets and desires. Fagot does it, for example, when reported the information about Likhodeyev, a famous person in Moscow's artistic world who is in fact idler, profligate and drunkard.

Later on in the novel, Koroviev makes the workers of "the Commission on Spectacles and Light Entertainment" (200) sing without stopping, and comically cries in front of Poplavsky due to the tragic death of Berlioz. All these events, along with the way Koroviev was dressed - "in a tight checkered coat, a jockey's cap and pince-nez" (106), and spoke, are incredibly funny for the readers. Therefore, it won't be mistake to suggest that most of the times this knight is there to provide entertainment, a comic relief. He and the tomcat Behemoth, are some kind of clowns, who entertain their master, Woland, and the readers as well.

But Fagot's main contributions to the story, his functions in the book is not only to be funny or unmask the truth, but also sometimes to provide one of the characters with serious and useful information, to give them some kind of knowledge. One of these characters, for instance, is the main heroine, Margarita. When she comes to the apartment No 50, Koroviev not only welcomes her comically, but also introduces her to the idea of the "fifth dimension" (268), ability to "stretch the space the devil knows how far" (268). After that he acquaints her with the business she is going to do, to be the mistress of the "Satan's Great Ball" (276). During the ball, Koroviev directs Margarita's actions and informs her of the arriving guests. He tells her what's every guest famous for and how she should talk to them. In the scene of killing Baron Meigel, the plate with Berlioz's skull on it was in Fagot's hands and he brings it, full of blood, to Woland who takes this strange cup. This proves that out of everyone in the Devil's band, Koroviev was the superior one.

After the Great Ball, Koroviev again becomes a poseur and clown, but, nevertheless, helps Margarita to talk to Frieda, takes care of Master, burns the history of his illness, and gives Master and Margarita their documents. So he helps the main heroes and carries out Woland's orders. After those good actions he just undertook, Koroviev begins his last adventures in Moscow. He, together with his permanent companion Behemoth, visit Griboyedov's restaurant, and cause the fire there. He is the reason of the Griboyedov house burning down, and what's more likely it wasn't an accident. He did it by intent, because it was home to MASSOLIT organization, where writers ate all the time, preoccupying themselves with free vacations, apartments, dachas, intrigues and feelings of "the blackest envy" (61), instead of actually writing. This was Koroviev's last fair punishment for corrupted Moscow citizens. Then he and Behemoth reunite with Woland and others, and depart from Moscow.

"Magician, choirmaster, wizard, interpreter" (267), only during the last flight Koroviev-Fagot finally became somebody who he really is - "a purple knight with a somber, never-smiling face" (384). A knight, who as well as his master knows the price for people's weaknesses and virtues. A clown who unmasks lies, falsehood, hypocrisy, greediness, and other human vices, and, therefore, fulfills the purpose and meaning of the novel. Koroviev-Fagot plays his roles, making fun of people's foolishness and ignorance. Bulgakov uses Koroviev's tricks and jokes to show a reader the corruption of a human nature. This is the main purpose of the book, and this is the purpose of Woland and his band coming to Moscow.