



**In Defense of the Homeless:
On the Uses of History and the Role of Bezdomnyi in The
Master and Margarita**

Laura D. Weeks

In the following essay, Weeks considers images and influences related to the character of Ivan "the homeless" in Bulgakov's novel. Published in *Russian Review* 48, no. 1 (January 1989): 45-65

From the archive section of
The Master and Margarita

<http://www.masterandmargarita.eu>

Webmaster

Jan Vanhellemont
Klein Begijnhof 6
B-3000 Leuven

+3216583866
+32475260793

From his first appearance at Patriarchs' Ponds to his final moonlit stroll along the side streets off the Arbat, Ivan Nikolaevich Ponyrev, alias "John the Homeless," remains one of Bulgakov's most controversial characters. He has been identified variously as the "Ivanushka Durachok" of Russian fairy tales,¹ a type of *iurodivyi* or "holy fool,"² a parody of Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov,³ and an ironic allusion to the proletarian poet Bezymenskii.⁴ His moral integrity and his relationship to the Master have been subject to radically different interpretations, with such critics as Proffer, Milne, and Avins on the negative end of the scale, and Bolen, Wright, and Hart on the positive end. Proffer, for example, sees Ivan as a largely negative figure, a failed disciple of a failed Master:

*Ivan, instead of continuing the work the Master left, i.e., the novel about Pilate, becomes a professor at the Institute which did indeed interest the Master. However, Bezdomnyi has renounced his belief in the Master and the events connected to him.*⁵

In assessing Ivan's role as the transmitter of the Master's message, Avins takes a similarly dim view of his achievement. "Unable to meet the demands of discipleship," she observes, "he fails not only to carry on the work of the Master, but even fully to grasp the lessons of his life and word, and to transmit them to others."⁶ Hart, by contrast, sees Ivan as a man "whose basic integrity remains uncorrupted," and who, at the novel's end, possesses the experience and the confidence to fulfill the task entrusted him by the Master.⁷ Bolen also sees Ivan as a success: "The novel contains enough support for the assumption that Bezdomnyi will be successful in the search for the truth begun by the Master."⁸

The divergence of interpretation indicates that there is no consensus on the figure of Ivan, although his significance for the *structure* of the novel is indisputable. As Wright points out, he is the character that opens and closes the novel, the source of at least one of the Pilate chapters, and the only truly sympathetic character consistently tied to the Moscow level of the novel.⁹ In addition to casting the figure of Ivan in a positive light, I would like to suggest that his structural significance is inseparable from his thematic significance. He functions both as one of the novel's chief icons and as the bearer of one of the novel's central thematic concerns, the elaboration of Bulgakov's vision of history.

The identification of the novel's three main characters as parodistic or iconographic representations of New Testament figures is by now a critical commonplace. The Master represents a modern Christ figure or, at the very least, is a pale reflection of the Ieshua of the Pilate chapters, but his significance is problematical.¹⁰ Margarita's function as an icon, however, is fairly obvious. She is the Virgin of the apocryphal tale "The Virgin's Descent into Hell," with Korov'ev playing the role of the archangel Michael.¹¹ She is the Church,¹² the Mother of God, the Mother of Sorrows, the Mother of Tenderness.¹³ In Ivan's final apocalyptic vision she resembles the woman clothed in the sun, with the moon at her feet.¹⁴

Ivan, as his very name suggests, is also a major source of the novel's iconography. His appearance at the Griboedov Restaurant is a masterful parody of John the Baptist.¹⁵ "Homeless" appears clothed in rags after his "baptism" in the Moscow River to warn his colleagues that Satan is among them. The crowd's reaction: "It's a clear-cut case. Delirium tremens." (*Gotovo delo. Belaia goriachka.*) parodies the angel's prophecy that John the Baptist "shall be great in the sight of the Lord and shall drink no wine nor strong drink" (Luke 1:15). His incarceration in the insane asylum recalls a similar verdict passed on John the Baptist (Luke 7:33): "For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine and ye say 'He hath a demon.'" (Possession by a demon was the Biblical equivalent of insanity.) In a truly surrealistic piece of irony, it is Ivan who sees the naked Salome (the woman in the bathtub in building 13, apartment 47).

As Ivan grows in consciousness, he renounces his former life as a poet three times: once when Dr. Stravinskii recognizes him as a famous poet, again when the Master asks him

what he does for a living, and again when the state investigator expresses the hope that he will soon write poetry again--an implicit parody of Peter's denial of Christ.¹⁶ Towards the end of the novel, Ivan is transformed into one of the novel's most beautiful iconic images. Margarita kisses him farewell, and for a moment their cheeks touch, she bent over him, his arms around her neck--a representation of the *Bogomater' umileniia*, the Mother of Tenderness. Ivan's relationship to the Master and to Margarita in this scene is also reminiscent of John, the disciple beloved of God, in John 19:26: "Mother, behold thy son. Behold, thy Mother." As many have observed, Ivan's function on the Moscow plane as the Master's disciple and the scribe who records the Master's story parallels that of Matthew Levi in the Pilate chapters.¹⁷ Thus, Ivan's iconographic function transcends identification with any one figure to become a composite image of "discipleship": John "the Forerunner" (as John the Baptist is called in Russian), Matthew the Evangelist, Simon Peter, and John, the disciple beloved of God. His "discipleship" also provides another layer of parody in the novel.

Leslie Milne has described in some detail how the opening debate between Berlioz and Woland in *The Master and Margarita* follows the classical Marxist-Leninist version of the Hegelian "negation of the negation," making the first two chapters of the novel a "diabolically elegant mockery" in which dialectical materialism is stood on its head.¹⁸ More recently, Bethea has demonstrated that Bely's *Peterburg*, Platonov's *Chevengur*, and Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* constitute a "resilient set of counter-models to the Socialist Realist classic."¹⁹ Avins goes even further in linking the opening relationship between Ivan and Berlioz to the master plot of the typical Socialist Realist novel.²⁰ There may be substantial basis, then, for reading *The Master and Margarita* as a parody of the Socialist Realist novel, with Ivan its "antihero."

The classical Socialist Realist novel, as Katerina Clark defines it, involves a young man's quest for consciousness. It is a kind of politically oriented *Bildungsroman* in which the young hero sets out to fulfill a nearly impossible task. En route he overcomes various societal and natural obstacles and masters his own impulses, thereby rising to a new level of consciousness. The outcome is the resolution of the "spontaneity/consciousness dialectic" within himself and the forging of a new, collective identity.²¹

This archetypal quest for consciousness is so highly ritualized that Clark likens it to the rite of passage common in some form to all cultures. She then breaks down the rite of passage into three distinct phases: separation, transition, and incorporation.

*Separation involves taking the subject away from the previous environment he knew and possibly attempting to expunge all memory of it. The transition phase is often marked by "instruction" in tribal law and gradual recitation of myths, etc., [while the] final act [incorporation] is a religious ceremony.*²²

In his quest for consciousness, the hero is assisted by "an older and more "conscious" figure who has made just such a successful quest before him."²³ In *The Master and Margarita* the obvious candidates for the roles of novice and mentor are Ivan and Master. It is significant that the figure of the Master was introduced midway in the writing of the novel, in 1932, the year the term Socialist Realism made its official appearance, and not long before Stalinist rhetoric reached its apogee.

Comparing *The Master and Margarita* closely with the standard formula for the Soviet production novel, we see that the stages in Ivan's journey towards consciousness resemble those of the positive hero. The first stage, the prologue, is identical to the archetypal stage of separation. As Clark explains,

*Most Soviet novels open as the hero leaves his "habitual environment" and goes to another place. This new environment then functions as a testing ground of his manhood and the place of instruction in tribal law, myths, etc.*²⁴

In Ivan's case, the appearance of Woland estranges him from his "habitual environment." For the first time his poetry and fame cause him embarrassment, not pleasure, and he, too, goes to a new environment--the insane asylum. In the archetypal Socialist Realist novel the hero, upon his arrival in the new place, sees that all is not well and devises a scheme for righting the wrong, which is dismissed as utopian. He then proceeds to inspire the masses at a meeting during which "his powers as an orator are displayed."²⁵ Ivan delivers two such speeches. With his newly awakened consciousness he perceives that all is not well in his own microcosm, the world of state-certified literature, and attempts to right the wrong. He delivers his first "oration" at the Griboedov Restaurant, where he is dismissed as drunk with grief, or more simply, drunk: "Brothers in literature! Listen to me, all of you! He has appeared! Seize him immediately, otherwise he will create indescribable trouble."²⁶ His second speech, at the psychiatric clinic, is in a much lower key: "Very well then you'll pay for this yourselves I warned you, but as you will At the moment I'm more interested in Pontius Pilate."²⁷ True to the archetypal pattern, Ivan's memory of his former life is then largely expunged, but by means of drugs and hypnosis!

After this begins what Clark calls the transition period, the setting up of the task that makes up the bulk of the typical Socialist Realist novel. Bulgakov, however, condenses this process into a single chapter, "The Schism of Ivan."²⁸ That Ivan is in the process of forging a new identity is clear from the last question of his "interior dialogue": "In that case, what will I become?" (*Tak kto zhe ia takoi vykhozhu v etom sluchae?*)

At this point in Ivan's journey towards consciousness, enter the Master. It should be noted that the teacher-disciple relationship is clearly marked in the Socialist Realist novel and is accompanied by a fair amount of iconography. In Clark's words,

The main formula here is that the elder should be shown to be old and about to "pass on" while the initiate is young and maturing. Thus, regardless of the actual age of the elder he will be described as being tired, gray, wasted, stooped. If the author does not see fit to represent him as aging, he may achieve a similar effect by rendering his elder seriously ill or badly injured (he has given his health to the cause or risked his life for it.)²⁹

The state of the Master's health is emphasized in the novel to the extent that it needs no further elaboration here. In enumerating the *topoi* of Stalinist literature, Vera Dunham also stresses the ill health of the devoted party leader and concludes that the preferred organ is the heart, i.e., the good-natured party boss suffers from a bad heart.³⁰ In a rather brutal bit of parody, Bulgakov has the organ in question be the brain, and the mark of the elect is brain-related disease: Ivan's schizophrenia, Pilate's hemiplegia, or the pain in the left temple shared by all the truth-seekers in the novel, including Margarita.

The climax of the hero's quest for consciousness, according to Clark, involves two events: a form of martyrdom (either a real or a symbolic death) and an initiation scene in which the mentor passes on the reins to the disciple.

The novel culminates in a scene marking the moment of passage itself, the rite of incorporation. The elder presides and confers his own status as tribal elder on the initiate. Very commonly the elder will give the initiate some advice or "instruction." Since this is a rite of incorporation, the elder also often hands the initiate some object or token that symbolizes belonging to the "tribe," i.e., a banner, a badge, or a party card.³¹

The martyrdom in ***The Master and Margarita*** is the Master's death, and the initiation is his final visit to the insane asylum, during which he passes on the reins to Ivan (the writing of the sequel) and takes his leave, concluding with the words "Farewell, my

disciple" (*Proshchai, uchenik.*) The token is the kiss Ivan receives from Margarita.

At this point the analogy with the typical Socialist Realist novel breaks down. For one thing, in his quest for consciousness, the positive Soviet hero moves from isolation to social integration and collective rather than individual identity. Ivan, on the other hand, journeys backwards. He begins as a happy, unthinking member of MASSOLIT, secure in his collective identity, and ends as an isolated individual. Furthermore, what Clark calls the master plan of the Socialist Realist novel is modelled almost exclusively on the production novel, which, as Clark says, is "by far the most common and the most highly ritualized of Stalinist novels."³² The production novel is structured around a task, and the stages involved in fulfilling this task. What constitutes Ivan's task? The fact that Ivan moves in spatial terms from the ideological center of Soviet life to the periphery and in temporal terms backwards, away from the utopian communist future, indicates the real reason for the discrepancy between *The Master and Margarita* and the classical Socialist Realist novel. *The Master and Margarita* may mimic in form the canons of the dominant literary ideology of its day, but in essence it is a polemical response to the vision of history found in Stalinist literature.

In Clark's interpretation, the Socialist Realist novel serves as a parable of the working out of Marxism-Leninism in history. The phases of the positive hero's life recapitulate the stages of historical progress toward communism.³³ Historical progress is defined by the dialectical struggle between spontaneity and consciousness which resolves itself in a series of revolutions leading to ever higher orders of the struggle. By the time of Stalin, certain moments in the struggle had become, in Clark's phrase, "a kind of canonized Great Time,"³⁴ and the way cleared for the glorious utopian communist future. Thus was created the officially sanctioned History, history with a capital "H". Whether this history had anything to do with reality is another matter. In fact, "there was an absolute cutoff between actual historical reality"³⁵ and the reality of the "High and Far-off Times."

The schism between official History and history led to the establishment of the dual sense of time that characterizes the Socialist Realist novel. On the one hand there is profane time, everyday reality; on the other, the Great Time or mythic time, signifying a transcendent reality. In literature these two coexisting times gave rise to modal schizophrenia--Clark's term for sudden, unmotivated transitions from the one to the other. In life, it was quite another matter. In life there is no way to bridge the gap. Because Marxist-Leninist history is eschatological in nature, one can only participate in the Great Time if one has the good fortune to be born either at the beginning of History (the Revolution) or at the end (the coming of communism). Clark describes the problem this linear view of history presented to writers as the number of older father figures who had actually fought in the Revolution or the Civil War, or had personally seen Lenin (and thus participated in the Great Time), gradually dwindled away. One solution was the addition of a secondary layer of *topoi*, generally involving the touching of a sacred shrine or monument, thereby linking the positive hero to the Great Time.

We cannot be absolutely certain that Bulgakov consciously parodied the state-mandated literature of his day, but the close structural affinity with the Socialist Realist novel, the date of composition (as mentioned above, the Master was introduced in 1932, a year significant both for literary and political reasons), and above all the opening debate (which Milne has identified as a mockery of Marxist-Leninist dialectical materialism)--all these suggest that he was consciously engaging in polemics and that the arena in which he chose to throw down the gauntlet was history. Lazslo Tikos notes that Bulgakov was "greatly skeptical of the historical optimism professed by Marxism, concerning man's discovering history's laws and "taking the future into his own hand."³⁶ The model Bulgakov counterposes to the Marxist-Leninist model of history closely resembles the pre-Augustinian or primitive Christian model of history.

Like the Marxist-Leninist model, the primitive Christian model is eschatological in

orientation, proceeding from an initial event (*Kairos*--literally, "a point in time") toward an ultimate goal, the *Parousia*, or Second Coming. A narrow interpretation of this linear model presented certain problems for early Christians, as the time of Christ and the Apostles receded, whereas the time of the "final event" was not yet fixed, leaving them "holding their breaths" for an indeterminate amount of time.

Robert Wilken defines a trend, beginning with the evangelist Luke at the end of the first century and continued by Hegesippus, which identifies the Age of the Apostles as a "golden time," an "eternal moment" to which Christians could refer in cases of doctrinal or ritual dispute.³⁷ This bears more than a shadowy resemblance to the above-mentioned *topoi*--the touching of a sacred shrine in order to make contact with the Great Time.

However, the primitive Christian model differs from the Marxist-Leninist model in some crucial areas. First of all, there is the value of the decisive event in each case. The Revolution that ushered in a new stage of history must be viewed as a complete break with the past. It can be seen as the culmination of centuries of class struggle, but by its very existence it negates the past. For the Marxist-Leninist, the past is at worst a dark period of oppression of the working classes by the propertied classes. At best it is useless baggage, to be "thrown overboard from the steamship of modernity." The "Christ event" likewise ushered in a new age, but far from being a break with the past, it was its fulfillment. Christ not only fulfilled Old Testament history, he participated in it from the beginning ("He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him." [John 1:2]).³⁸ Thus, God, the "author" of history, did not stand outside history but wrote himself into the text at the outset. Since he also wrote the conclusion, the primitive Christian could travel comfortably backwards and forwards in time, perceiving history as one unbroken, redemptive line.³⁹ The Marxist-Leninist, by contrast, can only travel forward in time, since a return to a previous relationship between exploiting and exploited classes would be unthinkable. The primitive Christian model also has the benefit of closure, since the "new heaven and new earth" promised are a recasting of the original creation.

Another of the fundamental differences between the two models is the placing of the decisive event at the center of history. This is graphically illustrated by the enumeration of time. The years preceding and following the Revolution form a progression (1825, 1861, 1905, 1917, 1921, 1933, 1941), which means that the Revolution ultimately recedes into the remote past. It is revealing that Bulgakov, with his acute sense of apocalyptic timing, hinted at the re-ordering of time in the opening sentence of ***The White Guard***: "Great and terrible was the Year of Our Lord 1918, *of the Revolution the second*. (emphasis added)." The advent of Christ, on the other hand, remains firmly in the center at the year 1, with time stretching out on either side.⁴⁰ The placing of Christ at the center of history still obtains in modern "quasi-existential" theology. Tillich, for example, speaks of the advent of Christ as "the center of history--if history is seen in its self-transcending character."⁴¹

Finally, in the primitive Christian model of history the cutoff between the Great Time and profane time is not as absolute as in the Marxist-Leninist model. By virtue of the doctrines of election and representation, and of resurrection, the individual has the possibility of intimate participation in both present and future stages of redemptive history.⁴² In other words, the primitive Christian participates equally in profane history (history with a small *h*) and sacred, redemptive History (History with a capital *H*).

Bulgakov's model of history resembles the primitive Christian model in many respects, for example, his placing the "Christ event" at the center of the text, and especially his emphasis on the figure of Pilate as a point intersection of profane and sacred histories.⁴³ As Oscar Cullmann notes, the evangelists continually stress certain key events precisely because they are the points at which history and History merge: the reign of the Emperor Tiberius, the ascension of Herod, the census called by Caesar Augustus, and above all the

decision of Pontius Pilate.

*Pilate, particularly as presented in the Gospel of John (ch. 19:11), is completely and in an outstanding way the involuntary instrument of the Christ event, which he brings to its very climax, to the decision on the cross. Thus, the mention of Pontius Pilate in the Apostle's Creed not only corresponds to a definite historical situation of the Church, but also has a theological significance, inasmuch as it shows by way of example how the course of even the so-called secular events stands in relation to redemptive history.*⁴⁴

Bulgakov similarly portrays Pilate as an instrument of History and makes an obvious allusion to the Apostle's Creed when Ieshua tells Pilate, "Now we shall be together forever. Where one is, there shall the other be! When they remember me--they will remember you also!"⁴⁵

Bulgakov's model also resembles the primitive Christian model in its sense of closure, both in the limited sense (before the Master has finished writing he already knows what the novel's last words will be) and in the larger sense--the sense that the outcome of history has already been assured because the conclusion has already been written, or in Woland's much-quoted words, "Everything will be as it should be. On this the world is founded."

Finally, Bulgakov's model resembles the primitive Christian model in the principal characters' intimate (not to say perplexing) participation in both profane history and sacred, redemptive History. This is illustrated by the shuttling of the narrative back and forth along the time line from the present to the "center" and back, which, as indicated above, is characteristic of the primitive Christian model, and by the characters' response to their encounters with History. Bulgakov underscores these encounters with the use of the word "history" (*istoriia*), in all of its many valences. After the first few repetitions, the word becomes a kind of flag, indicating that an encounter with History is taking place or is about to. For example, when Margarita, the most conscious of the three positive characters,⁴⁶ agrees to Azazello's scheme she exclaims, "Well, so what, I understand perfectly that I am being bribed and dragged into some shady little history (*v kakuiu-to temnuiu istoriiu*) for which I will pay dearly."⁴⁷ Inasmuch as Margarita, like Pilate, is the bearer of history (he is an official of the Roman Empire, she is the great-great-great-granddaughter of Marguerite de Valois), her encounter with Woland and Company represents the intersection of history and History.

The word history (*istoriia*) reappears in Margarita's final (finest!) moment, as she sees the suffering Pilate and remarks, "Twelve thousand moons for one moon long ago. Isn't that too much?" To which Woland replies, "A repeat of the little history with Frieda?" ("*Povtoriaetsia istoriia s Fridoi?*"),⁴⁸ thus reminding her of another moment when History and history intersected.

Ivan's encounters with History have special significance, because, unlike the Master and Margarita, he is left at the novel's end "stranded" at the intersection of History and history. To borrow a figure from the previous analogy with the Socialist Realist novel, the "task" set before Ivan is to record History and in so doing to gain control of the text. At the beginning of the novel he is clearly not in control, as demonstrated in his first encounter with History. He had been commissioned to write a satirical poem denigrating the figure of Christ, but, as the narrator tells us, due to his descriptive powers, his complete ignorance of the subject, or both, his Christ emerged as a living man. In short, the Word has a life of its own. In rejecting Ivan's first effort at writing History, his editor Berlioz, possibly the worst kind of unthinking positivist the Soviet system can produce, combats History (capital *H*) with history (small *h*). He invokes the historians Philo of Alexandria and Josephus Flavius, neither of whom mentions Christ, and claims that the passages on Christ in the *Annals* of Tacitus are much later interpolations. At this point poet and editor are joined by Woland, and the conflict between History and history comes

to the fore. In their haphazard attempt to identify Woland, Berlioz and Bezdomnyi settle on--a historian.

"A--ah--ah. You--are a historian?" Berlioz said with great relief and respect. "I am--a historian," affirmed the scholar, and added completely out of the blue, "This evening at Patriarchs' Ponds there will be an interesting little history."

(*budet interesnaia istoriia*)⁴⁹

Note the triple entendre in the word *history*: profane history (Berlioz's life is about to end), sacred, redemptive History (Berlioz is speaking to one who participated in Christ's story), and "*istoriia*" in the sense of an interesting, perhaps somewhat scandalous, incident. What is happening is that profane history and sacred History are about to intersect, but Berlioz fails to grasp this fact.

"There's your explanation for you!" thought Berlioz in confusion. "An insane German has arrived or somehow landed at Patriarchs' Ponds. There's a little history."

(*Vot tak istoriia*)⁵⁰

Ivan, on the other hand, does grasp what is happening, albeit tenuously. At the insane asylum he remains overwhelmed by the immediate presence of sacred History (Woland has assured him that he was present at the moment when Pilate bartered for Christ's life with the high priest Caiaphas). At the same time he finds that the staff at the psychiatric clinic is not the least interested in it. Whereas they are quite willing to hear his account of the death of his editor Berlioz (history), they dismiss his account of Satan and Pontius Pilate (History) as a hallucination. Left alone, Ivan tries to perform a seemingly trivial task. He tries to write history, the history of the previous day's events, and finds it no more trivial than did Tolstoi when he tried to write the history of yesterday. Needless to say, he fails. He tries various genres directed at various audiences, but he cannot fit the new wine into the old wineskins. The only thing that emerges is History--the first of the Pilate chapters. In despair he gives up, and the wind blows the pages he has written on the floor, where they lie scattered like Sybil's leaves--out of order, meaningless.

Meanwhile, Ivan, who has been diagnosed as schizophrenic, is developing a new personality. As the new Ivan emerges, the old Ivan is laid to rest. In yet another New Testament parody, two women and one man assist at the deposition from the cross, that is, three technicians write the history of Ivan's body. At this point he meets the Master, formerly a historian engaged in research at a museum, now a nameless invalid in the asylum--a man without a history. From the Master Ivan learns the truth about his first encounter with Satan, and that the Master had written a novel about Pontius Pilate. Their master-disciple relationship is cemented as they realize they are both prisoners as a result of their encounter with History. "Do you see," says the Master, "what a strange little history (*kakaia strannaia istoriia*). I'm incarcerated here for the same thing as you are--precisely because of Pontius Pilate."⁵¹ He then relates to Ivan not his personal history (his life and background) but only those events connected with his encounter with History (the writing of the novel), prefacing his remarks with a disclaimer: "My history is somewhat unusual." ("*Istoriia moia ne sovsem obyknovennaia.*")⁵²

In part II of the novel, the Master has his confrontation with Woland, his second encounter with History. The fact that this scene takes place outside of history is emphasized by the suspension of time (midnight in this scene lasts somewhere between three and six hours) and of dates (Begemot refuses to put a date on a document he is preparing, noting that "with a date on it a document becomes unreal"). In discussing the Master's future, Woland alludes to the writing of History: "So, the man who wrote the history (*istoriia*) of Pontius Pilate will go back to his basement flat with the intention of establishing himself there next to his table lamp and starving?"⁵³ He then suggests that

the Master turn from History to history. Instead of writing about Pilate he could write about the fools and philistines he has encountered since he first tried to publish his novel. ("If you have exhausted [the theme of the] Procurator, well, at the very least begin to describe this Aloysius.") The Master refuses, and we as readers learn that each writes his own text, his own history. As the Master tells Woland, "You were right when you said that once there is no document, the person does not exist. This is precisely why I do not exist--I have no document."⁵⁴ The Master's document was his novel, which he had burned in despair. We also learn that the text exists simultaneously in both histories, and while it can be destroyed in one, in the other it is indestructible. "History will judge us," ("*Istoriia rassudit nas*") says Begemot, and in the end History prevails over history. Korov'ev throws the history of the Master's body--his medical history (*istoriia bolezni*)--into the fire, but he rescues the Master's novel from the flames. Armed with the newly resurrected word, the Master passes from history into History, leaving Ivan his final instructions regarding Pontius Pilate: "You write the sequel about him." Thus armed, Ivan can now follow in his Master's footsteps, and as the novel ends, history repeats itself, as Ivan, now professor of history at the Institute of History and Philosophy, is cared for by his devoted wife. He is now in control of the text and ready to write.

The excursus into the uses of history in ***The Master and Margarita*** provides a convenient framework for solving some of the novel's critical problems, for example, the double death of the Master and Margarita, which has struck more than one critic as an oversight on Bulgakov's part. Both the Master and Margarita of necessity die twice, once on the literal level and once on the symbolic--once in history, once in History. The fact that at their second death they are participating in History is underscored by their drinking of the cup of communion offered them by the angel Azâzêl, who greets them with the words of the Mass, "Peace be with you." (This, of course, does not prevent Bulgakov from indulging his penchant for parody: Azâzêl is a fallen angel, and they drink not in memory of Christ but to the health of Woland.)

The interplay of history and History also casts Ivan's final fate in a more positive light. Ivan's continued existence should not be construed as a rejection of the Master and his teachings. He has, after all, given up a position of prominence with considerable material advantages to become a comparatively obscure professor of history.⁵⁵ Ideologically speaking, he has moved from a position at the center of his culture (insofar as MASSOLIT can be included among those state-controlled organs that both disseminate and control ideology) to a position nearer the periphery. Even critics whose assessment of Ivan is negative agree that Ivan's new status of being "cured" should be read ironically,⁵⁶ and the injection his wife gives him to enable him to carry on is no more sinister than the medicine given to the Master by Woland with Margarita's encouragement.

Certainly the Ivan of the epilogue is more conscious than the Ivan of the first chapter, and as indicated above, his journey towards consciousness is the mirror image of the journey of the positive Soviet hero. Instead of achieving success and social integration, he retreats into isolation. His journey is actually a model of Christian conversion. Having lost his identity (his clothes, his name, and above all his MASSOLIT membership card) as a result of his dunk in the river, he encounters the "Christ event," after which he retreats from his former world and becomes one of the elect patiently awaiting a future stage of History, which he *knows* will come ("So that's how it ended?" "That's how it ended, my disciple").⁵⁷ Thus, his "baptism," for all its parodic elements, is quite real, inasmuch as he loses one self to gain another. In this he also follows his master, who lost his name in order to become the "Master." It is significant that at his "initiation" Ivan receives not a badge or document but a kiss, the symbolic mark of membership in the early Christian church. (Recall Paul's injunction that you "greet one another with a holy kiss.") As one of the elect, he also participates in the yearly renewal of the central event, that is, he participates in History. As Bethea puts it,

*Homeless, the faithful disciple, must undergo his own spiritual death each Easter season in order to be released, if only for an oneiric instant, into that state beyond history where the Master and Margarita now reside.*⁵⁸

Ivan's position at the end of the novel can best be understood in the context of the debate on history. The spatio-temporal model of history, which Clark calls characteristic of the Socialist Realist novel, is a rising spiral.⁵⁹ Bulgakov's spatio-temporal model, as Bethea has ably demonstrated, is the circle--the vicious circle of unregenerative history symbolized by the hippodrome, that "absurdly finite model for Pilate's view of history."⁶⁰ Bethea posits death as the opening through which the Master and Margarita escape the cycle of unregenerative history, "at least inasmuch as death, the ultimate mystery, can be understood as a joyful opening into a state beyond history."⁶¹ The circle is a singularly appropriate model for Pilate's pre-Christian, Graeco-Roman vision of history. It is also a pre-Christian Slavic symbol of death. Thus, the Master's and Margarita's escape from the circle by dying is a literal enactment of the Orthodox Church's celebration of Christ "conquering death with death." Superimposing the primitive Christian model, with its axes of history and History, on this circular model we can visualize one other way, aside from death, to escape what Bethea calls "the race around the track of history's Hippodrome," and that is to drop out of the race, to retreat to the center of the circle. This is, in effect, Ivan's solution. Each year at Easter he retraces his own Via Dolorosa, ultimately arriving at the "central event," the crucifixion and resurrection.⁶²

Another way of viewing Ivan's final position is that he retreats from history to become the chronicler of History. This raises the perennial question of his role as a writer. Does Ivan fulfill his task? Does he succeed in writing History? Does he write the sequel as instructed by the Master? Since Ellendea Proffer, the first and foremost Bulgakov critic in America, persuasively argued that the lost novel written by the Master is ***The Master and Margarita***, readers have generally assumed this was the case. Unfortunately, under close scrutiny this hypothesis does not hold up.

Whereas Bulgakov performs some amazing sleight of hand with the laws of the physical world as we know it, the laws that govern his fictive universe are quite rigorous with regard to time and space. The narrator never misses an opportunity to point out the inner consistency of this universe, as, for example, the opening of Chapter Eight: "At exactly the same time as Stepa lost consciousness in Yalta, that is, around eleven-thirty a.m., Ivan Nikolaevich Bezdomnyi regained it." The account of the final incident at the Griboedov ends in similar fashion: "A few seconds later, along the asphalt path leading up to the wrought iron railing of the boulevard whence had come on Wednesday evening Ivanushka, the first herald of misfortune, understood by no one, now ran the writers Sofia Pavlovna, Petrakova, and Petrakov, not having finished their dinner." The laws of this fictive universe create some serious problems with the Master's authorship of the novel. With the exception of the four core chapters, the "inner text," *all* events take place after Ivan meets Woland at Patriarchs' Ponds; the Master could not *know* of any of them until his first meeting with Ivan.⁶³ This gives the Master three days before his death in which to write some three-hundred ninety-eight pages. He would also be faced with the unlikely task of describing his own death and Ivan's reaction to it, as well as the events that transpire in the "outer text" after his death. Furthermore, at no time does he claim authorship of even the "inner text." The closest he comes to acknowledging authorship is to exclaim, after hearing Ivan's account, "Oh, how I guessed it! Oh, how I guessed it all!", indicating that the two versions agree. The only excerpt of the entire novel of which he can unquestionably be the author is the two-chapter section beginning "The darkness that came from the Dead Sea " and ending "the fifth Procurator of the Jews, Pontius Pilate" (not quite a precise rendering of the famous final words).

The case for Ivan's authorship, on the other hand, is fairly strong. As Hart, who supports the thesis of Ivan's authorship, points out, Ivan alone has the initial conversation with

Woland and Berlioz.⁶⁴ This fact is stressed repeatedly in the narrative.⁶⁵ Ivan is also the only person to meet the Master, and the only person who knows of the existence of the original, unsuccessful, unpublished anti-religious *poema*. He is quite capable of depicting his own reaction to the Master's death, as well as subsequent events, which he could easily learn of after being discharged from the clinic.⁶⁶ In fact, a thumbnail sketch of the narrator coincides with a description of Ivan: a present-day Muscovite, an intimate of the literary world who knows both the members of MASSOLIT and the layout of the Griboedov, a friend of Berlioz's who is well acquainted with the interior of his apartment, and a rehabilitated Soviet citizen who is also well acquainted with the interior of the psychiatric clinic. Thus it is entirely likely that Ivan takes the advice that Woland gave the Master, that is, he becomes a writer of history ("if you have exhausted [the theme of the] Procurator, well, at the very least begin to describe this Aloysius.")

Ivan is also involved in the writing of History. The first of the Pilate chapters, received in a dream state from Woland, is addressed specifically to him ("Yes, it was about ten o'clock in the morning, worthy Ivan Nikolaevich"). Moreover, we know the exact moment of its transcription:

*Having tormented himself with these two Berliozes, Ivan crossed out everything and decided to begin with something very striking in order to quickly attract the reader's attention, and he wrote down how the cat boarded the trolley, then returned to the episode with the severed head. The head and the Consultant's prediction turned his thoughts towards Pontius Pilate, and for greater persuasiveness Ivan decided to retell the story of the Procurator in full, from the moment when he, in his white cloak with a bloody lining, came out onto the colonnade of Herod's Palace.*⁶⁷

The second of the four Pilate chapters is also his, along with the final vision in the epilogue, both created under identical conditions (drug-induced dream), at identical times (just before dawn). The fact that they are created as a result of a drug-induced dream does not make them any less authentic than Coleridge's "Kubla Kahn." Moreover, Ivan's schizophrenia agrees with the schizophrenic character of the narrative. In his waking state, he is the ironic, self-conscious narrator of the Moscow chapters. In his dream state, he is the narrator of the Pilate chapters. Only the above-mentioned excerpt, the two chapters unquestionably written by the Master, pose a problem for Ivan's authorship. If this excerpt indeed belongs to the Master's lost novel, how would Ivan come into possession of it? After all, both the original and the magically resurrected copy of the Master's novel disappear into flames. The answer is contained in some information about the history of the Master's novel.⁶⁸

"I remember, I remember that damned insert in the journal," mumbled the guest, describing in the air with two fingers of his hand the page of the journal, and Ivan guessed from the subsequent jumbled sentences that some other editor had published a large excerpt from the novel of the one who called himself the "Master." In his words, not more than two days passed when in another journal appeared an article by the critic Ariman entitled "An enemy under the editor's wing," in which it was said that Ivan's guest, taking advantage of the editor's carelessness and ignorance, had made an attempt to drag into print an apology for Jesus Christ. "I remember, I remember!" cried Ivan, "But I forget your last name!"⁶⁹

Since a large excerpt of the Master's novel was published, and Ivan even remembers the critical response to it in the literary journals, it is entirely plausible that a little research by Professor Ponyrev turns up the one surviving fragment of the Master's novel, which he then incorporates into his own.

Seeing both the "inner" and the "outer" texts as Ivan's work clears up the mystery of the final words, which in the 1973 Soviet edition occur at the end of the last chapter, but not at the end of the epilogue, which is the end of the novel. Ivan, who knew what the final

words were to be, uses them to conclude the Master's story. His own story he closes with a variation of them. Seeing Ivan as the sole author, with the exception of the excerpt, also lends greater consistency to the "nested" narrative in the case of motifs such as the words "Oh gods, gods of mine," which is uttered not only by Pilate, but by the Master, the narrator, and Ivan. With the exception of Pilate's exclamation in Chapter 26, three of these four statements derive from a single source. Finally, seeing Ivan as the chronicler of both history and History provides motivation for certain rhetorical figures in the narrative; for example, "The writer of these truthful lines" resembles the figures used by medieval Russian chroniclers.⁷⁰

The self-conscious narrator's "guarantees of authenticity" also resemble those found in the Gospel according to John: "He who saw it has borne witness--his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth--that you may also believe" (John 19:35); "This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true" (John 21:24). The relationship of the Gospels, either as sources or influence, to Bulgakov's "Gospel according to Woland" has engendered a great deal of critical commentary and will doubtless continue to do so.⁷¹ Pruitt has drawn some convincing parallels between Bulgakov's gospel and the Johannine Gospel based largely on elements that do not appear in the Synoptic Gospels. These include the famous "What is truth?" debate between Pilate and Jesus⁷² and details such as the refusal of the priests of the Sanhedrin to enter the palace on the eve of the holiday. (In the novel Caiaphas refuses to enter Herod's palace for fear of defiling himself on the eve of the Passover.)⁷³ To these we could add the above-mentioned "guarantees of authenticity," which are unique to the Johannine Gospel. The first of these, John 19:35, is particularly significant, as it follows the description of the piercing of Jesus' side, witnessed by John, the son of Zebedee, and it is the piercing of Hestas' heart that torments Ivan in his yearly nightmare: "He dreams of the unnatural noseless executioner, who, having jumped up and uttered a loud noise, pierced the heart of Hestas, who was bound to the cross and whose mind was wandering, with his spear."

But perhaps more important than any affinities of content is the affinity of intent that exists between Bulgakov's gospel and the fourth gospel. Recent scholarship has "rescued" the Johannine Gospel from the disrepute in which it long languished as the last of the Gospels in date of composition and the least reliable as a historical source. Archaeological discoveries that reveal Palestine as it stood before its destruction in 70 A.D. not only place the Gospel much closer in time to the Synoptic Gospels, but also reveal the Evangelist as absolutely accurate in his descriptions of locations in and around Jerusalem and perhaps more accurate than the other evangelists in his timing of events.⁷⁴ Moreover, the emphasis on historicity is the Evangelist's main intent. As Sanders indicates, the text is both a gospel of faith *and* a historical document, or it is neither.

*It is vital to the author's theology that the events he describes really happened. The idealist may say, as Hegel did, that the important thing is the idea of the incarnation, the idea (for Hegel) of the ultimate identity of the human and the divine spirit, for which a historical incarnation is irrelevant. But John will not have this. In the intention of the author, the Gospel is at once a theological treatise and a historical document, and it has value only if it is reliable as a historical document.*⁷⁵

Presenting the gospel of faith as a historical document is also Bulgakov's intent, as demonstrated by his phenomenally accurate description of the city of Jerusalem. This intent is stated outright at the beginning of the "Gospel according to Woland": "Keep in mind that Jesus existed. And no points of view are necessary," answered the strange professor. "He simply existed, and that's all there is to it."⁷⁶

Even more striking is the affinity of composition. Current biblical scholarship posits at least two stages in the composition of the Johannine Gospel: a preliminary body of

material attributed to one of the original disciples of Christ and an eyewitness of the crucifixion, and a first version written by a member of the disciple's following who transcribed material given to him orally.⁷⁷ Certain sections of the narrative that appear less refined are considered to be closer to the original apostle's account. Ivan likewise transcribes material given to him orally, and, if we accept chapters 25-26 as belonging to the Master's lost novel, he too embeds the original apostle's account in his gospel.

Thus, to the images associated with the figure of Ivan, we can add one final image--John the Evangelist, himself a "historian" and of all the evangelists the one most preoccupied with the placing of Christ in History. Whereas Ivan's first attempt at writing History failed, his second attempt succeeded in portraying a Christ who is, "well, completely alive." Like the Evangelist, Ivan takes great pains to locate the central event precisely in time and space: "in the early morning, on the fourteenth day of the spring month of Nissan, in the covered colonnade between the two wings of the Palace of Herod the Great," he begins. And the rest is History.

Notes

Elisabeth Steinbock-Fermor, "Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* and Goethe's *Faust*," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 13, no. 4 (1969): p. 325.

Steinbock-Fermor, "Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*," p. 325. Hart expands on Steinbock-Fermor's identification of Ivan as a *iurodivyi*. See Pierre Hart, "The Master and Margarita as Creative Process," *Modern Fiction Studies*, (summer 1973), pp. 169-78.

David Lowe, "Bulgakov and Dostoevsky. A Tale of Two Ivans," *Russian Literature Triquarterly*, no. 15 (1978):253-62.

Boris M. Gasparov, "Iz nabliudeniia nad motivnoi strukturoi romana M. A. Bulgakova *Master i Margarita*," *Slavica Hierosolymitana*, 3 (1978), pp. 202-04. Gasparov goes on to offer the figure of Ivan as a nexus of several threads of literary parody, including Bezymenskii, Demian Bednyi, and Griboedov's Chatskii.

Ellendea Proffer, *Bulgakov, Life and Work* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1984), p. 539.

Carol Avins, "Reaching a Reader: The Master's Audience in *The Master and Margarita*," *Slavic Review*, 45, no. 2 (1986), p. 281.

Hart, "The Master and Margarita as Creative Process," p. 171.

Val Bolen, "Theme and Coherence in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 16, no. 4 (1972), p. 434.

A. Colin Wright, *Mikhail Bulgakov. Life and Interpretations*. (Toronto, 1978), p. 268.

The Master is obviously intended as a modern Christ figure by virtue of his martyrdom. Of the three deaths on the Moscow level of the novel, his is central, flanked by the deaths of Berlioz and the Baron Maigel. However, he remains something of an equivocal figure, and there are substantial problems in equating him with Christ or even with the Ieshua of the Pilate chapters. The question of his "final reward" in particular has received a great deal of critical attention. See Proffer, *Bulgakov, Life and Work*, p. 539, and Margot Frank, "The Mystery of the Master's Final Destination," *Canadian-American Slavonic Studies*, 15 (summer-fall, 1981), pp. 287-9.

Edward E. Ericson, Jr., "The Satanic Incarnation: Parody in Bulgakov's *Master and*

Margarita," *Russian Review*, 33, no. 1 (1974), p. 35. See also Laura D. Weeks, "Black Magic and its Complete Exposé," (Master's Thesis, Stanford University, 1978), p. 63.

For the most complete discussion of Margarita's symbolic role, see Edward E. Ericson, Jr., *Bulgakov's Apocalyptic Vision*, unpublished ms., pp. 218-69.

Weeks, "Black Magic," pp. 62-63.

In the final vision Ivan sees first the wild play of the moonlight, then a woman of "immeasurable beauty" forming in the moonlight, and finally, Margarita emerges walking on the moonlit path. Thus she (like the woman in Revelations 12:1) "has the moon under her feet."

In "Theme and Coherence" (p. 428), Bolen suggests that Berlioz is a parody of John the Baptist, noting that it is his high tenor that resounds in the *deserted* (pustinni) allee and that his head is served on a platter. Having more than one parody of the same figure is in accord with the technique of doubling and mirror images that is so prevalent in *The Master and Margarita*. Note that the "true" disciple, Ivan Nikolaevich, is doubled by the "false" disciple, Aloizii Mogarich. The motif of drunkenness is firmly associated with Ivan. He is twice accused of being drunk, once at Patriarchs' Ponds and again at the Griboedov, and the first question asked when he arrives at the Psychiatric Clinic is "Has he been drinking?"

Both denials represent a repudiation of professional calling: that of "future poet laureate" of the Soviet state for Ivan, that of future head of the Christian community in Jerusalem for Peter. Ivan not only renounces his profession, he renounces his former self and acquires a different personality. Peter denies his identity both as a disciple and as a Galilean ("still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying." [Luke 22:59-60]). Finally, both denials are accompanied by an oath; compare: "Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear." (Matt. 26:74), and "'Do not write any more!" begged the visitor. "I do solemnly promise and swear," said Ivan." (*Master and Margarita*, p. 549). Peter, of course, renounces good in favor of evil, while Ivan renounces evil in favor of good; such inverted parallels are characteristic of Bulgakov's treatment of canonical material.

Gasparov, "Iz nabliudenii," p. 209. Wright, *Mikhail Bulgakov. Life and Interpretations*, p. 268. Proffer, *Bulgakov. Life and Work*, p. 539. See also Leslie Milne, *The Master and Margarita. A Comedy of Victory* (Birmingham Slavonic Monographs, no. 3, Birmingham, 1977), pp. 17-18.

Milne, *The Master and Margarita. A Comedy of Victory*, pp. 6-7.

David Bethea, *History Unbridled: The Shape of Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction* (Princeton, NJ, 1988), pp. 55-56.

Avins, "Reaching a Reader," p. 277.

Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel. History as Ritual* (Chicago, 1981), p. 167.

Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p. 172.

Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p. 167.

Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p. 172.

Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p. 257.

Mikhail Bulgakov, *Belaia Gvardiia. Teatral'nyi Roman. Master i Margarita* (Moscow, 1973), p. 479. Cited hereinafter as *MiM*. The translations are my own.

MiM, p. 487

Actually, the schism of Ivan is imminent from the outset of the novel. This is reflected in the shifting narrative point of view. The narrator refers to Ivan now ironically as *Bezdomnyi*, now more sympathetically as Ivan Nikolaevich. As the novel progresses the point of view becomes increasingly sympathetic to Ivan and he is referred to now as "Ivan," now as "Ivanushka." In the epilogue, after a passing reference to "the poor poet Ivan *Bezdomnyi*," the narrator rests with the more respectful "Ivan Nikolaevich," indicative of Ivan's new status.

Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p. 257.

See, for example, her reference to the Party Boss's "ennobling cardiac trouble" in her discussion of "The District Party Boss Bids Farewell." Vera Dunham, *In Stalin's Time* (New York, 1976), pp. 78-79.

Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p. 172.

Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p. 257.

Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, pp. 9-10.

Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p. 40.

Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p. 40.

Laszlo Tikos, "Some Notes on the Significance of Gerbert Aurillac in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*," *Canadian-American Slavonic Studies*, 15, no. 2 (1981), p. 323.

Robert Wilken, *The Myth of Christian Beginnings* (Garden City, NY, 1971), p. 21.

Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time. The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*. Trans. Floyd V. Filson, (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 189.

Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p. 178.

Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p. 178.

Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago, 1951-63), 3, p. 364.

Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p. 18

In *Bulgakov, Life and Work* (p. 551), Proffer notes that Bulgakov was deeply immersed in the debate between the mythological and the historical approaches to the story of Christ, and finds that his "Pilate novel" "falls on the side of the historical school."

Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, pp. 189-90.

MiM, p. 735.

Unlike the Master and Ivan, whose actions are marked by a fair amount of moral equivocation, Margarita displays a remarkable intuitive understanding of people's natures and a ruthless consciousness of her own sins. Consider, for example, her immediate

reaction upon finding the Master in a state of nervous prostration, "So this is how we must pay for [living] a lie." ("vot kak nado platit' za lozh").

MiM, 644. For the purposes of the argument, I have translated *istoriia* consistently as "history," although this frequently results in clumsy English. The word can be variously rendered as "tale," "anecdote," "incident," and "vot tak istoriia!" means "here's how-de-doo!"

MiM, p. 797.

MiM, p. 435.

MiM, p. 460.

MiM, p. 552.

MiM, p. 553.

MiM, p. 709.

MiM, p. 706.

Ivan's "obscurity" should be understood primarily (but not exclusively) in relation to his previous renown. His fame and popularity as a poet are stressed repeatedly in the narrative. In addition to the newspaper feature Woland shows him, there is the fact that the staff at the psychiatric clinic recognize him. Thus he is unquestionably a *successful* member of MASSOLIT, and the narrative leaves no doubt as to the material benefits attached to membership in that organization. Ivan is also genuinely talented, a fact brought out by comparison with the hack poet Riukhin.

Predictably, the critical assessment of Ivan's "cure" reflects the overall assessment of Ivan. Avins, who views Ivan negatively, remarks that the "narrator's assertion that the older Ivan "knows and understands everything" is deeply ironic," (Avins, "Reaching a Reader," p. 282) and goes on to describe how Ivan has sold out to the prevailing Soviet ideology. Haber, who views Ivan more positively, reads the "irony" of Ivan's cure in the context of the world of the flesh counterposed to the world of the artistic imagination: "On the surface it appears that the former poet, now professor of history and philosophy, Prof. Ponyrev, has been cured of his earlier schizophrenia. In other words, he has become an acceptable member of Soviet society. But his normalcy is more apparent than real. For during the spring full moon Ivan Nikolaevich's reason loses its power; he grows restless and dreams strange dreams. In other words, the schizophrenia is still in force. Indeed, it seems that such an illness is inevitable in one who has visions of higher truth and yet is striving to survive in the earthly sunlit world. In the person of Ivan Homeless, Bulgakov seems to be suggesting that the Pilate-like double life is bound to appear in the Soviet artist or intellectual who tries to live both in the world of his imagination and in the atheistic and oppressive everyday world." Edythe C. Haber, "The Mythic Structure of Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*," *Russian Review*, 34, no. 4 (1975): p. 407.

MiM, p. 811.

Bethea, *History Unbridled*, p. 371.

"The Marxist schema for the progress of history from harmony through discord and back to higher-order harmony is a complete circle, or rather, a narrowing gyre as a series of syntheses brings man ever closer to final harmony in communism." Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p. 112.

Bethea, *History Unbridled*, p. 349.

Bethea, *History Unbridled*, p. 369.

Thus, the spatiotemporal model corresponding to Bulgakov's vision of history can be described as a circle quartered by a cross, which is a time-honored Christian symbol.

It is questionable whether either the Master or Ivan could learn of all events taking place during Woland's visit as they occur, although they see and comment on each of the victims as they appear at the clinic. However, the Master dies and therefore has no other opportunity to learn about them, whereas Ivan can easily learn about them after his release from the clinic.

Hart, "*The Master and Margarita as Creative Process*," p. 170.

See *MiM*, p. 423: "Yes, we must note the first strange thing about that fearful May evening. Not only at the kiosk, but along the entire allée paralleling Malaia Bronnaia street not a single person appeared. At the hour when it seemed one no longer had the strength to breathe, when the sun, having made Moscow red-hot, disappeared somewhere beyond the Sadovoe in a dry cloud--no one came out under the lindens, no one sat down on the bench, the allée was empty." This fact is reiterated when Ivan gives his account of Berlioz's death at the clinic: "Did anyone besides yourself see this Consultant?" "That's the trouble, only myself and Berlioz." (*MiM*, p. 485.)

As the Epilogue implies, that is precisely what happens. After being discharged from the clinic Ivan hears the full account of the goings-on, including Margarita's name and the note she leaves behind, both of which are made public. This, at least, is the implication of the "editorial" comments: "The writer of these truthful lines personally heard, while travelling to Feodosiia, how in Moscow two thousand persons walked out of the theatre naked, in the literal sense of the word, and in this state dispersed to their homes in taxis." (*MiM*, p. 800).

MiM, p. 531 (emphasis added).

This information is not explicit in the 1969 Posev edition. The text published by Khudozhestvennaia literatura contains several interpolations from Bulgakov's manuscript. See Donald Fiene, "A Comparison of the Soviet and Posev Editions of *The Master and Margarita*," *Canadian-American Slavonic Studies*, (summer-fall, 1981), pp. 330-354.

MiM, pp. 559-60.

Compare "The writer of these truthful lines personally heard " with the entry for the year 1091 in the Primary Chronicle: " I, sinner that I am, was the first eyewitness of the attendant circumstances. What I here relate I did not learn by hearsay, but I was the initiator of it myself." (S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, eds. and trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle: The Laurentian Text* [Cambridge, MA, 1973], p. 170). Clark draws an analogy between the functioning of the author of a Socialist Realist novel and that of the medieval chronicler: " these "historical tales" must be based on something analogous to the "divine plan of salvation" followed by the Medieval chronicler, namely, the Marxist-Leninist account of history. None of the discrepancies between theory and practice that give such headaches to the theorist needs to concern him, for he does not have to *prove* anything. As a chronicler he merely *shows* how, in the particular model situation he has chosen, social contradictions work themselves out in successive resolutions of the spontaneity/consciousness dialectic." (Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p. 159.) That both Ivan and the Stalinist novelist resemble a medieval chronicler lends support to the assumption that Bulgakov is consciously parodying the *topoi* of the Socialist Realist novel.

See, for example, A. Zerkalov, *Evangelie Mikhaila Bulgakova* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1984); Genrikh El'baum, *Analiz iudeiskikh glav Mastera i Margarity M. Bulgakova* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1981); Milovoe Iovanovich, "Evangelie ot Matfeia kak literaturnyi istochnik Mastera i Margarity," *Canadian-American Slavonic Studies*, 15, no. 2 (1981), pp. 295-311.

The debate ends with the words "Do you not know I have the power to crucify you?", which Bulgakov renders as "Know that your life is hanging by a thread."

Donald Pruitt, "St. John and Bulgakov: The Model of a Parody of Christ," *Canadian-American Slavonic Studies*, 15, no. 2 (1981), pp. 312-20.

Raymond E. Brown, "The Tradition Behind the Gospel," in his *The Gospel According to John* (Anchor Bible Series), New York, 1966, p. xiii. In the discussion I have shifted the emphasis away from *content*, focusing instead on affinities of intent and composition because, as note 65 above suggests, where the content of Bulgakov's gospel is concerned, ample evidence can be found for Bulgakov's use of all four canonical gospels as well as the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus as resources.

J. N. Sanders, "The Gospel and the Historian," *The Listener*, 1956, no. 56, p. 757.

MiM, p. 435.

Raymond E. Brown, "The Identity of the Author and the Place of Composition," in *The Gospel According to John*, p. ci. A further link between John the Evangelist and Bulgakov's Ivan is the fact that the Evangelist is also the John of *Revelations*. Thus, both he and Ivan are responsible for a canonical gospel and an apocalyptic vision. In his study of Bulgakov's apocalyptic vision Bethea refers to Ivan in passing as a "modern-day St. John" (Bethea, *History Unbridled*, p. 62). A detailed treatment of the stylistic affinities between Bulgakov's apocalypse and the *Book of Revelations* can be found in Edward E. Ericson, Jr., *Bulgakov's Apocalyptic Vision*, pp. 272-85.