Religious doctrine in the works of Mikhail Bulgakov (with special reference to Belaia Gvardiia, Beg and Master i Margarita)

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Isabel Martin wants to show that Russian Orthodox Doctrine can provide a cohesive whole for Bulgakov's works, uniting them on a spiritual level. Master thesis at the Department of Russian of the University of Durham, Unted Kingdom - January 1998.

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RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE IN THE WORKS OF MIKHAIL BULGAKOV (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO *BELAIA G VARDIIA, BEG AND MASTER I MARGARITA)*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis will examine the works of Mikhail Afanasevich Bulgakov with special reference to *Belaia gvardiia. Beg,* and *Master i Margarita.* It shall be shown that Russian Orthodox Doctrine can provide a cohesive whole for his works, uniting them on a 'spiritual' level. At first an assessment will be made of the extent to which Bulgakov was a believing Christian, then the following examination of his works will be divided into the Divine and the Human, beginning with an examination of the Devil. The nature of Christ and God will then be considered and be shown to correspond on may levels with the tenets of Doctrine. In the second half, man and his relationship to God will be discussed, showing that the mortal condition of man and his attempts to come close to God are of importance to Bulgakov. Finally, his portrayal of man's progression through judgement to the attainment of Salvation will be considered, showing that, despite some deviations, Bulgakov's artistic ideas are founded in Doctrine.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

As a complete *Collected Works* was not available at the time of writing the following editions have been used. Works and the page number are referred to in the text in brackets.

MiM	Mikhail Bulgakov, 'Master i Margarita' in (S *Romany* ovremennik, Mo skva, 1988).
Eg	Mikhail Bulgakov, 'Belaia gvardiia' in *Romany* (Sovremennik, Moskva, 1988).
Beg	Mikhail Bulgakov, 'Beg' in *P 'esy* (Sovetskii pisatel', Moskva, 1987).

NOTE

In quotations in Russian taken from Soviet editions I have followed the text and retained a small 6 for Eor.

1. PREFACE

As has been well established since the publication in 1968 of *Master i Margarita* in the journal *Moskva,* Mikhail Afanas'evich Bulgakov is one of the most eloquent and popular Russian writers of the twentieth century. Despite languishing for over 25 years in an unavoidable silence, his novel and plays have received and are receiving the critical attention they deserve in both academic study and in the popular Russian and international press. This obvious universal appeal has prompted investigations into Bulgakov's life which have resulted in the publication of several significant biographies not only in the Russian language.

In the critical literature about Bulgakov and his literary creations many articles have examined his works from a variety of angles, such as possible sources that Bulgakov may have drawn on for his works (for example, Classical literature, Russian literature, scientific publications), philosophical approaches such as existentialism, and structural analyses concerned with narrative technique. This quest to align Bulgakov with schools of thought has not only applied to philosophical considerations but to literary theoretical inquiries (Fairy-Tale', Bakhtin's concept of Camivalisation^, Menippean Satire^, the Fantastic", Modernism^ and Magical Realism^).

' **S. Hoisington, 'Fairy-Tale Elements in Bulgakov's** *The Master and Margarita', Slavic and East European Journal* **25 (1981), pp. 44-55.**

^ **L . Milne,** *The Master and Margarita: A Comedy of Victory* **(Birmingham Slavonic Monographs, No. 3, 1977)**

^ **E . Proffer in** *Bulgakov: Life and Work* **(Ardis, Aim Arbor, 1984), p. 531, mentions this but also notes its limitations.**

See, for instance, Neil Comwell, *The Literary Fantastic. Gothic to Postmodernism* **(Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990).**

^ **Vladimir Tumanov, 'Diabolos ex Machina: Bulgakov's Modernist Devil',** *Scandoslavica* **(lomus 35, 1989), pp. 49-61.**

^ **For example, A.B. Chanady,** *Magic Realism and the Fantastic* **(London, 1985).**

As an alternative approach I intend to examine Bulgakov's works from the basis of Russian Orthodox Christianity as it is a system of beliefs about man and the universe with which Bulgakov would have been acquainted from his upbringing at home, from school and from personal interest. Russian Orthodoxy was a corner-stone of the Russian cultural life which Bulgakov, as we shall see, deeply cherished. Although many commentators have noted the significance that religious ideas play in Bulgakov's characters and their environment they are rarely compared with Doctrine. I intend to do so in order to assess the extent of Bulgakov's creative imagination (how far he strays from the 'given' laws and truths of Doctrine and how far he applies them in his work) and the relationship this may have had to his own personal and artistic integrity.

In the following chapters I intend to try to find some sort of a cohesive whole, uniting Bulgakov's works on a 'spiritual' level, by examining his oeuvre in comparison with religious, namely Christian Russian Orthodox, doctrine. The importance of Christianity within Bulgakov's works is undeniable and has been most deeply examined by commentators with regard to *Master i Margarita.* It is my intention however to pay special attention to three works: the novel *Belaia gvardiia,* the play *Beg* and the final novel *Master i Margarita.* The novels are not only of spiritual significance but span Bulgakov's creative development, being finished (it is difficult to use the word "published" in reference to his works) in 1925 and 1940 respectively, thus marking the beginning and end of his literary career. Bulgakov was also a prolific playwright and it is for this reason and for the play's unrelenting examination of the human soul that I have chosen to study *Beg.*

Before commencing my study of Bulgakov's works I shall first pause to assess to what extent Bulgakov was a believing Christian and how far this could have influenced his work, based on diaries and letters, contemporary accounts and significant books in his library. I shall then, in order to make as comprehensive an investigation as possible, compare and contrast Bulgakov's works in relation to some of the most important aspects of religious doctrine. Because Christianity is concerned with the relationship between the human and the divine I shall divide my work between these two principles, beginning my study of the Divine in reverse, as it were, with a consideration of the Devil. Because the Devil is more than a figure of religion for Bulgakov I shall also review his literary and traditional aspects as well as his theological significance. I shall turn my attention next to the nature and teaching of Christ, assessing questions of divinity, heresy, sources and the significance of his teaching as given in *Master i Margarita.* I shall then proceed to examine the nature of God, especially Bulgakov's understanding of His Love and His Omnipotence. In the second half of my thesis I shall concern myself with Man and his relationship to God. I shall look at Bulgakov's thoughts on mortality and its close links with sin and disease. I shall then concentrate on man's attempts to overcome sin and death and to come closer to God through the Sacraments. Finally I shall examine Bulgakov's expression of the progression to Forgiveness and Salvation within his works, considering also his notions of Judgment and Damnation, Hell and Heaven. Whilst undertaking this I shall also discuss critical opinion, biographical detail and sources where necessary.

2. FAITH
(by way of an Introduction)

An understanding of Bulgakov's personal faith is important when approaching his works. There is no denying the influence of Christian thought in his novels and so the question of the extent to which Bulgakov was a believer is very important, not only for obtaining a balanced view on his more 'religious' passages, but also for understanding his characters and the times in which they live. Understanding the characters also allows the reader to grasp something of Bulgakov's insight into life itself

Critics have, since the beginning of Bulgakov study in earnest in the late 1960s, held widely differing views about the author's personal attitude towards religion, his use of religion in his works, what his aims were in using religious material and to what extent he was prepared to break out of religious constraints. They have been hampered in achieving a definitive interpretation of his work by the fact that Bukgakov draws on so many different philosophies and ideas, works of both art and science, fantasy, fact and biography. Until recently, much Bulgakov material, such as the drafl:s of his works, his diary and the transcripts of his OGPU interview were unavailable. This forced scholars to rely on what they could surmise from his works, what was said about him by other people and other secondary evidence.

Much as the emergence of this material has been made possible by changing political attitudes, so criticism has also known political influence, although nothing like on such a scale as when Bulgakov was still alive.' I . Vinogradov and L. Skorino were keen to gloss over the religious aspects of *Master i Margarita* in their pioneering 1968

' **For an interesting article on criticism when Bulgakov was working see N. Groznova's article 'M. Bulgakov i kritika ego vremeni' in** *Tvorchestvo Mikhaila Bulgakova* **(Nauka, St. Petersburg, 1994), pp. 5 - 33,**

criticism^. V. Lakshin in a 1968 article went so far as to say that in the novel Bulgakov was looking forward to the new Socialist morality of the 1960s^ Even L. lanovskaia in her *Tvorcheskii puf*^ was keen to place Bulgakov near scenes of revolutionary significance during his Kiev years. As more information about Bulgakov the man began to appear, a more balanced view of liis work emerged. This was helped a great deal by the appearance of M . Chudakova's *Zhizneopisanie Mikhaila Bulgakova* in 1988. This comprehensive study of Bulgakov's life is still a seminal work. Nevertheless, the view of Bulgakov as an artist tending towards a rejection of religion persisted into the early 1980s with articles such as A. Chedrova's *Khristianskie aspekty* which understands him as abandoning Orthodox beliefs^ EUendea Proffer in her biography bases her opinion of Bulgakov's beliefs on her interpretation of his works. She implies that Bulgakov agrees with Berlioz in *Master i Margarita* about theological issues, although she does admit that he believes in some kind of God^ She seems to see him as an arch-heretic, vaguely Christian but actively challenging Orthodox convention, an opinion shared by D.B. Pruitt in his article *St. John and Bulgakov*^. *A*. Barratt in *Between Two Worlds* calls Bulgakov "a religious iconoclast of no mean order" and later says that he was as keen to insult the Church as atheists^ T.R.N. Edwards in *Three Russian Writers and the Irrational* considers that Bulgakov is "constantly applying pressure to

^ **L . Skorino, 'Litsa bez kamavarnykh masok',** *Voprosy literatury* **(6 June, 1968), pp. 24-42.**
I. Vinogradov, 'Zaveshchanie Mastera', *Voprosy Literatury* **(6 June, 1968), pp. 43-67.**

^ **V. Lakshin, 'M. Bulgakov's Novel** *The Master and Margarita'* **in** *The Master and Margarita - A Critical Companion* **(North-Western University Press, 1996), p. 82.**
L . lanovskaia, *Tvorcheskii put' Mikhaila Bulgakova* **(Moskva, Sovetskii pisatel', 1983), pp. 3-26.**

^ **A. Chedrova, 'Khristianskie aspekty romana Mikhaila Bulgakova** *Master i Margarita', (Grani* **134, 1984), pp. 199-211.**

^ **Ellendea Proffer,** *Bulgakov: Life and Work* **(Ardis, Ann Arbor, 1984), p. 535.**

' **D.B. Pruitt, 'St. John and Bulgakov',** *Canadian-American Slavic Studies,* **15 (1981)pp. 312-20.**

* **A. Barratt,** *Between Two Worlds* **(OUP, 1987), p. 122 and 184.**

the most cherished beliefs, not to destroy them but to test them"'. J.A.E. Curtis, however, finds that Bulgakov wanted to reject the Gospels, a radical step for a man brought up in the Orthodox faith^°, A similar line to this is taken by Laura Weeks in her recent post-Chudakova book where she says: "Bulgakov effectively calls into question the Christian worldview"".

A softer approach has been taken by a number of critics. These include Anatolii Smelianskii who views Bulgakov as having faith in "the natural order" and seeking only the truths in this'^. A. Colin Wright equates the Turbin family's "quiet yet enduring" faith found in *Belaia gvardiia* with Bulgakov's own'^ A few critics, however, maintain that Bulgakov saw things in an Orthodox light. E.E. Ericson jnr, far from minimalising his religious faith, finds him working well within Orthodox tradition, suggesting that Bulgakov may have been influnced by the thought of Sergei Bulgakov. Ericson even finds Woland *m Master i Margarita* to be the Satan of Russian Orthodox theology"'*.

Bulgakov's religious family background has been well documented by Chudakova, Proffer, Milne and lanovskaia and there is no denying that with this came many Christian influences. Both his grandfathers were priests. His maternal grandfather, Mikhail Vasilevich Pokrovskii, was the son of an archdeacon. Pokrovskii himself was a protopriest. Bulgakov's paternal grandfather, Ivan Avraamovich Bulgakov, was a village priest. His son, Afanasii Ivanovich, studied at the Orlov seminary and then at

' **T.R.N. Edwards,** *Three Russian Writers and the Irrational* **(CUP, 1982), p. 143.**
'° **J.A.E. Curtis,** *Bulgakov's Last Decade* **(CUP, 1987), p. 147.**
" **Laura D. Weeks, 'What I have Written I Have Written' in** *The Master and Margarita - A Critical Companion* **(North-western University Press, 1996), p. 42.**
'^ **Anatolii Smelianskii,** *Is Comrade Bulgakov Dead?* **(Methuen Drama, London, 1993), p. 150.**
'^ **A. Colin Wright, 'Mikhail Bulgakov's Developing World View',** *Canadian-American Slavic Studies.* **75(1981), p. 152.**
E . E . Ericson jnr., 'The Satanic Incarnation' *Russian Review,* **33:1 (1974), pp. 20-36.**

the theological academy in Kiev. He became a lecturer in Ancient History in Kiev and then in History and Western Religions, publishing works including *Starokatolicheskoe i khristiansko-katolicheskoe bogosluzhenie i ego otnoshenie k rimsko-katolicheskomu bogosluzheniiu i veroucheniiu* (Kiev 1901) and *0 zakonnosti i deist^'iteTnosti anglikanskoi ierakhii s tochki zreniia pravoslavnoi tserkvi* (Kiev 1906)'". The Bulgakov family attended church and, according to E.B. Bukreev, Afanasii Ivanovich read the Gospels aloud to his children'*. Religion does not seem to have been forced onto the Bulgakov children and, according to Chudakova'^, Afanasii Ivanovich took part in a circle which debated church questions and reforms, showing that his religion was not just blind faith but both intellectual and open to debate. Mikhail, as far as we know, never made any mention of a stifling domestic religious atmosphere. On the contrary, home in his works is always something cherished and sacred'^ and both parents are a source of love and inspiration. It is the residual warmth of a happy childhood which he conveys so well in *Belaia gvardiia.* Chudakova notes that Mikhail got top marks at school (1st Gymnasium) in 1909 in Catechism, the only subject in which he did, apart from Geography'^

Many family friends had religious connections. Among these were the Gdeshinskii family who had two sons, Platon and Aleksandr Petrovich, attending the seminary. Ekzempliarskii, Professor of Moral Theology, played an increasing role in the Bulgakov family after Afanasii Ivanovitch died in 1907. Mikhail's godfather, Petrov,

A.S. Burmistrov, 'Kbiografii M.A. Bulgakova (1891 -1916)', *Kontekst,* **1978 (Nauka, Moskva, pp. 249-267), p. 251.**

M. Chudakova, *Zhizneopisanie Mikhaila Bulgakova* **(Kniga, Moskva, 1988), p. 42.**

" M. Chudakova, *Zhizneopisanie,* **p. 26.**

See section on the ' 'Home' in Bulgakov's_r/ie *Master and Margarita'* **in M. Lotman,** *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture,* **trs. Ann Shukman (I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd, London, N.Y., 1990), pp. 185 -191.**

M. Chudakova, *Zhizneopisanie,* **p. 26.**

had an archaeological museum of religious artefacts fi-om all over the world at the 1 st Gymnasium where he taught^". Whether, as Proffer has suggested, the religious paintings of Ge and Svedomskii, two alumni artists of the school, had any influence on the young Bulgakov, it is hard to say. Certainly Ge sought to show Jesus of Nazareth as a man, vulnerable and poor. Undoubtedly, though, the comings and goings of priests and lecturers in the relaxed religious atmosphere of the sociable Bulgakov household left a lasting impression on Bulgakov and influenced much of his work.

A change appears to have come over Bulgakov in Kiev as he grew older. As Chudakova testifies, Bulgakov, his family and his friends liked to enjoy themselves and something of the atmosphere of their evenings can be seen in *Belaia gvardiia.* Whether this youthfiil hedonism or intellectual speculation temporarily alienated Bulgakov from his childhood faith, it is not certain. Katia Nikolaevna wrote to her sister Larissa Nikolaevna Gdeshinskaia 22 November 1971 that he was to blame for her brothers leaving the seminary:

> "Cama **roBopHJi, HTO** no **CBCTCKOH flopore OHH nonuin** nofl **BJiHHHHeM** MHnm."^'

she wrote, reporting what her husband had told her. Bulgakov used to tease the Gdeshinskii brothers and is supposed to have "persuaded" them to leave. Another witness to Bulgakov's reaction against the religious status quo can be found in his sister, Nadezhda Afanasievna's diary from March 1910:

> **"aacBHflexejibCTBOBaH OTXOA cxapmero 6paTa ox o6paziiOB (OH He** xo^ex co6j**[io^iaxb nocx nepea TlacxoH,** He **roseex)** H **ero pemenHe peJiHFHoaHbix BonpocoB B nojibsy HeBepna"**^^

EllendeaProffer,p. 5.

^' **M. Chudakova,** *Zhizneopisanie,* **p. 38.**

M. Chudakova, *Zhizneopisanie,* **p. 43.**

At this time he was 19 years old. He was married at the age of 22 to Tatiana Nikolaevna Lappa in April 1913. By this time she had already had an abortion. They failed to keep the Easter Fast before the wedding, at the marriage Tatiana had no proper wedding dress or veil and the couple laughed throughout the ceremony. Chudakova's use of the reminiscences of E. B. Bukreev^^ also show that Bulgakov's studies of such thinkers as Darwin and other scientific theories led him to question his faith. From Bulgakov himself, however, there does not seem to be any evidence as to his exact thoughts either through this period of his life or throughout the years of war and civil war which were to change the course of his career and have a lasting effect on his character. According to Chudakova he still attended Church after his wedding but such rituals as confession do not seem to have played much of a part in his life^".

At the age of 31, however, Bulgakov wrote in his diary 19th October 1923:

> "MxaK, **GyflCM Ha^eHXCH** na Bora **H xnxb.** 3xo **eflHHcxBeHHbift H** ***jiyiumR*** cnoco5""

It **seems** that he could no longer afford the luxury of intellectual atheism. He had witnessed murder, the poverty of the provinces (as described in *Zapiski iunogo vracha),* and the cruelty of men; he had undergone illness, morphine addiction"^ and the destruction of his entire way of life. From his diary we can see that his thoughts had once again turned to religious matters. His diary is illuminating in the extent to which he thought about religion between the years of 1922 and 1926. Considering the patchiness of his writing this is quite remarkable. For instance on 26 October 1923 he wrote:

M. Chudakova, *Zhizneopisanie,* **p. 42.**
M. Chudakova, *Zhizneopisanie,* **p. 65 - 66.**
M. Bulgakov, *Podpiatoi* **(Biblioteka Ogonek, Pravda 39, Moskva, 1990), p. 16.**
See *Neizdannyi Bulgakov: Teksty i materialy pod redaktsiei Ellendea Proffer* **(Ardis, Ann Arbor, 1977), p. 18.**

"Moxex **6HTb, cHJibHbiM H CMe.nbiM OH** [Bor] **He** Hyxen, **HO** *TaKnu,* **KaK** *H,* **XHTb** c **MHCJibK) o HCM .JieFHe. HesflopoBbe Moe ocjioxHeHHoe, aaxHXHoe. Becb** *n* **pa36HT . OHO Moxex noMemaxb** MHe pa6oxaxb, **BOX noqeMy H Soiocb** ero, **BOX noHCMy H nafleiocb** na Bora.."

God and art were closely bound in Bulgakov's thought and the "conservative", as he called himself on 30th September 1923 in his diary^^, was not one to ignore insults to the Christian faith in literature:

"CeroflHa **cneimajibHO XO;I;H;I B** pe/**iaKUHio** «Be36o»**cHHKa**»...BbiJi c M.C., **H OH onapoBaji MCHJI C nepBbix iKe** maroB.
- Hxo**,BaM cxeKJia HC** 5bK)x? - **cnpocHJi OH y nepBOH xe 6apbiiiiHH, CHfl**^meH 3a **CXOJIOM.**
- To **ecxb,KaK 3Xo? (pacxepHHHo).**
- **Hex,He 6bK)X (sJioBeme).**
- **)Kajib.**

XoxejT **noiiejioBaxb ero B ero** eBpeKcKHft **HOC"**

"Korfla **H npoFJiH^eji** y ce6H**flOMaBeqepoM noMepa «Be35oxHHKa»** 6bm **noxpaceH. CoJib He B KonmycxBO, XOXH OHO, KOHCHHO, 6e3MepH0, ecjiH roBopHXb** o **BHemHCH cxopoHe. Cojib B Hflee:** ee **MOXHO** flOKa3axb **flOKyMCHxaJibHO** - Mncyca XpHcxa H3o6paxaiox **B BHfle MOffleHHHKa,HMMeHo** ero. **HexpyflHO noHHXb, Hba axa paSoxa.** 3xoMy **npecxynJieHHK) Hex ueHbi."**^^

In this opinion he stood apart from the current literary establishment. These injured feelings were to be revived later in *Master i Margarita* and a written revenge taken.

Although art and religion are closely linked in Bulgakov's mind he was ready to make concessions on overt religious content in order to ensure the success of his art. In a sense, he was helpless to do otherwise. In *Teatral'nyi reman* he himself gives us a fictionalised version of the excisions made by the first editor of *Belaia gvardiia* to obviate the serialisation of the novel being forbidden by the censors; Smelianskii notes^^ that Bulgakov agreed to changes rather than have his plays banned. The reworking and de-mythologising of *Master i Margarita* was probably also influenced

Podpiatoi, **p. 12.**
Podpiatoi, **5th December 1925, pp. 42-43**
Smelianskii, p. 81.

in part by the awareness that a book openly containing "religious" material not shown in an unfavourable light had little or no hope of being published. He never felt passionately enough either to write or publish any works overtly and purely sympathetic to the Church. On 8 January 1924 he wrote in his diary:

"^To *dyjicT* c PoccHCH, 3Haex OOTH BOP. Flycxb **OH** eft **noMoxex."^"**

It does not seem to be known if Bulgakov ever attended Church while it was still relatively acceptable to do so. Tatiana Nikolaevna, who remained married to Bulgakov till 1924 said that he never wore a cross. But when she asked him how he could write in *Belaia gvardiia* that a prayer saves Aleksei he retorted:

"Tbi npocxo *ffypa,* HHqero ne noHHMaemb!"^'

In 1926 Bulgakov was arrested and a number of items taken away from his house including *Sobach'e serdtse,* his personal diaries and, as Grigory Faiman has discovered, a poem by Esenin called "Poslanie EvangeHstu Dem'ianu Bednomu"^-. Critics such as Andrew Barratt and N . Kuziakina^^ have long suspected that Bednyi had an influence on Bulgakov's writing in that Bednyi's vitriolic poems against all religion spurred Bulgakov on to write in opposition to such attitudes. Bulgakov was aware of Bedyi, as can be seen in a diary entry (23 December, 1924), where he mentions how he was told about Bednyi's address to a Red Army gathering. The editor of *Velikii kantsler* also points out the links between Bulgakov's opinions and those of Esenin's in *Poslanie*^"^.

^° *Pod piatoi, p. 21.*

^' **M. Chudakova,** *Zhizneopisanie,* **p. 297.**
Grigorii Faiman, 'Lubianka i Mikhail Bulgakov' *Russkaia mysl',* **4080, 1-7 June, 1995, p. 11.**
N. Kuziakina, 'Mikhail Bulgakov i Dem'ian Bednyi' in *Dramaturg,* **pp. 392-410.**
M. Bulgakov, *Velikii kantsler* **(Novosti, Moskva, 1992), p. 464, edited by Viktor Losev.**

At his arrest Bulgakov said httle to condemn himself, although he did express what must have already been known:

> "MoH **CHMnaxHH** 5bmH **Bceiiejio** na **cxopone** 5e**;ibix, oxcxynJieHHH Koxopbix H cMoxpeji** c **yxacoM H** Heo^**iyMneHHeM"**^^

According to the research of Grigorii Faiman in the KGB archives, the subject of the **religious material** of his works was **brought** up (and recorded by a GPU **agent)** at the first read-through of *Kabala sviatosh* on 3rd March 1930. Bulgakov denied that his play was anti-religious:

> "Kxo-xo **cneji nbecy anxMpejiHrnosHoK (B HBH oxpHijaxejibHO BbiBeaen napHxcKHH apxHenncKon), HO** ByjiraKOB na cooxBexcxByromnK **Bonpoc cKa3a;i, qxo nbeca He asJiHexcH aHXHpenHrH03H0H"**^^

This was the play from which he was forced to remove certain props with religious connotations. Religion was not brought up as a subject for questioning.

After Bulgakov abandons his diary writing, access to his thoughts becomes again more difficult. Apart from ideas **played** out in his works, an opinion of Bulgakov's faith or unbelief can only be gleaned from letters or at second hand. Occasionally there are expressions of religious feeling. In a letter to A. Gdeshinskii" on 28 December 1939 it is again his illness that turns him to God:

> "A Gojibme **Bcero** fla **noMoxex naM BceM** 6o**;ibHbiM** Bor!"

This is not to say that it was just fear of death that made him in some way "religious". The testimony of those around him bears witness to a more fiandamental, intellectual faith. Throughout his life various people were aware that religion was something that concerned Bulgakov as an artist, Laura Weeks notes that Markov, the **head** of MKhaT's **literary section** "recalls **that** the writer **told** him during rehearsals of

Grigorii Faiman, 'Lubianka i Mikhail Bulgakov', *Russkaia mysl'* **4080, 1-7 June 1995, p. 11**
Russkaia mysl' 4081, 8-14 June 1995, p. 11.
Tvorchestvo Mikhaila Bulgakova, **p. 69**

Dni Turbinykh (i.e. 1926) that he had long been tormented by the enigma of the New Testament tragedy"^^ This torment would soon be transformed into the drafts of what would become *Master **i** Margarita.* Valentin Kataev, who for a while was Bulgakov's friend but obviously not one who appreciated or understood him, wrote in *Almaznii **moi** venet^^:*

> "Ero **MopajibHbiii KOfleKC K E K** 6bi **6e3oroBopoHHO Biaiioqa;! B** ce6e **Bce aanoBeflH** Bexxoro **H HoBoro SaBexoB."**

One wonders whether Kataev had actually read the Commandments. Bulgakov's two-fold adultery, for instance, was hardly in keeping with Biblical morality. Kataev also went on to claim somewhat spitefully that Bulgakov believed his work to be divinely inspired:

> **"Co3/iiaBa;iocb Bneqax;ieHHe,** qxo ***Rmmb*** *ojmouy &uy* **oxKpbixbi BbicniHe HcxHHbi He xoiEbKo HCKyccTBa, HO H Boo6ii**];e **HCjioBCHecKOH *nmzim..."'^***

Surely not in the way Kataev implies, but Bulgakov, as one of the best Russian writers of the 20th century, was indeed intensely interested in the truth and had, through his art, divined something of these higher truths. Divine aid too had its place in his own mind, though again not in the arrogant fashion described by Kataev. Above the title o f a 1931 draft of "Polet Volanda" *m Master i Margarita* he wrote:

> **"noMora,** FocnoflH, **KOH^HXB** poMan. 1931r."'*'

Elena Sergeevna's diary reveals more about Bulgakov's state of health than his religious concerns. It is apparent that the worse his illness became the more he feared death, the bitter-sweet ending of *Master **i** Margarita* suggests that faith is the strongest

Andrew Barratt, *Between Two Worlds,* p. 43
Valentin Kataev, *Sobranie sochinenii* v 7 *Oti tomakh* (Khudozhestvennaia literatura, Moskva, 1984), p. 67.
Valentin Kataev, p. 262.
***Velikii kantsler* (Novosti, Moskva, 1992), p. 262.**

hope for a dying man. This remained with him until the very end. It is known that Bulgakov's dying words were addressed to God. When he died on 10 March 1940 he prayed:

"Forgive me, receive me"[""]

It is clear that Bulgakov had a voracious appetite for all kinds of religious literature - pro and contra (even i f he was enraged by the contra!). For example, he read the journal *Bezbozhnik"*[^] but he also collected copies of *Trudy Kievskoi Dukhovnoi Akademii,* which his father had contributed to'[^]. Much work has been done by various critics on trying to piece together Bulgakov's personal library and the scope of his reading. Chudakova's *Biblioteka Mikhaila Bulgakova i krug ego chteniia'*[^] and *Uslovie sushchestvovaniid"*[^] are two of the most comprehensive works, but Curtis, Proffer and Milne have also added to this pool of knowledge. Many of the books are, o f course, "Classics" such as Dostoevskii, Tolstoi, Gogol, Hoflftnann, Goethe and H.G.Wells, which would be normal reading for an educated man like Bulgakov. His constant companion was his Brockhaus and Efron dictionary but Chudakova notes that he also had a Church Slavonic dictionary. As reflects his interests, he also had many books on religious and philosophical subjects. In his works one can find references to the Bible and both Old and New Testament Apocrypha. According to Sergei Ermolinskii he had probably read the Talmud as well. His more recondite reading included Tacitus, Josephus Flavius, Philo and perhaps Kant. As Curtis has

""[^] A. Colin Wright, *Mikhail Bulgakov: Life and Interpretations* (University of Toronto Press, 1978), p. 253.

See Kuziakina, 'Mikhail Bulgakov i Demian Bednii' *in Mikhail Bulgakov - Dramaturg* (Moskva, 1968), pp. 392 -410.

M. Chudakova, 'Usloviia sushchestvovaniia' in *Vmire knig,* 12 (1974), p. 79. According to Chudakova, Bulgakov possessed the 1891-1897 issues almost in full.

"[^] M. Chudakova, 'Biblioteka M. Bulgakova i krug ego chteniia' in *Vstrechi s knigoi,* ed. E.I. Osetrov (Moscow, Kniga, 1979), pp. 244-300.

"'[^] M. Chudakova, 'Usloviia sushchestvovaniia' in *Vmire knig,* 12 (1974), pp. 79-81

documented""^, Bulgakov read *The Life of Jesus* by D.F. Strauss, A, Drew's 77?^ *Myth About Jesus Christ* and E, Kenan's ^«;7c/;m/. To these "Lives" Chudakova adds the Russian translations of *Zhizn' lisusa Khrista* by F.W. Farrar and Kenan's *Zhizn' lisusd*^^. Edward E. Ericson jr. in his 1974 article"*' has suggested that Mikhail Bulgakov was also aquainted with the thought of Sergei Bulgakov the theologian. There is also the well-examined *Mnimosti* v *geometrii* by the priest-mathematician Pavel Florenskii, which contains a remarkable meditation on the treatment of space in Dante and in the "Explanation to the Cover" made for *Mnimosti* by V.E. Favorskii. It does not appear that Bulgakov read any of Florenskii's religious works but there is evidence that he was aquainted with the thought of Lev Shestov from pre-revolutionary times and it is likely that he had some aquaintance with other Silver Age thinkers such as Berdiaev. Bulgakov also read various works concerning the Devil. Chudakova includes A . V . Chaianov's *Venediktov*^°, M . A . Orlov's *Istoria snoshenii cheloveka s diavolom*^' and Ilia Ehrenburg's *Neobychainie pokhozhdeniia Khidio Khurento i ego uchenikov*^^. One unlikely work which Bulgakov himself admitted gave him inspiration was Fenimore-Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*^^ :

"KaKoe **o6aHHHHe B SXOM cxapoM caHXHMeHxa;ibHOM** KynepeJ TaM ***J^aBUji,*** **KoxopbiH Bce BpcMa pacneBaex ncajiMbi, H HaBeji *ueim*** na **Mbicjib** o Bore."

Once again for Bulgakov, literature points to faith and that faith is reflected back into literature. It is these reflections which I intend to follow up in the ensuing chapters and to examine in the light o f Orthodox Christian theology.

J.A.E. Curtis, *Bulgakov's Last Decade.p.* 151.
M. Chudakova, *Zapiski otdela rukopisei* (Kniga, Moskva, 1976), p. 72.
Edward E . Ericson jr.. *The Satanic Incarnation: Parody in Bulgakov's* The Master and Margarita (Russian Review, 33:1, 1974), pp. 20 - 36.
***Biblioteka M. Bulgakova,* p. 272.**
^' *Biblioteka M. Bulgakova,* p. 295.
^- *Biblioteka M. Bulgakova,* p. 268.
" PodPiatoi, (26 0ctoberl923),p. 18.

2. THE DEVIL

The Devil in Christian terms is a very real presence and ahhough there are no doctrines determining his nature the Bible, theologians and tradition throughout the ages have created a strong image of the Prince of Darkness. Doctrine states that nothing can be co-eternal with the Father, therefore the Devil must be a creature of God. Despite the trouble this has caused in the debate about Good and Evil, religious ideas concerning Satan's nature and his role in the world's affairs have tended to follow the New Testament Lead.

Throughout the New Testament runs the idea that Satan is under God's control despite his being the chief enemy of Jesus, opposed to the Kingdom of God and the salvation of man. He is known as the Ruler of this World, not in the sense that he has been given it in its entirety for his sole control, but in that he is the ruler of the world that is opposed to God's. The Devil's kingdom, which contains subordinate devils and demons, is located in Hell, and it is here also that the Devil maintains some autonomy. His power lies in his ability to turn men away fi'om God and righteousness by means of lies and temptation. He is able to lead them away fi'om goodness, i f not actually force them from it but, according to Orthodox thought, his power is greatest in man's disbelief in him'. This power is understood to be very threatening and it is essential for an appreciation o f Christ's saving mission. The Devil is Jesus' adversary in His attempt to vanquish death, free the soul and unite men in the love o f God. The Devil's role in the New Testament includes that of being the killer, the liar and the tempter. These

Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith, volume I: Doctrine* (The Department of Religious Education, The Orthodox Church in America, New York, 1981), p. 51.

attributes are probably best seen in Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, Matthew 4:1-

11. To these can be added characteristics such as hatred, impurity, pride and cunning. J.B. Russel in his excellent book "The Devil"^ also reminds us of the Devil's links with sorcery and the bringing of violence and death.

Bulgakov's Woland is a composite figure of theology, literature and tradition. It is especially in the latter of these that the Devil, as a concept, has become a depository for man's irrational and often primitive fears. Bulgakov does not stand alone in world literature when he gives human form to this paranoia. Gareth Williams has pointed out^ that Woland's arrival is in accordance with one of the most popular traditions: speak of the Devil and he shall appear. Many of Bulgakov's uses of traditional material form a visual picture of Woland which differs from Biblical accounts of the Devil appearing in, say, the form of an animal. That Ivan and Berlioz think that he is mad could be a recognition of New Testament protrayals where the Devil possesses men and causes madness. Woland is imposing, he appears as a human, his cigarette case is decorated with a diamond triangle, there is the heat of Hell about him and he is pleased to have found atheists. After this initial flurry however, physical description is slowly replaced by more philosophically important matters until at the end Woland is not even described'*. The flight scene, however, may have been based on Vrubel's picture from a panel to Goethe's *Faust.* One curious symbol which I feel is worth noting is Woland's

scarab worn before the Ball *{MiM,* p. 615), I.F. Belza has put forward the suggestion

^ **J.B. Russel, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evilfrom Antiquity to Primitive Christianity,* (Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 228.**

' **Gareth Williams, 'Some Difficulties in the Interpretation of Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* and the Advantages of a Manichaean Approach, with some Notes on Tolstoi's Influence on the Novel', *Slavonic and East European Journal,* volume 68, (No. 2) (1990), pp. 234 - 256 (p. 238). There are also a host of other traditional events and symbols associated with the Devil, for example see Elizabeth KIosty-Beaujour's 'The Uses of Witches in Fedin and Bulgakov' *Slavic Review,* No. 33 (1974), pp. 695 - 707.1 shall restrict myself here to those more directly concerning Woland and his entourage.**

that this is the ancient Egyptian symbol for resurrection and new life, fitting Woland

(not without difficulty) into a cosmic system of rebirth^ Another possibility, I feel, is that it is the symbol of the God o f Ekron, Beelzebub (2 Kings 1:2), equated in Matthew 10:25 with Satan. This makes the scarab one of the evocative symbols which include the poodle, the triangle etc. which are in turn linked to the still unexplained symbolic whole of the novel.

By presenting Woland to the reader with traditional characteristics Bulgakov creates

levels o f ambiguity in the novel's universe and challenges the reader's assumptions about the Devil and the nature of evil itself Woland shows the Master and Margarita

(and through them the reader) that man's traditions about the Devil are, to a certain extent, misinterpretations. Times and events that have been perceived as 'evil', such as black masses, darkness and sabbaths, are in fact an important part of the natural order in the world o f the novel, containing much that is positive. The "black mass" at the end of Satan's ball, for example, may involve the murder of Maigel, but his blood turns to wine and grapes grow in its place. This is why I say only 'to a certain extent', because

always with Woland (and especially in the light of chapter 29 onwards) there is an undercurrent of menace and of a great, mysterious power. For the characters in Moscow, however, Woland's identity should be clearer. For example, Woland gives Berlioz and Ivan all the clues they need to work out who he is, yet they fail to perceive the truth and recognise him.

I.F. Belza, 'GenealogiiaMoj/era *i Margarity'* *Kontekst,* (Nauka, Moskva, 1978), p. 191.

One tradition that has grown up half way between theology and superstition and particularly concerned Old Testament Apocrypha and the Church Fathers, is that Satan was cast out from heaven because of his pride. This is based on interpretations of Scripture, namely Isaiah 14: 12-13: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, Son

of the Morning", and Luke 10:18: " I watched Satan falling like lightning from heaven", although Apocrypha **also** has its own reasons for the Fall from Heaven*. There is a dichotomy in *Master i Margarita* between a sense of order with all the higher powers

working together and the hints o f punishment and Fall among the devils. In chapter 18 *(MiM p.* 572) Woland makes a possible joke about falling:

> "51 ***JT!o6jno*** **cH**^exfa **HH3KO, - 3aroBopH**.Ji **apxHcx** [Woland] - c **HHSKOFO He Tax onacHO** naflaxb".

Although nothing is actually mentioned about any sin committed by Woland it is obvious from chapter 32 that the devils in his entourage are undergoing punishment and have fallen from a former grace. That Bulgakov may have differentiated between Woland and his suite can be found in a 1936 draft of the novel. When talking about Koroviev's sin and punishment (the unfortunate joke and his continuing life as a joker) Woland says:

> **"OH HeyaaHHo *opjtiaxjxbi* nomyxHJi, - menHyji BojiaHfl, - H BOX ocyxfleH** GbiJi **Ha xo, *nro* npH nocemeHHJix 3eMJiH myxHXb, xoxa eMy H He xaK y x xonexcH 3xoro. BnponeM, Ha,ii,eexcH na npomeHHe..H** 5yfly **xoflaxaflcxBOBaxb"**

In the final version of the novel Woland talks about the sins of his entourage but not about himself He does however display pride when talking to Matvei in chapter 29 and at the end of the novel the devils plunge into a dark abyss, perhaps that very place from

^ **These include fornication with human women in the "Life of Adam and Eve" and a refusal to worship man after God has created him in "1 Enoch". *See Apocryphal Old Testament,* edited by H.F.D. Sparks (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1984), pp. 149-150 and 188-190.**

^ ***Velikii kantsler,* p. 326.**

whence the sinners arrive at the Ball and whose fiery caverns are felt beneath the surface *{MiM,* p. 633)

Despite the fact that Bulgakov claimed that Woland had no prototypes'* and that, indeed, Woland is a unique character in literature, *bulgakovedenie* has unearthed references to other works of literature which Bulgakov seems to have drawn from in the creation o f his Devil^. Where Woland is concerned, the primary source seems to have been Goethe's *Faust.* This connection was noticed early on in critical considerations *Master i Margarita* not only from the theatrical text but also from the *Faust* operas of Gounod and Berlioz of which Bulgakov was known to have been very fond. A.C, Wright in his 1973 article'" found several points of contact between the two works which include the poodle (on Woland's walking stick, but which in a 1928-29 draft of chapter 5 in the novel was a six foot poodle howling in pain in the psychiatric hospital grounds"), Mephistopheles limp corresponding to Woland's knee trouble and the mention of Wagner by Ivan whilst trying to recall Woland's name, Wagner being Faust's student. The name Woland itself, as Curtis points out'^, is taken from a single mention in *Faust,* line 4023: "Blatz! Junker Voland kommt"'^ Elizabeth Stenbock-Fermor notes that Mephistopheles changes into a hippopotamus *(begemot,* a possible influence for the eponymous cat), and sources Vitzli-Putzli (mentioned by Berlioz, page

^ ***Zhizneopisanie,*** **p. 462.**

' **It would also seem that Bulgakov was influenced by art.Vrubel's 'Polet Fausta i Mefistofelia' of 1896 immediately recalls the Master's final flight,**

'° **A,C, Wright, 'Satan in Moscow: An Approach to Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita' PMLA,* 88, (1973), pp, 1162 - 1164,**
M, Chudakova, "Tvorcheskaia istoriia *xomms.Master i Margarita", Voprosy literatury* (1, 1976, pp. 218-253), p. 222,
J,A,E, Curtis, *Bulgakov's Last Decade,* p, 169.

" ***Goethe's Faust, Volume 1: the First Part*** **(D,C, Heath and Company, London, 1898),**

387) from the old Faust Puppet Plays and Variety Theatre tricks from the action in the play *Faust* itself*".

Critics have also concerned themselves with the epigraph to the novel which is of course taken from Mephistopheles' self-description in *Faust, Part 1.* Scholarly opinion has included approaches such as the notion that the epigraph deliberately mystifies in order to prompt the reader to begin to ask questions before the novel is underway'^ The reader should infer a cosmic harmony from the epigraph and conclude that Woland really does "do forever good" or at least doubt his apparent evil. Another approach would be to accept, as Edward E. Ericson Jnr. does, that Woland is an "old sophist" and treat the epigraph as introductory Satanic misguidance. Like the Satan of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (ahhough scholarly research has yet to find any evidence that Bulgakov was aquainted with Milton's works) Woland could also belong to a universe in which he is the unwilling instrument of Grace. Milton's Satan encouraged the Fall of Adam, but in doing so brought about the world's Redemption by Christ. Although Woland does not gnash his teeth like Milton's Satan, his "evil" works mean nothing in comparison with the Grace of God. Bulgakov's Woland, however, willingly obeys leshua's commands and the problem seems to lie in the extent to which he actually wills evil. A.C. Wright was not afraid to admit that Woland is deeply ambiguous'*. No one has been able to clear up the age old problem of the nature of the Devil and evil without creating a neat, but false picture of the universe and so it is not surprising that Bulgakov was not able to do so. As it is the shady words of Mephistopheles form the

Elizabeth Stenbock-Fermor, 'Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* and Goethe's *Faust', Slavonic and East European Journal,* volume 13, No. 6, (1969) pp. 309-325.

" **Andrew Barratt, 'Beyond Parody: the Goethe Connection' in *The Master and Margarita: a Critical Companion,* edited by Laura D. Weeks (Northwestern University Press, 1996), p. 120. This article also points out the differences between the works of Bulgakov and Goethe.**

A.C. Wright, 'Satan in Moscow', p. 1163.

perfect introduction to the structure of the novel's universe. I f we are to understand Bulgakov's world-view in its full complexity then perhaps we should not expect to fully understand the epigraph,

A possible influence on Bulgakov when he was creating Woland and constructing the universe o f *Master i Margarita* was Aleksei Tolstoi's *Don Zhuan.* In *Sobach'e serdtse* Professor Preobrazhenskii constantly sings the refrain "Ox **CeBH,nbH flo** FpaHaflbi", Don Juan's serenade to Niseta in Part One of his work. In the Prologue Satan gives an account o f his nature:

Mory cKaaaxb BaM HenpHXBopno
Moe BJiHHHbe 6jiaroxBopHo.
Be3 **flejia npaBe^HHK, noxajiyH** 6bi, 3acHy**,;i. rioBepbxe,**
***jiflsi* jiio**;teH **XOJIBKO nojiesHbi 3**XH, KaK **rajibBaHH3M**
nojieseH *jum* 5oJibHbix,
H **ecjiH** 6 **qepxa He** 5biJio **Ha CBexe,**
To **He** 6bUio 6bi **H cBHXbix."**^

This and other verses in the Prologue echo Woland's self-justification to Matvei in chapter 29 o f *Master i Margarita,* although Tolstoi's Satan is a much more cunning, proud and deceitful character than Woland.

Woland however was not the first Devil in Bulgakov's works. The presence of a Satanic figure can be found in the works *Diavoliada* and the original five-hour epic theatrical version o f *Belaia gvardiia.* These earlier works owe their Satanic influence to Gogol, E.T.A. Hoffmann and Dostoevskii's *The Double* and *Brothers Karamazov.* Certainly in the play *Belaia gvardiia* the stifling, taunting devil is the stuff of both Aleksei Turbin's and Ivan Karamazov's nightmares.

" **- H K BaM, AjieKceii BacHJibCBHq,** c **HOKJIOHOM OX** OeAopa **MHxaHJioBHHa /locxoeBCKoro."**[18]

" **A.K. Tolstoi, *Sobranie sochinenii,* torn vtoroi (Khudozhestvennaia literatura, Moskva, 1963), p. 20.**

18 M. Bulgakov, *P 'esy 20-x godov,* edited by A. A. Ninov, Act 2 scene 1 (Iskusstvo, Leningrad,

The reader is never really quite sure whether these devils are figments of the imagination or whether they have truly made themselves manifest. This toying with reality was also used in *Teatral 'nyi roman* where Maksudov momentarily believes the

editor, Rudolfi, is Mephistopheles. Bulgakov's devils, as W.J. Leatherbarrow notes, are never based on the grand Romantic design o f Byron and Lermontov'^. Other works he is known to have possessed in his library which involve the devil or diabolic possession

include *Istoriia snoshenii chelokevka s diavolom* by M . A . Orlov, and *Neobychainnye pokhozhdeniia Khulio Khurento i ego uchennikov* by I . Ehrenburg.

Thanks to the complex nature of Woland, scholars' opinions have been varied regarding his place in the universe, the implications this has for the nature of evil and the way he wields his power in the world. Theories about Bulgakov's positioning o f Woland in his cosmic system have been put forward by such critics as A C. Wright, Laura D . Weeks, I . L . Galinskaia, Gareth Wilhams, I.F. Belza and Andrew Barratt^".

The first of these, A.C. Wright, traces Woland back to the Old Testament Satan of *The Testament of Job* and Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudographia. The

1989), p. 351.

W.J. Leatherbarrow, 'The Devil and the Creative Visionary in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita', New Zealand Slavonic Journal,* No. 1, (1975), pp. 29-45 (p. 42). A possible exception to this comes in the form of Woland's tragic loneliness, *{MiM,* page 419): "il GAHH, OAHH, H Bcerjia oflHH, ropbKO OTBeTHJi iipo(i)eccop".

^° In this paragraph I have included only those theories based on religious-philosophical thought. Other popular critical opinions for example are that Woland must be viewed as a Modernist. Such an opinion is held by critics such as Vladimir Tumanov in 'Diabolos ex Machina: Bulgakov's Modernist Devil', *Scandoslavica,* tomus 35 (1989), pp. 49-61 and Elisabeth Klosty-Beaujour in 'The Uses of Witches in Fedin and Bulgakov', *Slavic Review,* No.33 (1974), pp. 695-707, however, Bulgakov's place within Modernism is extremely debatable. There is also an opinion that Woland is a Stalin figure, an idea maintained by D.G.B. Piper, for example in his 'An Approach to *The Master and Margarita, Forum for Modern Language Studies,* 7 (1971), pp. 134 - 57.L. Rzhevskii in 'Pilate's Sin: Cryptography in Bulgakov's Novel *The Master and Margarita, Canadian Slavonic Papers,* volume xiii (1971), pp. 1-19 points out on page 16 that the censor also suspected this link.

Apocrypha and Pseudographia are convincing sources for Bulgakov's conception o f Woland as they are more readily accepted by the Orthodox Church than in the West and it is more than likely, as Chudakova maintains^', that Bulgakov read them. Weeks takes this one step further and concludes that Woland, like the Devil of the Apocryphal *Martyrdom of Isaiah, Jubilees* and other books, functions as God's messenger (the

original function of all angels), acting as a semi-independent agent of retribution who is permitted by God to do such necessary work and is also a dispenser of justice, working side by side with other members of the Heavenly Court^^, Other evidence for Apocryphal influence comes from descriptions, such as that found in *The Apocalypse of*

Esdras:

"His right eye is like the Daystar and the other does not move"^^

This recalls the wall eye of Azazello (M M , p, 483) and the black and green eyes of Woland,

Galinskaia, through her examination of Koroviev-Fagot, concludes that Bulgakov's conception was based on that of the Albigenses, a 13th century French Manichaean sect not uncormected with the Bulgarian Bogomils, From their teachings she suggests that Woland is the ruler of the world and that leshua is the ruler of heaven and neither interferes in the affairs of the other^'*, Gareth Williams also feels comfortable with an Albigensian approach but reserves the main thrust of his article for a straightforward Manichaean interpretation. In this system, Woland is the ruler of matter and darkness while leshua is the ruler o f light. In Manichaeanism, matter is inherently evil, Williams

Chudakova, *Zhizneopisanie,* p, 221,
Laura D. Weeks, 'Hebraic Antecedents in *The Master and Margarita', Slavic Review,* 43 (1984), pp, 224-41.
***The Apocryphal Old Testament,* editor H.F.D. Sparks, p, 936,**
L L . Galinskaia, 'Albigoiskie assotsiatsii v *Mastere i Margarite* M.A. Bulgakova, *Seriia Literatury i iazyka,* torn 44, (No. 4) (1985), pp. 366-378 (p. 366).

transfers this concept to *Master i Margarita* and posits that Woland has no need to create evil, explaining why he is not the traditional Spirit of Evil in the novel^^ He also proposes (p. 247 o f his article (see footnote 3)), as does Belza^^ that the Universal Order could also be influenced by BogomiUan thinking, a mediaeval Slavonic heresy, which taught that God and the Devil were either brothers or that the Devil was subordinate to God but ruled in quasi-independence. Barratt's detailed study of the novel in the light of Gnostic beliefs is also interesting but ultimately unconvincing^^. Although the Faust legend, from which Bulgakov has obviously drawn, has long been associated with the Manichaean and Gnostic heresies through the legend of Simon Magus, I feel that the novel is too idiosyncratic and drawn from too many other different sources to follow one particular tradition o f thinking. The character o f Woland is a prime example of this and it is misleading to understand the universe in which he operates as in total accordance with this or that belief

Mention must be made of the devils in Woland's suite. The character of Azazello would seem to have his roots also in Old Testament Apocrypha, Azazel, or Azazil, being one of the chief devils in *Book of Enoch* and *Apocalypse of Abraham.* As both Wright and Weeks point out, Azazel is the demon who taught men how to make weapons and how to make themselves up. He is cast into the desert as a punishment^^. Behemoth likewise has connections with the hungry monster o f the land in the books o f Genesis and Enoch, His immediate earthly model was, however, as Liubov' Evgenevna Bulgakova-Belozerskaia has pointed out^^, inspired by the Bulgakov's family cat.

Gareth Williams, p, 244.

'^^ I.F. Belza, p. 195.

Andrew *Banan,Between Two Worlds.*

***The Apocryphal Old Testament,* p.190-191 and 195. This may go to explaining why Azazello is "the demon of the waterless desert".**

L , E , Belozerskaia-Bulgakova, *0 med vspominanii* (Ardis, 1979), p, 97.

Fliuska. Cats are also traditionally creatures of witchcraft. There is a large haughty and blasphemous cat in chapter 13 in the Book of Revelations which is associated with the Dragon. It has authority and a throne and it has a mortal wound which is healed. Boris

Sokolov^" also suggests that the name could have been taken from *Istoriia snoshenii cheloveka s d'iavolom* where a story is related of how a certain Anna Dessange is

possessed by several devils, including Begemot. Koroviev's prototypes have not really been satisfactorily explained. He has been associated with Mephistopheles as a singer, a fool and a magician by Weeks and, through the name Fagot, to heretic and witch

burning by I . L . Galinskaia^**V** The link with the word ***Kopoea*** has been associated with the Golden Calf of the Canaanites. But it could also be an echo of *lEnoch* (p. 277)

where the fall of The Watchers (similar to Archangels) from Heaven to fornicate with women is retold symbolically as stars falling among bulls and heifers^^. It seems fairly likely that Hella can be compared to Lilith, the beautiful, naked, red-haired vampire and lethal seductress who is mentioned in Isaiah 34:14 but remains a character well-known in her own right.

Woland's role in Moscow and that of his entourage is not clearly defined but is generally orientated towards provoking sinners, punishing wrong-doing and overseeing death. The duties are conducted within the sphere of God's plan and constitute some of the main arguments against equating Woland with traditional notions about the Devil. From the moment he materialises at Patriarch's Ponds Woland does not perform Satan's traditional role. During his conversation with Berlioz and Ivan Bezdomnyi it is obvious that he deeply desires that Berlioz believe in *something.* He does not

Boris Sokolov, *Entsiklopediia Bulgakovskaia* (Lokid-Mif, Moskva, 1996), p. 49.
***I.L. Galmskaia,Albigoiskie assotsiatsii,* p. 367.**
H.F.D. Sparks, pp. 277-279.

maliciously wish anyone's damnation but he does treat each individual according to how much access they have had to the truth about the divine and how much they choose to accept. Indeed, in a 1928-29 draft of the novel Woland declares to Ivan that he does beUeve in Jesus Christ:

A **Bbi, noHxeHHCHiiiHft HfiaH HHKOJiaeBHH, 3flopoBo BepHxe B** XpHcxa."^"

Neither Berlioz', nor Maigel's deaths are brought about by Woland. I f one is to take Woland at his word, and I believe that Bulgakov wishes the reader to do this, then Woland's function is ultimately to serve Truth and Goodness. In chapter 22 (page 613) Koroviev states that the devils dislike ambiguity and mystery. However, Woland does not actively perform good deeds (except when asked to take the Master and Margarita to their rest^'*), yet neither can he stop them from taking place. He "disagrees" with compassion but he does not encourage a lack of compassion. Woland is not Pure Evil in the conventional sense, but neither is he of the same spiritual stuff as leshua.

Woland's "Department" lies half-way between damnation and duty, which he performs willingly, albeit registering the odd objection on principle, and impartially. This appears to be based on an understanding of God's plan which he is able to divine with absolute accuracy. He and leshua do not meet and have little to do with each other directly (co-operating through the medium of Levi Matvei) but the greater power is leshua's, Woland, through Abadonna, may have the power of death, but through the Resurrection leshua has defeated this. To this extent Woland is the post-resurrectional Satan, stripped of the malice evidenced in the New Testament, This creates the

Velikii kantsler, **p, 238,**
In a 1934 draft of the novel Woland's function was more strictly subordinate:
- TaK BOX MHe 6buio BeJieHO...
- Pa3Be BaM Moryr Bejiexb?
- O, jia. Be:iieHO ynecTH Bac...
M. Chudakova, "Tvorcheskaia istoriia", p, 240,

impression that Woland is somehow beyond good and evil. He does not need human fear, he does not hate mankind and he does not force anyone to commit either good or evil actions. What he does do, however, is to test courage, love and faith and i f he finds

it lacking to deal retribution" . This includes the unmasking of greed, corruption, lies, adultery and treachery. For mild offences the punishments are light and, for the reader at least, amusing. For serious offences, such as those that Berlioz and Maigel commit, the punishments are ultimate. Berlioz' rejection of Christ and Maigel's betrayal (two sins, incidentally inextricably linked to the Gospel Passion narratives) are choices made freely by themselves. Woland respects the free-will granted by God and administers punishment accordingly.

Despite Matvei's implied Christian belief in the need for the eradication of evil,

Woland's reply states that evil is unavoidable so long as men continue to sin:

> **"Hxo** 6 **H ^tejiajio XBoe** flo6po, **ecjiH** 6bi ne **cymecxBOBajio 3Jia, H KaK** 6bi ***BhiTJiimeJia* 3eMJiH, *ecjm*** 6bi c **Hee HcnesjiH xeHH? Beflb xeHH nojiyqaioxcH ox npeflMexoB H JiioaeH. Box xeHb ox MoeM mnara.** Ho **6biBaK)X xeHH ox ^lepeBbeB H oxxHBbix cymecxB."** *(MiM,* p. 716)

Woland's position is thus necessary but Bulgakov does not explore this fact more deeply in the novel. leshua states that all men are good and so, unlike Gareth Williams' claim that matter is inherently evil in the novel, I would say the opposite: matter is inherently uncorrupted and is from God. It casts, like Woland's sword, an unavoidable shadow because it is earthly and shares in the fallen state of the world. Woland is a part of this fiindamental state and it seems that Bulgakov believes along with Origen and many Byzantine theologians including Dionysus the Areopagite, that the Devil's nature is created by God and therefore in essence good. He cloaked this nature in a mysterious

See for example, I. Vinogradov, *Zaveshchanie Mastera,* pp. 57 - 64.

sense of sin and hell and created the eternally intriguing character of Woland, forcing the reader to ask the question: "Say, who art thou?".

3. THETEACHING ANDNATURE OF CHRIST

The only two portrayals of Christ by Bulgakov can be found in *Belaia g\>ardiia* and *Master i Margarita.* In these portrayals, Bulgakov shows his readers - separately, as it were - the earthly and the heavenly form of Christ. Neither the Christ of Aleksei Turbin's dream in chapter 5 of *Belaia gvarciiia* nor the character of leshua Ha-Notsri in *Master i Margarita* are conventional theological figures, however Bulgakov never strays into the blasphemy that he so obviously detested in other writers. Through Bulgakov's portrayals, especially of leshua Ha-Notsri, one may see that he was not afraid to push back the boundaries of religious orthodoxy to create characters through the tension between the conventional and the unconventional. The Christ of the Gospels is originally the model for the Christ of the Church and it is with Him that I shall compare leshua Ha-Notsri in this chapter, but let us first consider some extraneous sources suggested by critical literature on the subject.

Before proceeding to a study of leshua, it is worth considering one of the most important questions that has concerned Bulgakov scholars since the pubhcation of *Master i Margarita.* Why did Bulgakov choose to include the Jerusalem narratives in the novel? Critical opinion about the meaning and fianction of the Jerusalem chapters has of course been varied^. A unique solution has been given by I . L. Galinskaia who sees the narrative as an expression of the second of the Three Worlds of Skovoroda's philosophy (the Earthly, the Biblical and the Cosmic)^ A more popular approach has

' **For Bulgakov's treatment of Christ in** *Belaia gvardiia,* **see chapter on God.**

^ **A minor aside to this question concerns the text of Levyi Matvei. I shall discuss the contents of his writings later but suffice it to say here that the relation between the Master's text and Matvei's is uncertain as it also begs comparison with the Gospel of St. Matthew in the New Testament. J. A.E. Curtis has suggested that his parchment is the "Q" text (the lost basis for the Synoptic Gospels). But Matvei's writings are flawed...**

^ **I. L . Galinskaia,** *'Master i Margarita* **M.A. Bulgakova: k voprosu ob istoriko-filosofskikh**

been to see these chapters as a "cipher" for the reality of Muscovite life. Some of the more oppressive ills of the Soviet regime can be suggested under the Jerusalem narrative's protective cloak of history. Adherents to this theory include Elena Mahlow" and D.G.B. Piper^, who draws links between the novel's characters and the literary and political establishment of the time. This simple and time honoured device, while it probably does have some relevance to the text, does little or nothing to explain the chapters' spiritual, philosophical and structural significance.

A convincing explanation, based on more detailed evidence than the characters similarity (or lack of) to political figures, has been proposed by M . Chudakova and has been well received by other scholars such as Curtis and Barratt. Curtis proposes, taking into account the Master's remark "0, **KaKH** yra^aji! O, **KaKH Bce** yraaaji!", the distribution of the narrative between oral story, dream and text, and the fact that the Jerusalem chapters appear "more real" than the Moscow phantasmagoria, the Master's "gospel" is a fore-text in the neo-Platonic, Romantic tradition*. Such a "gospel" can only be divined by an artist of genius as it exists beyond time itself, waiting to be discovered. As to the contents of this story, the question arises as to the historical position of the narrative. If the Jerusalem chapters can be understood as a poetic fore-text, to what extent should we consider them to be an attempt at historical authenticity, an attempt to picture what really happened in a manner "immune from influence of *myth",* as Andrew Barratt puts it'. It has been an often-stated idea (by critics such as Chedrova, Lakshin, lanovskaia and Milne) that with the Master's

istochnikakh romana', *Izvestiia akademii muk SSSR, Seriia literatury i iazyka,* **42 (1983), pp. 106 - 115.**

Elena Mahlow, *Bulgakov's 'The Master and Margarita': the Text as Cipher* **(New York, 1975).**

^ **D.G.B. Piper, 'An Approach to** *The Master and Margarita',* *Forum for Modern Language Study* **No. 7 (1971), pp. 134 - 157.**

^ **J. A . E . Curtis,** *Bulgakov's Last Decade,* **p. 146.**

' **Andrew Barratt,** *Between Two Worlds,* **p. 176.**

gospel, Bulgakov was adding his voice to the de-mythologisers such as Renan and Strauss and seeking to sort out the facts and challenge what he believes to be fiction.

As I will show below, I do not believe that this was Bulgakov's primary aim when he created the Jerusalem narrative.

leshua's significance within the Jerusalem chapters and the novel as a whole has also been much debated. Bulgakov scholars have noted ties that link him with the Master and with the concept of the Artist through their piercing insight and their suffering for the truth. Curtis puts a new perspective on this idea when she says: "It is the Master

who gains in moral stature through the implicit reference back to leshua"^ stressing that leshua's importance is more than that of a parallel, ancient artist-figure (a

prefiguration of the Master, Milne might say^) but that he also bears a moral significance and, I would add, a religious significance within the work.

One of the most important things to consider when approaching the character of leshua Ha-Notsri is the question of his divinity and the various ways in which he manifests his presence: firstly, in apparently human form in Jerusalem and then as the unseen power behind Levyi Matvei's conversation with Woland and lastly as the young

man walking up the moonbeam with Pilate. Scholars such as Lakshin have suggested that "he who is dying is not an omnipotent god who will be resurrected in the

morning"^*'. Others believe, like Proffer, that leshua is a non-divine man who practices some kind of "good magic"", or Hke Gareth WilUams that he becomes truly divine only afl;er the crucifixion'^. Yet leshua seems more than a man. Avril Pyman, bearing in mind also Aleksei Turbin's dream where Christ is spoken of as "God", has suggested

^ **J. A . E . Curtis,** *Bulgakov's Last Decade: the Writer as Hero,* **p. 144.**
' **L . Milne,** *Mikhail Bulgakov: A Critical Biography,* **pp. 238 - 239.**
'° **Lakshin, p. 80.**
" **Proffer, p. 544.**
Gareth Williams, p. 244.

that Bulgakov's understanding of his nature has much in common with the Monophysite heresy which stated that Christ's nature is essentially divine and that His physical manifestation of Himself is, as it were, assumed at will and subservient to the Divine - a premise which leaves the artist a comparatively free hand with the life of "the man Jesus"Such a range of opinion is frilly understandable. In Bulgakov's *Master i Margarita* there is no direct statement that leshua is God. To all intents and purposes he is a man with a human background, albeit an uncertain one. There are no claims that leshua is the pre-existent Logos, the Son of God, Son of Man, Christ or any other of the traditional christological titles applied to Jesus in the New Testament. Bulgakov expressly avoids them, as if to avoid prejudging the riddle he has set the reader. Instead he is at pains to make leshua as human in character as possible by using a wide range of emotions and expressions, far from the transcendent dignity of the Jesus of the Gospels. Although leshua himself (as a man in the Jerusalem chapters) appears to have no power over events, some of the happenings around him do suggest either the workings of a divine providence or that he himself has gifts of healing and prophecy. For example Matvei's mysterious illness, which prevents him from interfering in the work of Redemption when leshua leaves Bethpagy, could point to divine providence. leshua cures Pilate's headache and knows the reason for it, he knows that the procurator wants to commit suicide and he predicts trouble for Judas. The storm that breaks out over the crucifixion seems to suggest that the death of leshua may be of some cosmic significance. Although it would be easy to assume that Matvei's removal of leshua's body from the cross should be regarded as a rationalist explanation for later rumours of "resurrection", something akin to a real resurrection

" **Avril Pyman, "The Fantastic as Subversion in Soviet Literature",** *Essays in Poetics* **(Autumn 1995, volume 20), p. 82.**

does take place, although the reader is not permitted to see this. This may be because, as is stated in a 1936 draft of the novel, the rest of the story is not a suitable subject for the Master's pen"'. Be that as it may, leshua is still in control of events and converses with Woland through Levyi Matvei (who by the logic of time is also immortal). leshua has the power to award the Master and Margarita *pokoi.* He sends Woland to do His bidding and appears to Pilate, unchanged (in the guise that Pilate would recognise), to continue their argument along the moonbeam to take him into eternal rest.

We have, then, estabhshed that Bulgakov's leshua (and his concept of Christ generally) comprises both God and man. But is this an Orthodox vision? Heresies have also been considered as possible sources for Bulgakov's inspiration. Gareth Williams, as we have pointed out above, tries to explain leshua's nature in terms of Manichaeism, which maintains that Christ was either a spirit with the appearance of man, a person through whom Christ acted but with whom He had no inner union, or was a man who only assumed divinity afi:er death. He also tends to base his argument for this on Woland rather than leshua. Bogomilianism, with its beliefs that Christ and the Devil were brothers has been considered by critics such as Belza and Williams but offers the least likely key to Bulgakov's thinking. While there are some vaHd arguments in favour of this interpretation, touching on the relationship between the supernatural powers, I think it would be wrong to attempt to determine the character of leshua in any such terms. Although not a faithfiil copy of Christ in the Gospels, neither is he presented as Woland's "brother" or as a remote creator'^

Chudakova, *Zhiznesopisanie,* **p. 242-243. Chudakova records these draft notes: " . . . H O HcqesHex МНСЛЬ О Та-НоiipH Н О iipomeHHOM HrcMOHe. ЭТО aejio He xBoero ywa".**

" **Another interesting heresy that suggests a Christ of similar nature to that of leshua, but one the relationship of which to Bulgakov's thinking must remain purely speculative, is Monarchianism. This third-century heresy claimed tliat Jesus was a man who was subject to the special power and influence of God to an intense and unique degree. Upon his resurrection he became absorbed into the Godhead.**

It is worth examining the drafts of the novel to see where Bulgakov began and what he chose to suppress as time went on. The character and nature of leshua did not change dramatically from the first drafts of *Master i Margarita* to the last. He did, however, become less obviously associated with the divine realm and more "demythologised". Quite why Bulgakov chose to implement this process is uncertain. He did not seem to entertain any realistic expectations that the novel would ever be published, so it is unlikely that he was thinking of the censor, yet by the end he had created a more radical leshua and one less rooted in the Gospels. The main aspect that Bulgakov chose to alter was leshua's mysterious insights. In earlier drafts they were more obvious. For example, leshua considers the goodness of Mark Krysoboi:

> "...HpH **HflHCTaBH30 ero KaK yflapHJi repMaHeij - H y Hero noBpe^HJiacb roJioBa...**
>
> **riHJiaT B3flporHyji.**
> - Tbi **rfle x e BcxpeHaji** MapKa **paHbme?**
> - A **a ero HHrfle He BCTpenaji."'^**

He also predicts trouble for Judas:

> "... KaKyio 6efly **naflejiaji HcKapHox. O H oqenb MH^biH Majib^HK...** A **}KeHmHHa...** A **Be^epoM..."'"**

Such instances of leshua's prescience, coupled with the inclusion of the dream of Pilate's wife and his final words on the cross in the 1928-29 draft, suggest that the leshua (also called Eshua (Emya) and lisus (Hncyc)) of the first draft is closer to the Gospel Jesus than is the leshua of the final novel. In words that recall the incident of the Good Thief (though including both), leshua says from the cross to the bandits crucified with him: "05emaio, **HTO npHCKaqex** cef^iac. FIoTepnH, ceiraac o6a noHflexe **3a MHOIO**"[18]. leshua's eyes are filled with light as he says this (as are

Velikii kantsler, **p. 217 (1928-29 draft)**
Velikii kantsler, **p. 687., p. 222 (1928-29 draft)**
Velikii kantsler, **p. 687., p.230 (1928-29 draft)**

Woland's in chapter 29 of the published version of the novel). In the final draft leshua's last word ("Hegemon") is addressed to Pilate, is highly personal and appeals to his conscience. In the first draft however leshua says "Teteleostai" (which means 'it is finished' in Greek). This echoes Christ's words as recorded in the Gospels and suggests that leshua, like the Gospel Jesus, saw himself as having accomplished his Messianic role.

In his preparation for the Jerusalem chapters Bulgakov referred to a variety of sources, mostly of a de-mythologising nature. lanovskaia, Chudakova and others have pointed to Ernest Renan, David F. Strauss, F.W. Farrar's *Life of Jesus,* A. Drews' *Myth About Christ* and Henri Barbus' *Myth About Christ* as well as Bulgakov's trusty *Brockhaus and Efron Dictionary.* To a certain extent it seems that Bulgakov was influenced by the "mythological" school of David Strauss, whose highly influential *Life of Jesus* denied the existence of the supernatural and Christ's divinity. The radical idea that this brought forth was that the Gospels were the result of mythopoeic works based on Old Testament prophecies and that they were written in order to prove that Jesus the man, who is seen as an historical figure, was the Messiah. Strauss swept these myths aside, but as concerns the Passion and Resurrection, he did not posit any "replacement" events. Bulgakov certainly does de-mythologise many of the aspects of the narrative which have been read as fijlfilment of Old Testament prophecy, such as the entry into Jerusalem on a donkey. He also, however, tends to follow Farrar in his creative rendition of the story. Farrar's *Life of Jesus Christ* treats the subject more like an epic novel than a Gospel re-telling and his book stands as if in defiance to Strauss' work, concentrating on the feelings and details of events while the portrayal of Christ remains closer to the Christ of the Gospels than that of Strauss. Bulgakov draws on

these sources but I do not feel that he "follows" either. He uses them for his creative purposes but the artistic results are most definitely his own.

leshua, then, is as much a composite figure as Woland is, both of them existing in a multi-faceted universal structure which has been assembled through wide reading, creative intuition and concentrated thought.

Having dealt with scholarly opinion on the possible influences and sources for leshua, and on his artistic fimction within the novel, I shall now begin to look at the relationship between leshua and the Christ of the Gospels both within and without the Jerusalem narrative. According to Barratt, Bulgakov's friend Pavel Markov recalled "that the writer told him during the rehearsals of *Days of the Turbins* (i.e. 1926) that he had long been tormented by *the enigma* [my italics] of the New Testament tragedy"^. The Passion was therefore not so much an ineffable event to be contemplated with adoration but a topic for thought. It seems highly likely that Bulgakov considered the Gospels an unreliable source and in this he was not alone. The Gospel of John, for example, has long been considered by theologians to be fiirthest from the "facts", an idea first developed by such theologians as F C Bauer and the Tubingen School in the 18th Century^". Sergei Ermolinskii wrote that Bulgakov found the Gospel of John particularly important^', and it is quite possible that Bulgakov had the Johanine account in mind when he began to address the Passion Narrative. This Gospel is seen as an early Christian expression of what believers perceived to be the essential "truth" about Christ's mission. It is more of a spiritual interpretation than a chronological, factual account. According to Curtis, Bulgakov

Andrew Barratt, *Between Two Worlds,* **p. 43.**

^° **My thanks to Father Robin Fox for this information.**

^′ *Mikhail Bulgakov and His Times,* **compiled by Viacheslav Vozdvizhenskii and translated by Liv Tudge (Progress, Moscow, 1990), page 162.**

was not claiming historical authenticity for his work. She draws our attention to Bulgakov's use of the thinking of Father Pavel Florenskii, whose work *Mnimosti v geometrii* (Concepts of the Imaginary in Geometry, Moscow, 1920^^) states that reality can be multiplied without affecting the truth. This starting point would allow Bulgakov ample room in which to work with such religiously significant events as the Passion of Christ. Indeed, I would agree with lanovskaia when she says that Bulgakov was "looking for the truth of an image, not the truth of events"'^^. As I will show later, what Bulgakov actually does in the Jerusalem chapters is to question events and motives while leaving the fitndamental message of the Christ of the Church in essence unchallenged^". Of course, Bulgakov is unable to give a complete account of the life, work and personality of his "Christ" (the Bible has all of the New Testament in which to do this, Bulgakov gives himself four chapters and confines them to the chronotope of Jerusalem during the trial and Crucifixion). However, he manages to choose messages that, while important in the work of the Christ of the Gospels, are also relevant to *Master i Margarita,* crossing the boundaries between artistic and religious integrity.

As is obvious from a simple comparison of the Gospel account and that in *Master i Margarita,* Bulgakov changed and removed many of the events and details of the Passion story. He also made changes to the character of Christ when creating his leshua Ha-Notsri. Much of the modem perception of what Christ should look like has been formed by iconography and tradition. This is especially true in the Orthodox Church with its long and strong history of religious portraiture. Bulgakov's leshua,

^- **Bulgakov made many notes in his copy of this work. For an interesting examination see Lesley** *Milne's Mikhail Bulgakov: A Critical Biography* **(CUP, 1990), pp. 251 - 255.**
L . lanovskaia, *Tvorcheskii put',* **p. 260**

^'^ **This is also a view shared by A. Colin Wright in** *Mikhail Bulgakov: Life and Interpretations,* **p. 263.**

however, is a young man in shabby clothes, sporting a bandage. The reader is not told any particulars about his physical appearance (we certainly do not see the blond, blue-eyed Christ of Roman Catholic tradition or the darker figure of Orthodox iconography). We do however get some idea about leshua's physical insignificance through his bruises, his weakness and his grating, high-pitched voice.

As concerns his personality, there do seem to be two levels at work in leshua which, as with Woland, are reflected in his speech. First, there is the naive young man who speaks " **X H B O** " (animatedly) and "**OXOXHO**" (eagerly), but then there are also times when a voice of authority resounds, speaking words of a deeper knowledge. For example, during his conversation with Pilate after the procurator's headache has been alleviated, leshua's conversational comments on the weather slip seamlessly into a pronouncement upon Pilate's soul:

> "Befla **B xoM, npoflOJDKaji HHKeM He ocxanaBJiMBaeMbiH cBHsaHHbiH, - HXO xbi cjiHmKOM 3aMKHyx H OKOH^axejibHo noxepHJi Bepy B** ***RIORCH.*** *Bciib* **Hej[b35i** xe, **corJiacHCb, noMecxHXb BCKD CBOK) npHBH3aHHocxb B** co6aKy. **TBOH xii3Hb cKyana, HreMOH, - H** xyx ***roBopfimyiPi uosBomui*** ce6e **yjibiGnyxbCH."** *(MiM,* p. 401)

In contrast to the changing voice of leshua in *Master i Margarita,* Jesus Christ in the Gospels conducts himself before Pilate with calm, humility and a certain detachment. Bulgakov's motives for altering Christ's human personality in the way he presented leshua suggest that he was aiming to imply a personal relationship between prisoner and judge. leshua is deeply involved in Pilate's fate. Indeed, it is actually leshua who is the judge and Pilate who is the prisoner of his own conscience. leshua appeals to the Procurator on an intimate level, constantly exercising his ability to turn men away from themselves and towards the divine truth. leshua does not judge in order to condemn - he shines the light of truth into Pilate's dark soul.

What precise changes, omissions and additions to the Gospels Bulgakov made when he created the character of leshua and the Jerusalem narrative have been well documented by critics such as Zerkalov, El'baum and Pruitt^^ They and others have shown that Bulgakov researched all his architectural, geographical, historical and political information with a convincing vigour. However, from the point of view of the religious significance of leshua, I feel it is worth examining first the *sayings* of Bulgakov's leshua and then how these fit in with and affect his character (on a human level) and his nature (on **a** higher level).

The first point leshua makes in his preaching is: " **S J I B I X JiiofleH Hex Ha CBexe"** *(MiM,* p. 403). At first glance, and especially within the context of the Jerusalem chapters where Pilate and the Sanhedrin seem to stand as direct proof to the contrary, and in comparison with the Moscow chapters where the devils are occupied with all kinds of human misdemeanours, leshua's statement seems naive and deluded. Indeed, Krasnov, in his extensive article in the journal *Grant,* thinks that only leshua, who shows such love for all his neighbours, could ever beheve others to be "good"'^^. However, beneath the surface lies **a** depth of meaning and significance that reaches into Orthodox theological thought and the teaching of Christ in the Gospels. The statement that all men are good may not have sounded to Orthodox ears as far removed from doctrine as it would to Western Christians, especially in the context of the concept of Original Sin. The Orthodox do not believe in an Augustinian notion of Original Sin in the sense that all men are born inherently sinful. They are beings created by **a** God who

See A. Zerkalov, *Evangelie Mikhaila Bulgakova* **(Ann Arbor, Ardis, 1984), Genrikh El'baum,** *Analiz iudeiskikh gtav 'Mastera i Margarity" M. Bulgakova* **(Arm Arbor, Ardis, 1981) and Donald B. Pruitt, "St. John and Bulgakov: the Model of a Parody of Christ",** *Canadian-American Slavic Studies,* **15, 1981, pp. 312-20.**

^® A. Krasnov, "Khristos i Master. O posmertnom romane M. Bulgakova *Master i Margarita",* *Grant* **(73), p. 185.**

is Himself sinless and pure goodness and thus possess the capacity for love. The Orthodox believe nevertheless that all men are disposed towards sin because of the Fall, but are not by nature evil, which is not necessarily the same as saying that all men are good^'. What Bulgakov seems to be implying then, especially through leshua's declaration that the attack on Mark Krysoboi has made the centurion harsh, is that man is a product of his environment. This idea was one that gained increasing popularity both in philosophy and psychology, ostensibly because of the decline of religion. But here I feel that Bulgakov is in accordance with Orthodox thought - the world has come under the sway of sin and the devil and it is this that prevents man from obtaining a frill communion with his Creator.

During his conversation with Pilate, leshua denies that he literally wants to destroy the temple. His message is more metaphorical: **"PyxHex** xpaM cxapoH **Bepbi H coGjiacxca HOBbiH** xpaM **HcxHHbi"** *{MiM,* p. 400). This is very similar to statements found throughout the New Testament about Christ and the Temple. In the Gospels, Christ was accused of predicting the destruction of the temple but He was using the metaphor of the temple to predict the Resurrection (the Temple of the Body according to John) and, according to St. Paul, the necessary (as he saw it) transition from Judaism to Christianity. It is unlikely that Bulgakov intended the Church as he knew it to be equated with the New Temple for leshua in *Master i Margarita* seems to hint that Christianity itself may be nothing more than a series of mistakes brought about by incorrect writings *(MiM,* p. 399). leshua does not claim that any new religion is to be formed out of the Old Temple. Yet a change does take place in the world

^' **For afiiUerdiscussion of this see Man and his Relationship to God.**

("BeccMepxHe...npHiii;io **6eccMepxHe...",** hears Pilate *{MiM,* p. 411)). The effects of this are only demonstrated at the end of the novel and are bound up with Truth.

Truth, as scholars such as lanovskaia, Barratt and Andreev'^^ have noted, has a vital part to play within the whole novel. In the Gospels, Christ's words point to a revelation of "truth". In the Gospel of John 18:37-38, after a short exchange, we read:

> "Pilate therefore said unto him. Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I bom and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?"

Here Truth is of God and Truth is God. Truth is something that is inside each person (it is also linked to their spark of essential 'goodness', which leshua recognises in each man *m Master i Margarita).* The Christ of the Gospels does not reply; the truth is standing right before Pilate ("I am the way, the truth and the life"). leshua in *Master i Margarita,* however, does reply. The Procurator's question: "Hxo xaKoe **HCXHHa"** is a world-weary and cynical question, and is put as if he expects there to be some sort of concrete answer. leshua replies:

> **"McxHHa** npex^e **Bcero B XOM, HXO** y xe65i 6o**.fiHX rojioBa, H** 6**OJIHX** xaK **cHJibHo, HXO xbi Majio^iyniHO noMbiimiHemt** o **CMepxH.** Tbi ne **xoJibKo** ne **B cHJiax roBopHXb co MHOH, HO** xe6e **xpy^HO** aaxe **rjumexb** na **MCHH. M** ceftnac **H HeBo.iibHo HBJiHiocb XBOHM najiaqoM, HXO MBHH oropnaex...** Ho **MyneHHa XBOH** ceftnac **KonnaxcH, rojioBa npoHwex."**

This is in essence the same "reply" as that given by Christ's silent witness in the New Testament. Pilate in *Master i Margarita* can see no further than the physical world but leshua is more than physical - he is, as I shall discuss later, divine. As Barratt points out, leshua has "a seemingly miraculous ability to read the Procurator's mind". He knows when Pilate's headache departs (he has probably alleviated it) and he knows

See for example Pavel Andreev, "Besprosvet'e i prosvet", *Kontinent,* **22 (1980), p. 360.**

"the spiritual ailment which is the source **of** the Procurator's malaise"^'. leshua, in other words, has knowledge of the true state of body and soul because He **is** Truth.

leshua's third statement is that: **"BcHKan BJiacxb HB;i;iexcH nacHJiHeM Ha/i *mojihUH*... HeJioBeK** nepeiiaex **B iiapcxBO HCXHHH H cnpaBefljiHBOcxH, *T^.c* Boo6me He *dyjiCT* Ha;io5Ha HHKaKa^i BJiacxb"** *(MiM,* p. 406). The first part of this statement, that all **power** is tyranny, is easily **explicable** in terms of Bulgakov's **own** thinking. Considering his **obvious** loathing of that most vicious lust for power, war, and in the context of Stalin's regime, such a statement is hardly surprising. Within the context of the Jerusalem chapters, leshua speaks these words in a not dissimilar political climate where men such as Pilate are cowed for fear of the State into disobeying the promptings of conscience and act to save themselves. As regards the teaching of Christ and Christian thinking, an understanding of leshua's statement could lie in the Christian emphasis on love as the sovereign unifying factor in the Kingdom of God which cannot be established by earthly powers, which are repeatedly shown as fortuitous, impermanent and irrelevant.

As regards the second part of the statement, it does not seem to be borne out in the novel that the "Kingdom of Truth and Justice" has dawned on earth. The very mention of such a Kingdom sends Pilate into a paroxysm of rage. Within Christian thinking as based on the Gospels, the Kingdom is a description of the spiritual state man can achieve on earth through hearing and living by the word of God which is attainable here and now. This is what leshua seems also to be saying. This is supported by the Moscow chapters' rich apocalyptic imagery which is shown also within the context of the present. The Master, Margarita and Pilate do pass into the Kingdom after death

Both quotations from Barratt, *Between Two Worlds,* **p. 204.**

and this is probably the higher reality from whence comes Matvei in chapter 29 and where leshua dwells. leshua is not just a tiresome hippie advocating universal freedom. He knows human and divine nature and he knows how the former can achieve the latter - how men can come close to God. This was also one of Jesus' aims according to the Gospels. His earthly mission was to show men the way to God as it is in God's nature that He desires men to know Him and to voluntarily turn away from sin. The Kingdom is "within you", as Christ says in the Gospels.

Later in his conversation with Pilate, leshua claims that the thread of life can only be cut by the one who has suspended it. leshua believes in a Jewish concept of God and therefore he believes that God, as Creator, has suspended the thread of his life. Pilate believes, like Berlioz in chapter 2, that man controls the lives of men but leshua assures him that he is wrong, as Woland proves to Berlioz that *he* is wrong. Taken in the context of the novel, the thread of life also has a deeper level of meaning. Life within the novel is not just a physical life on earth. It is eternal. God decides when to terminate a man's physical life on earth, but the life of the soul continues. It is, however, up to man to chose or reject eternity. I f man chooses rejection then the thread is cut by God. Life is more important and significant than Pilate realises. He does not appreciate what life *is*. This also underline's once again leshua's nature as being "the Way, the Truth and the Life" and looks forward to his statement that "cMepxH Hex".

Apart from these recorded saying of leshua, Bulgakov also presents the reader with sayings attributed to him but are reported from unreliable sources. Three of these sayings are taken from Levi Matvei's parchment notes, which may be of doubtful authenticity, and one is spoken by the secret agent Afranius to Pilate. The first saying

is that "CMepTH Hex" *(MiM,* p. 687). This is very similar to Revs. 21, 4, which Bulgakov used to form part of the Biblical quotation in ***Belaia gvardiia.*** In Revelations the phrasing is ***there shall be no more death*** and refers to the future Apocalyptic time when men will be transformed and a new order of existence will be instigated. This also recalls leshua's ideas about the coming of the Kingdom. leshua says that ***there*** is ***no death.*** Even in his human form, his divine power and nature allow him to understand that death does not exist in the present, and what he seems to be saying here is that the death of the soul does not exist. Once again, this ties in with leshua's own teaching on the **soul** as given to Pilate, which is **also** borne out in the Moscow chapters, and shows that leshua (like Woland) lives in a different time dimension **bringing him** closer to the Christ of Aleksei Turbin's dream in **ch.** 5 of ***Belaia gvardiia*** and **a** doctrinal view of the eternity of God.

The second saying recorded by Matvei is that "Mbi ysHflMM HHCxyio pcKy *BOJXU* XH3HH" *{MiM,* p. 687). leshua seems to be saying that we shall see the saving Grace of God at work. The statement ties in well with the teachings of leshua in general, despite its dubious Matvean authenticity. This metaphorical statement comes to fruition for the Master and Margarita when they embark upon their eternal peace, lending greater credence to leshua's preaching. Within the New Testament, such as John at 4.14, the Water of Life is associated with God's Grace. leshua's statement bears **a** close resemblance, as Barratt has pointed out in his ***Between Two Worlds^^,*** to Revelations 22. 1. The third saying: "HejioBenecTBO ^*yJx&T* CMOXepxb Ha coJiHiie cKB03b npoapaHHbiH KpHcxai[" *{MiM,* p. 687) also recalls this passage, which points to the glorious understanding that awaits man in the love of God. The sun is the

Barratt, *Between Two Worlds,* **pp. 222 - 223.**

symbol of God (as God is Light) and so to **look** at the sun through transparent crystal, which as Genrikh El'baum notes is a traditional symbol of truth, may be to understand God clearly and without hindrance. It is the opposite of the image in I Corinthians 13.12 that **"Mbi BHflHMi, Kaicb** 6i>i **cKBoat xycicnoe CTCIOIO, raflaxejibHo".**

The **only** other saying of leshua, reported by Afranius to Pilate, is that **qejiOBeqecKHX nopoKOB oflHHM H3 caMbix rJiaBHbix OH *cnmaer* xpycocxt"** (MA/, p. 665). This has proven to be a problem for critics of the novel. Afranius tells Pilate that leshua spoke these words while on the **cross,** but as far as the reader is aware he does not say this, no mention of these words being made in chapter 16. Critics have put forward various suggestions regarding the reasons for the inclusion of the cowardice saying, ranging from the possibility that Bulgakov made a mistake, to Afranius being a disciple of leshua^'.

This is the only "saying" that cannot be explained as a paraphrase of the Gospels or Apocalypse and it is significant that it concerns not only Pilate but resonates throughout the novel and beyond. Therefore the origin must lie with Bulgakov himself He was known to have thought that cowardice was indeed one of the worst human sms:

> "He liked to repeat how much he detested cowardice. He used to say that all human baseness derived from cowardice"

^' Scholarly views include those of Richard W.F. Pope ("Ambiguity and Meaning in *The Master Margarita:* **the role of Afranius",** *Slavic Review* **36 (No.l, 1977), pp. 1 - 24.) who, in an interesting article, says that the statement could very well have been said by leshua as Matvei's parchment backs it up. He also puts forward the suggestion that Afranius could have been a secret disciple of leshua. Although this is an attractive idea as far as plot goes, there is no evidence in the text. Gareth Williams, ("Some Difficulties in the Interpretation of Bulgakov's** *The Master and Margarita* **and the advantages of a Manichaean Approach..."** *{SEER,* **volume 86, No. 2, April 1990), pp. 234 - 256) opts for the conclusion that the inclusion of the saying is an inconsistency.**

Curtis, *Bulgakov's Last Decade,* **p. 155. These words were written by Sergei Ermolinskii.**

a feeling probably borne out of his experiences in the Civil War and the rigours of Soviet life. A telling point about the strict censor's attitude to the significance of this saying is that it was one of the sections to be removed along with all other references to Pilate's cowardice^^ Scholars have pondered the reason for this excision. Lakshin, for example, suggests that cowardice may stand for "the extreme expression of an internal sense of submission, an imprisonment of the soul"^". A conformist ideology would naturally resist the thought that "submission" is necessarily "cowardly" - especially if we are speaking of submission to the unwritten laws of the State. Cowardice is despicable, but it is not classed as sin in its own right in Christian thinking. Nevertheless, in the context of ***Master i Margarita*** it opens up the door to all sorts of other sins and it is certainly a sin in Bulgakov's personal doctrine. I f sin is a resistance to the will of God and not wanting to come close to Him, then cowardice is amply demonstrated throughout many of Bulgakov's works. Bishop Afrikan abandons his flock and Korzukhin his wife in ***Beg*** and Talberg and the Hetman desert their own people and families in ***Belaia gvardiia.*** Bulgakov finds such people unforgivable. Whatever the place of the cowardice saying in the hierarchy of sins, this particular saying of leshua is particularly important to the structure of the novel ***Master i Margarita.*** It returns again in Matvei's parchment and is spoken by Woland when Pilate is released, affirming its function as one of the 'truths' of the religious framework of the whole novel. Perhaps it is also worth noting that cowards get a second chance in the Gospels - see, for example, the forgiveness of Peter after the

L . Rzhevsky, "Pilate's Sin: Cryptography in Bulgakov's Novel *The Master and Margarita",* *Canadian Slavonic Papers* **13 (1971), pp. 1 -19.**

M. Lakshin, "M. Bulgakov's Novel: *The Master and Margarita"* *in The Master and Margarita: A Critical Companion,* **edited by Laura D. Weeks (Northwestern Univ. Press, 1996), p. 80.**

cock crowed thrice. Bulgakov's tolerance would seem to be lower. For him cowardice is the greatest vice.

So we can see that Bulgakov's efforts to unravel the "enigma of the New Testament tragedy" have not, after all, lead him so very far from doctrine. leshua stands at the crux of the novel, each character being measured against him. Although Woland may seem a more obvious choice as a uniting principle it is leshua who provides a personal, spiritual link to all the characters of the novel and it is He, not Woland, who is the ultimate Judge. Bulgakov has stressed the Gospel description of Christ as a man of and with the people (Christ who healed the sick, fed the hungry and preached about salvation for sinners - an image which has become shrouded in myths, doctrines and religious ritual) and once more raised up the humble and gentle character that Christ was, without insulting this image. The story of the Passion may be reduced to its essentials, but the essence of Christ's message remains. Although leshua's style is not apocalyptic, his gaze is fixed firmly beyond the material world, beyond mortality, and he draws the characters of the novel and its readers to enter with him into a better kingdom and to recognise the power and mystery of God. In this sense he fulfils a Messianic and an Apocalyptic function. leshua has power of salvation and holds sway over the life and death of souls, over the finite and the infinite, the present and the eternal. In this he is linked to the Christ of Aleksei's dream in ***Belaia gvardiia,*** to the transcendent stars of that same novel, the thoughts they inspire of peace and goodwill between God and mankind.

4. THE NATURE OF GOD

The theology of the Orthodox Church has faithfully preserved the thinking of the early Christian Church and therefore I have made use of books on the early Church as well as Liturgy and Testaments in the following passage on the concept of God which Bulgakov would have learnt from home, school and in as far as he was a practising Orthodox Christian. In his works, however, the concept of God is only overtly present in ***Master i Margarita^ Belaia gvardiia*** and to a lesser extent ***Beg.*** For this reason I have confined myself exclusively to these texts, which cannot be properly understood without an understanding of the signification of the term for the author. It is also worth noting, following on from the previous chapter, that Christ is often referred to as God.

Russian Orthodox Theology is monotheistic and rejects all other Gods but the Holy Trinity, Three in One and One in Three. They also hold that the Devil is not co-eternal with God, to counter accusations of duality. God is omnipotent and absolutely Holy'. No one is stronger than He is and so He is Lord and has absolute authority and power^. He is **riavxoKpaTCop** (Almighty) and He is free to do as He chooses and this also includes limiting His power and allowing men to be free^. God is likewise omniscient. His knowledge is complete and in this there is love. The statement that God is love was a radical departure for Christianity from Old Testament ideas about Him. The God of the New Testament shows love to His creatures. "God forgives those who forgive (Mark 11:25; Matt 6:12; Luke 11:4), rejoices over repentant sinners

1 *Orthodox Spirituality,* **pp. 283-284.**
2 **Emil Brunner,** *Christian Doctrine of God,* **Dogmatics, volume 1 (Letchworth Press, London, 1949), p. 142.**
3 **Emil Brunner, p. 252.**

(Luke 15:4-32), gives to those who ask (Luke 11:2-4: 9-13; Matt 6:9-13; 7:7-11)"^. Orthodox thought is keen to emphasis the loving aspects of God. The first Antiphon in the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom tells how God forgives sin, heals diseases, is compassionate, merciful and long-suffering^.

God is also the omniscient, omnipresent Creator. He created the world from nothing and He dwells within it and within men's hearts: "The kingdom of God is within thee" (Luke 17:21). It is God Himself who gives all space and things reality. "God's presence in his creatures is more than His mere existence, it is the abiding basis of their being, their life."^. Orthodox theology, while rejoicing in God and his work, is also deeply aware that all is mystery. In particular God's unknowability and transcendence are often stressed. "God's essence remains unapproachable, but His energies come down to us"^. These energies are a call to faith and can be subtle and mysterious or they can be dramatic expressions of wrath, finding expression in vengeance and judgement. This is one of the paradoxes of Christian thinking about God and one of the hotly debated and unresolved points of theology.

Men have always sought to portray God artistically in art and literature. Bulgakov was no exception. As he had far too much respect for God to sink into cliche he does not simply portray Him in His glory surrounded by angels and clothed in white. Such depictions (as attempted for instance by Bulgakov's great predecessor Goethe in the "Prolog in Himmel" to ***Faust)*** offer an anthropomorphic view of an essence which we have already defined as "radically transcendent". They often border on bathos. Bulgakov prefers to confine himself to the deeply personal glimpse, suggested by some

Robert M. Grant, *Early Christain Doctrine of God* **(University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1966), p. 4.**

5 *Prayer Book,* **(Holy Trinit}' Monastery, Jordanville, New york, 1979), p. 94.**

^ EmilBrunner, p. 261.

Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church,* **(Pelican/ Penguin), p. 217.**

real image such as an icon or emerging from the subconscious mind in dream or delerium which makes no claim to theological correctness. For instance, in ***Belaia gvardiia*** we read: **"neHaJibHbiH H saraaoHHbiH cxapHK,** 6or **Mopraji."**^ This **fresh** and **surprising vision** is **taken** from a **fresco** in **the church of** St. **Nikolai the** Good and, because it is seen through the eyes of Nikolka, possesses a child-like quality. This is emphasised by "God's" surroundings: He flies away into a black sky leaving us with the impression that God dwells "up there", remote in sky or space. It is a very un-theological attempt to come to terms with what and where God is. Aleksei also "sees" God in his dream in **chapter** five. Here God **has** a radiant **face.** He **speaks,** has hands and is like a blue **light^.** Zhilin's description **of** God is more about **feelings** than **features. "BsrjWHeniL - H** noxojiofleemfc", "Crpax **xaKOH npoHMex", "xaKaa paflocxb, xaKaH paflocxb...** "1^. Images **such** as Nikolka's "Old Man" view **of** God are more in line with traditional Christian iconography and Bulgakov poignantly contrasts Nikolka's undeveloped view with Zhilin's transcendent, non-corporeal vision of the Spirit of God. Although the Holy Spirit does not feature in any direct way in Bulgakov's works (not even leshua in ***Master i Margarita*** overtly possesses the Spirit, Bulgakov instead choosing to emphasise his human character), perhaps it is here, in Zhilin's dream, that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are united. Certainly, the face of God in all Christian iconography and especially in the Orthodox Church with its developed iconographic imagery, is usually the face of Christ. The face and hands of the Father or "Sabaoth" is occassionally depicted, but it is Christ ***Pantokrator*** who looks down from

^ *Belaia gvardiia,* **p. 7.**

^ **This idea may be rooted in Exodus when Moses returnsfromMount Sinai with a glowing face. Bulgakov thinks about this episode with Moses again in a draft of** *Master i Margarita {Velikii kantsler,* **p. 264), from a 1929-1931 draft. Here Ivan asks Woland why, if God is so all-powerftil, Moses had to go up to see Him instead of God coming down.**

10 ibid, p. 61.

the domes of the great cathedrals and presides over the Last Judgement. When Zhilin sees the face of God, he is seeing the face of Christ. That face is many things, including himself

As far as we know, Bulgakov has not left any detailed personal thoughts on the Nature of God or Heaven apart from the fact that He does perceive Him as omnipotent and as holding all creation within His power. The ideas found in his works may, however, give us some clue as to the foundation of his thinking. Bulgakov affirms this foundation in Aleksei's dream in ***Belaia gvardiia,*** chapter 5, and leshua's statement in ***Master i Margarita:***

" - Bor o^**iHH, - oxBexHJi** Hemya, **B Hero** a **Bepio."** ***{MiM,*** p. 407)

Probably due to the diverse sources from which Bulgakov drew inspiration for his final novel, critics such as Andrew Barratt, Gareth Williams and Colin Wrighthave seen the two powers of leshua and Woland as losing their traditional independent status, usually to the detriment of God's omnipotence. Did Bulgakov really have duality in mind? After one has taken into account Bulgakov's own diaries, the evidence of his contemporaries and the drafts of the novel, the conclusion can only be that God is a single presence throughout the novel and that distinct from Woland^^

In early drafts of ***Master i Margarita,*** Woland looks up to heaven after discussing the existence of God with Berlioz:

"А **Bbi, - H HffiKenep** o6paxHnca **K** He6y, **- BH cjibimajiH, HXO H HBCXHO paccKaaaJi?!** ^a! **- H ocxpbiii najieij HHXcHepa BOH3H.;ICH B** He6o, **- OcxaHOBHxe ero! OcxaHOBHxe!!** Bbi - **cxapiifflH!"!^**

1' See for exapmle A Colin Wright 'Mikhail Bulgakov's Developing World View', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies,* **15 (1981), pp. 151 -166.**

'2 See chapter on the Devil

13 *Velikii kantsler,* **p. 239.**

Here God is addressed as the 'elder', or 'senior' in accordance with the doctrine that nothing is co-eternal with God and that all things, even Satan, come from him and are subordinate to Him. This may go some way to explaining the nature of Woland and coincides with Christian doctrine. As K. Ware says of God's creative purview: "This is true even of Satan and the fallen angels in heir'^^. God is as much a part of Woland as he is of leshua or the Master. The divine spark shines within them all. Only sin can extinguish the spark, as it has in Maigel and Berlioz. Woland's eyes occasionally shine with the power of the sun (page 715), the traditional symbol of God, despite being dark and empty at other times, darkness being the symbol of evil. God is in every living thing. The Orthodox world view is that God created the world on two levels: firstly on the noetic, spiritual and intellectual level, and secondly on the material and bodily levell^. Man exists on both and God works on both in Bulgakov's works through conscience, miracle and artistic inspiration. These for Bulgakov are the visible energies of God and it is man's choice to see this with an understanding that passes intelligence.

I do not think that this relies on a Gnostic idea of being ***able*** to see God. Bulgakov presents his characters with a choice and each makes the descision to accept or reject God as he will.

Nevertheless, God is Lord, and all things are subject to His Will. Yet Bulgakov finds God's will as difficult to accept as anyone else and complaints about the Will of God echo throughout ***Belaia gvardiia*** and a fear of fate runs like a sub-current through ***Beg.*** In ***Belaia gvardiia*** Father Aleksandr says that the death of the Turbins' mother was the will of God ***{Bg,*** p.9), the death of Nai-Turs is also attributed to the will of God ***{Bg,*** p.218). This does not only reflect a traditional, Russian fatalism, but a

14 Ware, *The Orthodox Way,* **p. 57.**
15 Ware, *The Orthodox Way,* **p. 62.**

firm belief that God directs the lives of men. In ***Master i Margarita*** the question of predestination is raised by Woland when he predicts Berlioz' death. This prepares the reader for Matvei's mysterious illness ***{MiM,*** p.544) and eventual recovery when leshua's situation is beyond hope. This could be coincidence or God's divine plan in action. In the Gospel according to Matthew many events are explained as fulfilment of prophecy, including the storm at the time of leshua's death in the novel which seems to be called up in response to Matvei's curses upon God.

Despite the confusion thrown up ***m Master i Margarita*** by Bulgakov's red herrings about whether Woland rules the world, I feel that God still presides over all the action and that Bulgakov shows Him to be doing **so.** It is God who ultimately has the power over the life and death of individuals, as stated by leshua:

nepepesaxb BonocoKyx, HaBepHo, Moxexxox, KXO noflBecHJi?" ***{MiM,*** p.403). This is further shown by Woland's drawing on what is already known ***{MiM,*** p. 3 92) and his acceptance of Matvei's commands about the fate of the Master and Margarita ***{MiM,*** chapter 29). God's control of individual destiny in ***Master i Margarita*** is represented rather differently in ***Belaia gvardiia.*** In Aleksei's dream God could be understood as being so transcendent as to be almost out of touch with creation. When talking to Zhilin about the Bolsheviks he says:

> "Hy **He Bepax, roBopHX, HXO noflenaenib.** HymaH. Be^**b MHe-xo ox axoro HH XapKO, HH** xo**;ioflHo".** ***{Bg,*** p. 61)

Bulgakov's God is only indifferent to the fact that men do not believe in him because they all behave the same whether they believe or not. God is transcendent and what men think has, indeed, no effect on His Nature whatsoever. He does, however, appreciate man**'s** capacity for laying down his life:

> **"Bbi Bce** y **MeHH, X H J I H H , oaHHaKOBbie B nojie 6paHH yOHennbie"** ***{MiM,*** p. 61)

The fact that He says that He pities Man and is shown as explaining things even to so lowly a mortal as Zhilin, expresses His nature as a personal, benevolent God. There is a duality of being both beyond Man and close to Man. This is certainly one of the dichotomies of Christian doctrine about God.

Throughout Bulgakov's works God is omniscient and knows men's hearts as well as actions, but in ***Master i Margarita*** the divine is seen as interacting more closely with human destiny than in ***Belaia gvardiia.*** In the latter, God hears and answers people's prayers (Matvei, Elena, Rusakov) and is in the conscience of man, according to the "God is within you" of Christian doctrine^^. In the fantastic world of ***Master i Margarita,*** however, a kind of dialogue is established. From Matvei's conversation with Woland we see that all the facts of the Master's life and work are known to leshua, who by this point in the novel has certainly become equated with God ***(MiM,*** p. 716). We do not know how God or leshua see the world and what their perception of eternity is, although we do get a hint of it in leshua's teachings. One theological idea is that God sees all in an eternal present . If God is transcendent and beyond all space and time then all does indeed stand in an eternal present before him. This would explain how the battle of Perekop ***{Bg,*** p. 60) and the death of Nai-Turs ***{Bg,*** p. 58) are predicted in ***Belaia gvardiia,*** whereas in ***Master i Margarita*** the characters move more freely in and out of the world of the 'eternal present'.

Thus one work leads to another. Bulgakov does not show God's knowledge of men as transcendental indifference - it is love and compassion, biding by the Christian tenet that God is Love. This is the essential part of God's love and nature described in theological terms as Agape, which stands in contrast to erotic love, Eros. Agape gives

16 Ware, *The Orthodox Church,* **p. 226.**
I" *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality,* **editor G.S. Wakefield (SCM, 1983), p. 213.**

value to something or creates its value. It desires to give, not to receive, and as such it is as much for the unworthy as for the worthy. When God gives his love he is not asking for something in return^^. The God of Aleksei's dream does not ask for faith or belief, nor does leshua ***m Master i Margarita*** or the unseen God who presides over his self-sacrifice. This is not to say that Eros is rejected by Bulgakov. Rather, he reserves the concept here for human love and does not, like Soloviev and some Silver Age thinkers, involve Eros with theology. For Bulgakov, Eros is reserved for human love. No human, except leshua, comes close to Agape. This is more insistently expressed in early drafts ***o^Master i Margarita,*** as when leshua sees Barabbas set free:

" - npHMo pa,nyK)cb c xo5oH, flo6pbiH 6aHflHX, **- H^H, - XHBH**!"^9

but survives in the form of leshua's belief in the goodness of all men and his total lack of bitterness for his death, as reported by Afranius ***{MiM*** p.664). Regardless of the credibility of Afranius' witness, it recalls the Evangelists' account of Christ's prayer from the cross: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do". The sacrifice of Christ is seen as God's fullest expression of His love for the world in that it brought salvation. Salvation is a fact in the novel, leshua's death is also a reality and he is closely associated throughout with the salvation of souls.

God's love is also shown through physical and spiritual healing^O. Within Bulgakov's works the healing power of God has an important role to play. Aleksei in ***Belaia gvardiia*** and the Master in ***Master i Margarita*** testify to this. This may have come from the author's own life as a doctor and his near-miraculous recoveries from morphine addiction and typhus^l. As he states in his diary, Bulgakov felt that, in grave

EmilBrunner, p. 186.

19 *Velikii kantsler,* **p. 228.**

20 Prayer Book, p. 94.

21 M. Chudakova, *Zhizneopisanie,p.* **64.**

illness, God is the only help. It is also worth noting, however, that in specifically medical works, that is in ***Zapiski iiinogo vracha, V rioch' na trei'e chislo,*** and ***Neobyknovennie prikliucheniia doktora,*** God gets no mention whatsoever. This could be due to the fact that on the whole these works are as much biographical as they are creative and we know from various sources that religious thought concerned the author less during his younger years.

Although Bulgakov had read Darwin and had a first class scientific education, he seems to have had no difficulty in reconciling science with the concept of God as depicted in his mature work as the omnipresent Creator, permeating all things, eternal in a changing universe. One of the simplest and most expressive ideas about God is that He is Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, and this idea Bulgakov expresses through the construction of his most serious works. God is at the beginning and the end of ***Beg*** in prayers and at the beginning and the end of ***Belaia gvardiia*** in the quotes from Revelations. He is at the beginning of ***Master i Margarita*** where He is denied in theoretical discussion, but at the end is present as a living reality and a means to salvation. Although obliquely glimpsed in Bulgakov's works He is always felt as unchanging and above time. The God of Ershalaim is the same God of Moscow. The God perceived by the writer of Revelations is the same who presides over Kiev in the Civil War and the God who swamped the Egyptians in the Red Sea is the same who watches over the Exodus of the White Army from the Crimea, as indeed we are reminded by Khludov. The timelessness of the Creator finds expression at the end of ***Belaia gvardiia.*** The call is to look up to the Heavens, to see oneself in the perspective

of God's creation, to recognise that there is more to life than daily cares. This is a recognisibly Orthodox perception of life, creation and the Creator22.

As we have seen, the "energies of God also express His wrath and manifest themselves as destruction". Although God for Bulgakov was a God of love, he also understands Him as demonstrating His power in justice and this inevitably includes wrath. Bulgakov clearly recognised the sins of his age and even foresaw the sins of the age to come in a prophetic newspaper article^^. In his early works, all the appalling acts of violence which men had committed against one another and their general moral degeneracy are so depicted that the reader feels they must indeed entail divine judgement. Of course, "hell-fire" preaching is never Bulgakov's style but he does create worlds in his works which have an underlying strict sense of what is acceptable and what is not. In ***Sobach 'e serdtse*** and ***Rokovye iaitsa,*** men are subject to retribution for interfering in the process of evolution which is seen as divinely ordered. Here respect for an unspecified higher order and strong feeling that these are moral boundaries which carmot not be overstepped with impunity appear to be all that is left of the God-ordered universe of Orthodox belief In ***Belaia gvardiia*** and ***Beg,*** however, God's hand is more keenly felt and divine wrath in response to events on Earth is more consciously present both in the minds of the characters and in the Biblical subtext and direct quotation. In ***Belaia gvardiia*** the quotations chosen from Revelations express God's wrath and judgement and also stand as a warning against sin:

> "M **cy^HMbi** 5buiH **MepxBbie** no **HanHcaHHOMy B** KHHrax coo6pa3Ho c **fleJiaMH CBOHMH..."** ***{Bg,*** p. 6)

22 **See, for instance.** *Orthodox Way,* **p. 54.**

23 **See J.A.E.Curtis' translation of this ('Grudiashchie perspektivy)** *inManuscripts Don't Burn* **(Harvill, Harper Collins), p. 17.**

An awareness of sin and the potential wrath of God does find expression among Bulgakov's characters. I will discuss sin more **fially** in my chapter on "The Nature of Man and his Relationship with God" but here, precisely in the context of retribution, it is worth noting a few cases. Bulgakov presents the readers with characters who are unaware of the significance of their words, such as Nikanor Ivanovich in ***Master i Margarita,*** who says: "Focnoflb *MCHR* **HaKaayex sa cKBepny MOIO"** ***{MiM,*** p. 529). As we have seen, Khludov in ***Beg*** Dream 4 (page 153) quotes Exodus 15:9-10 and draws a comparison between the destruction of Pharaoh's troops and the defeat of the White Army. This is not an entirely happy comparison as Smeliansky has pointed out^^ but Khludov's meaning is ultimately that God destroys the wicked. Although within the context of the play this could be understood as irony, God's justice is shown to be not fickle but exacting. Afrikan's prayer in which he claims that the power of God (which is on their side) will bring the enemy low, is shown to be hollow, coming as it does immediately after his dismayed exclamation on hearing the Commander-in-Chiefs pious declaration that the White Army's only hope is now in the mercy of God. God's power is in fact shown to be far beyond the monopoly of any one side.

XjiyflOB: BjiajibiKo! Sana^HoeBponeiiCKHMH flep«aBaMH **noKHHyrbie, KOBapHbiMH** nojiHKaMH **oGManyTbie, B** 3**XOT cxpamnbiH** Mac **TOJIBKO** na **MHJiocepflHe** 6o>KHe **ynoBaeM!**
A4)pHKaH: *{noHWi, Htno* ***nacmynma 6eda).*** An-**aH**-aii!
TjiaBHOKOMaHsyiomHH: HoMHnyiiTecb, BjiaflbiKO CB^XOH!
A4)pHKaH: ***{neped FeopuzueM Ilodedonoceif).*** BceMorymnfi **rocnoflb!** 3a **HXO?**
3a **HTO HOBoe HcnbixaHHe nocbinaeiub** naaaM **CBOHM, XpncxoBy HMenyxoMy BOHHCXBy?**
C HaMH KpecTHaji CHJia, **OHa HHSJiaraex** Bpara **5jiarocjioBeHHbiM**
opy>KHeM.
(e ***ctJteKjiHHHOU nepezopodKe noKosajiocb mifo HanajibHUKa cmautjuu, mocKyioiif.ezo om cmpaxa)***
XjiyAOB: Bame **BbicoKOCBHiueHcxBo, npocxHxe, HXO H Bac** nepeGnBaio, **HO BBI HanpacHo GecnoKOHxe rocnoaa** 6ora. **OH *yyKt* ^BHO H ^aBHO ox nac oxcxynHjica.** ***{Beg,*** p. 141 - 142)

24 Anatoli Smelianski, *Is Comrade Bulgakov Dead?,* **p. 148.**

Rusakov in ***Belaia gvardiia*** is well aware of God's wrath and appreciates that his illness is punishment:

"O, KaK **cxpamHO xbi MCHH naKaaaji."** ***{Eg,*** p. 114)

Yet adversity is not meant to shake faith, it should strengthen. Even in trials there is love, albeit a mysterious one. Father Aleksandr in ***Belaia gvardiia*** sees the times ahead as "Gojibirrae **HcnbixaHHa"** ***{Eg,*** p. 9) when God tests and punishes as He sees fit. Khludov too accepts, even seeks "judgement". In ***Master i Margarita*** we see judgement commuted to mercy wherever human beings are willing to receive it.

The rejection of God has as much a part to play in Bulgakov's work as the acceptance of God. He was living in a time of increasing anti-religious activity and apart from having to purge religious material from his works, such as some props in ***Kabala sviatosh,*** he faced unrelenting hostility to all forms of "mysticism" among the critics of RAPP and later, apologists of Soviet Realism. This atmosphere could not fail to be reflected in his works. Atheism is on the side of the Revolution. It is the accepted creed of the soldiers who come to the monastery in ***Beg,*** with the Bolsheviks in ***Belaia gvardiia*** and of the writers of Woland's Moscow ***m Master i Margarita.*** It develops in Bulgakov's works from the raw revolutionary "militant atheism" of civil war to an insidious creeping intellectual smugness. It could be argued that the rot existed before the Revolution in the Church itself in characters such as Afrikan, who pray and bless but crumble when they truly have to rely on God and have faith. In one of the drafts of ***Master i Margarita*** a church building has become nothing but a shell and has been taken over by an auctioneer's firm^^.

« **BnarocjioBeH** Bor **Ham...», - noflCKasaji MbicjieHHo** 6y4**)exqHK** nanajio **M0Jie5Hbix neHHii.**

25 *Velikii kantsler,* pp. **209-210.**

- Illy6a **HMnepaxopa** AjieKcanapa Tpexbero, - **Hapacnes Ha^aJi oreu MBaH,**

- **HenajieBaHHafl, ocHOBHafl uena** 100 py6jieH!

Before the Revolution, atheism was a daring fashion, as shown by the depiction of Shpohanskii and his circle in *Belaia gvardiia.* They are among the "bold and the brave" of whom Bulgakov speaks in his diary. By the time he came to write *Master i Margarita,* such types have moved from risque sub-culture to literary acceptability. Blandly ignoring the possibility of retribution and empty of love, they stifle religion wherever they find it and, ultimately, stifle fi'eedom of thought and, with it, art. The liberal attitude of 'believe what you like' no longer applies. The differences in the Divine attitude to revolutionary atheists and established atheism can be explained by the fact that the Red Army soldiers in *Belaia gvardiia,* for whom God is preparing mansions in heaven are not, as Berlioz and Maigel are in *Master i Margarita,* actively campaigning against the True God, His works and His inspiration, but merely against a misrepresentation wished onto them by an inadequate but authoritarian elite. A peasant revolutionary's atheism, Bulgakov seems to be saying, cannot be compared with that of cold, intellectual atheism that flies in the face of truth and tries to bolster its ideas with philosophical reasoning:

"B o6**;iacTH paayna HHKaKoro flOKaaaxenbcxBa cymecxBOBaHHH** 6ora **6bixb He Moxex"26**

says Berlioz. However, Beriioz is also one of the bold and the brave for whom God is no longer a useful concept: " M b i **He** BcxpeqaeM **Haflo6HocxH в s x o н rHnoxe3e"27.** Times have moved on, Berlioz is saying, and old culture has been consigned to the historical dustbin. It is of course ironic that Beriioz should choose Kant and his destruction of the five proofs as evidence of the non-existence of God. Kant did indeed

26 ***Velikii karttsler,*** **p. 30.**
2"^ ***Velikii kantsler,*** **p. 29.**

find reasons for the failure of the medieval arguments but, as Berlioz must have ver>' well known, he did so in order to offer new proofs consistent with the science of his own time.

Bulgakov's works do not present the reader with theological or philosophical counter-arguments against atheism of his time. Nevertheless, as we have seen in this chapter, the books we have chosen to study do suggest an albeit fragmentary and subjective picture of God which accords with Orthodox Christian thought and which, i f we may for once take Woland as the author's spokesman, is based on a sturdy faith in the historical existence of Jesus Christ:

"r i p o c TO **o н cymecTBOBaji н** 5ojibme **HHHero" (MM,** p . 395)

To talk about God in Bulgakov's works is certainly a challenge. He does not present the reader with a crafted theological portrayal and the idea of Trinity would appear to be absent, although, as I have said, there may be a suggestion of Trinitarian thinking in *Belaia gvardia.* The idea o f God seems to be more important in Bulgakov's novels when the action is connected with war and death, although this is not a strict rule, as God does not feature strongly in the majority of the plays or shorter stories, some o f which deal with these themes. The obvious reason which suggets itself is that any positive treatment of religion meant trouble with Repertkom or the censor and Bulgakov was keen to have his works staged and published and to make a living from them. From his diaries we can see that God was indeed important for Bulgakov but compromises had to be made in order for him to continue as an artist. This is not to say, however, that Bulgakov was a conformist, although fi-om the *Master i Margarita* and the confessions of the Master (generally accepted as being synonymous with Bulgakov) to Ivan in the hospital, he clearly thought that he had compromised. Strict

theological convention was not so important to Bulgakov as expressing his feelings and basic faith in God. This is what comes through in the relevant works. There is no contradiction between this personal faith and the often scathing treatment of the clergy within his works, as they are seen as inadequate both as priests and human beings, less concerned with the ultimate Truth they are supposed to be serving than with the traditional authority of the Church in a society clearly in urgent need of social and intellectual reform.

Over the years (as can be traced through the drafts of *Master i Margarita),* the strong affirmation of the presence of God found in *Belaia gvardia* was toned down, reworked and finally clothed in mystery and virtually hidden. Yet throughout *Belaia gvardia. Beg* and *Master i Margarita* the crux of the spiritual level is the meaning of God's works. These works point to Apocalypse and Justice, but at some point in the future. For the time being they give only a by and large traditional Christian affirmation of faith. This is in keeping with the treatment of so many of the other major human questions that are thrown up by Bulgakov's works, and perhaps these are questions which are not meant to be finally answered in a work of art: they are part of the human condition and a part of life. The answers are left with God.

5. THE NATURE OFMAN AND HISRELATIONSHIP TO GOD

At the centre of Bulgakov's fragmenting and re-forming universe stands man. Much of Bulgakov's oeuvre contains autobiographical detail and one is aware of the emphasis he places upon the physical nature of man in relation to the spiritual, and how very personal this often is. He never seeks to preach to his audience, nor to laud man too highly. It is my aim in this chapter to analyse Bulgakov's opinion on the state of man and compare this with Orthodox doctrine, which also seeks to explain man's nature, especially his fallen condition. I shall then examine how Bulgakov treats the sacraments - the rituals by which man attempts to come closer to God - and how these contribute to his world view and fit with his spiritual values.

According to Orthodox Doctrine, the most important affirmation about the nature of Man is that he is a creature created by God in His image and likeness for fellowship with God. The second most important affirmation is that Man "everywhere repudiates this fellowship"'. The reason that Man (Adam) strayed fi-om communion with God is based on an understanding of the nature of Man before the Fall which differs fundamentally from that in the West. According to Augustinian thought, Man before the Fall (brought about by the temptations of the Devil) was a perfect creature and so his fall was all the more terrible. According to Orthodox doctrine, Man's pre-Fall nature was one o f potential perfection and so his fall was only from "a state of undeveloped simplicity"^. This straying from the path of immortality and life brought about a state of disease and death, allowing sin and the Devil to dominate. This state of

' **Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church,* p. 223.**
2 Ware, *The Orthodox Church,* p. 227.

sin is understood in Orthodox thought to be something like a failure on the part of man to be and act as he should. As all men are united from generation to generation, all men suffer, but as to any notion of "guilt" and an inherent sinful nature, this is understood rather as a deliberate turning away from the Light, repudiation of fellowship such as was first committed by Adam. Man still possesses Free Will, reason and a sense of moral responsibility, which are points of contact which allow him to come close to God. Yet the Fall created a barrier between Man and God which Man could never have overcome himself, were it not for God's solidarity with him expressed through the Incarnation and the Resurrection^. The Sacraments are an expression of Man's acceptance of this and symbolise communion restored.

Man's Mortality

Throughout his life, Bulgakov must have been very aware of mortality, first with the death of his father in 1907, then as a doctor working alone in harsh provincial conditions during the First World War and Kiev and then with the retreating White Army during the Civil War, then living hand to mouth in Moscow amid mounting terror and the midnight knocks of Stalin's regime and at last, faced with his own slow, inevitable death from a kidney disease which, as a doctor, he understood. It is little wonder then that death is an aspect of nearly every work he wrote. Death, in the usual meaning of the word, comes to Bulgakov's characters fi-om a variety of sources. These include such grim ends as murder (luda iz Kiriafa, *MiM),* execution in war (Krapilin, *Beg),* death in battle (Kolia, *Krasnaia korona.;* Nai-Turs, *Bg),* illness (Andrei Fokich, *MiM),* and accidents (Berlioz, *MiM).* As a scientist, Bulgakov accepted physical death

3 Ware, *The Orthodox Church,* p. 228 - 229.

as part of the natural processes. He does not shrink from often gruesome detail of deaths which can involve the slack jaw of a suicide *{Morfii),* head wounds *{Krasnaia korond),* chest wounds *{Tainomu drugu)* and severed heads *{Belaia g\'ardiia* and *Master i Margarita).*This detail comes from his experience as a surgeon and doctor and death is always an irrefutable, medical fact, right up to the death of leshua with his broken, pierced, fly-ridden corpse in *Master i Margarita.* One of the best examples of this view of the body without soul can be found in *Sobach 'e serdtse.* Here death is the mere silencing of life and the cutting of f of personality. The corpse of a man can be revived with a little scientific **effort,** an idea also found in Maiakovskii's *Klop.* Actual bodily resurrection featured in the philosophy of Fedorov and formed a part of Soloviev's ideahst thinking in the late 19th century. As Proffer has shown, Bulgakov was acquainted with the works of these philosophers'* and they may very well have influenced this use of his artistic material, even i f only "from the opposite".

Throughout his literary career, Bulgakov was also very aware that death could be overcome, not by science, but by faith. There is a definite progression in his works from the atmosphere o f fear and need to prevent death at all costs found in *Krasnaia korona* to the mixture of melancholy but also joyous acceptance of death in *Master i Margarita:*

> *вотн,***6orH м о н** ! KaK **rpycxna BeqepHHH** ***seuiml*** KaK **xaHHXCBeHHbi xyMaHbi Ha**,a 6o**;ioxaMH. Kxo** Sjiyx^aji **в s x н x** xynanax, **кхо мноxо cxpa**^aji **nepefl cMepxbio, кхо Jiexeji *naji.*** **s x o н** *зсмлі&рі,* **necH** na ce6e **HenocHJibHbift** rpya, **xox** 3xo **snaex.** 3xo anaex **ycxaBmHH.** H **O H 6e3 coxajieHHH noKHflaex xyMaHbi 3eMJiH,** ee 6o;ioiia **H peKH, O H oxflaexcH** c **JiexKHM cep^e M B pyKH cMepxH,** anaa, **нхо xojibko** ona ***ojma*** **<ycnoKOHX ero.>** (M M , p. 732)

It is worth noting that this passage was one of the last to be added to the text and enhances the feeling that over the years during which it was written, the novel became

EUendea Proffer, *Bulgakov: Life and Work,* p. 2.

more about coming to terms with human death than the "novel about the devil" it had originally been. Bulgakov affirms that death can be a spiritual event. In *Belaia gvardiia,* for example, Bulgakov contrasts death with and without religion. The body o f Nai-Turs in its purely physical, dead form, is cold, smelly, disgusting and animal. In a way, this is a reflection o f man in his basic, fallen state. The reader is made to feel he is one of the beasts. However, Nai-Turs body is given a Christian burial and suddenly he and his life are given a context and a meaning. He is no longer an animal but a man created in God's image, with a soul and a fliture life. As Bulgakov writes: "CaM Haft **3HaHHTeJibH0 cxaJi paaocTHee H noBeceJieji B** rpo5y".(*Bg,* p. 224). Death may be a physical end on earth but this does not entail a necessary spiritual end. Apart from Matvei's written statement of leshua's words *inMaster iMargarita* (p. 687) that there is no death, this is also suggested by the heavenly soldiers in Aleksei's dream and by Elena's vision of the risen Christ in *Belaia gvardiia.*

Bulgakov's depictions of people who have gone through the process of death is interesting in its simplicity. As in accordance with Orthodox belief, those who have died are taken to Heaven, Hell or oblivion relatively unchanged in their appearance. This accords with the idea of the eschatological bodily resurrection of all believers before judgement and the personal continuity between the pre- and post-resurrectional states. Death and Resurrection, according to Orthodox belief, amount to a transformation o f the body: "...although transformed, our resurrection body will still be in a recognisable way the same body as that which we have now."^. Thus Bulgakov's depiction o f people passing into heaven essentially as they have been on earth (except that in their new spiritual state they would lose their earthly signs of suffering) has

5 **K. Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (London, 1979), p. 182.**

much in common with Orthodox doctrine. For example, Margarita loses her squint, the Master's look changes from "MpaqnbiM **H C HcnaBHCxbio"** to ***"xHBhiM* H CBexJibiM"** *(MiM,* p. 725). Zhilin and Nai-Turs are still soldiers in *Belaia gvardiia* but they have **a** divine glow around them *(Bg,* p. 58). Death, or rather the passing from this worid into the next, is characterised in *Master i Margarita* for the eponymous heroes by joy, release from pain and understanding. In a 1934 draft of the novel^ there is an all-pervading sweetness. Woland's final statement on the matter in one of the drafts is a fine summing up o f the Christian and especially Orthodox Christian concept of life and death:

He Bce **JiH paBHo - X H B O H J I H , MepxBbm** jra!'^

Essentially this expresses the Orthodox concept of the continuing fellowship between the living and the dead, united by faith, or, as in the novel, by the power and mercy of God.

Bulgakov's attempts to personify Death in his works often have a scriptural foundation. For instance in *Master i Margarita* death is personified by Abadonna. This is a romanticisation of death and an attempt to come to terms with the awesome power and mystery it possesses. Death somehow becomes more manageable when it is given human form because it implies a form of reason. Abadorma is the name of the Destroyer in Revelations and is the successor to Apocryphal Old Testament death-angels, such as the one which must be restrained in the Apocalypse of Baruch 21:23^ and "The Shameless Face and the Pitiless Look" of the Apocalypse of Abraham^. This last description may account for Bulgakov giving Abadonna a gaze that kills mortals

6 ***Velikii kantsler, p. \S2.***
***Velikii kantsler p.* 196.**
^ ***Old Testament Apocrypha,* p. 835**
^ ***Old Testament Apocrypha,* p. 415.**

on the spot. Although death in popular thought is personified as the skeletal Grim Reaper, Bulgakov presents the reader with a Death for the 20th century, cutting a dash in his black suit and dark glasses. Whatever the outfit, however, death remains the same. Margarita is scared of Abadonna when she first meets him in chapter 22, but Woland reproves her. The just have nothing to fear from him and he is described as never being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Bulgakov, however, does not quite stick to this plan in the novel. It is Azazello, not Abadonna, who is present at the death o f the Master and Margarita.

Bulgakov's works are an approach to life and death - a playing out of what ought to be and what ought to have been as well as what could be and is. They are a way for him to communicate with the dead *(Krasnaia korona),* to save those who died *{Belaia gvardiia),* to see the deaths of the unworthy and to continue his own life *(Master i Margarita).* Although he draws from both Eastern and Western ideas on the subject of death, Bulgakov seems to have remained largely within traditional Orthodox thought. He polemicises against the pseudo-scientific resurrectionist and philosophical approaches in smaller, lighter works, such as *Sobach 'e serdtse* and *Rokovye iaitsa,* but reserves religious exploration o f mortality and immortality for his weightier and more personal works, such as *Belaia gvardiia. Master i Margarita* and *Beg,* while preserving an almost clinical clarity of vision as to the inevitability of physical death.

Man's Sinful State

Clearly Bulgakov sees man as a creature who has become alienated from God and needs to rediscover him. The idea o f sin in Bulgakov's works is present but it is not a sin against a clearly defined moral code. Although the Church's teaching on sin and

what makes a sin may be encapsulated in the Ten Commandments and in popular Christian thought in the Seven Deadly Sins, Bulgakov was not a rigorist and I would agree with A. Cohn Wright in his article on the development of Bulgakov's worid view that "the values he admires are essentially those of the Christian intellectual middle

c l a s s " H e was no moralist or preacher but his innate values regarding matters of honesty and decency (rather than chasteness and purity) and his literary ability allowed him to craft his works with a sense of what he felt to be right and wrong at a very fiandamental level. He was aware of the presence of sin in the theological sense of man's tendency to hide from the light of God, because his works are evil and

communicated this awareness through the way he conveys the faults and hypocrisies of his characters to whom he often attributed his own faults.

As we have said, in Orthodox Christian thinking sin is understood to be the expression o f a refusal o f God. Bulgakov unconsciously or unconsciously reflects this in his work. The great refusal is suicide, that ultimate act of despair which Bulgakov feels compelled to return to time and time again in his works. There are two main theological reasons as to why suicide is a sin. The first is that it goes against creation and therefore against God the Creator. God gave man life for service to Him and it is not man's place to choose when to take it, as God has already appointed the time from His own omniscient nature. When one sins against God as Creator, one also offends against Him as Redeemer. The second reason is that, in the tradition of St. Augustine, suicide is a violation of the Sixth Commandment: Thou shalt not k i l l " . Augustine argued that suicide is self-murder and as such is a display of despair and unwillingness

'0 A. Colin Wright, 'Mikhail Bulgakov's Developing World View', p. 151.

• 1 M.P. Battin and D.J. Mayo, editors, *Suicide: the Philosophical Issues* (St, Martin's Press, New York, 1980), p. 78.

to trust in God. From both points of view, suicide constitutes a rejection of God. Yet it is a recurring theme throughout Bulgakov's works and he had first hand experience o f several people who had killed themselves. He was present when his friend Boris Bogdanov, who was a guest at his wedding, shot himself at his home in 1915'^; his

first wife's younger brother, Kostia, shot himself later that year'^; Andrei Sobol', a friend o f Bulgakov, shot himself on May 12th, 19261", Vladimir Maiakovskii shot himself at the beginning of Holy Week (14 April 1930)^^. This closeness to suicide and

violent death together with later fear of and longing for his own death left a deep impression on Bulgakov's work. He was well aware that suicide was a sin as is shown by his account of his attempt to take his own life in *Tainomu drugu:*

> **"ABTOMaxHqecKHft nHcxojiex** 6bi**;i ycxpoen** 6e3 **npe;ioxpaHHxe.JiH.** Ho **BesflecymHH** Box **cnac M B I M OX rpexa"**^^

Various fictional characters, such as Studzinskii in *Dni Turbinykh,* Korotkov in *D 'iavoliada,* Maksudov in *Teatral 'nyi roman,* the narrator of *Master i Margarita* at Griboedov's Restaurant, Doctor PoHakov *mMorfii* and Pilate *in Master i Margarita*^'^ commit, or wish to commit suicide in Bulgakov's works - unaware of the religious implications of their acts, as they believe themselves to be in situations which are chaotic and beyond rectification. In all these characters we can glimpse something of the seemingly insoluble problems which, at one time or another, faced their creator and on occasion brought him close to despair.

'2 Chudakova, *Zhizneopisanie,* p. 49.
'•^ Chudakova, *Zhizneopisanie,* p. 50.
14 E . Proffer, *Bulgakov: Life and Work,* p. 176.
1^ Chudakova, *Zhizneopisanie,* pp. 380-381.
***Mikhail Bulgakov. Dnevnik. Pis'ma 1914 - 1940,* editor V I Losev (Sovremennyi pisatel', 1997), p. 608.**
•'^ It seems likely that Bulgakov drew inspirationfromthe Apocryphal texts *Death of Pilate* where Pilate kills himself out of fear of execution by Caesar and^cta *of Pilate* where Pilate is executed and taken up to heaven.

Characteristic of Bulgakov's attitude is Andrei Fokich Sokov's conversation with Woland in chapter 18. Sokov's death and miserly end is predicted by Woland:

> " He **Jiyqme J I H ycxpoHXb nHp** na **3XH *aBajmarh* ccMb X M C O T H npHHHXb** aa, **nepecejiHXbcji B apyrott M H P** nofl **3ByKH cxpyn, oKpyxennbiM KpacaBHHaMH H J I H X H M H flpyabHMH?.. EnponeM, M H saMexqajiHCb...** (M M , p. 575)

According to Woland, the best thing to do is to end it all and go straight to heaven. However, this is Satanic Guile. As can be seen in the deaths of Pilate, Berlioz and the Master, Bulgakov did not conceive of decamping to the afterlife and facing judgement as anything like this.

Perhaps because the nature of and reasons for sin and evil are controversial and confusing, Bulgakov does not tackle the problem directly in a philosophically consistent manner. Instead there is a general awareness of sin in his books and a recognition of the fact that people are capable of consenting to evil. Although the concept o f the Seven Deadly Sins is not so rooted in Russian cultural history as that of the Roman Catholic West, I have chosen to look at them in Bulgakov's works as they provide us with a reasonable cross-section of human misdemeanours. Bulgakov's characters do not fail to exhibit them.

Covetousness is seen by Bulgakov as very much a personally generated failing exacerbated by the collapse o f social and moral order. Indeed, money is often the reason for displays of greed and the punishment frequently not only fits but arises directly from the crime. In *Belaia gvardiia,* for example, Vasilissa and Vanda are attacked and robbed in their own homes by men pretending to be soldiers. In *Beg,* Korzukhin refuses to lend Golubkov and Charnota money, despite their desperate condition but Charnota wins a large sum from him at cards. In the Variety Theatre in *Master i Margarita* the devils distribute money, clothes and perfume, causing fighting

to break out in the disordered rush for valuables, but no one profits from the mayhem. Nikanor Ivanovitch Bosoi is caught for black marketeering, committed to the asylum and tormented with moralising dreams as a punishment. At a more serious level there is also the greed for housing space. Bulgakov understood this particularly well and even Woland alludes to the shortage as an excuse for man's hard-heartedness . Aloysius Mogarych, who denounces the Master in order to obtain his flat, is struck out o f life altogether, as i f he had never existed. But for Bulgakov covetousness is not just the opposite of charity, it is a whole state of being. It is concern for the self above others and an unwillingness to help the weak which erodes the soul.

Wrath in Bulgakov's works is represented both on an individual and a collective level. For example, in *Beg* and other works about the Civil War, the Whites hate the Bolsheviks (and vice versa) with a ferocity that causes needless violence, murder, and irrational, dangerous fears. The scene at the railway station in *Beg* is rife with such fear and violence. Likewise in Act I I scene I o f the original five act version of the play *Belaia gvardiia,* Bolbotun and Galanba, soldiers in one of Petliura's divisions, behave with increasing violence towards innocent passers and, in the end, kill a Jewish man on his way to see his children. The killing and retribution on both sides does find personal expression in *la ubil* where Doctor Yashvin looses control of himself and kills Colonel Leshchenko for torturing men to death. But even after political and military conflict is over, Bulgakov shows us in *Rokovye iaitsa* how the crowd turn their anger against Professor Persikov, a terrifying scene that reminds us that wrath is buried just below the surface and, coward fashion, finds strength in numbers.

Lust, as opposed to love, and greed are often portrayed by Bulgakov as temptations against which man is virtually helpless and they are not high on his list of sins. During

his lifetime, Bulgakov had often had to go hungry, something that must have been very difficult for a bon-viveur. Complaints about lack of food and comfortable living conditions are often expressed in his diaries and letters. He was also, according to his contemporaries, something of a ladies' man. Three wives and his obvious appreciation of the female body'^ suggest that Bulgakov saw physical enjoyment life-affirming and something that should be experienced to the full. The obvious feeling of injustice he felt that the privileged and undeserving few, as exemplified by the Griboedov House,

are able to gorge themselves with a grotesque hedonism and to live in luxury, was perhaps tinged with longing.

It is also in the setting of the Griboedov house that pride is most vividly portrayed and is seen at its most dangerous. The Massolit writers are lazy, talentless individuals who have no creativity and live by criticising others. Their pride is vacuous and self-serving. Bulgakov as a satirist is determined to show up the sins o f his milieu (the intelligentsia) and of his own class, the White Guards, whose conviction that God is somehow on their side is cynically expressed by Afrikan in *Beg* through his "mis-reading" of Exodus. The enthusiastic wish to defend their way of life and the Tsarist state, which has been drummed into the cadets of *Belaia gvardiia,* is also a kind of pride which crumbles rapidly when faced with the bitterness of the Bolshevik troops. In the play, Aleksei Turbin is eventually forced to admit that "nobody loves us" and to accept the humiliation of defeat rather than lead his juvenile troops into fiirther proud, despairing resistance. Even in works that concern life after the Civil War, the pride of the pre-Revolutionary intelligentsia occasionally shows through in characters such as Professor Preobrazhenskii and Professor Persikov, who feel entifled to abuse people.

See Bulgakov's delight in E L Belozerskaia-Bulgakova. *Dnevnik. Pis'ma 1914-1941.* pp. 80-81.

animals and the environment, bringing about near disasters in the cause of science.

Preobrazhenskii has the grace to repent though not, we feel, for long, whereas Persikov is lynched. Theirs is not empty pride, like that of the Griboedov crowd, but is founded on a real superiority of intellect, but none the less demonic for that. Bulgakov signals this by depicting Preobrazhenskii as obsessed with Faust, Persikov as a loveless ascetic surrounded by snakes. Even the Master in *Master i Margarita* has renounced the world and his own name out of a kind of inverted pride in his role as an artist.

The last of the Seven Deadly Sins is sloth. Due to the often action-packed nature of Bulgakov's writing, few characters are at liberty to be slothful. Those that are include Sharikov in *Sobach'e serdtse* who is happy to do as littie as possible out of pure

spitefiilness o f character. But there is also the "paralysed" character of Chamota in *Beg* who, despite his claim to be a soldier, collapses easily under the weight of poverty in Constantinople. Nowhere do we find Bulgakov making sin attractive, although he is more likely to present it in a comic rather than in a judgemental light.

In Biblical and Christian tradition illness and disease often appear as signs of sin. In the Old and New Testaments all kinds of afflictions of the body and the mind were considered to need spiritual as well as physical treatment. In the New Testament, the "mad" were thought to be possessed by demons. This tradition surfaces several times in Bulgakov's works and interestingly, in the form of personal guilt about illness and sin. In one of his earliest works, *Krasnaia korona,* Bulgakov describes a man made mad through guilt at the fact that he was unable to save his younger brother in battle. Although the narrator is lucid is it obvious that his guilt and madness are inextricable linked and neither will be soothed. The theme surfaces again in *Beg* where Khludov's madness becomes concentrated on the murder of orderiy Krapilin. Khludov realises

that only when the sin is expiated will the madness cease. Elena in chapter 18 of *Belaia gvardiia* also associates sin with illness, but sees Aleksei as symbolically carrying the sins of all: "Bce **Mbi B KpoBH noBHHHbi"** she mutters in prayer. Rusakov also in *Belaia gvardiia* (p. 114) understands his illness as not only being a direct result o f his cocaine habit and whore-mongering, but also as a punishment sent by God for his atheism:

> M H **BepK), HXO xbi ycnbinmmb M O H M0Jib6bi, npocxHinb *utwi* H BbiJieHHnib. MajieHH MCHH** , o **rocnoflH, 3a6yflb o X O H rnycHocxH, Koxopyro** a **nanHcaji B npHnaflKe GeayMHii, nb^HbiH,** nofl **KOKaHHOM.** He aaft **MHe crnnxb, H A KJiHHycb, HXO** a **BHOBb cxaHy HejroBeKOM.**

It seems that the state of sin for Bulgakov was not something to be questioned but rather to be accepted as existing. What is more important is not man's distance from God but how he can approach him more closely through expiation of sin. In this sense, Bulgakov's view of sin is much like that of the Orthodox Church: sin is Man's current state. He lives in a world of death and disease under the rule of the Devil, be he present *{MiM)* or lurking behind the scenes *{Diavoliada).* Man's path is to reject this state of affairs and overcome the weaknesses of his own nature'^ and here perhaps lies the explanation of leshua's puzzling statement about cowardice. Cowards will shrink back into the darkness, hiding behind their sickness, whether o f body or o f spirit, refusing to face up to the need for a cure. Some of Bulgakov's characters do turn their free will towards God and a greater good, people such as Elena and Aleksei Turbin, Khludov, the Master and Margarita.

For an examination of cowardice, see chapter Nature and Teaching of Christ.

Man's Expression of Closeness to God

Because God is beyond understanding one can approach Him only through signs and symbols. Christian symbolism, like all religious systems, is fortunate in that it has the benefit of centuries of meanings layered upon it. This is especially true of the Sacraments - the Grace-bestowing rituals which mark the progression of a spiritual life within the Church. The Orthodox sacraments are Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist, Confession, Ordination, Marriage and Extreme Unction. Bulgakov has a highly developed sense of sacramental symbolism, though he does not always exercise it in a strictly Orthodox fashion. Considering that Bulgakov's family and family friends were closely connected with the Church, it is not surprising that an awareness of the Sacraments irradiates his work. He does however use different aspects of them to suit his own purposes and some are less important to him than others. His upbringing enabled him to appreciate the significance and deeper meaning of the ecclesiastical symbolism, but he was not a devout church-goer, so far as we can tell, and his treatment of ecclesiastical rites is often heavily flavoured with parody and even disrespect. The ambiguity of his attitude leads to interesting layers of potential meaning. This is applicable to his treatment of all religious doctrine and not just to the Sacraments.

Baptism is the initiation rite of the Christian Church and in the Orthodox Church this consists o f two essential elements: invocation of the name of the Trinity and a three-fold immersion in water. Water must be poured all over the body and not just sprinkled on, as in the West.^o Baptism takes the immersion of Christ in the River Jordan by John the Baptist as its model. It does not say in any of the Gospels that Jesus was immersed

20 Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church,* **p. 284.**

three times; presumably he was immersed once. The recorded presence **of** the Trinity, the Spirit descending on the Son in the form of **a** Dove and the Voice of the Father probably **account** for the Tradition of threefold immersion.

There are two "baptisms" in Bulgakov's works and both are to be found in ***Master i Margarita.*** The first is Ivan Bezdomni's plunge into the Moscow river and the second is Margarita's bath before Satan's Ball. Bezdomni's brief swim in the river has much in common with Orthodox baptismal rites and Bulgakov does seem to be conscious of this fact, Ivan removes all his clothes, which in Christian thought symbolises the putting o f f of the old man and his sinful life^^ and immerses his entire body in the water. Before he does so he entrusts his clothes to a venerable old man with a beard, obviously a tramp but possibly ironically hinting at a priest figure. Ivan experiences the feeling that he may never surface. Although this is naturally not required in the Christian rite Ivan's feeling does express the idea of dying and rising again, associating his "baptism", as with all Christian baptisms, with the idea of water as grave, recalling the resurrection of Christ and the crossing from death into life. An important part of the baptismal service is the chrism with oil. The water of the Moscow river is ironically able to provide this:

> **... OTfljnBaacb H 4)HpKafl,** c **KpyrjibiMH O T yxaca rjiaaaMH,** HsaH **HHK0.iiaeBHH Hawaii njiaBaxt** в naxHymett ***nt^rhio*** **nepHOH** ВОАС Mex **H3Ji0MaHHbix 3Hr3aroB 6eperoBbix 4)0HapeH.** ***{MiM,*** p. 427)

When Ivan comes out of the water he is forced to put on a white Russian shirt. In baptism the new white robe put on immediately after baptism symbolises the adornment of a new, purer life. Ivan also picks up his candle^^. In Orthodox rites this is

21 Raymond Burnish, *The Meaning of Baptism* **(SPCK 1985), p. 107.**

22 Although in the final draft of the novel Ivan also picks up his icon, in an earlier draft Ivan had only a candle. *Velikii kantsler,* **p. 44.**

given to the baptised person or their sponsors, i f the baptised is a child, to show the relationship between baptism and enlightenment^^. Ivan has received enlightenment. He recognises the Devil and he is granted a glimpse o f the Master's true novel. His baptism marks the new spiritual life he has embarked upon. He has rejected the Old Man, as is shown in the clinic where the two Ivans converse, "novyi Ivan" being interested in Woland's story, the "staryi Ivan" expressing irrational fear ***{MiM,*** p. 487). Bulgakov's treatment of the material here is both comic and ironic. He twists the expected rituals in surprising ways. This does not, however, diminish the true significance of the baptism and the associations of the redemption of Ivan with the death of leshua and the idea of resurrection. This is reinforced by the time o f year.

Baptism is closely associated with Easter and baptism during this time is particulariy significant^^. In his own strange way Ivan has heard the Gospel and experienced a desire to share in the fate of Christ, otherwise known in the novel as leshua. This lends weight not. just to the baptism but to leshua's death. That the baptism has significance within the Moscow chapters could mean that it has significance within the Pilate

chapters, which are said to be historically accurate (I was there, says Woland). Ivan's "death" and "resurtection", provide a paradigm to leshua's within the altogether lighter-weight, parodic, phantasmagorical context of the Moscow setting.

The second "baptism" is that of Margarita before Satan's ball ***{MiM*** p. 622). Although this is a baptism from Hell there are still many aspects o f the rite that link it to Christian baptism. Margarita has rejected her old self and has begun a new spiritual life. Once again all clothes are removed, but this time the baptism takes place in a font-

23 Burnish, p. 117.

24 J.D. Crichton, *Christian Celebration: Understanding the Sacraments* **(G. Chapman, London, 1993), p. 36.**

like ***onyx*** pool and not a river. More in keeping with Satanic ritual than Christian rite, Margarita has blood poured all over her and not water, then she receives a chrism in attar o f roses. The blood ritual recalls cultic initiations which were popular in the Roman empire at the time of the birth of Christianity, forging a link with the Pilate chapters. It may be significant that in chapter 1 Bulgakov has Berlioz mention three cults (Adonis, Mithras and Attis) that were linked by theologians to St. Paul's view of baptism, expounded in Romans chapter 6^**5.**The ***taurobolium,*** or being washed in the blood of a bull, was part of the rites of Attis and Mithras. The cult of Adonis does not seem to have had this rite. As Beriioz points out, these cults celebrated sons of gods and they were ones who were thought to have died and risen again. Blood washing nevertheless gives the scene a suitably mysterious and demonic feel. A connection with the Passion o f Christ is made in the chrismation with rose oil. Orthodox congregations are anointed with rose oil during Lent as a blessing.

In Christian thought the Eucharist is one of the most important acts of worship. It is a sacrifice o f praise fi-eely offered to God on behalf o f both the living and the dead^^. It is a remembrance of the Last Supper, Christ's death and resurrection and a thanksgiving for God's creation and all his gifts. It unites all men within the Church and it unites the Church with God. It takes its historical root from Judaism and the Passover and from the Last Supper, celebrated by Christ before his death.

The sacrament o f the Eucharist is paralleled in ***Master i Margarita,*** and the celebration o f the Divine Liturgy can be found in ***Belaia gvardiia*** and Bulgakov's adaptation of ***Voina i mir.*** In these last two works the Mass is used more for its value as a setting than for its deeper meaning. In ***Master i Margarita*** the Mass is seen as

25 Gunter Wagner, *Pauline Baptism and the Pagan Mysteries* **(London, 1967), p. 266.**
26 Ware, *Orthodox Church,* **p. 292.**

sacrament, in its function in the New Testament and within the world of the novel. One of the most noticeable things about the Mass is that it is found as a Black Mass within the Satanic realm rather than the divine. In chapter 18 of ***Master i Margarita,*** Andrei Fokich the barman enters Woland's apartment to find an altar cloth, a gold plate and bottles on the table, wine being drunk and the smell of burnt meat. Although Mogarych thinks that a requiem has just been celebrated the scene is more one o f a mixture o f Eucharist, Passover and Black Mass, reflecting the strange nature of the devils themselves. Passover is hinted at in the fact that the day is Friday, the 14th of Nisan in the Pilate chapters, and in a 1933 draft o f the novel the burnt meat was specifically identified as **lamb2^,** traditionally consumed at Passover. To add to the air of a Mass having taken place the room has stained-glass windows and there is a smell of incense. But neither Passover nor the Eucharist fully correspond to the scene in the room as neither rituals are completely adhered to. There are the strange botties, it is the wrong time of day for Passover, there is no evidence that bread has been eaten as in a Eucharist (unless you take the empty gold plate as having borne bread). Eucharistic hints can be found in the scene at Griboedov's, with the twelve writers waiting in an upstairs room (chapter 5). Satan's Ball (chapter 23) figures similar rituals. Wine is drunk at the Ball, although more in the manner o f a Black Mass, while the writers at Griboedov's drink wine and eat to excess. The thin and desperate shriek of 'Alleluia!', meaning 'praise to Jehovah', at the restaurant becomes a powerful cry which rings out at the Ball. As in a Mass, wine is drunk at the Ball to eternal life and God on behalf o f the living and the dead, there is reverse transubstantiation as blood turns to wine and the Satanic and the divine find a curious union.

2"^ *Velikii kantsler,* **p. 132.**

Distortion o f the Eucharist is also found in the Pilate chapters, namely chapter two.

In keeping with his overall treatment of Gospel material, Bulgakov alters the Last Supper while not subverting it entirely. He changes it from the Gospel occasion when Judas' betrayal was predicted to the time when the betrayal of leshua is actually realised ***(MiM,*** p. 406). Betrayal is a key theme in the novel and Bulgakov chooses to highlight this negative aspect of the Last Supper at the expense of such positive ideas as sacrifice and remembrance. Possibly to include these ideas would be to dispel the ambiguity which, I feel, Bulgakov has deliberately inserted into the divinity of leshua.

The sacrament of marriage was a very difficult area for Bulgakov. The Orthodox Church is not inflexible as regards divorce, but nevertheless takes Holy Matrimony very seriously. According to Canon Law a second and third marriage are allowed for non-divorcees, but never a fourth. Widowed priests may not remarry at all. The Orthodox Church holds marriage up as a harmonious union between two people and blessed by God. With an ideal marriage it is considered possible for a couple to grow together in love until they achieve celibacy and a closer relationship with God, as, for instance, did the parents of Sergei Radonezhski who, towards the end of their lives, took holy orders with mutual consent. Marriage symbolises the union of Christ with the Church and is thus to be approached in a spirit of awe. The sacrament enjoins the couple to be faithful unto death as marriage is an eternal bond.

There are no wedding ceremonies in Bulgakov's works and the married state itself is never depicted as an harmonious ideal. It is ruined by betrayal and unhappiness, usually on the part o f one partner, and children, i f they appear at all, as in the short story ***Psalom,*** are not seen as part of a family. Bulgakov's plays are peppered with dysfunctional families. See, for example Elena Turbin's marriage to Talberg in ***Belaia***

gvardiia and Serafima's marriage to Korzukhin in ***Beg.*** Another example of marriage is that of Vasilissa and Vanda in ***Belaia g\>ardiia,*** a secular relationship based on common property and the acceptance o f convention. The private lives o f Bulgakov's characters and in particular their marriages, are always influenced by external events such as the Civil War. In both ***Belaia gvardiia*** and ***Beg,*** splits occur either through the opening of sub-conscious gulfs (Talbergs) or deliberately acknowledged abysses (Korzukhins). It is the institution of marriage which is seen to break up together with the society o f which it was a part and there is litde or no feehng of broken sacrament. Love, on the other hand, is self-sanctifying. In ***Beg*** the relationship of lovers is clearly felt to be more valid than the familial ties, blessed and made sacred by the Church as these may have been "ofF-stage". Golubkov woos Serafima and Liuska abandons Charnota for Korzukhin, but nevertheless keeps a soft spot for her old lover and bails him out when he is in trouble. Lovers continue to feature in Bulgakov's works such as ***Adam i Eva, Kabala sviatosh*** and ***Poslednye dni.*** In ***Master i Margarita*** marriage is an empty dream, best forgotten. The Master no longer even remembers his wife's name and Margarita's husband is forgotten as soon as he is mentioned. Briefly, in a 1934 draft o f the novel, the Master and Margarita are 'married' with rings by Woland, giving the lovers some kind of doctrinal **status2s,** albeit a Satanic one, but this did not survive to 1940. The Christian ideal of two persons uniting as one is thus only realised by lovers and never within marriage. The Master and Margarita remain devoted to one another and aware of the spiritual worid as represented by leshua and Woland. It is also worth noting that death does not part them but unites them even more indissolubly.

28 *Velikii kantsler,* **p. 159 Morning 7/1. 1934.**

The three sacraments that Bulgakov does not mention in any detail are confession, ordination and extreme unction. In the Soviet era church-going was, of course, actively discouraged by the State. Characters who do attend confession in Bulgakov's fiction are the poet Rusakov in ***Belaia gvardiia*** and Armande and Madeline in ***Kabala sviatosh.*** None of these confessions are portrayed positively. Rusakov's confessions are a part of his religious madness and Armande and Madeline's are abused by their priest. Ordination is never portrayed, and although priests figure in abundance within Bulgakov's works, they are usually treated, not without compassion, as woefully inadequate figures. Extreme unction is suggested by Myshlaevskii in ***Belaia g\>ardiia*** for Aleksei but the priest is never needed. These sacraments are not so much rejected by Bulgakov as "passed by", probably because he never found an artistic use for them.

Bulgakov's portrayal of the Sacraments is progressively driven underground within his work, just as religious rites were in Soviet life. There is a world of difference between the public Masses and funerals celebrated in ***Belaia gvardiia*** and the ambivalent hints at Eucharist which are to be found in ***Master i Margarita.*** One reason for this is self-protection. It would have been impolitic of Bulgakov to continue to include overt religious rites within his work as this would almost certainly have rendered them impossible to publish and stage. This did not necessarily have a negative effect. He clothed his sacraments in everyday life or in his magical imagination, visually enriching and adding layers of meaning to his work. His use of the Sacraments not only reflects his artistic development but his personal development as well. He came to see the sacraments not so much as dogmas and physical events that should be enforced and marked with ritual, but as spiritual changes into a deeper level of understanding by those who experience them. In a sense this is a return to what

sacraments ought to be. Human reality is such that stress is often placed more upon the sacraments' physical aspects than upon their spiritual aspects; upon the symbol, rather than the symbolised. His attitude to marriage, for example, became less concerned with the formality o f vows and became a free enjoyment of two equal people, both united in a higher aim and ready to sacrifice themselves for one another. In his works. Sacraments may appear unexpectedly and in surprising forms, such as his baptisms. They are not overt events and the concern is not so much with the rite itself as with the expression of what has happened. His treatment of the Sacraments may be twisted and it may be ironic, but this is Bulgakov's way. What they retain is the idea of the provision o f symbolic rites of passage from one state of being into another.

Bulgakov's opinion o f the nature o f man is very much his own. He does not resort to philosophy or psychology to show why Man is as he is. Instead, he draws on his life experiences to show how men deal with situations and with each other. He makes no overt inquiry into the origins o f sin or evil. What he does concentrate on is their effects in this world and the next. Bulgakov puts his characters to the test to see i f they are worthy of life here and hereafter. Man, then, is found by Bulgakov to be subject to sin, disease and death but nevertheless has the capacity for virtue and the possibility of attaining health and eternal life. Man's relationship with God, in whose Grace these gifts lie, cannot be a direct one (except for those characters in ***Master i Margarita*** who come into contact with leshua).In his art Bulgakov plays with the mediatary states of dream and sacrament, he puns on Transfiguration, examines artistic and scientific creativity and dabbles in the approach from the opposite, the occult. What seems the most important, but perhaps the most difficult way for Bulgakov 's characters to come closer to God is through a clear, willing and courageous facing up to conscience. In

this, Bulgakov's view is surprisingly in keeping with Orthodox thought. Men must strive in his works to overcome their fallen state by upholding truth, accepting their death, acknowledging their sin and accepting judgement with faith.

6. THE ATTAINMENT OF FORGIVENESS AND SALVATION

Throughout Christian doctrine it is emphasized that the final end of man should be to come close to God in an eternal union. As we have seen, the Sacraments are an expression of this need. Although Bulgakov did not class himself as a sinner out of the ordinary, the need for some sort of expiation is strong throughout his works and increases as he becomes older. His latent awareness of personal guilt expressed in even the earliest works such as ***Krasnaia korona, la ubil*** and ***Belaia gvardiia*** reveals to the reader a deep-seated need to reconcile himself to the world and to God. Bulgakov's characters may exist, as he did, in a frustrating and unsatisfactory universe, but it is one which is full of opportunities for the operation of love and repentance which lead naturally on to atonement and forgiveness. Bulgakov explores these opportunities and posits his own understanding of what divine judgement can mean. I shall look at love, repentance, atonement and forgiveness in this chapter, comparing Bulgakov's expression of them with that of Orthodox Christian thinking. I shall then consider Bulgakov's notion of Judgement and the Afterlife, comparing and contrasting them to Orthodox teaching, and taking into account critical opinion where necessary.

According to Orthodox Doctrine, love is an essential part of God's nature and therefore should be an essential part o f man's. God's mercy and forgiveness are infinite and are given as gifts freely to man. All men have to do is willingly to accept them; no sin is too great for God to forgive as each individual is "infinitely precious in God's sight"'. Accepting God's forgiveness involves repentance which includes abandoning the old, sinful, rebellious life and turning towards God with faith and humility. Repentance is a continuous experience and prayer is understood to be a vital part of

^ **Timothy Ware,** *The Orthodox Church,* **p. 226.**

this, for it is a means of constant communication with God and a way of becoming more truly aware of one's own soul. Although God knocks, man must himself open the door. The forgiveness obtained by man from God (which is achievable on earth) confers the benefit o f a ***life*** free from the fear o f punishment and shame. Ideas about how God's forgiveness works include the notion that God "blots out" or no longer

"remembers" sins. It is also a type of healing process. The uhimate grace from God is a

place in Heaven and Eternal Life. This, however, is only achieved after judgement and

is beyond understanding.

In Christian thought, as based on the Gospels and tradition, death is a time of judgement. What the outcome of this judgement will be is partly based on a choice. I f someone chooses to believe in God and to strive towards Him then he chooses life. I f he chooses to deny God he chooses death and rejects the concept of the defeat of death by Christ's death and Resurrection. The choice is between oblivion and eternal life. The Orthodox tradition is less rigidly legalistic than the Roman Catholic tradition which sees sinners paying their debt to the Lord rather like prisoners paying their debt to society through an allotted period of purification through suffering after death. In either case, however, death is seen as a continuation of life and how one lives one's life on earth, the acts one performs and the beliefs one holds contribute to one's fate after departing the world of the living. This is seen as a dynamic rather than a static condition. The Orthodox firmly believe that God will always love His Creation and will never destroy it, that the living can pray for the souls o f the departed and that these prayers will affect them and that the dead, too, continue to pray and intercede for the fate o f this world. They believe that souls can be purified by prayer and grace but not by punishment.

Mercy is seen in Bulgakov's works as one o f the last sparks o f human decency possible and effective in dysfunctional societies or hopeless situations. Yet mercy is notable more often by its absence than its presence in most of his works, such as ***Beg, Belaia gvardiia*** and ***Rokovye iaitsa.*** For example, in ***Beg*** we read after Khludov's boast that he went into battie with music:

> **KpanHJiHH:** Bee rySepHHH **njiioroT Ha** твоіо **MyatiKy! (Bflpyr oHHyjicH, BSflpornyn, onycxHJicH** na **KOJieHH, roBopHX xaJioGHo)** Bame **BbicoKonpeBocxoflHTcJibCTBo, cMHJiyHxecb Hafl KpanHJiHHbiM!** *5{* **6biJi B 3a6biTbH!**
>
> **XjiyflOB!** Hex! ітјіохон coiwax! Tbi xopomo **HaHan,** а конннјі **cKsepHo. BajMcmbCH B Horax? UoBecHXb** ero! ^ **He Mory** na **Hero cMoxpexb!** ***(Beg.p.*** 146)

In ***Master i Margarita,*** however, mercy takes on a more significant role. In this novel compassion and mercy turn up in some surprising places, such as in the presence o f death and among devils; although Woland says specifically that they are "not his department", they are never actively discouraged. In a 1934 draft of the novel, mercy is one of the main things which the devils have come to Moscow to find. Azazello says he has been waiting for a cry of mercy after the Master expresses his pity for the children as Moscow burns and women fall on their knees and cry out to heaven^. In the final published draft of the novel the devils find that man is not totally without compassion even at the unlikely venue of the Variety theatre. After Bengalskii's head has been pulled off, a woman's cry for mercy for the compere is noted by Woland. People are shallow and fickle, yet such moments of compassion, the first moment perhaps, towards redemption, are still possible for them, still fundamental to their character. What they lack, however, are the higher, spiritual qualities which lead naturally on to repentance, atonement and forgiveness. Mercy and compassion do,

Velikii kantsler, **p. 185.**

however, have a definite function in the book. In as far as Margarita exercises them (quite spontaneously) in regard to others (the frightened child, Frieda), the door of mercy is opened not just to others but for herself and the Master.

Bulgakov's notions about love and compassion accord with the best traditions of Christian teaching. Compassion for others is shown within family groups, such as the Turbins in ***Belaia gvardiia,*** but is also freely demonstrated for strangers by such acts

as lulia Reiss' when she shehers Aleksei Turbin ***{Bg),*** or by Golubkov when he meets the sick Serafima in ***Beg*** (the erotic motives which come into the play in both these relationships are secondary to the primary impulse). True mercy is not handed out

from indulgent heights - it is offered in humility and understanding. The love of God that motivates compassion and is not self-seeking is also unconditional. Love is also based on faith and confidence in the love and wisdom of God - not on concern for the physical self The teaching that "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself is a barrier against sin and thus against that which cuts off man from God. The displacement of the ego at the centre of man's life allows the living union with all other men and with God which, in Christian terms, is the proper end of man. To shew mercy indiscriminately is often difficult. It is part o f the Christian struggle because it is not necessarily returned by the recipients and always requires actions not in one's own interests. A universal compassion, like leshua's, is its highest manifestation.

In Bulgakov's world-view repentance and atonement are both necessary for the attainment o f forgiveness and reconciliation. In his works one cannot be effective without the other. This is in accordance with Orthodox doctrine as taken from the Bible where Jesus states many times, as in the parable o f the Prodigal Son, that no sin

is too great, it is only necessary that the sinner should repent and turn back. The fact

that ***Master i Margarita*** is set at Easter time puts the novel in a context of atonement. It is the crossing point between death and life, time and eternity. Within the novel the entire cosmic order is experiencing this, making the death of leshua a part of a general, universal principle. The night before Easter is a night of forgiveness when all sinners, including the devils, are again as they were intended to be in Eternity, without sin or blemish.

The cosmic system of atonement is described by Woland as one of debt and repayment. This particularly Orthodox conception of sin finds expression in the Lord's Prayer where, instead of the Western "trespasses" the Russian bears the translation **flOJixH** (debts)^ Debts are forgiven and consequently the debt is absolved and made void. Debt and repayment is sin and forgiveness. To be in debt is to be incomplete; forgiveness restores wholeness. Seen in this light the debt of all sinners has caused a break between man and God. According to doctrine the reuniting of man and God through the death and resurrection of Christ is spoken of in terms of the payment of a debt, which restores man to God in unity. The necessity of payment of debt on a human level emphasizes man's responsibility to others and it is accomplished through the excising of sin and the self from the centre of one's existence. Thus the devils' completion of atonement for the night is the annulment of the debt **("cqex** on**;iaxH**./i **H 3aKpbiJi",** ***MiM,*** p. 733). Such a temporary "annulment", leaving the devils obliged to continue "payment" after the Night of Atonement, can only be explained by their momentary passing into the dimension o f eternity, into the realm of the "imaginary points". It is not the usual system of forgiveness as presented by Bulgakov (and indeed by Christian doctrine). God's forgiveness, in Christian thought, is never rescinded,

In early English protestant translations "debts" was also used.

though man (and Devil) can reject it. For example, Pilate's forgiveness is the annulment of his guilt in that the crucifixion never happened and his forgiveness is permanent.

Bulgakov also shows the truth o f the idea that "to whom much is given, much shall be required" and this is seen to be closely bound up with the devils' perdition and damnation. The eternity of their crimes in ***Master and Margarita*** is proportionate to their non-human status and knowledge of the truth. This is also a part of divine justice as meted out to Berlioz and Ivan. Beriioz' knowledge was greater and he had had more access to the truth than Ivan, yet he rejected it. Yet Berlioz does not even acknowledge his "debt", let alone seek an accounting. He cuts himself off from God's love and forgiveness. By this he dies, along with Maigel and luda. Many minor characters such as Varenukha do not actually repent wholeheartedly but comply with Woland's wishes through fear. Those not liberated by repentance and atonement are trapped by fear within themselves. God will not and cannot liberate by force or terror. Such is Bulgakov's thought and it is sound doctrine.

There are also those who cannot face up to the truth about themselves and who are neither hot nor cold. Pilate, for example, tries to atone for his sin by killing luda, but this is merely an attempt to transfer the guilt. He also does not fully repent of his sentence upon leshua. He does not turn to God, or rather, to leshua (since he cannot know God in a Judaeo-Christian sense). He feels a deep sense of regret, but this is not full repentance because, as the Master is told, when Pilate cannot sleep he blames not himself but his position **("aonxHocxb").** He refiases to accept the responsibility for his own sin, despite admitting the action was wrong. When he sleeps his subconscious desire for a second chance haunts him in the form of a longing to walk along the moonbeam towards leshua. It is the wanting to be forgiven and inability to accept the

responsibility for his sin which traps Pilate in his own private purgatory and which condemns him to centuries of insomnia and regret. This is very much like Khludov's position in ***Beg.*** Khludov at first tries to convince himself that the atrocities he orders were part of the duty of a General, not "murders". He finally repents of the fact that he caused the death of Orderly Krapilin and others, but only after an extended period of resisting the idea of personal responsibility. Repentance is purely a matter of turning towards God and wanting and accepting Him, i.e. the Truth. For this one must have a proper understanding of one's incompleteness. Khludov eventually "pays his debts" by going back to certain death in Russia. He sacrificed people to the cause of war and now he must sacrifice himself to settle the score. Although God does not come overtly into this, Charnota says that the soul demands judgement: ***'%yma cyaa*** xpeGyer" ***(Beg,*** p. 185). Khludov has already condemned himself and he cannot forgive himself and knows that he cannot reasonably hope for mercy fi-om the Bolsheviks and so he is atoning before God; there is no one else to turn to. Krapilin's disappearance in Dream 8 could be a sign that he has chosen well. It could be said that Khludov wants to be killed because he is mad, but the structure of the world-view of the play is not that of, say, ***D'iavoliada*** where Korotkov kills himself needlessly in a world gone mad and Khludov does not commit suicide but submits himself to the judgement of those he has wronged. A more difficult case is that of Muarron in ***Kabala sviatosh.*** He speaks of suicide as of submission to divine justice. He has told the monks that Moliere has married his own daughter and has been offered money by the King for this information. He comes to see Moliere before he hangs himself In Act 4 Lagrange calls Muarron a Judas, thus apportioning to him ideas of guilt for the betrayal of a friend and a master, self-murder and despair. Muarron's desire for suicide is partly a desire for atonement

because he feels his own sin and guilt and he knows that his own death ought to be the proper payment for betraying a friend, yet it can also be viewed as the act of a self-absorbed, despairing coward rather than that of a man seeking to reenter into communion with his God and his fellows, to face up to his debt. The author here withholds judgement.

Apart from the New Testament concept of Atonement, Bulgakov also touches on the Old Testament idea of the scapegoat. Here I would agree with Lesley Milne in her "Critical Biography" that Azazello's appearance in the 1934 drafts of the novel is associated with increased emphasis on the themes of forgiveness and atonement^ Andrew Barratt in "Between Two Worlds" also links Azazello to the scapegoat\ However, in the Old Testament Azazel is not the scapegoat itself, although there is a link. In the given version of the Bible, the goat took on the sins and was driven out. According to Northrop Frye^ the word "scapegoat" is a mistranslation. Frye then goes on to say that what actually happened on the Day of Atonement was that a goat had the sins of the community ritually transferred onto it and was then sent out into the wilderness ***as a sacrifice to the demon of the desert, Azazel.*** The goat nevertheless represents accumulated sin and it is symbolic of the separation of sin from the coirnnunity of Israel'. This atonement ritual brought to mind in the novel ***Master i Margarita*** by the name Azazello is considered a prefigurement of the crucifixion of Christ. Christ took on the sins of the world and descended into Hell. Azazello does not take on anybody's sins but the association stresses the idea that the devils are performing a vital role in the function of the universe. It also goes to show how the

" **Lesley Milne,** *Mikhail Bulgakov: A Critical Biography* **(CUP, 1990), pp. 246-247.**

^ **Andrew Barratt,** *Between Two Worlds,* **p. 168.**

* **Northrop Frye,** *The Great Code* **(Routledge, London, 1982), p. 185.**

' **Fiye, pp. 133-134.**

demonic and the divine interweave and depend on one another. Azazello, as he flies with the other devils through the night in his true form, is identified by Bulgakov as

"^leMOH 6e3B0flH0H nyCTblHH"*.

That forgiveness is an essential part of the divine nature is testified by leshua in ***Master i Margarita.*** Forgiveness is natural to him and is indistinguishable from his general psyche. It is innate and does not need to be consciously apphed. For this reason he does not need to make a display of forgiving Judas, Pilate or Caiaphas. His nature is all-forgiving and all-embracing and this is one of the reasons why he does not take offence at Matvei when he calls him a dog and why he does not get angry or blame anyone for his death (chapter 23 **"He в н н н т 3a т о, нто у Hero отнцін ХНЅНЬ").** leshua is also able to forgive Pilate because He himself is totally innocent and in no need of forgiveness or mercy from Pilate's court. This so-called "de-mythologised" Christ-figure pays with his own blood for the sins (cowardice, greed, malice, betrayal etc.) of others as did the Christ of the Gospels.

Christ's death is indirectly associated with the general forgiveness of sins, but how this comes about and how it works is not known. Somehow, by forgiving His own murderers in His temporal life He effected a closer union between man and God. Bulgakov does not show the reader that leshua's death has had any effect upon the fallen state of modern man in the novel, but the reconciliation between the Master, Pilate and leshua outside time clearly defines his thinking on the subject of forgiveness.

Divine forgiveness is substantially more encompassing than is commonly thought. Bulgakov's view of the divine "economy" is also in accordance with Woland's description of his "department". This is confirmed in other works. In ***Belaia gvardiia***

There is, of course, a connection between Azazello and the Apocryphal Azazel of 1 Enoch 10, verse 4 who is cast into the desert as a punishment.

Zhilin **reports** in Aleksei's dream **that** even the Bolsheviks will go **to** heaven. According **to** the priests they should have gone **to** Hell. The priests **cannot** live **up to** the ideal of divine forgiveness or, to their discredit, begin to comprehend it, yet they, too, are objects of divine compassion in the dream. Man, in his arrogance, judges God by his own standards. Even Elena is guilty of this when she demands that "justice" fall **upon** the Germans: "By^**b o н н npoKjiHXbi.** Но ecjni **толвко** 6or ne **naKaacex нх, s н a ^ т** , у **Hero Hex cnpaBeajiHBOCTH.** Bo3Mo**:acHO JIH, HTO OHH** 3a 3**TO** ne **OTBexHJiH? OHH OTBexjiT.** ***Byjjyr* o н н MyHHTbCH,** KaK **н M H** , Gyayr". ***(Bg,*** p. 141). In a draft ***of Master i Margarita*** God's forgiveness even extends to the Devils, something usually rejected in Christian teaching, though the thought was not unknown to the Fathers (notably Origen). In the published draft divine judgement is seen as **a** matter of time and punishment:

> "H pbmapio **npHHUiocfa** nocjie **axoro npomyxHTb HCMHoro** 6o**.Jii>iiie, н *jXORhmt,* HexenH o н** npeflnojioraji. Но **ceroflHH xaKaa н o н l , Kor^a cBozjaxcfl** *c^QThi"{MiM,* p. 733)

God's forgiveness is there for everyone who wants it. This is also one of the messages of the quotations from Revelations which Bulgakov uses with such effect in his first novel. In ***Belaia gvardiia*** these passages point to a forgiveness that is both universal and personal and predict that out of the seeming chaos and terror of the "Last Days" will come **a** lasting harmony and peace.

In Bulgakov's view, man is quite capable of sharing in the divine power of forgiveness and using it to good effect. By doing so, human beings can partake in the Divine Nature. Some of Bulgakov's characters are capable of forgiving, such as Moliere, who forgives Muarron in ***Kabala sviatosh.*** There are, however, many scenes

of cruelty, particularly mass cruelty, such as the destruction of Persikov and his laboratory by the crowds in *Rokovye iaitsa.*

- Bei4 ero! yeHBaii!...
- MnpoBoro sJio^**ieH!**
- Tbi **pacnycTHH** raflos!

HcKaxeHHbie JiHi];a, pasopBaHHbie luiaxbH sanpbirajiH B KopHflopax, H K T O - To BbicTpejiHn. SaMeJibKajiH najiKH. FlepcHKOB neMHoro oTcxynHJi nasaji, npHKpbiJi flBepb, BeflymHH **B Ka6HHeT,** rae **B yxace na nojiy na Ko.neHax cTOHJia** MapbH **CxenaHOBHa, pacnpocxep pyKH KaKpacrwTbiH...^**

The psychology of such scenes, however, is similar to that of the totally unjustified pogroms in ***Belaia gvardiia.*** In this novel Elena shows forgiveness in its highest form when she prays not just for the Whites but for the entire nation. Their sin is collective'" but she takes it upon herself to accept their guilt and to pray for the sins of all to the Virgin Mary, Joy of all who Sorrow, who is considered by many Christians and certainly by the Orthodox as an intercessor, an intermediary between earth and heaven. In her prayer to the Virgin, Elena shows universal compassion and takes responsibility for the guilt and sin which is the human condition. This condition means that even people like the Turbins, who are basically decent and honourable, share in the sin of all. As the war shows, there is little to be done about man's sinful state but the efforts of people like Elena to try to ask forgiveness for all are a form of imitation of Christ, aesthetically and psychologically convincing within the parameters of the novel.

Bulgakov shows the spiritual significance and importance of human forgiveness perhaps not generally noticed in everyday life. Margarita, for instance, becomes the conduit of divine forgiveness to absolve the repentant Frieda (chapter 24) even though

' Mikhail Bulgakov, 'Rokovye iaitsa' in *Sobranie sochinenii vpiati tomakh, torn 2* (Moskva, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1989), p. 113 -114.

'° This was an opinion Bulgakov seems to have held himself at least since 1919. In his articile published in Grozny 'Tpyflaimie nepcneKTHBti" he speaks of "EesyMCTBOOTyxnocjieflHwx Jier TOjncHyTO nac na crpamHtiH nyxb. H naM ner ocraHOBKH, HCT nepeatmiKH. Mti Hana.™ nirrb namy HaKasaHHH H BtmeM ee flo Komia" (Pod piatoi, p. 45).

the offence was not against her. This act reinforces the notion that forgiveness is a shared power with a direct link between man and God. When Margarita forgives Frieda she says "Te5H npomaiox". She is forgiving on behalf of higher powers and she makes herself a channel for God's Grace. This forgiveness of a specific sin diff'ers from Elena's acceptance of general sin in that Margarita can be effective because she has an interest in Frieda and through Goethe's heroine, Gretchen, is actually identified with her, or can be identified with her by the reader. Yet Bulgakov's Margarita's compassion is also general. In order for her to accomplish Frieda's forgiveness she herself takes on the responsibility for Frieda's sin and she has a spiritual understanding of it. There also lies behind this the idea that all are responsible for all. But as all men are bound together by sin, they are also bound together by the hope of forgiveness, Margarita, by her compassion and appeal for Frieda's forgiveness, emulates leshua and shares in his work, though is no innocent as He is, nor is her compassion part of her fiandamental nature, as His is. Her destruction of Latunskii's flat is enough to prove this.

Margarita caimot pronounce the forgiveness of Pontius Pilate, however, because she does not have the personal responsibility for him that the Master has. Between Pilate and the Master there exists the relationship of creature and creator (artistically) and only the Master can eflfect his release. Part of Pilate's forgiveness is to be told that the crucifixion never happened". Divine forgiveness and its acceptance is the annulment of sin; it is the settling and the closing of accounts and this is how Bulgakov depicts it.

" **Although this is one of the things that Pilate most desired in life (much as the Master always desired peace), it is also the way that forgiveness is achieved according to the philosophy of Lev Shestov. He said that God redeems man by making sins as if they had never existed. God is able to do this because Truth is what God makes it and it is temporal. According to Elendea Proffer, Bulgakov was encouraged to read Shestov by his father and he had copies of his works in his library when he died. For some tenuous hnks between Shestov's works and Bulgakov see**

Michael Glenny, 'Existential Thought in Bulgakov's Ma^/er **aMt**/Margar/to, *Canadian-American*

A creative exploration of Bulgakov's ideas about life after death"' - however tentative these may have been, is implemented in ***Belaia gvardiia*** and ***Master i Margarita.*** He uses the conventions of dream and delirium. Aleksei's dream of Heaven, for instance, shows him conversing with the dead and soon-to be-dead about events that have not **yet** taken place. That he converses with Nai-Turs ***{Bg,*** p. 58) seems to indicate, as is shown by leshua's present tense comment on death (in chapter 26 ***MiM),*** that the state of death is beyond temporal conditions as we know them. It is in eternity and it is timeless. This would also indicate that the dead are closer to God and His divine state beyond time and space. Death is a continuation of life on a different plane (I will refrain from using the words "higher plane" because, as is shown in ***Master i Margarita,*** Bulgakov perceived different layers of life after death). In a 1936 draft of the novel Bulgakov introduced the idea of the Transmigration of Souls, the Oriental, Classical (especially Platonic) and occasionally Christian notion of the immortal soul moving fi-om body to body. As Woland says to Margarita:

> - хух **Bonpoc o nepecejieHHe** Aym... B **inecxHafliiaxoM Bexe в u 6buiH Kopo;ieBOH (i)paHcy3CKofl...**^^

This idea did not survive into any other draft and the concept of the soul remained more conventionally Christian, but it does at least show us that Bulgakov was actively thinking about its nature and receptive to a plurality of ideas on the subject.

In those books where Bulgakov touches on the subject of redemption and judgement, how one dies depends on how one has lived. Bulgakov's moral tenets are not as rigid as those that a strictly religious code would require, but he appears to

Slavic Studies **xv (Nos. 2-3) (1981), pp. 238-49.**
Chudakova has discovered from her research that Ermolinskii reports Bulgakov as saying: "Mne Mepemjrrca HHoraa, *mo* **CMepri, - npoflOJiaceHHe aaoHH.** M**BI Tojn,KO ne MoaceM ce6e npeacxaBHTt KaK 3X0 npoHcxoflHT. Ho KaK-TO npoHCxoflHT..."** *(Zhizneopisanie,* **p. 479),** *Velikii kantsler,* **p. 365.**

accept the general rule that "each will receive according to his beliefs". This gives the moral structure of the novel a very personal foundation and is quite magnanimous, but it is also, to a surprising degree, consistent with Orthodox Doctrine. The condition, without which the idea of receiving according to one's behefs would be meaningless, is that one must believe honestly and declare one's convictions in good faith not just to others, but most importantly to oneself After repentance, the slate is wiped clean. If one refuses or evades the truth then one's beliefs are empty and the ultimate reward will be just as empty. In Orthodox thought this is based on the understanding that man has fi-ee-will and God can only approach man so far. This is a moment when man is required to approach Him. This is summed up well by Father Hopko:

> "I f some men refuse the gift of life in communion with God, the Lord can only honour this refusal and respect the freedom of His creatures which He Himself has given and will not take back"^^

As is shown in ***Belaia gvardiia,*** even the Bolshevik rejection of God can be overcome if a man has lived his life well and believed sincerely, albeit erroneously, to the point of self-sacrifice. But throughout this work judgement hangs like a watchful eye with the quotations from Revelations. Bulgakov demands that men respect one another, their way of life and their convictions. This may be a cry for understanding fi'om one whose liberal, middle class values were under constant threat from Soviet practice and ideology. It is to his credit that he did not try to fight fire with fire and it accords with the doctrinal tenet of God's respect for man's freedom.

One of the most puzzling and debated questions about Bulgakov's conception of divine judgement is that of the Master's reward ***m Master i Margarita,*** namely why he

Father Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith, Volume 1: Doctrine* **(The Department of Religious Education, The Orthodox Church in America, New York, 1981), p. 112.**

deserves ***pokoi*** and not ***svet.*** As many scholars have noted, the question of why the Master only receives "peace" and not "light" is one that has given rise to a variety of theories. The reason for the disquiet about the Master's reward is based on **a** conversation between Levii Matvei and Woland in chapter 29:

> **"- А кто же Вы Не берете его к себе, в свет?**
> **- ОН He sacjiyxHJi cBeTa, O H sacjiyxHn noKoii, - nenaJibHbiM FOJIOCOM noroBopHH JleBHH."**

Matvei's sad tone seems to indicate that peace is a lesser reward than light. A. Colin Wright's up-beat attempt to prove that ***pokoi*** is a uniting of the two opposing principles of light and darkness is somewhat undermined by the sadness of Matvei's voice lacking in foundation'^. One of the most widely accepted ideas - that the Master gets what he most desires - is based on the text, in that with each appearance of the Master it becomes increasingly more obvious that all he desires is to hide away from the world with his mistress and lead a quiet, untroubled life. Critics such as Curtis, Kenja-Sharratt, lanovskaia and Wright suggest that, as Curtis puts it: "he can envisage no happier prospect than release from persecution, a marvelous, final peace"'^. Curtis,

I feel quite correctly, ties this up with the novel's general judgement principle that "Ka:a<aoMy Gy^iex ***nmo*** no ero Bcpe". A different theory that has been proposed by inference from the text, is that the Master's novel and his portrayal of Christ have somehow fallen short. A. Chedrova thinks that the Master's creation of a de-mythologised Christ meets with divine disapproval'^, while Margot K. Frank points out that judgement is made only after the novel has been read by leshua . Other

A. Colin Wright, 'Mikhail Bulgakov's Developing World View', *Canadian American Slavic Studies* **15 (1981), pp. 151-166.**
J. A. E . Curtis, *Bulgakov's Last Decade,* **p. 182.**
A. Chedrova, 'Khristianksie aspekty romana Mikhaila Bulgakova *Master i Margarita', Grani* **134**
Margot K. Frank, 'The Mystery of the Master's Final Destination', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* **15 (1981), p. 291.**

theories are based on the moral implications of the Master's life and direct us to his despair, his lack of faith in Margarita's love and in life itself^. One act for which he may have been held unworthy of "light" is his rejection of his own novel, a betrayal of the truth that is contained therein^°.

Whilst all of these opinions are pertinent and significant, I am drawn to the conclusion that Bulgakov may also have been influenced by his understanding of heaven. As we have already discussed in our examination of the Devil, it seems likely that Bulgakov drew on Old Testament Apocrypha when creating the character of Woland. In ***Master i Margarita*** Heaven is made up of different levels, much in the way that Dante, another Bulgakov source, described it in his ***Paradise.*** However, Bulgakov may equally well have drawn more on an Apocryphal view of Heaven. Here Heaven is also made up of levels, each dedicated to a worthy part of the population. In

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2Enoch 8 v. 8 the just are rewarded with their own houses , and in 5 v. 1-10 in the Third Heaven the reward is a beautifijl garden with rivers for people who have suffered in life^^. The Master has indeed suffered and enters a world with a house, garden and stream. Perhaps most important is the notion of the Seventh Heaven. In 2Enoch this is characterised by light, eternal praises and the presence of the Lord. From drafts of the novel we can see that Bulgakov may have had this supreme heaven in mind and was certain that the Master would not be worthy of it. In 1934 he wrote: "Tfai **He** no/**IHHMeiiiBCH** ***jxo*** **Bticox.** He 6y;ieiin> **cjibimaxb Meccbi"** and in 1936 he wrote: "Tbi **HHKorfla He noflHHMenibCH Bbime,** Emya ne **yBHflHmb, xbi He noKHHemb C B O H**

" **See for example I. Vinogradov, 'Zaveshchanie Mastera',** *Voprosy literatury* **1968 (6), p. 67.**
^° **See for example, Curtis, p. 182 and Frank, p. 290.**
Apocryphal Old Testament, **editor HFD Sparks, p. 448.**
Apocryphal Old Testament, **p. 331.**

npHiox"^^. So the Seventh Heaven is an extremely special place for extremely special people who have spent their lives (or death, in the case of Pilate) in the quest for God. The Master's hfe has not led him to the eternal glorification of God but rather to a quiet reconciliation with Him. To a certain extent he abandoned his responsibility to leshua by failing to complete and by burning his novel. For such a man to deserve the ultimate reward in a universe that relies on personal responsibility, truth and actions which matter would be unthinkable. I would also concur with Milne that there is also the spiritual and moral consideration that Bulgakov would have had to have been enormously vain and presumptuous to give his alter ego, the Master, a place beside Christ in Heaven^"^!

Bulgakov's broad ideas on who can enter Heaven find equally diverse expression in Heaven itself In his novels we find that Heaven can be a place of rest and of things one has loved. There is equality and calm and it is very much what one wants it to be. The soldiers of ***Belaia gvardiia*** find it is like a barracks, while the Master and Margarita discover it to be a well-loved and beautifiil home. It is especially emphasized in ***Master i Margarita*** that it is a place where the trials of the earthly existence are forgotten.

According to Christian thinking, after Judgement the other sentence is one of damnation and Hell and Bulgakov is surely not heretical in thinking that, for this sentence to be passed, some kind of spiritual death must have taken place. This is not simply the resuh of an immoral life. A spiritual death is not just a moral death. The dead who arise from their graves at Woland's ball in ***Master i Margarita*** have all committed terrible crimes but they do not seem to have offended against any Holy

Velikii kantsler, **p. 328.**
L . Milne, *Mikhail Bulgakov: A Critical Biography,* **p. 241.**

Truths. They certainly beheve that the Devil exists and, as we see in the case of Frieda, are not irredeemable. Spiritual death for Bulgakov is characterized by a rejection both of morality and God. The two combined lead to aimihilation.

The sentences pronounced upon Berlioz and Maigel thus stand in direct contradiction to Orthodox Doctrine, which states that God will never destroy His Creation but in His Love allows sinners who love the Devil to suffer with him in Hell. Bulgakov, on the contrary, destroys the atheist editor and the betrayer. Bulagkov's increasing despair and fear of life must have gone some way to bringing about this change but accords perfectly with the impartial declaration **"KaxaoMy** *6yjieT* flano no

ero **Bepe".**

In the multi-dimensional ***Master i Margarita*** Bulgakov ventures to portray hell as well as heaven. To a certain extent, he pictured it in fairly conventional terms. The fact that the dead appear from a fireplace hints at the fires of Hell and references are made (p. 310) to "hellish fiirnaces", "dark caverns", "glowing coals" and "flames" lurking just below the surface in chapter 23. What particularly marks it as an opposite of Heaven is that it is a place of unhappy remembrance. This is in contrast to Heaven where not only one's sins are forgotten but also all the bad and unpleasant things that ever happened in life. Sorrow is no longer a concern in heaven, whereas in Hell nothing is ever forgotten. Frieda is never allowed to forget her child, Woland and his retinue always carry the burden of their sin and even Pilate's Purgatory/Hell is a place of constant regret. This does at least carry the positive concept that the sinners' remembrance enables them to realize what they have done and what they should or should not have done in the past. Hell can be escaped through the intercession of another (a common Biblical idea). Hell at least is ***somewhere*** and the souls which inhabit it have not

deserved armihilation. It is very difficuh to form an opinion as to how Bulgakov decided who was fit for Hell and who for oblivion - perhaps he did not have a conscious system, seeing that the novel is a work of art, not a philosophical or theological tract. We have established that he did not take this ultimate judgement on himself as author and so minor weaknesses and transgressions go unpunished and as regards the anihilation of Maigel and Berlioz we are left with the ultimately, perhaps, unsatisfactory explanation that all receive in accordance with their beliefs and that the only eternally soul-destroying offence is agaist Truth.

As we have now seen time and time again, doctrine is now followed, now transformed in Bulgakov's works. His expiative system is no exception to this and his progression from expressions of love and mercy, repentance, atonement to forgiveness and heavenly reward on the whole adhere to the general principles of Russian Orthodox Doctrine. Running as a kind of parallel to these however are his quite un-doctrinal statements about judgement and damnation indicating a deep-seated, personal desire for the punishment of wrong-doing (although, as we have also seen in our discussion of Sin, what wrong-doing actually means to Bulgakov is also very personal and is beyond strict morality).

Bulgakov appears to have sympathy for humanity and in his works the demonstrations of compassion by certain characters stand as symbols of hope in his war-torn, socially incohesive worlds. He shows us, in the spirit of Christian teaching, that no sin is too great and no sinner is "lost" if they have the courage to repent and atone for their sins, to make amends and to turn away from sin, Bulgakov's judgement criteria for some sinners, however, do not express the doctrinal certainty in the love of God but rather offer an almost literal understanding of Apocalypse, that the old must

be swept utterly away. The difference between ***Belaia gvardiia,*** with its expression of hope for all, and ***Master i Margarita,*** with its categorical destruction of those without faith, is a noticeable shift in attitude in one oppressed by the worid and longing for release. However, Bulgakov's rewards for the deserving and the repentant are peace, joy and in ***Master i Margarita*** a release from unbearable memories that poison the soul. Never is atonement presented as a futile act. Despite the sin and corruption displayed throughout Bulgakov's works, he always recognizes, as does Christian teaching, that faith and hope and the need, desire and possibilities for man to come ever closer to God are achievable in this life and the next^^

I would agree with Lesley Milne in *Mikhail Bulgakov: A Critical Biography* **(CUP, 1990), p. 142, where she says that "tragic guih can be redeemed".**

CONCLUSION

Despite the difficulties in assessing the extent and fervour of Bulgakov's personal religious beliefs, it is often apparent in his works that theological considerations are of great importance to him. Undoubtedly his family background contributed to this, coupled with the fact that Church life and religious thought were fundamental parts of the Middle Class cultural traditions and values which Bulgakov cherished so deeply after the Revolution. Based on his diaries and the recent publications from the KGB archives commentators can now obtain a better picture of the social constraints that Bulgakov was under and appreciate the interest that he took in ecclesiastical and religious matters. Despite the condemnation of state-sponsored artists and critics, who saw Bulgakov's work as old-fashioned, reactionary and eventually politically dangerous, he obviously felt a need to express and re-interpret his rich cultural and moral heritage, a need which eventually overrode even the desire to see his works in print and his plays performed. He never sought martyrdom either in the cause of literature or as witness to his faith, but did his best in the face of adverse political conditions to write as well as he could according to the promptings of his conscience.

It is, however, not so much Bulgakov's personal faith which concerns us here, as the extent to which we can use Orthodox theology to decode his books. Bulgakov's divine and diabolic rulers are not so far from Doctrine and Russian Orthodox tradition as they may at first seem. His Devil, Woland, despite the polygenetical origins in scripture, legend and tradition is still the ruler of a world that is opposed to God's. He hovers on the border between wild Adversary and tame Servant but he is not completely the Lord of Evil of the New Testament. Bulgakov may have felt freer in

using Satan as a character as there are many literary precedents and no precisely formulated doctrines.

In discussing the portrayal of Christ, we have to consider the identity of leshua in ***Master i Margarita.*** Bulgakov's depiction alters the unalterable facts of the Gospels but, far from creating a piece of arch heresy, he composes a Christ figure who in essence bears many of the messages of the New Testament and displays a calm, honest and simple goodness to which Christian teaching also aspires. Bulgakov subtly shows the reader leshua's true powers on earth and, though far from suggesting a glorious portrayal of Christ on the throne in judgment so common in the iconography of the Church, he pictures leshua in heaven as still the wandering philosopher who comes to greet Pilate personally. Bulgakov conveys His divine nature through the conversation between Levii Matvei and Woland, where we are given to understand that this once humble man is indeed omnipotent God.

It is not easy to speak of theological motives in Bulgakov's works, because God is by nature inexpressible and all we have to go on is crafted images of imaginary beings who more or less embody theological concepts and the thoughts, words and actions of Bulgakov's human characters. The idea of the Trinity would appear to be absent. The strong affirmation and beautifijl description of "God" found in Aleksei's dream in ***Belaia gvardiia*** was toned down and reworked over the years (as can be traced through the drafts of ***Master i Margarita)*** and finally clothed in mystery and virtually hidden. God is nevertheless present in the texts and through symbols, thoughts and dreams and points to a time of Apocalypse and Judgment and to the hope of Love and Reconcilliation. Quietly, He calls Bulgakov's characters to Him and keeps secret the mysteries of life.

Even if the Devil cannot be reduced to the concept of the Evil One or the Father of Lies, God is still Love made manifest in Christ. Bulgakov makes us think about Man's position in the economy of salvation and questions our assumptions about ourselves and the responsibility we have for our own actions. He is aware of man's mortality, his frailty in the face of disease and temptation, but he shows us that, fully in accordance with Christian thought, if man is willing to take on the responsibility for himself and for those around him and to turn away from a corrupt life, then health and eternal life are achievable goals. This is fully in accordance with Orthodox teaching on repentance and atonement.

In Bulgakov's works, and especially in ***Belaia gvardiia.*** ***Beg,*** and ***Master i Margarita,*** the inextricable link between the earthly and the divine is expressed with a clarity and lyricism that points to a personal faith and an understanding of the world strongly influenced by Russian Orthodox Christian thought. Bulgakov's use of scripture is as varied as his use of satire, other literature or philosophical ideas. However, it is apparent that he chose to elaborate and perhaps to obscure his use of doctrinal tenets in order to create new or slightly warped universal structures such as those where Satan works in a joint but mysterious partnership with Christ ***(MiM),*** or where the would-be destroyers of the Church on Earth are welcomed into heaven ***(Bg).*** Bulgakov's universes, as found in ***Belaia gvardiia. Beg*** and ***Master i Margarita,*** are at once awesome and mysterious and yet humanly approachable and unusually beautiful. Chaos threatens (we feel this particularly in the wilder crowd scenes of ***Belaia gvardiia*** as well as in the early short stories, notably ***Diavoliada)*** but its origin is identified and resisted by a Higher Order in which everything has its place and its reason. Bulgakov occasionally allows us a glimpse into the true workings of Heaven: beatific visions

presented as it were in counterpoint to the Apocalyptic undertones of ***Belaia g\'ardiia***\ the need for expiation found in ***Beg*** and Woland's declaration that "all is as it should be" in ***Master i Margarita.*** Yet Bulgakov never allows his human characters to become too deeply involved in the workings of heaven. Woland's statement to the Master in a 1936 draft of the ***Master and Margarita*** (see ***Velikii kantsler*** p. 328) that the continuation of the novel, (which could only be beyond the boundaries of human life) is not for his pen can be read as a self-imposed boundary for Bulgakov.

Bulgakov's vision of the universe, the Devil, Christ and God is not identical with the one laid down in the New Testament where God is Good and the Devil is Evil, the latter always watchful to lead men astray and to undo the saving work of Christ's Resurrection. Yet Bulgakov the author does not deny the divine and demonic forces in our lives, nor is it his intention to insult or ridicule the principles of Christianity. In his polygenetic works of fiction the layers of artistic and cultural embellishment mask deeper "truths" that have their root in Russian Orthodox doctrinal thinking. Orthodox doctrine, in this sense, is the cornerstone for the secondary universe he creates in his works and is part of the spiritual foundation for his characters.

Appendix 1

Translations of Quotations in Russian

A ll translations given below are mine, except where indicated as follows.

Curtis J. A.E. Curtis, ***Manuscripts Don't Burn*** (Harvill, Harper-Collins, 1991)
Glermy M&M M . Gleimy, ***The Master and Margarita*** ***(Harvill,*** Harper-Collins, 1988)
Glenny ***WG*** M . Glenny, ***The White Guard (Haivill*** Harper-Collins, 1993)
Milne L. Milne, 'Flight' in ***Six Plays*** (Methuen Drama, 1994)
Proffer Carl Proffer, 'Fatal Eggs' in ***Diabohad*** (Harvill, Harper-Collins, 1991)

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8 Sasha said that they had left to follow the secular road due to Misha's influence.

There is witness to her elder brother's refusal to attend services (he didn't want to fast before Easter or Mass) as well as his deciding religious questions in favour of non-belief

9 So let's trust in God and live, that's the best way and the only way. (Curtis, p. 53)

10 Maybe he's not needed by the bold and the brave, but for such as myself it is easier to live with the thought for Him. My illness is a complex and a lingering one, and I am completely run down. It could hinder me from working, which is why I fear it; and that's why I place my hope in God. (Curtis, p. 54)

Today I went especially to the publishers "Atheist". I was with M.S. and he delighted me fi'om the outset.
"So, they've not been smashing in the windows?" he asked the first girl sitting at the table.
"Sorry, what?" (conftised).
"No, they've not been." (ominously).
"Pity".
I wanted to kiss him on his Jewish nose.

When I looked through the issues of "Atheist" at home I was shocked. It's not the blasphemy, although that of course is beyond all measure if one is talking about the external side. It's the idea of it: it can be proved documentally. Jesus Christ is portrayed as a swindler. Even He. It's not difficult to work out whose work this is. It's such a cheap and shoddy crime.

11 God alone knows what will happen to Russia. God help her! (Curtis, p. 56)

You're just an idiot! You don't understand a thing!

12 My sympathies were always wholly with the Whites, whose retreat I looked upon with horror and disbeUef

Someone considered the play anti-religious (the Parisian Archbishop was portrayed negatively), but Bulgakov replied to a question concerning this that the play was not anti-religious.

But most of all may God help us poor invalids! (Curtis, p. 294)

13 His moral codex included unconditionally, as it were, all the books of the Old and New Testaments.

The impression was created that to him alone had been revealed the higher truths of not only art but of all human life.

Help me to finish the novel, Lord. 1931.

15 What fascination there is in sentimental old Fenimore Cooper. His David, who is constantly singing snatches of the Psalms, was the one who turned my thoughts towards God. (Curtis, pp. 53-54),

19 " I love a low seat," began the professor. "One's not so likely to fall". (Glenny, ***MiM,*** p. 235.

"He once made an unfortunate joke", whispered Woland" and so he was condemned to carry on joking during our visits to the earth, although he doesn't really want to. However, he's hoping for a pardon. I shall intercede."

22 I can say to you truthfully
My influence is beneficial.
The righteous man would no doubt fall asleep
Without anything to do.
Believe me, only these are useful for people.
As a galvanism is useful for the sick.
And if there were not devil on earth. Then
there wouldn't be any saints either.

22 I have come to you, Aleksei Vasilevitch, with greetings from Fiodor Mikhailovitch Dostoevskii.

23 Footnote: 19 " I am alone, alone, I am always alone," replied the professor bitterly.

27 "But you, most esteemed Ivan Nikolaevitch, believe in Christ perfectly well"

Footnote 34:"So I have been ordered..."
"Can they really order you?"
"Oh, yes. I have been ordered to take you away..."

28 "Where would your good be if there were no evil and what would the world look like without shadow? Shadows are thrown by people and things. There's the shadow of my sword, for instance. But shadows are also cast by trees and living things." (Glenny McfeM, p. 405)

31 Footnote: "Oh how I guessed it! Oh, how I guessed it all!"

34 Footnote 14: "... but the thought of Ha-Notsri and the forgiven hegemon will disappear. This is not a matter for your mind."

35 "A German hit him at the battle of Idistavizo and his head was injured..."
Pilate shuddered.
"So where have you met Mark before?"
"I've never met him."

"...What trouble Iscariot has caused. He's a very nice young man...a woman... in the evening..."

" I promise that someone will arrive at a gallop soon. Wait a little and you will both follow me."

39 "Your trouble is," went on the unstoppable prisoner, "that your mind is too closed and you have finally lost your faith in human beings. You must admit that no one ought to lavish all their devotion on a dog. Your life is a cramped one, hegemon." Here the speaker allowed himself to smile. ***(Ghmy M&M,*** 34)

40 There are no evil people.

41 The temple of the old beliefs will be destroyed and the new temple of truth will be founded.

42 Immortality...immortality has come...

"At this moment the truth is chiefly that your head is aching and aching so hard that you are having cowardly thoughts about death. Not only are you in no condition to talk to me, but it even hurts you to look at me. This makes me seem to be your torturer, which distresses me... But the pain will stop soon and you headache will go." (Glenny McfeM, p. 33)

43 All power is a form of violence exercised over people... Man will pass into the kingdom of truth and justice where no sort of power will be needed. (Glenny ***M&M,*** p. 39)

44 There is no death.

45 We shall see a pure river of the water of life. (Glenny ***M&M,*** p. 371)

Mankind will look at the sun through transparent crystal ***(Ghmy M&M,*** p. 371)

46 Among human vices he considered cowardice to be one of the worst.

51 ... glum and enigmatic old man, God, towered above them and winked (Glenny ***WG,*** p. 9- 10)

Sometimes you look at him and you turn cold (Glenny ***WG,*** p. 76)

Fear runs through you.

Such joy, such joy... (Glenny ***WG,*** p. 76)

52 "God is one, answered leshua. " I believe in Him."

"And you," the engineer appealed to heaven. "Have you heard what I've just said in all honesty?! Yes!" The engineer's long finger pointed at the sky. "Stop him! Stop him!! You're the more senior!"

54 "You must agree, I think, that the thread can only be cut by the one who has suspended it." (Glenny Mc&M, p. 35)

"So what," says He, " i f they don't believe in me? That's their business. It doesn't bother Me." (Glenny ***WG,*** p. 76)

"With Me you're all equal - all who fell on the field of battle." (Glenny ***WG,*** p. 76)

56 "I'm so happy for you, good bandit. Go forth and live!"

58 And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.

59 God will punish me for my sin.

KHLUDOV: Archbishop - abandoned by the Western European powers, stabbed in the back by the treacherous Poles, there is nothing left to us in this fearful hour but to call on the mercy of God.
ATHANASIUS; ***(realising that disaster has come)*** Lord have mercy!
C in C: Pray, Archbishop!
ATHANASIUS: ***(in front of the ikon of St. George)*** Why, almighty God, why? Why dost Thou send new tribulations upon Thy children, upon these warriors dedicated to Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ? The power of the Lord is with us. He blesseth the sword that smiteth the hosts of Midian...
The STATION MASTER***'sface, distorted withfear, peers from behind the glass partition.***
KHLUDOV: Excuse me for interrupting you, your Grace, but why bother God now? It's quite obvious that he gave us up long ago, (Milne, p. 171 - 172)

60 "O, how terribly Thou hast punished me" (Glenny PFG, p, 139)

A great test.

61 "Blessed is the Lord God," the barman muttered the beginning of the hymns. "The emperor Alexander Ill's fijr coat," sang out Father Ivan." Never worn, starting price - 100 roubles!"

"In the realms of reason there can be no proof for the existence of God."

"We don't have any need for this hypothesis"

62 "He existed, that's all there is to it." (Glenny McfeM, p. 25)

66 How sad, ye gods, how sad the world is at evening, how mysterious the mists over the swamps. You will know it when you have wandered astray in those mists, when you have suffered greatly before dying, when you have walked through the world carrying an unbearable burden. You know it too when you are weary and ready to leave this earth without regret; its mists, its swamps and its rivers; ready to give yourself into the arms of death with a light heart, knowing that death alone can comfort you. ***(Gletmy M&M,*** p. 426)

67 Lying in his coffin, Nai himself had taken on a distinctly more cheerful look (Glenny ***WG,*** p. 277)

68 Grim hatred, lively and bright.

Isn't it all the same - alive or dead!

71 The automatic pistol did not have a safety catch. But omnipotent God saved me from committing the sin.

72 "Wouldn't it be better to throw a party with that twenty-seven thousand and take poison and depart for the other world to the sound of violins, surrounded by lovely drunken girls and happy friends?... But we're day dreaming..." (Glenny Mc&M, p. 258)

76 "We are all guilty of the bloodshed." (Glenny ***WG,*** p. 283)

"I believe that Thou wilt hear my prayer. Thou wilt pardon me and cure me. Cure me. Oh Lord, forget about the filth I have written in a moment of insanity, when I was drunk on brandy and drugged with cocaine. Do not let me rot, and I swear I shall become a man again." (Glenny ***WG,*** p. 140)

78 Puffing and snorting, his eyes round with terror, Ivan Nikolaich began swimming in the black, oily-smelling water towards the shimmering zig-zags of the embankment light reflected in the water. (Glenny McW, p. 66)

89 KRAPELIN: Yes, if your bands hadn't played, you madman, half those men would be alive now! ***{suddenly looks around, shudders, stares, drops to his***

knees, whines pitifully). Oh, sir, forgive me, sir, I'm nobody, sir, just private Krapilin! I don't know what I've been saying, sir!
KHLUDOV: No! Too late. You began well, but you finished badly - on your knees. Hang him! I can't bear the sight of him.

91 He has paid his score and the account is closed (Glenny Mc&M, p. 427)

95 The demon of the waterless desert.

"he blamed no one for taking his life." (Glenny Mc&M, p. 346)

96 Damn them! If God does not punish then he is not a God of justice. Can it be possible that they won't answer for this? They'll answer. They'll suffer just as we have. They will.

"As a penance he was condemned to spend rather more time as a practical joker than he had bargained for. But tonight is one of those moments when accounts are settled." (Gleimy McfeM, p. 427)

97 "Beat him! Kill him!"
"Public enemy!"
"You let the snakes loose!"
Distorted faces and ripped clothing jumped through the corridor, and someone fired a shot. Sticks flashed. Persikov stepped back a little, barring the door to his office where Marya Stepanovna was kneeling on the floor in terror; and he spread out his arms, as one crucified... (Proffer)

Footnote 11: The insanity of the last few years has sent us down a dreadful road, and we will have no pause or respite. We have begun to drink from the cup of retribution, and we will drain it to the bottom (Curtis, p. 17)

98 They forgive you.

99 "The question concerns the transmigrafion of souls... In the 16th century you were a French Queen."

101 "Why don't you take him to yourself, to the light?"
"He has not earned light, he has earned rest," said the Levite sadly. (Glenny ***M&M,*** p. 406)

"a man will receive his deserts in accordance with his beliefs." (Glenny McfeA/, p. 311)

102 "You will never ascend to the heights. You will not hear Mass"

"You will never ascend higher. You will not see Eshua, you will never leave your refuge."

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