

Insert Name

Instructor

Class

Date

## The Struggle of Good and Evil in Bulgakov's "Master and Margarita"

### Overview

The beginning of the book begins with the entry of the devil into Moscow. The devil then causes all sorts of evil things in Moscow. Satan's evil mischiefs are so strong such that they affect a failed writer, who happens to be the Master. The Master's wife is also affected by the devil's evil misdeeds. At other evil events, the Master and Margarita show how the devil's acts of mischief cause confusion among the Muscovites. This is shown by retelling the story of one Pontius Pilate and the circumstances that led to the death of Yeshua-Ha-Notri (Chapter XVI). Pontius is used to represent the evil while Jesus is used to represent the good. The story is written in the communist Russia where the common citizen is highly oppressed. Many citizens are forced to live in the denial of the basic endeavors and truths. Any foreigner is also treated with a lot of distrust. Woland uses any pretense to propagate the dangers the communist regime has placed on the common life.

Throughout the Master and Margarita, the story revolves around telling the evil and the good and the existing competition between these two sides. While there is no point where the evil and the good engage in battle to win against one another, the different acts contained in the book show that theme of the book tries to strike a balance between the good and the evil. Satan, who is referred to as Woland in Moscow, punishes people for their stupidity, greed, in addition to placing people in

situations that will victimize their existence. Allegory is largely used in the text to represent various acts of good and evil.

Bulgakov uses symbolism to provide a description of dark and light. For instance, Bulgakov introduces the devil (Woland) through the darkness. The sun fades to give darkness. Equally, the idea of using darkness gives an idea of the devil's evil characteristics. On the other hand, the sun is used to demonstrate good intentions having to interfere with dishonest acts from Pontius Pilates. Bulgakov also uses Apartment 50 to symbolize the millions of lives lost during the Russian Communism. Apartment 50 provides a mockery to Stalin's insincerity due to his involvement in creating mass starvation that killed millions of people. Berlioz's and Styopa apartment are used to depict the residents who disappeared forever. Biblical allusions are also used in *the Master and Margarita* to represent evil and good. For instance, Pontius Pilate is a great biblical figure who is often used to mirror the devil's acts. Rose oil was used in the Bible as an anointment. Mary Magdalene used her hair to dry Jesus's feet after anointing it with rose oil. In *the Master and Margarita*, Pontius is revealed to hate the smell of rose oil hence symbolizing evil acts.

Satire is also used majorly in the book to convey evil and good acts. The Russian people suffered acts of oppression. In *the Master and Margarita*, the audience is treated to a satirical comedy in which the devil uses many forms to commit acts of misdeeds through his miscreants. The upper class and people ruling others are surrounded with general misfortunes. Evil is used to transform acts of the ruling to represent their true feelings. The lifestyles of the communist people are highly satirized in the novel. Many a people are not allowed to think on their own or take pride in their actions. Josef Stalin's regime made the Russian people to live in a

constant state of alertness. Stalin made life so difficult such that the citizens were forced to lead confused and disorderly lives. The Woland's Magic Show is also filled with greed.

Faithfulness and faith are also used to depict evil and good in *the Master and Margarita*. Margarita is the number fan of the Master. Theirs is the story of love and convictions. Margarita is devoted to the Master and does her best to ensure that the Master's potential is brought out clearly. Margarita herself is an excellent but neglected poet, and writes brilliantly. Throughout *the Master and Margarita*, Margarita gives her best to ensure that she maintains her desires. Margarita is depicted to being full of selfless love plays a significant role in getting involved between good and evil.

Concerning character, Pontius Pilate is depicted as a person who has the ability to choose between evil and good, and death and life (Chapter 2). Yeshua (Jesus) represents the good. For some reason, Pontius likes Yeshua and believes in his innocence. Pontius somehow believes that Caiaphas framed Yeshua. Pontius also believes that Caiaphas is an unscrupulous individual who is ready to use any evil means to destroy Pontius and that Caiaphas is amorally corrupt priest. Pontius chooses Yeshua because the choice was inescapable (Chapter II). This could have been due to cowardice and or bad faith. In this act, Pontius gives in to evils committed by Caiaphas (Glenny, last page, last paragraph). In a broader and more generalized explanation of this situation, a moment will come when mighty individuals characterized by insight, strength, and the fight for the good will fall into traps of agony and make decisions comparable to Pontius's (Chapter XVI).

Woland or the Devil is used to refer to different manifestations of the devil. In the *Master and Margarita*, Woland has a hand in the sudden disappearance of several lead characters. The deaths of Baron Meigel, and Berlioz Alexandrovich are acts of the devil. During Stalin's regime, perceived and potential enemies were eliminated. Woland is used to provide a resemblance to Stalin. In another part of the novel, the devil manifests himself as a magic trick. Woland's black magic uses Satan in masquerade to expose the bourgeois and greedy behavior of the spectators (Chapter XII). All other Woland's retinues are used to show different forms of evil. Goethe's *Faust and Faustian* devil.

In *the Master and Margarita*, being a foreigner was understood to be as being an evil act (Chapter I). Josef Stalin's used Socialism to obtain a strategy for isolating himself from the wider Soviet Union. Virtually, all countries were enemies of the Soviet Union. Sanctions had been put against the Russians making it difficult for the Russians to travel to foreign countries. Similarly, it was difficult for foreigners to enter the Soviet Union. For those who were lucky to get permission to enter the Soviet Union, special areas were designated for them. Similar measures were applied to foreign currencies because the export and import of the Soviet Currency were prohibited.

Throughout the novel, there is a notable interaction of innocence and guilt, Bad and good. In cases when the authority denies the existence of such interplays, examining such issues could bring us to the truth. Additionally, love a very dominant theme in this novel, the book entails a conflict of sensual impressions. In contrast, Nikolai Ivanovich who was Natasha's hog-broomstick demonstrates the stupidity of declining sensuality on the grounds of empty decency. The interchange of fire, destruction and water gives an exemplary accomplishment of events in the novel,

the entangling of events in the story is also enhanced by the existence of powerful polarities. Arguably, the devil is used as a common literary image in the novel. The devil is viewed as the enemy of God and that the devil is there to torment and trick. He makes pacts with people to sell their souls and raise armies against heaven.

Notably, every character in this novel is being faced with a situation where he or she has to make choices; these choices will determine the character's prospect on the basis of spiritual subsistence. From the book, the master forgets about Margarita and the novel and therefore he becomes Pilate's assistant in executing Jesus. He is therefore not worthy of light and he never meets Jesus, Woland passes a divine will to him, where he later receives it from Mathew Levi. The characters of the paralleled novel do not meet, since their bond is limited to the contact through messengers.

Some characters have comic choices rather than dramatic. For instance, Berlioz's uncle decides to live in Moscow, the only thing he puts into consideration the moment he receives the message about his nephew's death is to take the ownership of the apartment. The chairmen of the tenants, Nikanor Ivanovich take the foreigners' money. Other characters with comic choices include the crowd of women that chooses to change their dress as the show continues, a show that had been organized by Fagot and Behemoth. The punishment they persevere seems ridiculous, but this never meant that their bad actions could not be judged later at Ewigkeit. The fate of Berlioz is perceived as the most frightening warning, in his earthly life, Berlioz believes that there is nothing going on in the afterlife, Woland has therefore kept him into eternity in the ritual world. From the last scene of the novel, the idea that great masters are never lost and that manuscripts cannot burn is put forward. It is believed that they will become part of the eternal life.

Despite the mischief and havoc in the city, the situation brings happiness and peace to the unhappy and ill-fated couple the master and margarita. The master is seen to put much interest on the psychological and the political aspect of the Pilate and Christ. Margarita who was in love with the doomed writer was willing to sell his soul to the devil in order to save the master from his illness and misery. The fact that she had hope makes her fearless, to an extent of daring the devil.

From my own perspective based on the book, I do not think that Bulgakov had desire to undermine humanity, though most readers accuse him. In contrast to most people's philosophy, he wishes to re-establish in a country that had been disdain.

Work Cited

The Master and Margerita. Web.

<http://rt.com/all-about-russia/literature/mikhail-bulgakov/the-master-and-margarita/never-talk-to-strangers/>

Glenny, Michael. Existential Thought in Bulgakov's The Master ad Margarita. Web.

[http://www.masterandmargarita.eu/estore/pdf/emen022\\_glenny.pdf](http://www.masterandmargarita.eu/estore/pdf/emen022_glenny.pdf)