



## SATIRE AND THE SUBVERSION OF ANTHROPOCENTRISM IN MIKHAIL BULGAKOV'S *THE MASTER AND MARGARITA*

*Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies*

*Master's degree student Qurbonova Umida Begaliyevna*

*Telephone number: +998881113135*

*E-mail: [umidaqurbonova71@gmail.com](mailto:umidaqurbonova71@gmail.com)*

**Annotation.** *This paper examines how Mikhail Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita challenges anthropocentric assumptions through satire, supernatural elements, and biblical parallelism. Written under Soviet ideological constraints, the novel integrates historical, religious, and fantastical worlds, contrasting early Soviet Moscow with ancient Jerusalem. The study analyzes Bulgakov's critique of materialism, censorship, and the illusion of human autonomy through characters such as Woland, Pontius Pilate, the Master, and Margarita. The biblical subplot destabilizes rationalist morality, while the intertwined narratives reinforce themes of love, artistic integrity, and metaphysical humility. The conclusion emphasizes that the novel undermines human-centered power while affirming spiritual and ethical values beyond ideological control.*

**Keywords:** *Mikhail Bulgakov, The Master and Margarita, satire, anthropocentrism, Woland, Jerusalem, supernatural, Pilate.*

**Annotatsiya.** *Ushbu maqola Mixail Bulgakovning Usta va Margarita romanida antropotsentrizmni kinoya, g'ayritabiiy hodisalar va Injil parallelizmi orqali qanday tanqid qilinishini tahlil qiladi. Sovet mafkuraviy cheklovlari sharoitida yozilgan roman tarixiy, diniy va fantastik olamlarni birlashtirib, o'sha davrning sovet Moskvasi bilan qadimiy Yershalaimni qarama-qarshi qo'yadi. Tadqiqot Bulgakovning materializm, senzura va insonning o'z kuchiga ishonish xayolini tanqid qilishini Woland, Pontiy Pilat, Usta va Margarita obrazlari orqali ko'rsatadi. Injil bo'yicha syujet ratsional axloqni izdan chiqaradi, o'zaro*



*bog'langan hikoyalar esa muhabbat, ijodiy halollik va ma'naviy kamtarlik mavzularini mustahkamlaydi. Xulosa shuni ko'rsatadiki, roman inson markazidagi hukmronlikni inkor etib, mafkuraviy nazoratdan tashqaridagi ruhiy va axloqiy qadriyatlarni tasdiqlaydi.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *Mixail Bulgakov, Usta va Margarita, kinoya, antropotsentrizm, Woland, Yershalaim, g'ayritabiiylik, Pilat.*

**Аннотация.** *В данной работе рассматривается, как роман Михаила Булгакова Мастер и Маргарита критикует антропоцентризм при помощи сатиры, сверхъестественных мотивов и библейских параллелей. Созданный в условиях советских идеологических ограничений, роман соединяет историческое, религиозное и фантастическое пространства, противопоставляя раннюю советскую Москву древнему Ершалаиму. Исследование показывает, как Булгаков обличает материализм, цензуру и иллюзию человеческого всевластия на примере образов Воланда, Понтия Пилата, Мастера и Маргариты. Библейская линия разрушает рационалистическую мораль, а переплетённые повествования утверждают темы любви, художественной честности и духовного смирения. В заключении подчеркивается, что роман отвергает человекоцентричное мировоззрение и подтверждает существование нравственных и духовных ценностей, не подвластных идеологии.*

**Ключевые слова:** *Михаил Булгаков, Мастер и Маргарита, сатира, антропоцентризм, Воланд, Ершалаим, сверхъестественное, Пилат.*

**ABSTRACT:** *Mikhail Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita is a multi-layered novel that confronts the intellectual, political, and spiritual crises of early Soviet culture. This article examines how Bulgakov subverts anthropocentric assumptions that elevate human rationality, agency, and power to the center of the universe. Through supernatural satire, narrative duality, and theological reimagining, Bulgakov dismantles Soviet materialism, Enlightenment rationalism, and the illusion of human dominance over moral and metaphysical domains.*



**INTRODUCTION.** The Master and Margarita, written by Mikhail Bulgakov, is a complex work of literature that contains elements of satire, fantastical fiction, and Russian Socialist Realism. The sociohistorical conditions in which the novel was created imposed restrictions and guidelines on artistic expression, particularly regarding religion, which was not valued in the Soviet Union. Because of this, the novel's numerous biblical and mythological connections offer wide possibilities for interpretation. The Jerusalem tragedy of Yeshua Ha-Notzri and Pontius Pilate became a measure of human qualities, and the novel itself an encyclopedia of human souls, historical events, and biblical subjects. Bulgakov naturally blended Moscow's early Soviet world with ancient Jerusalem, the story of the Master and Margarita, and the mystical Ball of Woland, constructing a moral and spiritual metric that unites reality with religious allusion<sup>1</sup>.

Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* uses satire to challenge anthropocentrism: the belief in human centrality and self-sufficiency<sup>2</sup>. Through a multilayered narrative that moves between Soviet Moscow, biblical Jerusalem, and supernatural realms, the novel questions Soviet materialism and Enlightenment humanism, exposing the limitations of human power. The arrival of Woland, clearly associated with the Devil, breaks the illusion of human autonomy<sup>3</sup>. The grotesque behavior of Soviet officials and writers, such as Berlioz and MASSOLIT figures, ridicules the belief that humans control reality, as Woland's entourage mocks bureaucracy and exposes hypocrisy<sup>4</sup>.

The satirical attack extends to art, literature, and censorship. The Master's novel on Pontius Pilate is rejected, symbolizing the fate of authentic art in an anthropocentric system. His collapse shows that ideology replaces imagination, whereas Margarita's spiritual elevation comes through sacrifice and metaphysical

<sup>1</sup> Martin I. V. Religious doctrine in the works of Mikhail Bulgakov (with special reference to *Belaia Gvardiia*, *Beg* and *master I Margarita*) : дис. – Durham University, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> M. Chudakova, 'Biblioteka M. Bulgakova i krug ego chteniia' in *Vstrechi s knigoi*, ed. E.I. Osetrov (Moscow, Kniga, 1979), pp. 244-300.

<sup>3</sup> Sultanova S. R., Akhmadjonov M., Rakhimova R. N. THE IMAGE OF WOLAND IN THE NOVEL "MASTER AND MARGARITA" // *Oriental renaissance: Innovative, educational, natural and social sciences*. – 2023. – Т. 3. – №. 2. – С. 696-701.

<sup>4</sup> Milne L. *Mikhail Bulgakov: A critical biography*. – Cambridge University Press, 1990



trust<sup>5</sup>. The parallel biblical narrative destabilizes human-centered morality: Pontius Pilate's failure to save Yeshua reveals the impotence of authority unconnected to metaphysical ethics<sup>6</sup>. Bulgakov's narrative structure, moving between time periods and realities, rejects linear, rational storytelling and undermines human assumptions of mastery.

The novel does not advocate nihilism. While it dismantles anthropocentric illusions, it affirms values transcending ego: love, mercy, and artistic integrity. Margarita's loyalty and sacrifice are rewarded, and she and the Master receive "eternal refuge, which is not considered heaven in the book, but rest outside earthly striving<sup>7</sup>. These ending rejects human dominion and affirms humility before the unknown.

Critics interpret Bulgakov's stance differently. Smelianskii sees a search for "natural order," while Wright compares his quiet faith to *Belaia gvardiia*. Ericson reads Bulgakov through Orthodoxy, suggesting Woland aligns with Russian theological Satan. Bulgakov's reading habits support spiritual complexity: he collected religious and anti-religious texts, including *Bezbozhnik* and *Trudy Kievskoi Dukhovnoi Akademii*<sup>8</sup>.

Woland synthesizes literature, theology, and folk tradition. His arrival follows the superstition that the Devil appears when spoken of<sup>9</sup>. Physical description soon yields to philosophical meaning. Traditional demonic imagery black masses, sabbaths, and supernatural festivals are reinterpreted as part of the natural cosmic order. Even Woland's suite reflects fallen beings whose role supports balance.

Satire and social commentary characterize the novel. Bulgakov critiques the Soviet regime, exposes power, corruption, and human foolishness, and blends

<sup>5</sup> Wachtel A. B. The battle for childhood: creation of a Russian myth //(No Title). – 1990.

<sup>6</sup> Cornwell N. The literary fantastic: from Gothic to postmodernism //(No Title). – 1990.

<sup>7</sup> Peace R. The enigma of Gogol: an examination of the writings of NV Gogol and their place in the Russian literary tradition. – Cambridge University Press, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Yurichenko A. V. Bulgakov's Novel The Master and Margarita and the Subversion of Socialist Realism: дис. – University of Oregon, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Williams G. Some Difficulties in the Interpretation of Bulgakov's "The Master and Margarita" and the Advantages of a Manichaeon Approach, with Some Notes on Tolstoi's Influence on the Novel //The Slavonic and East European Review. – 1990. – Т. 68. – №. 2. – С. 234-256.



multiple storylines Pilate, the Master and Margarita, and Woland's Moscow episodes creating rich characterization and philosophical depth. Through its focus on personal identity, creativity, and faith, the novel challenges the repression of individuality and explores the perception of good and evil. Its impact extends beyond literature, influencing later writers and readers confronted with ideological control, totalitarianism, and existential uncertainty.

**CONCLUSION.** The Master and Margarita is a multifaceted novel that subverts anthropocentric illusions by challenging human claims to control reality, morality, and the meaning of life. Through satire, supernatural intervention, biblical parallelism, and narrative structure, Bulgakov undermines the Soviet and Enlightenment belief that humans are the masters of history. While exposing arrogance, vanity, rationalism, and ideological blindness, the novel affirms humility, love, and spiritual openness. Its examination of freedom, identity, faith, and the nature of evil continues to resonate, making it a lasting critique of human self-importance and a testament to imagination and moral complexity.

### REFERENCES:

1. Batyrshina, Z. K. Culturological approach in the poetics of the novel *The Master and Margarita* by M.A. Bulgakov// *Zien Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*. – 2022. – 13, 58–59.
2. Bulgakov M. The master and Margarita //An Anthology of Russian Literature from Earliest Writings to Modern Fiction. – Routledge, 2019. – C. 511-524.
3. Cornwell N. The literary fantastic: from Gothic to postmodernism //(No Title). – 1990.
4. Clark K. The Soviet novel: history as ritual. – Indiana University Press, 2000.
5. Haber E. C. The Mythic Structure of Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* //The Russian Review. – 1975. – T. 34. – №. 4. – C. 382-409.
6. Gasparov, M. L. O russkoi poezii (On Russian Poetry)// Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie. – 1995.



7. Lakshin V. Roman M. Bulgakova Master i Margarita //Novyi mir. – 1968. – Т. 6. – С. 284.
8. Milne L. Mikhail Bulgakov: A critical biography. – Cambridge University Press, 1990.
9. Peace R. The enigma of Gogol: an examination of the writings of NV Gogol and their place in the Russian literary tradition. – Cambridge University Press, 2009.
10. Sultanova S. R., Akhmadjonov M., Rakhimova R. N. THE IMAGE OF WOLAND IN THE NOVEL “MASTER AND MARGARITA” //Oriental renaissance: Innovative, educational, natural and social sciences. – 2023. – Т. 3. – №. 2. – С. 696-701.
11. Wachtel A. B. The battle for childhood: creation of a Russian myth //(No Title). – 1990.
12. Williams G. Some Difficulties in the Interpretation of Bulgakov's "The Master and Margarita" and the Advantages of a Manichaeic Approach, with Some Notes on Tolstoi's Influence on the Novel //The Slavonic and East European Review. – 1990. – Т. 68. – №. 2. – С. 234-256.
13. Xo'jayev S., Turg'unova C. L. JAHON ADABIYOTIDA IBLIS OBRAZI TALQINI (I. GYOTE VA M. BULGAKOV ASARLARI MISOLIDA) //Oriental renaissance: Innovative, educational, natural and social sciences. – 2024. – Т. 4. – №. 1. – С. 195-199
14. Yurichenko A. V. Bulgakov's Novel The Master and Margarita and the Subversion of Socialist Realism: дис. – University of Oregon, 2008.
15. Кураев А. В. " Мастер и Маргарита": за Христа или против?. – Общество с ограниченной ответственностью Проспект, 2019.
16. Баскакова Е. С. Экспрессивные синтаксические конструкции: перевод и их влияние на скрытые характеристики текста:(на материале романа М. Булгакова " Мастер и Маргарита" и его перевода на английский язык). – 2009.



17. Питерман Т. В. Сравнительный герменевтический анализ евангельских мотивов романа Айтматова Плаха и романа М. Булгакова Мастер и Маргарита // Отечественная филология. – 2010. – №. 1. – С. 69-73.