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The Role of the Holy Fool in Society as Portrayed in the Novels

Maidenhair and *The Master and Margarita*

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The Role of the Holy Fool in Society as Portrayed in the Novels,

Maidenhair and *The Master and Margarita*

by

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The Role of the Holy Fool in Society as Portrayed in the Novels

Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita

by

Lindsay Anne Shupala, M.A.
The University of Texas at Austin, 2014
SUPERVISOR: Thomas J. Garza

This thesis examines the role of holy fool in society in the Russian novels *Maidenhair* [*Венерин волос*] and *The Master and Margarita* [*Мастер и Маргарита*] by using Platonic philosophy from *The Republic*. This study relies heavily on the book *Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives,* edited by Priscilla Hunt and Svitlana Kobets, for its definition and background of the Eastern Orthodox holy fool. The point most discussed about the holy fool is the concept of the figure as a selfless, eccentric, and vagrant messenger between two groups of contrasting ideas and cultures. In addition, this thesis also looks at the journey of a figure towards becoming a holy fool and his or her effect on other individuals.

In *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita*, the holy fool serves as a guide for society and reveals the light and dark sides of the citizenry. Socratic dialectic assists in examining the purpose of the holy foolish characters in *Maidenhair* and *The Master and*

Margarita by highlighting the importance of integrating one's unique understanding of truth as the individual sees it in his or her own image, after one emerges from the dark cave as it is described in Plato's Allegory of the Cave. After leaving the cave of illusory reality and confronting ones past, patterns, and shadows, the characters in *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita* can achieve a calmer and more peaceful state of being. Thus, they attain the ability to help others by pointing to the light and dark traits within humanity, so that society can realize its individual truths. These two very different writers, Mikhail Bulgakov and Mikhail Shishkin, describe similar ideas on the examination of historical patterns and the preservation of words, thereby demonstrating the importance and timelessness of the enlightenment aspect of Russian literature through manuscripts.

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Chapter One: Introduction

> "It's not because I'm afraid of being laughed at – that's childish – but because I'm afraid that in slipping from the truth where one least ought to slip, I'll not only fall myself but also drag my friends down with me…I expect that it's a lesser fault to prove to be an unwilling murderer of someone than a deceiver about fine, good, and just things in laws..." (Plato *The Republic* 451a).

This thesis will compare specific qualities and features of Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* and Mikhail Shishkin's *Maidenhair*. Although the former is considered a fantastical work from the Stalinist era and the latter is a post-modern novel written twenty years after the fall of the Soviet Union, both stories provide similar messages about the importance of truth and the timelessness of love, which appear greater than the injustices of the tangible realm. Along with a close reading and a comparison of the two works, Platonic theory from *The Republic* will be applied in order to understand concepts, such as love and truth within *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita*.

Searching for the Truth

In Allan Bloom's translation of Plato's *The Republic,* Socrates hints that metaphysical crimes produce more detrimental consequences than those created by physical evils, such as murder. In *The Republic,* Socrates states his worries about "dragging" his friends down with him on a faulty path of lies. "I expect that it's a lesser fault to prove to be an unwilling murderer of someone than a deceiver about fine, good, and just things in laws..." (Plato *The Republic* 451a). Thus, the embodiment of Platonic philosophy in Socratic discourse from *The Republic* demonstrates that a person who performs the role of truth seeker plays a crucial role in helping society find

enlightenment. Therefore, any negative consequence resulting from a mistake will produce a much graver effect than an accidental murder. While death ends material existence, fraud causes the victim to lose his or her sense of character and life purpose. The listener's loss of understanding an individual truth and unique sense of virtue causes the person to stray from a path of self-enlightenment. According to Socrates, it is worse to claim knowledge of a higher truth and to lead someone astray, than to murder someone unintentionally (Plato *The Republic* 451a). In the former scenario, a student becomes a mindless vessel of false outsider beliefs, while in the latter, replication and brainwashing have never occurred, thus preserving the quality of a virtuous life. Therefore, the metaphysical consequences for a teacher-philosopher are greater those of a murderer. Within *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita*, the truth seekers present knowledge to their readers, which they gain from the work of their different professions. Their insights develop from personal experiences and unpredictable life circumstances, which they retell in dreamy flashbacks and situations that occur either out of a vacuum or a whimsical fairytale.

Additionally, this thesis will be exploring the ways in which truth seekers in *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita* discover intangible philosophies written within their personal records and their expressed knowledge of themselves in relation to their life circumstances. In *The Master and Margarita*, the truth seekers are disciples of the truth bearer, who embodies virtue and guides others on the path to enlightenment, and thereby resembles the Russian Eastern Orthodox holy fool. In support of the latter view, Svitlana Kobets provides a description of the holy fool in Russian historical and literary

context. She states that, "*Iurodstvo* (*iurodstvo Khrista radi*), or holy foolishness for Christ's sake," is unique to Eastern Orthodox ,"whose practitioners, *iurodivye Khrista radi*…feign madness in order to provide the public with spiritual guidance yet shun praise for their saintliness and attract abuse in imitation of the suffering Christ" (*Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives* 15).

In the article, "Lice in the Iron Cap: Holy Foolishness in Perspective," Kobets further explains that the physical manifestation of the holy fool originated in the early Middle Eastern monastic communities, while the first written record of such figures exists in the New Testament. Holy foolish behavior as the "hagiographical ideal" was carried over from the Byzantine Empire to medieval Russia. "It was in medieval and modern Russia that a holy fool's cult and impact on culture reached unprecedented scope and intensity" (*Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives* 15).

By influencing modern Russian culture, the phenomenon of the holy fool also heavily influenced Russian literature. The figure of the Russian Orthodox holy fool is characterized in religious hagiographical texts, such as the *Life of Archpriest Avvakum*, (*Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives* 16). As Russian literature became secular, the holy fool found its way into contemporary literature. Kobets' historical depiction and literary definition of the holy fool illustrate how the theme of the holy fool is embedded throughout Russian thought and literature. According to Kobets, the term *iurodivyi* developed between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when holy fools became "Russia's most popular canonized saints" (*Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives* s 16). The word was meant to describe the qualities of the secular behavior

that included "presumed hidden holiness, grotesque humiliation, [and] play-acting" (*Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives* 16). A few contemporary authors who created characters embodying this "subversive model" in their works include, Fedor Dostoevsky, Vasilii Rozanov, Venedikt Erofeev (*Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives* 16).

The Holy Fool in *The Master and Margarita* and *Maidenhair*

In *The Master and Margarita,* Yeshua stands as the prominent example of a holy fool due to his humility and peaceful, non-aggressive criticism of the Roman Empire by means of his discussion with Pontius Pilate of his knowledge from a higher truth. In contrast to Yeshua, the Master is a scholar and truth seeker, who sacrifices his worldly life for one of solitude in order to write the truth about Yeshua's crucifixion. Furthermore, the Master in Bulgakov's work serves as a monk, who searches for edification and enlightenment by becoming a student of the original holy fool.

Today, Mikhail Shishkin's post-modern work, *Maidenhair* marks the continuation of time, as the interrogator's questions and refugees' answers imitate a ticking clock and create a chronology for the interpreter's records. Similar to Bulgakov's main character the Master, the interpreter finds answers from studying recorded past events. The holy fool, an embodiment of love and truth, is reincarnated through the interpreter's notes and flashbacks of a particular masculine-looking school teacher. The female re-creation of the holy fool in Shishkin's work and its relation to Russian folklore and Platonic theory from *The Republic* will be discussed in greater detail, as will be similarly discussed the holy fool in Bulgakov's work.

Carrying the Torch

In the spirit of earthiness of Russian folklore, Mikhail Shishkin used a tree as a metaphor for the development of the various branches within the trunk of Russian literature (Shishkin). He stated that although only time can test the quality of an author's work, his own influences branch from the literature of Nikolai Gogol' and Vladimir Nabokov (Shishkin). Western reviewers and book sellers have stated that Shishkin is the next Gogol' or Dostoevsky (Shishkin). Others have drawn parallels between *Maidenhair* and the works of Chekhov and Tosltoy (Taplin "Russia's Best Kept Literary Secret"). This thesis will not be seeking to prove or disprove the measure of Shishkin's contribution to Russian literature, but instead it will contribute to the commentary of reviewers and literary critics by discussing the respect that Mikhail Shishkin and Mikhail Bulgakov share for Nikolai Gogol's efforts to write an edifying and inspirational message for society through fictional literature (Shishkin).

Mikhail Shishkin further explained that "only in the West is literature entertainment," and that historically in Russia, literature has not always served this purpose (Shishkin). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, capitalism allowed Russian writers to sell their work, and ultimately their souls, for money. While writing cheap quality writings to sell for income, novelists thought that they could construct a grand masterpiece on the side, as well (Shishkin). According to Shishkin, a writer should avoid this. In order to produce exemplary works, one must dedicate all focus on creating a single masterpiece. Similar to the Russian writers who sold themselves for fame and wealth to capitalist markets of vacillating public tastes, the Russian writers, journalists,

and historians of Bulgakov's time sold their artistic ideas to the State and its ideology. Because Bulgakov continued his political-satirical novel in poverty until death, he is regarded to have upheld the importance and power of the written word with the completion of his masterpiece, *The Master and Margarita*. Bulgakov hoped to earn a living through writing, even though his written truth conflicted with State ideology. Platonic theory in *The Republic* also upholds the importance of the truth, which is symbolized in Socrates' caution before publicly exploring an argument and attempting to do so without contradictions (Plato *The Republic* 451a). Discourse from *The Republic* ties together *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita* with its support for a thorough and honest discussion of the truth, which can be seen in these two works of Russian literature, despite the different eras in which they were composed.

Unlike previous reviews which have compared Mikhail Shishkin to his predecessors, this thesis will be focusing on the application of Platonic philosophy from *The Republic* in order to elucidate Shishkin's post-modern work, *Maidenhair*, and the work's place within Russian literature. Moreover, it is important to note that the Socratic dialogues have been previously applied to *The Master and Margarita*. For example, Ritta H. Pittman constructs parallels between Bulgakov's philosophies and Socrates' discussion in her book, *The Writer's Divided Self in Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita*, which will be examined in this thesis (Pittman 41-42, 52-53). However, this will be the first time that *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita* will be compared according to Platonic philosophy from *The Republic*.

Further reason for using *The Republic* in order to analyze *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita* is that Plato's description of Socratic dialectic contribute to the a canon of Western philosophical literature. Plato's work serves the single uncomplicated purpose of the truth seeker, who wishes to find truth from within oneself and not from a contemporary ideology existing within and imposed by his or her external environment. While truth is derived from within, the truth seeker finds the task easier if a guide points the way to an individualized path, even if it is not the exact route of the truth bearer. This relationship between student and teacher or leader and disciple is embodied in the holy fool and his followers and in the dedication to the search for the truth in the novels. This relationship is important because *The Republic* explains that one person's journey toward absolute goodness differs from another's based upon their separate obligations to society. Virtues of various professions are not universal because paths towards self-fulfillment are not universal. However, the novels provide the same message that the universal goodness of truth and love can be discovered along all paths and through exploring oneself, instead of taking the detour through a political ideology. Within this context, the symbolism of the characters' roles and responsibilities to society will be discussed in later chapters.

Furthermore, it is also important to note that Platonic characters have appeared within the course of Russian literature. For instance, Platon Karatayev of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is called a "fool," by Pierre Bezukhov due to his illiteracy and lack of a proper, analytical education. However the wealthy Pierre still holds Platon in high esteem and acknowledges that his peasant wisdom developed from experience is invaluable. This peasant soldier-philosopher loves neither war nor peace. His position as

prisoner of war embodies his balanced state, in which war and peace do not exist. For his humility and good nature in the face of life circumstances, Platon gains followers among the other upset and confused captives, including Pierre. In return, Platon loves his fellow inmates and enemy captors as brothers, thus embodying platonic love. In this way, Platon also matches Svitlana Kobets' definition of the "holy fool" in contemporary Russian literature. Not only does the prisoner turn the other cheek, but he appreciates life and believes in the innate goodness of others, even during wartime. Therefore, Platon in Lev Tolstoy's *War and Peace* resembles the holy fool and natural philosopher, proving that Platonic philosophy serves as a legitimate tool for providing insight into Russian literature.

Convenient for the purpose of this thesis, the reviewers have noted the similarities between Shishkin and Tolstoy. Another strong tie also lies between Bulgakov and Tolstoyan philosophy. Both authors suggest that the answer towards mastering oneself lies in the acceptance of fate. However, Tolstoy also believes in the realization of one's own predestined path, while Bulgakov stresses finding the truth within one's self in order to improve one's state of existence. Throughout *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita*, the characters in these works must adopt a similar philosophy to Tolstoy's message in *War and Peace*. One must accept their current stance in life or as the interpreter interprets "a strand in the wool" (Shishkin 71-83). If one is arrogant enough to believe that nothing else exists that is greater than material objects, one might experience a supernatural prank, as did many of the Muscovites in *The Master and Margarita*. Within these bodies of text, the concluding message seems to be that for a person to deny

his personal insights and present state of being is an act against nature and the existing truth.

Using Plato's *The Republic*

While Platonic philosophy in *The Republic* is useful in analyzing Russian literature, it is also a good fit for exploring the theme of the holy fool within *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita*. The preservation of *The Republic* through translations and present day lectures that discuss the creation and maintenance of a righteous republic, demonstrate that citizens are still interested and concerned about creating and maintaining an efficient, honest, and hardworking society. Just as a student needs a teacher's honesty or a writer needs an editor's critique, a society needs a holy fool who will offer insight to its rulers and people. According to Plato's Socrates, truth is the ultimate value to society. Although the holy fool cult developed well after the ancient Greeks, the figure of Christ fulfilled a duty to society through his spiritual teachings and social critiques of the Roman rulers. The works that will be examined in this thesis, and Svitlana Kobets' definition of the holy fool, show that not everyone can become a holy fool because of worldly attachments. However, one can greatly improve his or her life once he or she discovers his or her own path towards spiritual self-fulfillment, most likely with assistance from a holy fool.

Conclusion

Examination of the authors will be limited to the works, *The Master and Margarita* and *Maidenhair*, as opposed to each author's entire bibliography. *The Master and Margarita* stands as a culmination of Bulgakov's earlier work as made evident in

Edythe Haber's work *Mikhail Bulgakov, The Early Years*. Although Bulgakov's work came much earlier than *Maidenhair*, *The Master and Margarita* crosses genre boundaries (Pittman 1), making it a universal text that can be extremely versatile when discussing it in comparison to another work. The novel still stands on its own as it is a multifaceted masterpiece of political satire, historical fiction, spiritual enlightenment, and modern fairytale.

Similar to *The Master and Margarita*, the post-modern *Maidenhair* incorporates historical and social commentary. The way in which the plot emerges out of a vacuum gives the work a mystical mood that is comparable to the confusion that arises out of *The Master and Margarita.* Shishkin's dream-like sequences match Bulgakov's chaotic depiction of the creation of the early Soviet Union by an atheistic citizenry who have been led astray from an enlightened path of realizing their own truths in favor of an ideology. However the whimsical events experienced by both The Master and Shishkin's interpreter provide a similar understanding of an intangible truth that develops out of a vacuum in which time is irrelevant.

With reference to Plato's *Republic*, this thesis will add to the tree of Russian literature by demonstrating that *Maidenhair* shares literary themes and philosophical traits that exist within *The Master and Margarita*. Most importantly, this thesis will utilize Platonic philosophy from *The Republic* in order to demonstrate how the themes of love and truth in the works of *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita* are conveyed by the holy fool and his or her disciples in order to better society.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The purpose of this second chapter is to present and discuss the sources that are most relevant to this thesis. This chapter will examine previous reviews and research on Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* and Mikhail Shishkin's *Maidenhair*. It will provide supporting biographical information, demonstrating the embodiment of love and truth within the holy fool as viewed through a Platonic lens from *The Republic*. It will begin with a discussion of the historical and cultural contexts of the creation and publication of *The Master and Margarita* and *Maidenhair*. This chapter will further provide rationale for applying Platonic philosophy from *The Republic*, which was written in a Greek pagan society, to the literary works of authors from a society that has undergone dramatic shifts over the past century or more. It will demonstrate that Plato's Republic provides a unique lens for the examination of Russian works in spite of its rapid transition from an Eastern Orthodox Empire to a socialist-atheist society before once again becoming a society that accepts Christianity. Finally, this chapter will examine resources that aid in understanding and defining the holy fool. Many secondary sources on Bulgakov, Shishkin, the holy fool, and Russian history and culture are available in both English and Russian. Where quotes from *The Master and Margarita* and Maidenhair are relevant, they will be drawn directly from the original Russian language publication. Any translations from these works will be my own. In addition, any translations of quotes from secondary Russian sources used to analyze these texts will also be my own, unless it was previously cited and translated by earlier scholars for the purpose of their argument.

Existing translations of this nature will be reviewed for accuracy of translation prior to use.

Part 1. A Tale of Two Writers: Their Primary Texts and Publication Histories

Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* and Mikhail Shishkin's *Maidenhair* are the primary texts examined during the course of this thesis. According to Edythe Haber's *Mikhail Bulgakov, The Early Years,* Bulgakov frequently had the opportunity to emigrate or remain in Russia. Although the reasons for travelling and emigration differed at various points in the writer's life and career, the underlying theme of not abandoning familial and ethical responsibility are clearly evident and consistent in the Bulgakov's earlier and later works.

Much has been said about Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* by Russian and Western academics and this thesis will use Russian and English scholarly sources. The journey of composition and the road to publication for *The Master and Margarita* had many twists and turns. Bulgakov reportedly began burning manuscripts of his work as early as March 1930, along with some of his other works (Haber, 239). Bulgakov continued to write the novel throughout the 1930s, and by May 1939 the Epilogue of the novel was completed (Curtis 132).

> "One regrettably unverifiable source in Moscow has reported that when Buglakov began to read the novel to his friends *with* the Epilogue in 1939, he used to omit the last paragraph of chapter 32 from the work, and that it was Yelena Sergeyevna who preferred the earlier version and insisted that it should be put back for the publication of the novel in the 1960s," (Curtis 142).

The Master and Margarita was published in 1966-67, after his death in 1940 and more than two decades of "obscurity" (Haber 2). However, the majority of research on Bulgakov's life and works was not written until the 1980s. Stephen Lovell's article "Bulgakov as Soviet Culture," published in *The Slavonic and East European Review* in 1998 describes the underground culture surrounding *The Master and Margarita* in the latter period of the Soviet Union. "To begin with, Bulgakov's novel was an event largely restricted to the literary establishment and the intelligentsia; then, in the early 1980s, it was taken up by the popular imagination" (Lovell 48).

In the 1970s, "the Soviet reader" considered Bulgakov's works as belonging to a "cultural Other" that found itself grouped with Western literary works. These "Other" texts were of interest to the Soviet reader, but still presented an internal conflict with Soviet political ideology for him (Lovell 43). According to Lovell, the main theatrical adaption of *The Master and Margarita* occurred in the 1970s at the Taganka theater, when only 40,000 copies of the novel had been published in the Soviet Union" (Lovell 35). The very first application of the production of *The Master and Margarita* by the director Liubimov was rejected in 1972, but was later approved in 1975. However, a refusal of funding caused an aesthetic problem for the play, since Liubimov was forced to recycle props and stage pieces from previous plays to continue the production (Lovell 36). The period of glasnost' finally allowed the Bulgakov cult to come out into the open after having been "hidden or ignored" (Lovell 45-48). Liubimov's play "was revived in the 1980s under a different director, A. Vilkin," (Lovell 37). Beginning in 1983, members of the Bulgakov cult started to graffiti the stairwell of Bulgakov's old apartment on

Sadovoe kol'tso with characters from *The Master and Margarita*. By 1986, this graffiti became "regarded as an institution" and "a cultural landmark representing legitimate opinion," honoring the writer and his work (Lovell 45). Overcoming obstacles and being conveyed through various mediums, the timeless words of *The Master and Margarita* continue to survive after the Soviet period.

Research from Stephen Lovell's "Bulgakov as Soviet Culture" is cited in Maria Kisel's article "Feuilletons Don't Burn: Bulgakov's 'The Master and Margarita'" during her discussion of Soviet readership during the early Soviet period. Kisel explores Bulgakov's relationship with Soviet readers and writers throughout his literary career. However, her article also provides character analysis of the fictional writers and journalists in *The Master and Margarita* and their own fictional Soviet readership. In addition, Kisel's article explains Bulgakov's disdain for his early career as a Soviet journalist, as well as the reasons for burning manuscripts of the novel during its creation in the 1930s. These articles shed a colorful light on the creation and publication history of Bulgakov's text. They also dive into the intellectual aspects of the writer and his characters, and their roles in society. For the purpose of this thesis, publication history provides background for the writer and his work. It demonstrates how the novel persisted and was preserved by academics and Bulgakovites. Furthermore, it conveys the struggles that the author endured in order to have his voice heard by society and it describes the audience who paid attention.

Biographies on Bulgakov

Biographical and historical works that will be used in this thesis that pertain to the author's life during the writing of *The Master and Margarita* include Edythe Haber's *Mikhail Bulgakov: The Early Years*, J.A.E Curtis' *Bulgakov's Last Decade: The Writer as Hero*, *Manuscripts Don't Burn: Mikhail Bulgakov A Life in Letters and Diaries* translated by J.A.E. Curtis, and Lesley Milne's *Mikhail Bulgakov: A Critical Biography*. Although each of the four works contribute greatly to the composition of this thesis by providing information on Bulgakov's life during the early Soviet and Stalinist period, these four works are listed in order of most relevance for this thesis.

Edythe Haber's *Mikhail Bulgakov: The Early Years* also provides a wealth of information on Bulgakov's life. This thesis will explore Haber's analysis on the personal and ethical dilemmas that Bulgakov faced as a Soviet writer and citizen, such as the plight of the individual intellectual who needs to speak out for the benefit of society and the continuous theme of abandoning one's duty and resisting the change of the times. Many of these moral lessons confronted by Bulgakov during pre- and post-Revolutionary Ukraine and Russia are mirrored in many of his works, such as *The White Guard*, *A Country Doctor's Notebook*, and *The Master and Margarita*, which Haber explains more fully in detail. Edythe Haber thoroughly analyzes Bulgakov's earlier works *Bulgakov's Early Years* in order to demonstrate the influence his earlier compositions had on *The Master and Margarita*. Her work will provide a platform from which to discuss the intellectual monk and his relationship to the original holy fool. J.A.E. Curtis also explores the characteristics of the intellectual writer in Bulgakov's fictions and historical

plays in *Bulgakov's Last Decade: The Writer as Hero*. Curtis examines the influences that Moliere, Gogol', and Pushkin had on Bulgakov's work and philosophy and how his reenactments and historical fictions mirrored his ethics as a writer. Curtis discusses the pagan elements of *The Master and Margarita* that are used in conjunction with Christian religious symbols and allusions, which provides a strong and intriguing foundation for the holy fool manifestation, which will be explored in this thesis. Mikhail Bulgakov's letters and diaries, from *Manuscripts Don't Burn: Mikhail Bulgakov A Life in Letters and Diaries* published and translated by J.A.E Curtis will be used to provide insight into the creation of *The Master and Margarita*, as well as into the mind and personal sentiments of the novel's individualistic, intellectual creator. Lesley Milne's *Critical Biography* will provide biographical information and supporting analyses for all of Bulgakov's works during the early Soviet and Stalinist period, including *The Master and Margarita*.

Sketches of Shishkin

Similar to Bulgakov, Shishkin currently spends some of the year residing in Moscow, but spends another portion of his time in Switzerland (Shishkin). Mikhail Shishkin's most recent work *Maidenhair* blends together history, literature, and politics in order to describe an ethereal universe that is vacant of historical timelines and political borders. In *Maidenhair*, the only concepts that continue to survive within the immaterial vacuum are love and truth, which bond people together during times of calamity and stability. More has been said about Mikhail Shishkin in the course of Russian interviews about his earlier works. Although his work *Венерин волос* was published in Russia in 2005, the recent English translation of his work, *Maidenhair* by Open Letter Books on

October 23, 2012, and Shishkin came to debut the book in the United States in April, 2013. At a book release sponsored by Book People in Austin, Texas and during a lecture at the University of Texas at Austin, Shishkin made a distinction between *Венерин волос* and its translation, *Maidenhair*, by stating, "if you like this book, then you like Marian Schwartz's book," in order to mark the difference between original text and translation (Shishkin). His comment held the translator's craft in high esteem for struggling to translate the work in her own language. According to Shishkin, he has to "wrestle" with his own language in order to express his thoughts with clarity, and then Schwartz is left to "wrestle" with her language in delivering the right context, meaning, and message, being true to the word (Shishkin).

Most importantly, Shishkin came to the United States prior to declining his participation as a member in the Read Russia delegation to BookExpo America in New York, which he openly declined on February 27, 2013 out of political opposition to the Federal Agency for the Press and Mass Communications and the International Office of the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Center.

> "…I am simultaneously taking on the obligations of being a representative of a state whose policy I consider ruinous for the country and of an official system I reject. A country where power has been seized by a corrupt, criminal regime, where the state is a pyramid of thieves, where elections have become farce, where courts serve the authorities, not the law, where there are political prisoners, where the state television has become a prostitute, where packs of imposters pass insane laws that are returning everyone to the Middle Ages – such a country cannot be my Russia. I cannot and do not want to participate in an official Russian delegation representing that Russia" (The American Reader).

Although Shishkin understands that it is difficult to get into the English-language book market, he refuses to represent a government that suppresses and oppresses the

voices of its citizens (Roo 31). Recent interviews with Shishkin on his work provide information and insight into the author's political biases, reasons for writing, his sense of ethics, and the creation of his own work. In addition, book reviews from Russia and the United States will provide details about the general interpretation of his work as it reflects contemporary Russian culture. Very little has been written academically on any of Mikhail Shishkin's works in English or academically on *Maidenhair* in Russian and English, so book reviews and interviews with the author in both English and Russian will serve as primary research sources.

Since Shishkin is a contemporary writer whose work is currently being translated into English, many English sources that provide interviews and reviews on his work from the years 2010-2014 will come from internet sources with varying degrees of depth and quality, while less academic research has been written about the author and his texts. *The American Reader*, a monthly literary journal, published Shishkin's open letter and conducted an interview with the *Maidenhair* author on the topics of translation and the Read Russia delegation. Their interviews and articles on Mikhail Shishkin will be used in this thesis, as will the open letter which was given to them for publication. Other sources include interviews with *Publisher's Weekly* and from university newspapers, since Shishkin frequently travels to Western universities to present and give lectures. Some of the news sources that will be used may have a political bias and may base questions asked of the author upon their biases. However, because they interviewed Shishkin, they remain valuable sources of information. These interviews will only serve as assistance to the analysis of the text, with every effort made to limit the influence of the political

agenda of the publishers. In order to be true to Shishkin's text, this thesis will draw heavily from the original Russian text of *Maidenhair* and from his lectures at Book People in Austin and at the University of Texas at Austin, which the author of this thesis attended personally.

Part 2. Demons and Holy Fools,
Why use Platonic Philosophy from *The Republic*?

Riitta H. Pittman's publication *The Writer's Divided Self in Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita* provides biographical information on Mikhail Bulgakov, which will be used in addition to the research conducted by Bulgakov specialists Edythe Haber, Leslie Milne, and J.A.E Curtis. As stated earlier in the introduction, Pittman discusses parallels between characters in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* with the philosophies and experiences of Socrates, as recorded by Plato, Xenophon, and Plutarch. Socrates' isolated interactions with demons and Bulgakov's "[arrival] at presenting the devil as a 'dream'," provide a transcendental quality in the attainment of the truth in *The Master and Margarita* (Pittman 52). Examples from Pittman mirror the moment that Christ consciously decides to enter the wilderness alone to fast and connect spiritually. On the fortieth day, Jesus interacts with Satan and is presented with temptations, all of which he succeeds in denying (*The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Matthew 4:1-11). Unlike the Biblical Satan however, Pittman states that "the demon appeared to Socrates as a tangible being, who delivered expedient messages and had a purpose of beneficial inspiration" (Pittman 52). Socrates' demonic interaction therefore is much more like Bulgakov's Woland, who also delivers messages to truth bearers. Woland's activities

inevitably unmask the hypocrisy of influential Soviet leaders and figures because their actions are on equal footing with darkness, while going against the truth, which rules Yeshua's Kingdom in *The Master and Margarita*.

J.A.E Curtis provides an excellent insight into the reason why Woland's communication might be beneficial for Bulgakov's characters living in Soviet society. Just as Socrates viewed demonic communication in a sacred, beneficial light, Curtis quotes M.A. Orlov's work *Istoriya snosheniy cheloveka d'yavolom* from 1904, which further explains the pagan perspective of demons and the relationships between people and demonic spirits. Many of these interactions that Orlov records from folklore, parallel the communication that takes place between Woland and the atheist Muscovites.

> "The pagan not only believed in the existence of the malevolent spirit, but also served him. The evil deity was just as much a deity for him as the good spirit. What's more, there was no need for him to concern himself and make such special efforts with the good deity. Evil gods were another matter. They have to be persuaded to be well disposed towards you, otherwise all you can expect from them is malice and harm" (Curtis, 171-172).

In 1987, the year in which *Bulgakov's Last Decade* was published, few scholars had examined Woland in a beneficial light. In fact, Curtis states that the notion of Woland having a positive impact on the narration of the story had been "widely disregarded" (Curtis, 172). By 2003, Peter Georges Larson completed his doctoral dissertation titled "Functions of Woland in Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*." His study expands upon the role of Woland in the story and his association with Yeshua, a figure of light and Kingdom of Truth and will be used in the course of this thesis. Today, Russian literary academics consider Woland to be in service to the truth and to the light, however very little information exists on considering Woland as an evil

pagan god. If one views Woland as a kind of demon who might appear in tangible form before Socrates, one makes this character into an entity worthwhile of standing alone with a sense of self and purpose, rather than a malicious being who simply exists to mislead the living from the light. In *The Master and Margarita* both light and darkness stand on equal footing. Therefore, the pagan origins of truth revealing within *The Master and Margarita* should be explored. This thesis will do so through a Socratic lens from Plato's work in *The Republic*.

Truth Seekers in Russian Orthodoxy and Greek Paganism

According to *Bulgakov's Last Decade*, views expressed in "certain émigré publications," such as *Novy zhurnal* and *Vestnik russkogo khristianskogo dvizheniya*, find that "Woland should be interpreted strictly in the Christian tradition as the source of all evil; it has even been maintained that Woland should be held responsible for all the Master's trials and troubles" (Curtis, 172). This thesis will consider these publications, which might stand as conservatively Russian Orthodox in origin. This thesis will use Curtis' insight of Orlov's original Russian text to provide insight on the role of Bulgakov's Woland in Soviet society. In doing so, this thesis will discuss the pagan and Christian influences within Bulgakov's work as they relate to the Platonic notion of truth that is described in *The Republic*.

Russian Orthodox hagiographies, such as the *Life of Feodosij* and *Isaakii of the Kiev Caves Monastery* further demonstrate that the interaction between truth seekers and demonic beings as evil. It seems that the interactions that the Orthodox monks have with demonic presences as represented in the hagiographies are of an essence evil. While the

hagiographies demonstrate infernal communication resulting in malevolent mischief or demonic possession, Socrates' interactions with demons are shown to have produced benevolent results. This might be the result of a Greek pagan cultural and religious influence. Despite the difference in tradition, both Socrates and early Russian saints primarily represent truth seekers, even if the truth seeker must be unmasked in preparation for discovering the truth. Kobets and other scholars discuss the kenosis quality of the holy fool, in the book *Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives*. According to this process, the holy fool empties his body to become a vehicle for Christ to speak. Hagiographies in both contemporary Russian and in English translation will be used for this thesis in order to understand the path that one needs to live in order to follow the path of light, according to Russian Orthodoxy. Scholarship on the holy fool will provide additional insight into the lives of saints and holy fools from the Russian Orthodox tradition. *Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives*, edited by Priscilla Hunt and Svitlana Kobets, will provide a solid foundation of information for interpreting the holy foolish qualities of the canonical saints in *The Primary Chronicles*.

Since Soviet citizens in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* are not Yeshua himself, they cannot be the original holy fool. However, followers of truth may live a life similar to the one of Yeshua, and thus be able to have access to the other world. In *The Master and Margarita*, those whom Woland favors will receive insight into the celestial realm of truth. Those who veil the truth, however, will in turn be unveiled. Therefore, an earthly Muscovite citizen will receive reciprocate information of equal honesty, depending upon his or her relationship with and favor from the other beings from any

realm within Yeshua's Kingdom of Truth. Furthermore, the application of Socratic dialogue, as expressed in Plato's *The Republic* in the quest for truth is in alignment with Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita.* The development of Soviet society relies on the truth of a person, just as Socrates requires his dinner guests to express their concerns honestly in *The Republic*, as they construct a new hypothetical society from scratch.

So the question remains, why use Socratic dialogue from *The Republic* if Christianity did not exist in Ancient Greece? Issues particularly related to truth and the relationship between teacher and disciple play a prevalent role in *The Master and Margarita* as well as in Plato's *Republic*. In each of the texts, the relationship and words between teacher and student stand on an equal level of importance as one discovers his or her own path towards internal truth. Still, companions of Socrates transcribe his words, just as the disciple Matthew recorded Christ's parables in the New Testament. Bulgakov depicts this in *The Master and Margarita* when Matvei records his own account of Yeshua's journey to Yershalaim.

The Gospel Matthew will be used in this thesis in order to understand the construction of *The Master and Margarita* and is meant to support the use of Socratic dialogue in *The Republic* as a literary theory for this thesis, since the relationship between teacher and disciple is a theme in both Plato's *The Republic* and in *The Master and Margarita*. In the end, whether one speaks to angels or demons in the Russian Orthodox hagiographies or in the philosophies from Ancient Greece, or whether one aligns oneself with light or darkness in *The Master and Margarita,* figures must communicate with beings from Yeshua's Kingdom in order to catch a glimpse of the truth. Pittman's work,

the Gospel of Matthew, and the Russian Orthodox hagiographies will serve as a large component in analyzing the role of the holy fool in *The Master and Margarita*.

Socrates Can't Live in the Soviet Union

Another question, why use an idealistic philosophy to examine a literary work if it was created in an atheist and materialistic society? Truth is needed to construct a strong foundation for a new society, so that the desire to make the ideal a reality can materialistically occur. According to Eugene Kaminska, in the article "Philosophy in the Soviet Union":

> "The striking thing about the Russian philosophical thinkers preceding the Bolshevik revolution and the literary figures related to them is their preoccupation with uniting the 'real' and the 'ideal', a strong *Platonic* strain which made Russian intellectuals especially prone to various forms of Hegelianism and to Marxism" (Kaminska 12).

This article will be used to add further detail about Soviet state philosophy. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* by Stephen Kotkin pairs nicely with Kaminska's study, by providing insight into an understanding of the zeal from the philosophical political elite in creating a utopia on Earth, which "spoke the language of science" (Kotkin 13, 225). Kotkin depicts the development of Bolshevik life, culture, and speech at Magnitogorsk. He explains the hardships people endured and the Bolshevik language they developed to gain privileges and reinforce their beliefs. He translates the language and explains the ideology they attempted to adopt.

Magnetic Mountain examines "the dream socialist city" Magnitogorsk as "a microcosm of the Soviet Union during the building of socialism" (Kotkin 122, 144), in which migrants moved to barracks in order to learn how to work, how to interpret state

ideological philosophy, and how to speak Bolshevik (Kotkin 198). The loyalty to philosophy and respect for rulers almost mirrors the hierarchal position of the hypothetical philosopher kings in *The Republic*. The issue of wearing masks and speaking "Bolshevik" is relevant to *The Master and Margarita* as this novel introduces writers and pagan-Christian figures who tear the masks off atheist, indoctrinated Soviet citizens, in an effort to wake them up to a real, eternal truth within themselves. In *The Republic*, a sense of political indoctrination is never so prevalent since Socrates and his dinner guests always remain in contact with their own truths and question each other as they imagine the new society. However, disagreement with the political elite could never occur in the Soviet Union, as demonstrated by Kotkin's study. Other historical sources which will be used to discuss the oppression and denunciations of the accused citizens of the Soviet Union include *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1930-1939* by J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, Sheila Fitzpatrick's *Russian Revolution* and *Everyday Stalinism, Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, Vladisalv Zubok's *Zhivago's Children*, and *Stalin, The First In-Depth Biography Based on Explosive New Documents from Russia's Secret Archives* by Edvard Radzinsky. Radzinsky's book in particular describes the relationship between Stalin and Bulgakov through archival research and interviews between with Yelena Sergeyvna Bulgakova conducted by the author himself, which will mainly be used in the course of this thesis.

The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1930-1939 by J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov expand on the political culture surrounding Stalin

by arguing that the elite purged members of their own class who voiced opposition in order to preserve the legitimacy of their status and privilege of rank, thereby creating an unpaved "Road to Terror." The *Road to Terror* provides a political historical context for the Muscovite environment in which *The Master and Margarita* was written. Most importantly, this novel explains the lives of the politicians, the philosophy in which they believed and the masks and lies that they wore in order to preserve a "Republic" which they created. Although Stalin's conflicting nature perpetuated the Kremlin's silently chaotic atmosphere, the authors created and carried a cohesive argument that targeted the elite's self-interests as producing the Great Purges and explain why Stalin was not solely responsible for the Great Terror. Through trial manuscripts and personal documents, the authors prove the elite's willingness to preserve their rank and privileges by any means necessary. Although Stalin's conflicting nature created a dark atmosphere that hovered over Moscow, the authors clearly point to the self-interested behavior of the elites, which created the Great Purges and are mirrored in Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*.

While Getty and Naumov discuss elitist culture in Stalnist Russia, Fitzpatrick depicts the life of ordinary people in her book *Everyday Stalinism, Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. She examines how people hid behind masks and formed connections for survival, demonstrating duality existed in the Soviet Union. Fitzpatrick gives an account of the extreme conditions that ordinary people had to endure and adapt to under the Stalinist Regime. Throughout each chapter, Fitzpatrick points out the hypocrisy and duality that people unquestioningly endured in their daily lives. By using personal letters and anecdotes, newspapers, and statistics, Fitzpatrick puts

forth a compelling study of the, "*Homo Sovieticus*," or the Soviet citizen, who found ways to survive under the repressive regime.

As explained by the historian in her book *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, the Soviet government urged writers and artists, "to cultivate a sense of 'socialist realism' – seeing life as it was becoming rather than life as it was – rather than a literal or 'naturalistic' realism'" (Fitzpatrick 9). According to Fitzpatrick, socialist realism became "a Stalinist mentalité, not just an artistic style," in which "ordinary citizens also developed the ability to see things as they were becoming and ought to be, rather than as they were" (Fitzpatrick 9). If a writer and scholar, such as the Master is to express his honest interpretation of the truth, Fitzpatrick's study of citizens living under socialist realism demonstrates the Master's dilemma and explains why an indoctrination will not allow one to live their own truth. It is under this mentality and within this cultural climate that Bulgakov wrote his requiem, *The Master and Margarita*.

From the research that will be further examined later in this thesis, it can be concluded that Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* proved a grave danger to the state that required a citizen's utmost allegiance. The novel's inclusion of a holy fool and a devil, its allusions to Western artistic and literary tradition, and its satirical criticism of societal behavior and conditions, and its examination of proper leadership offered perspectives that differed from the Soviet communist party line. Just as contemporary Russian art and culture relates to the Russian social and political climate of the day,

Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, a fantastical, multifaceted fiction sheds light on the reality of the plight of the Soviet people.

Gender Roles in the New Republic

In addition, *The Master and Margarita* comments on the issues arising in the blooming Soviet society, albeit in a fictional and satirical light. This thesis intends to examine the survival of the real themes of truth and love in the embodiment of the holy fool and his disciples as the novel's characters exist in an oppressive republic. This thesis will also consult historical sources relating to the roles of women in the early Soviet period. This thesis will apply Plato's definition of the roles of men and women according to their respectable positions in society in order to create a just utopia on earth. This thesis will view gender roles in *The Master and Margarita* with Platonic philosophy from *The Republic* in order to interpret Bulgakov's message on the honest role of women in society as it pertains to earthly and celestial realms.

In addition to looking at these works through a Platonic lens, this thesis will compare *Maidenhair* to *The Master and Margarita*, while considering the current social, political, and cultural influence that Socialist Realism had on Bulgakov's work as a backdrop for understanding the text. Most importantly, for the discussion of this thesis is the role of women in the new Soviet society during the New Economic Period of the 1920s, in which small, private businesses functioned. According to Fitzpatrick, "The interval of the NEP allowed the working class to re-form, and other social structures also started to solidify" (Fitzpatrick 11). During the late 1930s, when Bulgakov was writing *The Master and Margarita* a woman's movement known as the *Obshchestvennitsa*,

which was meant to encourage women to work. However, even within this movement to make the ideal a reality, "There was a gulf between the elite women…and the ordinary working women, or even the wives of ordinary workers, and it was not only social but also ideological. For elite wives, duty to husband and family and the task of homemaking were seen as paramount, particularly in the early stage of the movement" (Fitzpatrick 162).

As stated by Edythe Haber, Bulgakov considered himself a family man 'with principles' and with more "traditional aesthetic tastes" (Haber 143). Thus, both Bulgakov and his character, Margarita, seemed more aligned with the elite wives and pre-revolutionary ideas of how to live. Margarita is a character who "takes upon herself the traditional female role connected with caring and domesticity" (Pittman, 133). By noticing gender roles in *The Master and Margarita* and their relationship to the holy fool in society, this thesis will explore how love and truth is purveyed in Bulgakov's novel and how these characters may play a beneficial role for the new socialist republic.

Part 3. The New Republic's Holy Fool

Mikhail Shishkin's *Maidenhair*, on the other hand, has been viewed and discussed by many academics and book reviewers through a postmodern lens. Many of the interviews and book reviews listed previously in Part 1 of the Literature Review can attest to this notion. This thesis will not disprove these perspectives, but will simply compare *Maidenhair* to *The Master and Margarita*. In addition, this thesis differs from the general, popular consensus since it will be using Platonic philosophy from *The Republic* in order to view and connect *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita*, and it

will not attempt to emphasize any genre classification for either literary work. As stated in the introduction, Pittman wrote that *The Master and Margarita* cannot fit neatly into any fictional genre, which can allow Bulgakov's text to interest a wide-range of readership today. Since *Maidenhair* is being compared to a multi-genre text, *Maidenhair* will also be discussed in terms of crossing multiple genres. The various links to multiple Russian writers of different literary periods and genres today indicates the novel's universal and timeless qualities. Perhaps a factor that makes these novels stand as classic works of Russian literature is their traditional discussion of psychology, history, and spirituality.

Maidenhair, The Master and Margarita, and the Holy Fool

During Shishkin's discussion of *Maidenhair* at Book People, Shishkin mentioned Nikolai Gogol's troika from *Dead Souls*. He stated that Russia was being pulled by a troika then, but "now Russia is on a train…At one point there is a dictatorship and at the other there is revolution and chaos." The train that Shishkin described continues to travel back and forth. According to him, Putin is already a prisoner in the Kremlin. If he steps down he will go to prison and then that will be it. If Putin had given the presidential seat to the Oppositionists, he would have had a way out of the Kremlin, but he refused (Shishkin).

According to J.A.E. Curtis' work *Bulgakov's Last Decade*, Bulgakov also respected Nikolai Gogol and considered Gogol to be his 'great teacher' (Curtis 111). When he was nine years old, Bulgakov "first read *Dead Souls* by his favorite writer, Nikolai Gogol." He considered it, "an adventure novel" (Haber 12). "Later [Bulgakov]

combined an interest in the Russian satirist, Saltykov-Shchedrin, with one of the American writer of adventure tales, James Fenimore Cooper" (Haber 12). These early readings taught Bulgakov a mix of satirical and adventure genres at an early age, which affected his writings and behavior, even then (Haber 12-13).

Therefore, both writers carry the literary tradition of Gogol through social commentary and description of the natural environment as it pertains to the characters' transformations. Robin Aizelwood's analysis of contemporary literature and folkloric metaphors in "Leskov's 'Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezdf': Composition and Symbolic Framework" is important in understanding the meaning of gender roles and the changing of seasons and water in Shishkin's *Maidenhair*. Like water, these characters are shape shifters as they transition through time. Although Aizelwood, wrote her piece on Leskov's *Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezdf* or *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsenskii District*, her article provides excellent definitions and analysis of Russian folkloric literary motifs which relate to themes in *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita*, even though these stories were created long after the literary genres of the nineteenth century.

The Current World

In *Maidenhair*, definitive roles for men and women do not exist in the asylum, as is demonstrated by the routine procedure that Peter uses to address each GS petitioner when they request asylum in Switzerland. In addition, the importance of gender is diminished by the appearances of the mannish-female school teacher, who visits the interpreter as a dream or vision in order to deliver philosophical messages during various transition points in the interpreter's life. A political background of Russia will not serve

as a research focus for Shishkin's work on *Maidenhair*, but as a backdrop for discussing Shishkin's work as it correlates to Russia's contemporary social climate. The focus of this thesis will center on the themes of love and truth within his work as they are embodied by the holy fool, and relate Shishkin's holy fool to the Russian literary tradition and to reflections from the novel *The Master and Margarita*. This thesis also argues that Shishkin's multi-genre work comments on society and human nature alone and will bring support to this point novel's message on humanity through a Platonic lens.

The Holy Fool

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss the quest for love and truth within human nature, as it is expressed by male and female citizens and is embodied by the holy fool, who serves as a critic of society. It is certain that both truth revealing and truth finding go hand in hand. This thesis will focus on the transcendental purposes of the revealing the truth and the holy fool or benefactor who unmasks lies. It will also examine the relationship between the truth revealer and society and society's leader. This thesis will explore these questions through a Platonic lens as they exist within *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita* and relate to the themes of truth and love expressed by the holy fool and his or her disciples.

Works that pertain to the holy fool and Russian pagan and Christian spirituality are primarily written by Svitlana Kobets. Kobets provides a wealth of information with her website slavdom.com and allows readers to browse through academic articles on the holy fool in Russian literary and cultural context. Svitlana Kobets website on holy foolishness have contributed to this thesis by providing detailed reviews over literary,

historical, cultural studies from previous scholars, both in the West and in the Eastern hemisphere. By piecing together different scholarly texts, Kobets paints a specific picture of the Russian Holy Fool is different from pious and figures further West and East of Russia. Another work edited by Priscilla Hunt and Svitlana Kobets *Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives*, is a compilation of scholarship on the holy fool as it pertains to Russian history, literature, and culture. Many articles from Kobets website are included in this book as are other texts.

Second, holy fool hagiographies will also be used as background knowledge, since these hagiographies teaches readers how the holy fool finds his place in society. Many of these hagiographies, such as "The Life of Feodosij" by Nestor from the Primary Chronicles and translated by Paul Hollingsworth in his book, *The Hagiography of Kievan Rus'* served as a reference point for understanding the spiritual journeys of recognized holy fool, who went through the various stages of development from an ordinary human being to an enlightened monk. Since this thesis considers both the Master and the interpreter as metaphorical monks, who aspire toward a higher, immaterial ideal, these hagiographies serve as a measure of comparison.

For the purpose of analyzing the holy fool in *The Master and Margarita* pagan interaction of truth seekers with demonic characters is crucial. In addition, the interpreter who experiences visions and confusion must also interact with uncomfortable memories from the past and present in order to better understand the future. Indeed, life is a shape shifter that can change from light to dark. Therefore, it only makes sense that the person who connects to the intangible realm of truth must also embody light and dark. As

demonstrated by Socrates and in the hagiographies, one must confront their demons before one can attain a realm of universal truth.

Chapter Three: Shishkin's Style

> "I'll never forget the first time I wanted to profess my love to a certain girl, I opened my mouth, and I understood that the world did not have these words that could express what I felt. Everything real, everything important that happens with us is beyond words that could express what I felt. Words are traitors. Not a single one is to be trusted." – Mikhail Shishkin (Gorski 40).

The writer's message and the readers' interpretation are crucial for Shishkin because words are easily misread, misinterpreted, and misunderstood. According to Shishkin, words are already dead, and it is the writer's job to revive them (Gorski 40). At a discussion in the bookstore, Book People, Shishkin said that his translator, Marian Schwartz, has to fight with her own language in order to express the ideas that she gathered from his work, *Венерин волос* (*Maidenhair*) into English, almost producing a new work. In jest, Shishkin stated that if readers like *Maidenhair*, then they enjoy Marian Schwartz's novel, but if readers like *Венерин волос*, then they enjoy his book (Shishkin). Still, Shishkin's joke demonstrates a unique respect for the literary translator, who works to preserve the original idea in her target language, while narrating the story through specific, creative word choice. For the Russian novel, Shishkin acts as the first voice for the multiple narrators with diverse experiences in *Венерин волос*. While his "words pave the way" (Shishkin) for readers to empathize with the characters, Shishkin is the first person who comprehends the ideas and experiences during the narration.

It is nearly impossible to have an intelligible overlapping of words without having a conversation sound as if everyone is interrupting each other. Shishkin's multiple narrators converse with and over each other across time and space through the recollection of memories, artifacts, letters, and diaries. At the University of Texas at

Austin, Shishkin jokingly confessed his envy of musicians for being able to affect people without distancing themselves from them with words, which can alienate people from one another as they struggle to express intangible emotions (Shishkin). A series of instruments can discuss a topic by producing a multitude of images and emotions simultaneously and harmoniously in order to create one universal picture. In contrast, Shishkin's characters play in harmony and dissonance through interviews and interrogations in which their ideas merge or battle each other in dialogue.

In the case of both intricate music and elaboration of imagery, the listeners or readers can be taken to a different time and place within the artist's or one's own version of subconscious reality. However, a writer must intellectualize emotions into intelligible words, while the musician can use notes to create an audible picture that moves listeners and helps them to travel to revisit destinations and reunite with past relations. Unfortunately, in order to avoid ambiguity, a writer must abide by proper sentence structure in order to convey his message about human nature throughout time. Although bound by linguistics, particular word choice is the writer's way of choosing musical notes for his story. Shishkin composes his piece with dream sequences of fantastical images that allow readers to find individual meanings, memories, and perspectives in relation to the images. As a communicator, Shishkin simply describes symbols and patterns, rather than forcing the receiver to interpret anything in a specific way. In *Maidenhair* or *Венерин волос*, the interpreter serves as a holy fool, who serves as a guide or instrument for the explanation of an eternal truth. This chapter will examine how these truths are reflected in nature in *Maidenhair* through water and seasonal motifs. However, like Ivan

Bezdomny and Margarita, the princess frog develops her own epiphanies through connections to people and to nature, and becomes a natural holy fool. Although *Maidenhair* is not political satire, Shishkin similarly links the ancient with the present and the surreal with the mundane. His words allow readers to travel between the past and the present and the internal and external realms of the characters' psyche, which conveys various messages about society and human nature.

The Flow of Words

According to Shishkin, words alienate people from one another. Once an emotion is verbalized, a piece of its force and meaning is lost (Shishkin). Even if an audience can relate to a person or situation because of past experiences, the listeners will process the ideas through individual knowledge, which creates a barrier to understanding the narrator's personal experience. While interpreters remain true to the original ideas, they have no control over how the audience will internalize a message. An example of this can be seen in Shishkin's interpreter who restates the refugee applicants' stories and requests for asylum. The interpreter struggles with the petitioner's confusion and seeks clarity in their pleading or trauma.

> "I agonize, trying to sort out what he's gushing about, while Peter [the interrogator], still at his desk, is laying out pencils and toothpicks in a row, as if on parade, as if he were the desk marshal reviewing a parade. We're on the clock. No one is in any hurry. Peter likes order. And this GS is muttering something about open sesame and shouting for someone to get the door. He's babbling about white circles on gates, then red ones. He starts assuring us that he was sitting by himself in the wineskin, not touching anyone, not bothering anyone, but he got the boiling oil treatment" (Shishkin 15).
>
> "Я мучалось, пытаюсь разобраться, что он там квохчет, а Петр все на своем столе выравнивает, чтобы как на параде, вроде как он начальник стола – принимает парад карандашей и зубочисток. Время-то казенное. Никто не

> торопится. Петр порядок любит. А этот GS бормочет про какой-то сим-сим, кричит, чтобы открыли дверь Лепечет про какие-то белые кружки на воротах, потом красные. Начинает уверять, что сидел себе в бурдюке и никого не трогал, никому не мешал, а кипящим маслом" (Shishkin 393-394).

The interpreter cannot ethically add or analyze information before delivering the message in order to make it comprehensible. Meanwhile, the interrogator Peter Fischer lines up toothpicks up in a row, as though they were on "parade," but also as though they were contributing to a bullet point list of his mental process regarding the applicant's claims. In the midst of the petitioner's incoherency, the interpreter desperately searches for an already spoken meaning that he can ethically communicate without evaluation or judgment.

> "…All that's necessary to refuse the rogue is to find discrepancies in his statements. Peter gets a little book off his caseload shelf and things start moving" (Shishkin 15).
>
> "А чтобы отказать разбойнику достаточно найти несоответствия в показаниях – Петр достает с полки заплечных дел книжицу, и пошла писать губерния" (Shishkin 394).

Although the interrogator trusts no one, he does trust the interpreter enough to listen for the details that will give him a basis for his work, which is usually to refuse asylum based upon inconsistency and conflicting information. Peter internalizes people's stories through an understanding of metaphors and cyclical patterns throughout his career and experiences with other applicants. The petitioners, who are labeled as GS (*Gesuchsteller*) or "a person who has filed for asylum (*Ger.*)," or "Лицо, подавшее заявление о предоставлении убежища (нем.)," (Shishkin 5; Shishkin 385) are not interviewees or suspects. They are nameless, homeless people, who survive in a limbo

under the general category, GS. With such a lack of identity, it is easier for Peter to equalize one GS's experience with many others.

> "*Question*: And then, all the stories have already been told a hundred times. But you – this is your story.
>
> *Answer*: What kind of story?
>
> *Question*: Oh, any kind. Some simple, banally sentimental story always goes well, you know there was a princess and she became Cinderella.
>
> *Answer*: I became Cinderella?
>
> *Question*: That's just a manner of speaking. A metaphor!
>
> *Answer*: Then you should have said so right away, otherwise I'm some kind of Cinderella" (Shishkin 50).
>
> "*Вопрос*: И потом: все истории уже сто раз рассказаны. А вы – это ваша история.
>
> *Ответ*: А какая у меня история?
>
> *Вопрос*: Да любая. Всегда хорошо идет какая-нибудь простенькая, банально-сентиментальная история, вроде как была принцесса, а стала Золушкой.
>
> *Ответ*: Я стал Золушкой?
>
> *Вопрос*: Но это же образ. Метафора!
>
> *Ответ*: Так бы сразу и сказали, а то Золушка какая-то" (Shishkin 424).

Once a GS decides not to test Peter's unvoiced intention of not letting anyone past the gates into Switzerland, communication becomes more fluid between the interrogator and the GS. Awareness and acceptance of the present moment and being with oneself completely makes finding solace within the confines of the white room easier, and alleviates the tension created by a slow ticking clock that counts down the minutes to deportation.

> "*Question*: You didn't need your freedom?

Answer: No.

Question: That's why they released you?

Answer: Yes. I wrote an appeal: 'Strand of wool. Counting rhyme acknowledged. Flying to sea. Kissing.' And that's it.

Question: What happened then?

Answer: It all went according to the rhyme. The little Indian became a strand of wool in the hide. He started making good money and got married" (Shishkin 83).

"*Вопрос*: Вам не нужна была свобода?

Ответ: Нет.

Вопрос: Поэтому вас освододили?

Ответ: Да. Я написал помиловку: 'Шерстинка. Признаю считалочку. Вылетаю к морю. Целую.' И все.

Вопрос: И что было потом?

Ответ: Все по считалке. Негритенок устроился шерстинкой в шкуре. Стал прилично зарабатывать, женился" (Shishkin 450).

Through the interpreted word, the GS points out that one can emerge as a victim or a sage from past experiences through the roles that he chooses to embrace. In addition, he also shares a common foundation with Peter that expresses surrender to the ticking clock of life. In many interviews, Peter verbalizes his imaginings about what the petitioners' have left unsaid regarding their identities and experiences, which he bases upon the "banal" and "sentimental" stories that he has heard repeatedly.

The interpreter, on the other hand, does not assume any kind of sense from the GS' stories. This action demonstrates that the interpreter can only be used as an instrument, which sounds more sharply when working with a calm and confident speaker. If the petitioner is unsure of which words to formulate, then the interpreter cannot possibly function without dissonance. Still, the most exact understanding happens when

the speaker and audience are able to understand each other nonverbally. Although music is a more transparent medium to share and express emotions, metaphors and allusions can allow the conversation to flow much more like chords in harmony with its multiple meanings and voices, during the recollection of past emotions and experiences. Examples of this are shown in the previous quotations when the GS recites his poetic and fragmented appeal for freedom. However, a peaceful silence in the presence of the "counting rhyme" would signify a moment when both people share a mutual ease and understanding. In this case, there would be no words necessary for description and expression because the pair is at peace with themselves in that present moment.

The Presence of the Holy Fool

In the case of *Maidenhair* or *Венерин волос*, it is the claim of this chapter that the interpreter is like a musical instrument, who sounds back as clearly as the musician wants to expresses his feelings. As stated above, the interpreter avoids any tendency to add or correct any information before transforming the words into a new language. No matter how much babble a GS produces or how many notes a toddler pounds on a piano, the instrument will sound back what it has received - nonsense. Almost a holy fool, the interpreter will "agonize" over finding meaning in what was unintelligible. However, his willingness to stress over each detail and to make sense of a message without lying by addition or omission demonstrates his integrity and proves his loyalty to the truth. As an anonymous monk, the interpreter chronicled the life of actress, singer, and World War I survivor, Bella Dmitrievna. Her letters and diaries reveal her struggles with finding love and happiness despite life's challenges and hardships. This chapter argues that Bella

Dmitrievna is a holy fool. According to Svitlana Kobets' chapter "Lice in the Iron Cap: Holy Foolishness in Perspective":

> "*Iurodstvo (iurodstvo Khrista radi)*, or holy foolishness for Christ's sake, is a peculiar form of Eastern Orthodox asceticism whose practitioners, *iurodivye Khrista radi*…feign madness in order to provide the public with spiritual guidance yet shun praise for their saintliness and attract abuse in imitation of the suffering Christ" (*Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives* 15).

Although Bella does not feign madness, she can be seen as a fool in love, which consumes her as the core of her inner truth and her reason for being.

> "All of a sudden I thought, 'What do I in fact do on stage? I love. I love those who have come and try to win their love. I have a love affair with the entire hall, hundreds of men and women. I know how to make them happy for one evening. Then I come home alone and lie in this icy bed'" (Shishkin 352).
>
> "Вдруг подумала: что я на самом деле делаю на сцене? Я люблю. Люблю тех, кто пришел, добиваюсь из любви. У меня любовь с целым залом, с сотнями мужчин и хенщин. Я умею сделать из счастливыми на один вечер. А потом возвращаюсь домой одна и ложусь в эту ледяную постель" (Shishkin 678).

Just as a holy fool speaks in riddles rather than give an answer directly, Bella's music does not provide listeners with definite answers to their problems. This would be the audience's own struggle to overcome as they attain their own sense of truth and self-worth after hardship. Instead, her performances provide a comforting escape for an audience who needs her service. Just as society needs a holy fool to point out its flaws, society also needs artists and singers to help them temporarily escape from their daily life.

Not simply a temporary high, Bella's music allows her to maintain an unspoken emotional connection with others that helps her to alleviate their suffering. Bella even

admits to her flaws, which mirrors Socrates notion of admitting that he knows nothing. She admits in a letter to her lover that she is "of course, the most ordinary of women," and "[needs] everything an earthly woman needs…boats, a coat, a couple of winter dresses, a hat, perfume, my own apartment. But all this is foolishness. The real earthly me needs you! [Конечно, я самая обыкновеннаядля, и мне все нужно, что нужно земной женщины...боты, пальто, пара зимних платье, шляпа, духи, отдельная квартира. Но все это глупости. Настоящей земной мне нужен ты!]" (Shishkin 354; Shishkin 679-680). Therefore, her ability to love and survive heartbreak allows Bella to become something of a guide for others who are lost in the haze of personal misfortune.

Her life in memoirs helps the interpreter reach his own inner truth by showing him that he is not alone. Therefore, the hagiographer looks to the life of his teacher in order to learn a way to live a joyful life. In the same respect, the interpreter challenges himself with the task of piecing together the life of Bella Dmitrievna, who had who started to write her own memoir, but "had not been able to get past her childhood, and then…abandoned it altogether" (Shishkin 101). He continues this pursuit, even after the publishing company can no longer pay him. In a sense, the scholarship of the young biographer resembles a spiritual pursuit towards a universal understanding of human nature. At first, the future biographer's editor gave him the agenda of writing a book with the main theme of "rising up from the grave [Суть книги – это как бы восстание из гроба]," (Shishkin 101; Shishkin 465) even though she had already died and many had forgotten her.

> "The future biographer looked through the packet of photocopies of her diaries and memoirs that same night. The old woman had indeed written in great detail

> about all kinds of superfluous people only she cared about, endlessly recalling various unimportant details, and for the book he'd been asked to write, it was all useless" (Shishkin 101).
>
> "Пачку ксерокопий её дневников и воспоминаний автор будущей биографии просмотрел в ту же ночь. Старуха действительно писала очень подробно о каких-то ненужных, интересных только ей людях, вспоминала без конца какие-то неважные детали, и для той книги, которую ему заказали, все это было бесполезно" (Shishkin 465).

It seems that the young biographer's first reaction was to find valid information that would support his editor's main intention for the novel that he had been asked to write. They even paid him hundred-dollar bills which he had "carelessly" thrust in his pockets, because he "had never held" that much money "in his hands before." "[Он]...небрежно засовывая стодолларовые купюры, которых никогда до этого и в руках не держал, в карман" (Shishkin 101; Shishkin 465). After the death of Bella Dmitrievna and the incident of "a certain major bank" going "bust, and his editor's "publishing house vanish[ing] with it." "Затем лопнул один большой банк, и вместе с ним исчезло и издательство" (Shishkin 102; Shishkin 466). The future biographer is left with the "useless" photocopies [ненужных ксерокопий] of diaries and memoirs and no future paycheck. Without editors to give expectations to the future holy fool on what to write as a resurrection story, the interpreter could decide for himself if and how the words truly spoke to him without any materialism or external pressure to influence the project.

Unlike the interpreter in his historical pursuit, Peter listens for conflicting details and repeated stories with a trained ear. Peter's patterned behavior allows him to perform his job as expected – guarding the gates to Switzerland. Socrates in *The Republic* likes to

break down established formulas in search for the truth, which Peter's job does not allow him. Through the power of the dialectic, Socrates lets go of his biased projections in order to accept truth as it presents itself to him without judgment and evaluation from external reality. The Socratic method of understanding something outside of one's preconceived notions is a gateway to empathy and holy foolery by becoming one with the word.

Paul B. Anderson describes the holy foolish process of *kenosis* in his *Foreign Affairs Journal* article "The Orthodox Church in Soviet Russia." This process reflects the actions of the interpreter during his work with Peter and the discussions between Socrates and his students. Anderson's definition also mirrors Bella's letters and diaries, which show that she becomes one with her audience in creating an atmosphere of empathy and symbiotic joy the moment she begins to perform, thus giving into *kenosis*.

> "The essence of Russian Orthodoxy is glorifying God, with services of worship which elevate the spirit while impressing the mind. Humility, hospitality to strangers, help to the needy, but above all *kenosis*, the emptying of one's self in service to God – these are Orthodox virtues" (Anderson 302).

As stated in the literature review, Ritta Pittman states that "the demon appeared to Socrates as a tangible being, who delivered expedient messages and had a purpose of beneficial inspiration," (Pittman 52). As Plato writes in Book VI of *The Republic*:

> "And Glaucon, quite ridiculously, said, 'Apollo, what a demonic excess.'
>
> 'You,' I [*Socrates*] said, 'are responsible for compelling me to tell my opinions about it [*about what is good*].'
>
> 'And don't under any conditions stop,' he said, 'at least until you have gone through the likeness with the sun, if you are leaving anything out.'
>
> 'But, of course,' I said, 'I am leaving out a throng of things.'

> ‘Well,’ he said, ‘don’t leave even the slightest thing aside’” (Plato *The Republic* 509c).

Similar to Socrates, Peter asks people questions and behaves cordially, however he never believes their answers or listens to all of the details (Shishkin 14; Shishkin 393). In addition, Peter tries to find which answers he can evaluate as valid or invalid, while Socrates listens to his students for guidance and new perspectives on the truth. Peter’s philosophy on keeping with the counting rhyme is demonstrated in his words with another GS. Rather than believe in the impossibility of knowing everything, Peter controls his perception of life by collecting in his mind as many types of stories as possible and quickly labeling petitioners with identities that will predict their inner stories, personalities, and patterns.

> “*Answer*: What mitt?
> *Question*: The story is the hand, and you’re the mitt. Stories change you, like mitts. You have to understand that stories are living beings.
> *Answer*: What about me?
> *Question*: There is no you yet. Look: blank sheets of paper” (Shishkin, 120).

> “*Ответ*: Какая варежка?
>
> *Вопрос*: История – рука, вы – варежка. Истории меняют вас, как варежки.
>
> Поймите, истории – это живые существа.
>
> *Ответ*: А я?
>
> *Вопрос*: Вас ещё нет. Видите – пустые листы бумаги” (Shishkin 482).

In this selection, the role between interrogator and petitioner has reversed. Peter is now giving answers to the speaker about his human nature. He tells the person in the dialogues what his truth is, rather than allowing their inner truth to speak for themselves. Peter turns people into dead words by capturing them within the confines of blank pages.

In effect, he tells the nameless GS that the story is the living being, not himself. If a GS is nameless and homeless, without a story to choose him, it means that the GS is alone and unloved. According to Peter's philosophy, Bella's records show all of the hands that changed her like a mitt: the outbreak of World War I, her success as a singer, the dissolution of her family, her husband's affair, and her misfortune of being forgotten. Unlike Socrates, Peter is not interested in guiding people towards their inner truth or life purpose because that is not his job.

While Peter rejects answers and Socrates questions his knowledge, Bella simply accepts whatever events and explanations come to her. Bella Dmitrievna's records demonstrate that she would see herself as just a "strand in the wool [шерстинка]" who would like to become a bigger strand that ties other strands together to help them feel happy in their fateful placement. Although a young Bella hopes for fame and fortune, she understands life as a powerful and invisible force that chooses benefactors at will. She realizes this while listening and recording to former actress Nina Nikolaevna's stories about her friends and rivals.

> "I listened and thought, Could this really be just the envy of an old failure? One gets everything – world fame and success – and the other drags out her old age in Rostov. But she may have had as much talent as the famous Sarah Bernhardt. So what does this mean? Why does fate take pity on some and punish others?
>
> My fate! Be kind to me! Please! Is that too much to ask? Give me everything!" (Shishkin 237).
>
> "Слушала и думала: неужели это просто зависть старой неудачницы? Одной все – мировая слава, успех, а другая прозябает нна старости лет в каком-то Ростове. А таланта у нее, может, не меньше было, чем у знаменитой Сары Бернар. Так в чем же дело? Почему судьба одних жалует, а других наказывает?

Судьба моя! Будь ко мне ласкова! Пожалуйста! Ну что тебе стоит? Дай мне все!" (Shishkin 581).

Similar to Nina Nikolaevna, Bella Dmitrievna grows old and becomes lost and forgotten, even by those closest to her, such as her husband. While her writings seem to agree with Peter's metaphor, the difference lies in her ability to understand herself in relation to her service to humanity, rather than a self-projection of her own truths, regardless of anyone else's interests or expectations. She lived her story without letting anyone deter her from realizing her potential by embodying her inner truth. Her writings demonstrate that because love was her truth, Bella was able to maintain her hopefulness in love and happiness, even in times of war, poverty, and misfortune. Peter's view, though, provides an explanation of chaos, which Bella's records show is more trying. While Peter questions and records answers about others' experiences, Bella has actually lived through war. Yet, she continued to love, and therefore has a greater sense of self and authority in guiding others by helping them to find themselves through the mystery of life. Rather than alienate people with metaphors, Bella sings songs that commiserate with her audience. She is their beacon of light or the "fire burning far above and behind" the cave dwellers of Plato's cave allegory, who sit with "their legs and necks in bonds…seeing only in front of them, unable because of the bond to turn their heads all the way around" (Plato *The Republic* 514a-b).

Just as an interpreter struggles to find meaning in the stories of the GS and listens to the messages within Bella's memoirs, Plato's records demonstrate the importance of words as they describe a truth about an idea or concept. Book VII of *The Republic*

describes the importance of the dialectic as a gateway to understanding the truth. Socrates' student, Glaucon, says to his questioner:

> "…So tell what the character of the power of the dialectic is, and then, into exactly what forms it is divided; and finally what are its ways. For these, as it seems, would lead at last toward that place which is for the one who reaches it a haven from the road, as it were, and an end of his journey" (Plato *The Republic* 532d-e).

Glaucon's request confirms the purpose of the dialectic as a crucial part of the path toward finding truth and knowledge. As Peter the interrogator, or "Herr Fischer. Master of fates [Вершитель судеб]" (Shishkin 7; Shishkin 387) conducts his work with a biased perspective, his guidance in helping individuals understand their own inner truth is affected. Socrates, on the other hand, fears dragging along with him his disciples on the slippery slope of discovering a truth, since a spiritual death is more detrimental than a physical ending (Plato *The Republic* 451a). It seems that the master of fates is not concerned about anyone's salvation from a fate of pain and misfortune. Socrates, however, deeply concerns himself with finding the truth and cautiously leads others toward the light at the cave opening through his dialectic. In Book VII, Socrates responds to Glaucon:

> "'You will no longer be able to follow, my dear Glaucon,' I said, 'although there wouldn't be any lack of eagerness on my part. But you would no long be seeing an image of what we are saying, but rather the truth itself, at least as it looks to me. Whether it is really so or not can no longer be properly insisted on. But that there is some such thing to be insisted on. Isn't it so?'
>
> 'Of course'" (Plato *The Republic* 533a).

Both Socrates and Glaucon agree that once one thinks that he or she has seen the truth according to an individual perspective, the inquirer should never continue to

guarantee that he or she knows anything as the sole truth. Even with the help of a guide, one can only know his or her own perspective of a universal truth based upon individual experiences, which Peter either does not have or express.

The guard to Switzerland, however, is expected to be unconcerned with others' salvation, so that he may confirm the legitimacy of their claims for refugee status. Peter may be seen as soulless "cold clay [холодная глина]" (Shishkin 14; Shishkin 393) or a devil's accomplice because his profession does not allow him to save or communicate with others about their life philosophies. Since Herr Fischer is expected to guard the gates and not perform a soul-searching dialectic, he cannot play the most important role in society, the holy fool. His strict obedience to earthly law is seen as beneficial for guarding the interests of Switzerland. However, as a guardian for Plato's Republic, Peter would ethically be liable for society's greatest good philosophically. The philosopher-king must be a lover of learning and his nature "philosophic, spirited, swift, and strong" (Plato *The Republic* 376c). Those in the ranks of philosopher rulers cannot be of "cowardly and illiberal nature[s]" or else they cannot participate in "true philosophy" (Plato *The Republic* 486b) since true philosophy asks one to question oneself completely. Furthermore, a philosopher-ruler is not a "lover of money," a "boaster," a "hard-bargainer," or "unjust," simply because none of these traits or inclinations will be in his nature (Plato *The Republic* 486b).

There is never any evidence of Peter's boasting, concern with wealth, or hard-bargaining with a GS for something in exchange for asylum in Switzerland. As an earthly guardian, Peter does as he is expected by his government. However, his speaking in

themes and metaphors demonstrates his ability to see something beyond the physical, such as historical patterns that existed before his time or the invisible force of the hand that will change him, like a mitt. Peter is not a false guardian, but more like an obedient child, who speaks in fairy tales in order to arrive at an intangible, universal truth. According to *The Republic*, fairytales serve a purpose:

> "Don't you understand that first we tell tales to children? And surely they are, as a whole, false, though there are true things in them too. We make use of tales with children before exercises" (Plato *The Republic* 377a).

Since children are incredibly "plastic" and at a stage when "each thing assimilates itself to the model whose stamp anyone wishes to give it," (Plato *The Republic* 376b) it is imperative that the right teachers direct future thinkers and leaders, such as Peter. Otherwise, if a nameless and homeless GS does not know his inner truth as it relates to the whole of humanity, he sits at the mercy of an older child, who is still discovering his own truth through fairytales. Therefore, it is important not just to have anyone guiding people to find themselves. "*Question:* So what should I do? Come up with another word? New symbols for the letters? [*Вопрос*: И что делать? Придумать другое слово? Новые знаки для букв?]" Peter asks his lover, the princess frog, during a conversation about love and fate. She responds:

> "*Answer:* You're teasing me again! This isn't about the word. Use any word – traveler, pollen, God, or even that same centipede. In one dimension it hid under a brick between the swollen, rain-laden phlox, but in the other, it's everywhere. Love is a special, God-size centipede, as weary as the shelter-seeking traveler, as omnipresent as pollen. It puts each of us on like a stocking. We're sewn to its foot and we take on its shape. It walks us. So here, in this centipede, we are all one. It doesn't have a hundred feet. It has as many as humanity…
>
> *Question:* You have icy feet.

Answer: As usual, you weren't listening to me…" (Shishkin 398).

Ответ: Ты опять меня дразнишь! Дело же не в слове. Назови это любым другим словом – тем же путником, или пыльцой, или Богом, или вот хотя бы той же сороконожкой. В одном измерении она спряталась под кирпичом между набухшими, тяжелыми от дождя флоксами, а в другом – она везде. Любовь – это такая особая сороконожка размером с Бога, усталая, как путник, ищущий приюта, и вездесущая, как пыльца. Она надевает каждого из нас, как чулок. Мы сшиты под ей ногу и принимаем её форму. Она ходит нами. И вот в этой сороконожке мы все едины. У нее не сорок ног, а столько, сколько, у человечества...

Вопрос: У тебя ледяные ноги.

Ответ: Ты, как всегда, меня не слушал..." (Shishkin 716).

While Peter is an earthly Pilate, master of fates, his princess frog is his holy fool, who speaks in parables and stories, so that Peter will understand her. Love is her immaterial, hidden wisdom, just as it is Bella's, if the holy fool is "an expression of 'hidden wisdom' [sokrovennaia mudrost']" (*Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives* 44). The princess frog begins her interview with a lesson for the interrogator.

"*Question:* Who's there?

Answer: There's this parable…" (Shishkin 381).

Вопрос: Кто там?

Ответ: Есть такая притча..." (Shishkin 701).

The book of Matthew contains many parables. After listening to so many of Christ's stories, his disciples ask him, "Why do you speak to [the people] in parables?" (*The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Matthew13:10). Christ explains that his disciples have had the opportunity to know the "secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to [the people] it has not been given" (*The New Oxford Annotated Bible,* Matthew 13:11). Just as

Socrates agrees that children must first learn fairy tales in order to understand a truth, Christ explains in this gospel that the parable is a spiritual vernacular of the people, and therefore the best method in guiding others toward their image of a truth. "This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand," (*The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Matthew 13:13). Therefore, if someone has not had an experience to drag him out of a cave or strike him on his way to Damascus, it is impossible to understand the harmony of a spiritual truth according to the logic of a ticking metronome or the cyclical rhythm of nature. Therefore, the princess frog is a Christ-like figure for the Pilate-Peter. Peter's metaphors and name-giving resembles Pilate's conversation with Christ in the Book of Matthew. "'Are you the King of the Jews?'" To which Christ answers, "'You have said so.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer" (*The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Matthew 27:11-12). Thus, the book of Matthew demonstrates that if one cannot see or hear a spiritual truth without first confining it to earthly terminology, then there is a complete lack of vernacular or medium to connect one to his or her hidden wisdom. Therefore, a blunt explanation or definition cannot explain what is invisible and immaterial, and so silence is given in response.

Once Peter is called to give and receive a literal message, it is almost as if he tries to avoid it, as though he does not want to see or hear the universal truth, even if it is begging to be seen, heard, or said.

> "One person loves, suspecting nothing, and the other suffocates from that love. Suddenly I was dying with longing for you and I called, and you said, 'I can't talk to you right now!' and you hung up. I called back. You hung up again. I called

> again – and on and on. You didn't understand that I just needed to hear 'I love you.' That was it. I wouldn't have called anymore" (Shishkin 406).
>
> "...один человек любит ни о чем не подозревая, а другой испытывает от этой любви удушье. Умираю вдруг от тоски к тебе и звоню, а ты: «Я сейчас не могу с тобой говорить!» - и вешаешь трубку. Я снова звоню. Ты опять вешаешь трубку. Я снова звоню – без конца. Ты не пнимал, что мне всего-то было нужно услышать: «Я тебя люблю». И все, я бы больше не звонила" (Shishkin 723).

Although Peter does not answer her calls or fully listen to her stories about her inner wisdom, he acknowledges his natural rhythm with the ticking clock. Time's natural beat that is present within him demonstrates his innate orderly and "musical" nature. Additionally, this clock is the center of his life's experiences in the white office with the interpreter. This musical sense of beat ties Peter to a universal, spiritual truth and his life philosophy. However, this is the extent of his spiritual awareness, since attempting to understand anything beyond the ticking clock would lead him astray from his work as a guard and turn him more into a philosopher-king, who might challenge the earthly laws already in place.

According to Socrates, people who are philosopher-kings do not possess "an unmusical and graceless nature." Instead, they are naturally "drawn to a want [to] measure" (Plato *The Republic* 486d). With "measure and charm," the philosopher can "[grow] by itself in such a way as to make it easily led to the *idea* of each thing that is" (Plato *The Republic* 486d-e). Peter already has the inner truth of a ticking metronome to help him discover other images of his hidden truth, but he lacks the experience of hearing the voice of rhythm in order to create a more complete song. This melody would in effect

drag him outside of the comfort of his white office to experience a light that would show him his unique perception of "each thing that is."

Although Socrates follows the dialectic and the holy fool feigns madness, both surrender to an inspiration that they believe is received from a source outside of them. Both Socrates' possession and the holy fool's madness expose the hypocrisy in society or in an individual, so that the hypocrite will see the darker aspects that need to be questioned and confronted. While Socrates asks questions and the holy fool speaks in riddles, both alert listeners with messages that may be met with either resistance or acceptance, as the audience is awakened to see themselves and to understand their truths. It is in the argument of this chapter that both the dialectic and riddles are in service to help others find a path towards a personal enlightenment that is like a foot attached to the centipede of an eternal truth. Although Socrates claims that the dialectic is the best method for discovering a truth, he also admits that a child needs fairytales prior to receiving exercises, so that they can even see the truth to begin with. Once one sees the "*idea*" of what is, then he can start questioning himself and others. Both the holy fool's messages and the Socratic dialectic allow others to see people and the world as everything truly exists. Peter, however, labels the GS petitioners with metaphors and allusions as though the refugee seekers are a malleable piece of plastic that can be impressed upon by explanations and expectations.

Facing the Music

The interpreter and the GS feel uncomfortable when truths are being blocked by an absence or incomprehension of words. However, once the GS no longer struggles to

understand himself and the interpreter is no longer agonizing over the meaning, Peter can accept the applicant's story more fully. Thus, with the interpreter's assistance, Peter is able to learn new labels, recollections, and aspects of a hidden wisdom from the GS' experiences. In a sense, the interrogator experiences a puppet show put on by "puppet-handlers" (Plato *The Republic* 514b). Some of these people carry different versions of similar experiences, some "wrought from stone, wood, and every kind of material; as is to be expected, some of the carriers utter sounds while others are silent," (Plato *The Republic* 514c-515a).

Meanwhile the interpreter, who acts as a monk and hagiographer, speaks the GS' truth through vernacular for the GS, and provides an external light to guide the way towards truth. The interpreter bridges the gap between people and cultures with words, thus bringing concepts to life by reviving dead words. If a GS is unlike Bella, however, and expects an identity and a place in the world from Peter, the GS will be lost to identify his own light.

During another interrogation, Peter looks out a window and a GS nervously picks at his nails. The interpreter confesses:

> "I draw crosses and squares on a pad, divide them into triangles with diagonal lines, and fill them in to create relief" (Shishkin 11).
>
> "Рисую в блокноте крестики, квадратики, делю их диагональными линиями на трешгольники, закрашиваю так, чтобы получился рельефный орнамент." (Shishkin 390).

Peter is unaware of the tense, silent environment, accented by the slow ticking clock. The interpreter struggles with the silence. It seems as though interpreting

information makes his presence necessary. Almost as a kind of *kenosis*, the interpreter works to serve. "And no one understands anyone. And so I serve. An interpreter in the chancellery for refugees in the defense ministry of paradise [А никто никого не понимает. И вот я служу. Министерства обороны рая беженской канцелярии толмач]," (Shishkin 14; Shishkin 392). Just as the holy fool works as a medium between the spiritual realm and the physical world, the interpreter literally becomes a bridge between two opposing ideas through his service of verbalizing the petitioners' narrations in a new language. Without words to convey, the interpreter has no reason to be in the room. Without these words, the interpreter draws crosses on a notepad to the tune of the "counting rhyme." The interpreter is an embodiment of words, which guide the way toward his inner truth and service to others. However, these words will either come from an external source or not at all. If the interpreter and the GS cannot work together as musician and instrument, then both remain silent and anonymous.

While Peter and the GS, who accepted his fate as a strand in the wool, share a non-verbalized understanding, the lack of communication between the interpreter and his wife causes estrangement. The absence of words is a symbol of the interpreter's physical and spiritual misplacement. He calls her his Isolde, but he was not her Tristan. In a letter from the interpreter to his and Isolde's son, her first lover, Tristan, had been killed in a car accident a few years before she and the interpreter married. Isolde kept a diary on their shared laptop that expressed her frustrations with the interpreter.

> "When everything was good with them, she didn't write anything, as if those days never happened. But when she couldn't stand it any longer, when she felt as if she were suffocating from the life she shared with the interpreter, she sat down at the

> computer, opened that file, and vented. Their arguments, which the interpreter had long since forgotten, lived on, recorded in hot, still aching, unforgiven pursuit.
>
> It was also odd that she was writing this diary to Tristan" (Shishkin 187).
>
> "Когда у них все было хорошо, она ничего не записывала, этих дней как будто и не было. А когда становилось невмоготу, когда испытывала приступы удушья от делимой с толмачом жизни – садилась к компьютеру, открывала тот файл и выговаривалась. Их ссоры, о которых толмач давным-давно забыл, продалжали жить, записанные по свежим следам, еще не отболевшие, не прощенные.
>
> И еще было странно, что этот дневник она писала Тристану" (Shishkin 538).

An absence of joyful expression on her part caused her to remember only the disagreeable parts of their relationship, and so the words recorded were unfavorably biased against her husband. The interpreter, on the other hand, serves as a guide to his son as he writes his experiences in third person. The third person structure separates the interpreter from the experience, so that the events are recorded in an unbiased manner for readers to process according to his own interpretation. By calling his former partner "Isolde", the interpreter shows some agreement in Peter's logic: common characteristics exist between people and metaphors. This time, Isolde the mitt tried to fit a new hand, but the truth was she could never find another one – another inner truth. Just as Bella's documents show that love cannot be controlled or contained. It is either expressed because it exists, or it was never there initially, as can be seen in the princess frog's words to Peter.

> "I was so afraid of losing you, and I kept thinking about the others you would have afterward. Who were they? Could they really love you more than I could? I was beside myself with jealousy and envy…Then a simple thought occurred: but they would just be copying me. Your love for me would be their template. Each time you would be loving me. When I realized this, I even stopped being jealous of them, and they became practically family" (Shishkin 407-408).

> “Я ужасно боялась тебя потерять – и все время думала о других, которые будут у тебя потом. Кто они такие? Неужели можно больше любить, чем я? Исходила ревностью и завистью...а потом пришла простая мысла: но ведь они будут только повторять меня. Твоя любовь ко мне будет для них как выкройка. Ты каждый раз будешь любить меня. И когда это поняла, даже перестала их ревновать, они стали чуть ли не родными” (Shishkin 724).

Whether or not the interrogator and the princess frog are together they will continue to love because it is the hidden wisdom that ties them to the universal family. In this case, Isolde does not need to be with Tristan, nor the princess frog with the interrogator. What matters is that the feet of the centipede remember the whole of the body to which they belong and take part in walking. Peter, though, has not allowed himself to be engulfed in the rhythm of waves that the princess frog experienced in her youth. “…I decided that if a fourth wave licked my toes, I would have love – a tremendous, real love to last a lifetime [И я загадала, что если четвертая волна лизнет мне пальцы на ноге, то у меня будет любовь – огромная, настоящая, на всю жизнь]” (Shishkin 392; Shishkin 711).

As the first, second, and third small, powerless waves stop farther and farther away from her feet, she begins to lose hope. Suddenly, “the fourth collected itself, buckled, and reached me. It took all my toes in its mouth and tickled my heel with sand! [А четвертая собралась, выгнулась, и дотянулась. Все пальцы в рот взяла и пятку песком пощекотала!]” (Shishkin 392; Shishkin 711). As the princess frog sits and listens to the waves, she experiences the animals, people, and nature as they exist in the present moment.

> "…But this wasn't vision, or hearing, or touch, or smell. It was love, and I had nothing else of my own – no eyes, hands, or feet. It was all love's…where could I put so much love? What should I do with it?" (Shishkin 392-393).
>
> "...но это уже не зрение, не слух, не осязание, не обоняние – а любовь, у меня нет больше ничего своего – ни глаз, ни рук, ни ног, все -ее...ну куда мне столько любви? Что мне с нею делать?" (Shishkin 711).

The princess frog's epiphany demonstrates love's devotion and generosity, instead of a fear of letting go and experiencing the unknown. Once the princess frog realizes the whole of humanity through love, she does not need to be with just one person in order to express her inner truth. This is different from her mother, who had relationships with various men as she searched for a true love. According to the princess frog, her mother, "used love to save herself each time from that icy cold. After all, it's impossible – being left alone with that universal loneliness, with yourself [от чего она каждый раз спасалась любовью: от этого леденящего холода. Ведь это невозможно – оставаться наедине с этим вселенским одиночеством, с самой собой]," (Shishkin 407; Shishkin 724). Her mother hoped for a more "normal" life for her daughter, "…a family, and a child from a husband I loved and who loved me, and all of it genuine [выйду замуж, все у меня будет по-людски, семья и ребенок от любимого и любящего мужа, и все по-настоящему]" (Shishkin 405; Shishkin 722). However, fate did not treat the princess frog that simply and she found the interrogator.

Like Bella, the princess frog sees herself as sharing her compassion and inner wisdom with others, not just with one lover. The princess frog truly loves Peter and understands "…that this love was my first and last, it has never been before and never would be again. Never before us were there, and never after us would there be... [...что

эта любовь – первая и последняя, ее никогда больше не будет. До нас не было и после не будет...]" (Shishkin 403; Shishkin 721). Still, she understands that feet wear new stockings, not because they do not remember their favorite, but because love is about sharing and experiencing, rather than clinging and withholding. This suggests that in order for Peter to leave the cave of comfort he will need to answer the phone and interpret parables, or he will need an experience like the interpreter's misfortune with Isolde in order to begin his search for the universal truth.

> "*Question*: You'll return to me?
>
> *Answer*: No.
>
> *Question*: What do you mean no? You already have. I'm holding you, breathing in the smell of your head. Here you are breathing, snuffling, dozing under my arm. Here I am feeling with my fingertips the smooth membranes of the frog skin on your chest…Here I am twirling your hair on my finger so you don't run away in your sleep.
>
> *Answer*: No.
>
> *Question*: But why?
>
> *Answer*: Because right now I'm somewhere else completely. The beach – flat, Baltic, and half-empty. I'm sitting on the sand by a selvage of sea which is cold and barely alive…I know that there are just about to be three weak, puny waves. And then mine, the fourth, the promised one will gather up, flex, and reach my foot, take my toes in its mouth, and tickle my heel with sand" (Shishkin 413-414).
>
> "*Вопрос:* Ты вернешься ко мне?
>
> *Ответ:* Нет.
>
> *Вопрос:* Как же нет, ведь ты уже вернулась ко мне. Я же обнимаю тебя, вдыхаю запах твоей головы. Вот же ты дышишь, чуть посапываешь, засыпая у меня под мышкой. Вот чувствую подушечками пальцев гладкие перепонки твоей лягушачьей кожицы на груди...Вот я наматываю твои волосы на палец, чтобы ты никуда во сне не бежала.
>
> *Ответ:* Нет.
>
> *Вопрос:* Но почему?

> *Ответ:* Потому что я сейчас совсем в другом месте. Пляж, плоский, балтийский, полупустой. Сижу на песке у кромки моря, холодного, еле живого...Я знаю, что сейчас будут три бессильных дохлых волны. А потом моя, четвертая, заветная – соберется, выгнется, отянетсся до моей ноги, возьмет пальцы в рот и пощекочет песком пятку" (Shishkin 729).

Already, the princess frog is mentally returning to the water, the original source of her understanding of love. Peter fears letting her go, because to do this he would have to acknowledge the reasons why she would change him, or why he would change her. Rather than accept the rhythm of waves, he twirls his finger around the hair of his lover, to keep her from leaving. He remembers that he had given her the name "princess frog" after seeing her legs that looked short and crooked under the green water of the bathtub (Shishkin 399). The water birthed the princess frog into a new reality. Although she was still the same person physically, she had transfigured into a creature that could exist between two worlds: water and land, love and earth. Although Peter does not listen to her words, he recognizes that her feet "are icy," just as a frog is a coldblooded animal. Peter acknowledges consequences of truth, but still speaks in observations and metaphors in order to express his internalization.

The lovers' conversation points to the various forms of love through its metaphors of water. Just as water vapor can form a raincloud, which will then produce a liquid, the princess frog is in the present moment temporarily, until the next wave strikes. The princess frog's stories show that by facing the waves, one will be able to embrace life and its transitions and cycles.

Although the two hydrogen molecules and one oxygen molecule creates the water, H_2O can transform from a solid, into a liquid, and into a vapor. Just as the princess

frog became transfigured through her interaction with water, but still remained inside her physical being, the solid, liquid, and vapor forms of water still remains as H_2O. In the same sense, a hidden wisdom is there because it always has been, but was simply waiting to surface. Like water, which can transform into different phases, love can come in multiple variations, such as parent and child or husband and wife. Regardless, true love is love, just as water is still H_2O. Although the princess frog will not always be at the interrogator's side, she is as consistent as H_2O, which always changes forms, but continues to exist at the core. Any partners that have come before or will come after resemble the puny waves of the past and the future, but the present moment of the inner truth in in the fourth wave, which strikes one unexpectedly. The princess frog knows the fourth wave will repeat itself, just as Isolde found Tristan.

Water and time stand consistently as important themes throughout Mikhail Shishkin's *Maidenhair*. The first few nights in Rome consist of rain and shower water for Isolde and the interpreter. "When Isolde climbed into the tub and turned on the shower, she seemed to be dressing in water [А когда Изольда залезла в ванну и включтла душ, показалось, что она оделась в воду]," (Shishkin 185; Shishkin 536) almost like the princess frog, who was washed in the fourth wave.

Water was romantic, until the night that the "mosquitoes were biting him [ero закусали комары]" and the interpreter remembered Isolde's diary to Tristan on their laptop (Shishkin 186; Shishkin 537). The rainwater had given birth to a nuisance that gnawed at the interpreter, rather than wash over him and Isolde as the princess frog's fourth wave. "He couldn't sleep because of their buzzing and kept scratching the bites.

He turned on the light and started smashing them on the walls with the guidebook, leaving bloody stains on the wallpaper. After that he could not fall asleep [Не мог спать от их зудения и все расчесывал укусы. Включил свет, стал быть по стенам путеводителем, оставляя на обоях кровавые пятна. Потом никак не мог заснуть].” (Shishkin 186; Shishkin 537). Just as blood stains remain on the wall, so remains the persistent knowing of the diary and the vacations that Isolde and Tristan had spent in Rome before him. Just as the buzzing mosquitoes awoke him to attention, so too the thought that perhaps everything that he and Isolde had done so far was simply a repeated pattern of what she had once done with Tristan. The interpreter refused to accept the possibility that Isolde was trying to label him as someone who he was not.

The interpreter’s unhappiness in his personal relationship affects the perception of his surroundings. Although the tour guide claims that everything in the Italian museums is “genuine [все настоящее]” and that “these sculptures [are] exact copies [а эти скульптуры – точные копии],” the interpreter realizes his present state of his personal life in Rome.

> “...Everything turned out to be a copy – the sculptures in the Vatican museums, the Bernini angel statues on the Ponte San Angelo, Marcus Aurelius on the Capitoline Hill, the Egyptian obelisk in front of Santa Trinita dei Monti – and you had to go somewhere and search again for what was genuine” (Shishkin 192).
>
> “...а все опять оказывалось копией – и скульптуры в ватикаских музеях, и статуи ангклов Бернииеи на Ponte San Angelo, и Марк Аврелий на Капитолийском холме, и египетскеий обелиск перед Santa Trinità dei Monti, а настоящее снова нужно было где-то ходить и искать” (Shishkin 542).

True or false, the notion that he is just another copy of Tristan or a template of Tristan completely consumes him and his inner truth comes tumbling out. “When they

had moved away from the stand Isolde blurted out, 'You're rude [Ты – грубый].' Suddenly he exploded. 'Not like Tristan [Не то что Тристан]'" (Shishkin199-200; Shishkin 549). Thus, the interpreter stands up for his sense of self over the mitt that Isolde tried to give him. When the interpreter refuses to play the part of Tristan in her fairytale, Isolde walks away from him without looking back.

Just like Shishkin's dead words, dead myths and characters are revived and repeated in the present, either by nature or manipulation. A little bit of everything and a little bit of all partners from the past, present, and future return until they awaken to the call to find out what properties of life are consistent and genuine, like the ticking metronome and the expressive harmony. While *The Republic* points to Socrates, the interviewer, as a guide, *Maidenhair* reverses the roles and shows the answerer as a spiritual source for Peter, who lives vicariously through others. In the case of interrogations, the interpreter works to make the GS' messages comprehensible for the receiver. Bella, though, serves as the interpreter's guide through the storm of finding his way back to the path again, love and acceptance for all that is.

Song of the Holy Fool

Just as Isolde writes diary letters for Tristan to read, the memoirs of Bella Dmitrievna fall under the interpreter's responsibility. A young Bella records her visit at Nina Nikolaevna's house, after her instructor was "dissatisfied" with Bella for feeling upset that her boyfriend, Alyosha, was enlisting to fight in the war.

> "'Every actress wants to play a genuine woman, in love and unhappy. I don't understand. That's not true. It shouldn't be like that. Why must a genuine woman be in love and unhappy rather than not in love and happy?" (Shishkin 239).

> “«Каждая актриса хочет сыграть настоящую женщину, влюбленнуб и несчастную». Не понимаю. Это неправда. Так не должно быть. Почему настоящая женщина должна быть влюблена и несчастна, а не влюблена и счастлива?” (Shishkin 583).

The interpreter searches Rome for what is “genuine [настоящее]” while Bella wonders about the qualities of a “genuine [настоящая]” woman. Similarly, Nina Nikolaevna attempts to groom Bella into a younger version of herself, just as Isolde wanted the interpreter to play Tristan. However, both Bella and the interpreter realize that what is “genuine” is not necessarily what is being told and impressed upon them. Perhaps the reason why a “genuine” person must be unhappy in love is because its dissatisfaction and unhappiness serves as a wake-up call for those who are need of growth into a new state of being. Someone who is genuine may be unhappy because s/he has left the comfort of the cave in order to discover something that is more real than what s/he has ever experienced. The actress hopes to play the role of a genuine woman because through acting she can understand aspects of a universal truth without living it, much in the same way one might read another’s writings in order to understand pain and suffering without feeling it.

People act, study, read, or write what they do not know in order to grasp a better understanding of something beyond their present moment of existence. As a young biographer, the future interpreter begins studying the life of a woman he does not know and the love that he has yet to experience. Years later, the interpreter finally verbalizes his thoughts on Bella’s writings as he internalized them to a young Frau P., a student just out of law school.

Usually the lawyers had no enthusiasm for their cases, but Frau P.'s youth and freshness make her different. Frau P. follows the book and common formalities by asking the Belarussian refugee to "confess" his "sins" to the judge for staying in Switzerland after being refused citizenship, but her emotions get the better of her during the case. Unlike Peter, she feels truly guilty and offended when a Belarussian refugee swears and curses at her for living a happy life. Afterwards, the interpreter comforts her:

> "If you and your mama are doing well, then you have to rejoice in that. And if there's a war somewhere, you need to live and rejoice even more that you aren't there. And if someone is loved, there will always be someone whom no one loves. And if the world is unfair, you still have to live and rejoice that you're not sitting in a stinking cell but are going to a wedding. Rejoice! Enjoy yourself! (Wenn es Ihnen und Ihrer Mutter gut geht, dann freuen Sie sich doch! Wenn irgendwo Krieg ist, dann solte man umso mehr leben und sich freuen, dass man selbst nicht dort ist. Und wenn jemand geliebt wird, dann wird es auch immer einen anderen geben, den niemand liebt. Und wenn die Welt ungerecht ist, so soll man trotzdem leben und sich freuen, dass man nicht in einer stinkigen Zelle sitzt, sondern auf eine Hochzeit geht. Sich freuen Genießen!)," (Shishkin 380).
>
> "И если вам и вашей маме хорошо, то и надо этому радоваться. И если где-то война, то тем более нужно жить и радоваться, что ты не там. И если кого-то любят, то всегда будет тот, кого никто не любит. И если мир несправедлив, то все равно нужно жить и радоваться, что не сидишь в вонючей камере, а идешь на свадьбу. Радоваться! Наслаждаться!" (Shishkin 701).

The interpreter cannot restrain from passing down this information to her as though she was his student, just as Bella's writings told him "Since everyone can't be happy anyway, whoever can be happy right now, should. You have to be happy today, right now, no matter what [Раз всем быть счастливыми все равно невозможно – значит, счаслив должен быть тот, кто сейчас может. Надо быть счастливым сегодня, сейчас, несмотря не на что]" (Shishkin 474; Shishkin 780). After all, he had kept his experiences and inner wisdom contained silently and within the pages that he

wrote to his son. After the outburst, Frau P. looks at the interpreter strangely. "She probably couldn't believe it. [Наверно, не поверила]," (Shishkin 380; Shishkin 701). Having just realized his new found truth, he did not have time to come up with a parable to interpret his thoughts.

However, the interpreter does not realize his complete truth until seeing a vision of his teacher, Galina Petrovna in Rome. She appears to him almost as an image of the Virgin Mary that would visit a holy fool in a hagiography. He first recalls her in the beginning of the novel when he awakens from a dream in the middle of the night drenched in sweat. He remembers the schoolroom, her lessons, and the name that the boys gave her "out of sheer meanness" – Galpetra.

> "…I remember the field trip mainly because someone whispered to me that our Galpetra was pregnant. This seemed so impossible to me at the time, so unimaginable, that our ageless, mustachioed teacher could get pregnant. After all, for that to happen, what happened between a man and woman – a woman, not our Galpertra! – would have to happen…" (Shishkin 27).
>
> "...Но главным образом та экскурсия запомнилась тем, как кто-то мне шернул, что наша Гальпетра – беременна. Это настолько показалось мне тогда не возможным, не представимым, чтобы наша не имеющая возраста усатая классная могла забеременеть, ведь для этого нужно, чтобы произоло то, что происходить между мужчиной и женщиной – женщиной, а не нашей Гальпетрой!" (Shishkin 404).

The child's incomprehension of the idea of Galpetra being pregnant hints at the idea of immaculate conception. When Galina Petrovna visits her student at the end of the novel in the center of Rome, the interpreter says to her, "…I wanted to ask you this: Why did you love us while we hated you? [Я хотел вас спрость вот что: почему мы вас ненавидели, а вы нас любили?]" His teacher responds, "You loved me, too, you just didn't know [Вы меня тоже любили, только не знали об этом]" (Shishkin 485;

Shishkin 790). Whether or not this vision was meant to be seen as a divine image, the story of his memories and dream-like interactions with her still compose a story of finding one's way back towards the path of salvation by one's own inner truth.

As Bella writes in a diary entry about a lover she met in Crimea, "In the morning he wakes me by nibbling on my earlobe and whispers words of love – I don't care whether it's the truth or a lie. Because there cannot be a lie in love, only in words. [А утром он будит меня, покусывая губами мочку уха, шепчет слова любви, и мне безразлично – правда это или ложь. Потому что в любви лжи быть не может – только в словах.]" (Shishkin 476, Shishkin 782). The words of her students only reflected the resistance they felt towards learning the lessons and teachings from the blackboard that caused the interpreter to wake up drenched in sweat (Shishkin 27). Although cruel, their words in no way truthfully depicted how they honestly felt towards her. While the third person sentence structure in letters to his son demonstrates a sense of neutrality towards his past relationship with Isolde, the amends made with his schoolteacher in the vision signifies the interpreter's rebirth into seeing all that is, in the present moment. At first, interpreter serves as a musical instrument for Peter, the guardian. By the end of the novel, the interpreter has transformed from a musical instrument to a musician or from a monk to a holy fool. Finally, he reaches his unique inner truth, so that he can interpret his story for future listeners.

Speaking the Truth

"*Question*: Everything will be fine.

Answer: It will?

Question: Believe me, it will all turn out.

Answer: You think so?

Question: I know so.

Answer: How do you know?

Question: Everything always ends well. It happens every time, you know. First the sufferings, fears, worries, tears, and losses, but ultimately it's all in the past. You can't even believe it ever was. Like a bad dream. It's over - and gone" (Shishkin 93-94).

"*Вопрос*: Все будет хорошо.

Ответ: Да?

Вопрос: Поверьте, все обойдется.

Ответ: Вы думаете?

Вопрос: Я знаю.

Ответ: Откуда вы знаете?

Вопрос: Все всегда заканчивается хорошо. Так ведь каждый раз бывает: снчала переживания, страхи, волнения, слезы, потери, а в конце концов все оказывается уже позади. И уже не верится даже, что все это было. Как дурной сон. Прошло – и нет" (Shishkin 459).

Although it is a common belief that time heals pain, Peter does the opposite of what Socrates would do by claiming that he knows what will happen in the future. Although his words compose a false knowledge, a hint of truth exists. To be a master of words is an ethical responsibility to society. Living according to one's unique philosophy is another. By avoiding the inclination to judge and evaluate according to earthly logic, the interpreter, teacher, or holy fool humbles himself and honors the speaker or listener by not self-projecting. Removing oneself from the past and remaining aware in the present moment allows the interpreter to assist others by working as an instrument. After discovering his or her own truth, however, the holy fool is able to stop reciting others and to start speaking from within.

Chapter Four: The World of Bulgakov

A variety of voices speak in *The Master and Margarita*, much like the singers and orchestra in an opera or musical. However, only a few talented soloists stand on stage to deliver a message. Lies from tone deaf singers and off-key instruments create cacophony, as they project over the soloist. The performers' reluctance to change tempo and play a new melody forces the soloist off stage. However, Bulgakov demonstrates through caricatures of false Soviet authorities that society is already out of tune with themselves and their surroundings. Although the audience would like to hear a new harmony, the performers' fears change as they rediscover the beat within themselves, instead of within an ideology as directed by the conductor. Thus, confusion arises in the novel from multiple speakers who blare over each other masking the original melody of some, and making others lose their sense of the beat as well.

Since one soloist surrenders himself to an asylum and another is thrown off beat by his editor, the only musician keeping in sync with the tune is Margarita. Although she never creates any manuscripts, she preserves the Master's words out of unconditional love – her unique composition. Although the title of the novel names only two characters, *The Master and Margarita*, Bulgakov discusses a variety of roles as they participate in the song of dissonance, while regaining their beat. Just as Shishkin's Peter describes the various historical identities and plotlines, the Master's novel discusses themes and patterns that occur in Ancient Jerusalem and repeat in Soviet Moscow. The holy fool's words and truth, however, revive society to help it break free from cycles of delusion and confusion. Through manuscripts, one can reach a sense of personal enlightenment by

interpreting and experiencing the writer's words on the existence of unconditional love and the act of being true to oneself. Therefore, core traits of a holy fool in both *The Master and Margarita* and *Maidenhair* are the act of awakening the reader through words and preserving the message with unconditional love.

Part 1. Meeting Demons

Confusion and dissonance occurs synchronously with each rude awakening in *The Master and Margarita*. As an aid to the light, Woland turns the audience's world upside down by destroying the rhythm and perception of a truth that is conducted and manipulated by "the puppets-handlers." In *The Republic*'s Allegory of the Cave, the cave dwellers sit in chains facing the cave's walls. The people's only source of light that appears to them comes from a campfire far behind and beyond the cave's opening. "Between the fire and the prisoners there is a road above, along which see a wall, built like the partitions puppet-handlers set in front of the human beings and over which they show the puppets" (Plato *The Republic* 514a-b).

In *The Master and Margarita*, the Soviet officials and leaders mirror the puppet-handlers, who walk along the road with propagandist images, as though they are putting on a puppet show for the public. Georges Bengalsky, master of ceremonies, interrupts Woland's black magic performance with his misinterpretation of each act. He makes the incorrect assumption that he can regain control of the cave dwellers and influence Woland's debut by disrupting the audience's suspension of disbelief through his reinforcement of state teachings on the Soviet cave-like perception of reality.

> "'The foreign artiste is expressing his admiration for Moscow and its technological development, as well as for the Muscovites' Here Bengalsky smiled twice, first to the stalls, then to the gallery" (Bulgakov 122-123).
>
> " - Иностранный артист выражает свое восхищение Москвой, выросшей в техническом отношении, а также и москвичами, - тут Бенгальский дважды улыбнулся, сперва партеру, а потом галерее" (Bulgakov 126).

By misinterpreting the show, Bengalsky attempts to explain what he does not know, thereby throwing off the audience's unique perception. Bengalsky's job requires him to guard the cave opening from contradictory information so that the dwellers' can continue to exist within the Soviet version of truth. Woland then asks his own interpreter, Fagott-Koroviev for clarification. "Did I express admiration?" The interpreter replies: "By no means, Messire, you never expressed any admiration…he quite simply lied! [Разве я выразил восхищение?...Никак нет, мессир, вы никакого восхищение не выражали...А он попросту соврал!]" (Bulgakov 122-123; Bulgakov 126). Like Bengalsky, the interpreter Koroviev also spoke false words and is now an experienced candidate for deciphering lies.

> "'This knight once made an unfortunate joke,' replied Woland...'The pun he thought up, in a discussion about light and darkness, was not altogether good. And after that the knight had to go on joking a bit more and longer than he supposed…" (Bulgakov 380).
>
> "Рыщарь этот когда-то неудачно пошутил, - ответил Волад...- его каламбур, который он сочинил, разговаривая о свете и тьме, был не совсем хорош. И рыцарю пришлось после этого прошутить немного больше и дольше, он предполагал..." (Bulgakov 395).

Because of his error, Koroviev serves time as a false interpreter, speaking in riddles causing misunderstanding. A holy fool cannot be found in the Variety Theater to interpret for Woland, because society's composers have been miswriting notes and its

conductors have waving the baton aimlessly. Therefore, Koroviev is the only soul with enough knowledge and experience to decipher words and deliver messages between the audience and those on stage, especially Bengalsky, who tells lies as a profession.

Since Koroviev never learned how to climb Socrates' slippery slope of truth, he serves as a false guide. While the cacophony he creates has an underlying logic, his words tell a truth in an unmusical jumble that makes it difficult to understand his message. Unlike Peter who keeps count with the metronome, but lacks the experience to understand rhythm, Koroviev dances with the darkness, but learns how to keep count with the devil in order to regain his sense of order. As was stated in Chapter 3, Peter as a student philosopher-ruler is "drawn to a want of measure," (Plato *The Republic* 486d). Koroviev, on the other hand, is spending time in the after-life to find that measure.

While part of Koroviev's role in Woland's performance is to clarify Bengalsky's mistakes and conduct magic tricks to society, the other half of the interpreter's part is to stand by Woland's side and offer support. He does this without providing any absolutes about concepts he does not understand, and therefore avoid telling another lie or a bad joke. Koroviev only states an absolute after the mad professor has already spoken the truth in the form of a question.

> "'Tell me, my gentle Fagott,' Woland inquired of the checkered clown, who evidently had another appellation than Koroviev, 'what do you think, the Moscow populace has changed significantly hasn't it?'
>
> The magician looked out at the hushed audience, struck by the appearance of the armchair out of nowhere.
>
> 'That it has, Messire,' Fagott-Koroviev replied in a low voice," (Bulgakov 122).

> "- Скажи мне, любезный Фагот, - осведомился Воланд у клетчатого гаера, носившего, по-видимому, и другое наименование, кроме «Коровьев», - как по-твоему, ведь московское народонаселение значительно изменилось?
>
> Маг поглядел на затихшую, пораженную появлением кресла из воздуха публику.
>
> - Точно так, мессир, - негромко ответил Фагот-Коровьев," (Bulgakov 125).

Woland never protests against Bengalsky's statements, but asks his entourage for a second opinion on the validity of his statement within a question, just as Socrates does throughout *The Republic*. Similar to Socrates' disciples, Woland's followers rarely challenge his inquiries. In addition, just as Socrates' students assist their teacher by asking questions to arrive at conclusions about what makes a society just, Woland's entourage help the maestro expose the soul of the new republic's Homo-Sovieticus (Fitzpatrick 1) in order to show the cave dwellers how little they truly know about themselves, let alone philosophical teachings.

Woland conducts his disorienting social experiments with the controlled variable of his entourage's stunts and the independent variable of his black magic in order to manipulate the dependent variable of humanity. While on stage, Woland scans the state-indoctrinated audience with the sole purpose of trying to discover if the atheist Homo Sovieticus is truly a transfigured human being in a just republic. He presents the scientifically evolved citizenry with temptations: clothes, money, and magic. After the audience suspends its disbelief in order to snatch the raining money, Woland makes the following conclusion based upon the previous data:

> "…they're people like any other people…They love money, but that has always been so…Mankind loves money, whatever it's made of – leather, paper, bronze, gold. Well, they're light-minded…well, what of it…mercy sometimes knocks

> at their hearts…ordinary people…In general, reminiscent of the former ones…only the housing problem has corrupted them…" (Bulgakov 126).
>
> "…- они – люди как люди. Любят деньги, но ведь это всегда было... Человечество любит деньги, из чего бы те ни были сделаны, из бумаги ли, из бронзы или золота. Ну, легкомысленны... ну, что ж... и милосердие иногда стучится в из сердца... обыкновенные люди... В общем, напоминают прежних... квартирный вопрос только испортил их... (Bulgakov 130).

Loyal to his knowledge, Woland speaks according to observation, rather than to a blind dogma. In Socratic fashion, Woland also questions people, but does this in order to receive new data to test their soul's level of enlightenment or righteousness. According to Ritta Pittman, both Plato and Xenophon "testify" that "the demon spoke to Socrates through the language of sounds and signs" (Pittman 52-53). Although Socrates' students present him with challenging inquiries, Socrates always wins the argument and everyone's agreement at the end of each discussion due to his strong sense of inner wisdom or as Plato and Xenophon considered it, possessive inspiration. Therefore, Woland is a guide for the philosopher or the seeker who dares to undergo a transformation by venturing into the darkness of uncertainty in order to learn an unknown truth. While Woland causes confusion by leading those into the darkness, he also breaks the chains of the holy fool, who later returns to the cave in order to illuminate the truth to the rest of society.

Just as Peter in *Maidenhair* asks questions and searches for inconsistencies, Woland looks for dishonesty and hypocrisy. The difference between Socrates and Woland lies in the motivation for questioning. Socrates cautiously guides others to find the truth from within, so that he does not make an error in misguiding them from their own knowledge and experience. His caution is demonstrated in his listening to the

students' truths and admitting that the only certain thing he knows is that he knows nothing. Woland, on the other hand, is not concerned with other's salvation. Instead, he introduces problems to people, but allows the citizens to choose freely how to react to unfamiliar circumstances and new information about the state of their souls. According to Woland's observations of the Muscovites behavior at the Variety Theater and his narration of the public's response at Christ's Inquisition, humanity as a whole is still not ready to leave the comforts of their current lifestyles to break free from their chains of confinement. While the Muscovites greedily snatch at clothes and money, the High Priest Kaifa and his peers fear a loss of power caused by Yeshua's disobedience and good works. For the majority of humanity then, free will is used to gain more earthly comforts rather than to discover one's own truth. Although Woland realizes that thousands of years have passed between Yeshua's execution and the creation of Soviet Moscow, humanity remains the same, due to its decision to dedicate free will towards finding ways to alleviate discomfort, instead of confronting and speaking each person's hidden wisdom.

While the audience at the Variety Theater scrambles one after the other by snatching money and clothes, Matvei decides to give up money and leaves his position as a tax collector in order to join Yeshua. However, similar to the Woland's participants, Matvei follows the example of another, thereby ignoring his inner truth. Matvei's refusal to engage in conversation with Woland stems from his rejection of money and acceptance of light. Woland, however, reminds Matvei of his roots by addressing him as a former tax collector and then engages him in a conversation. "Kindly consider the question," Woland asks the uninvited messenger, Matvei.

> "…what would your good do if evil did not exist, and what would the earth look like if shadows disappeared from it? Shadows are cast by objects and people…Do you want to skin the whole earth, tearing all the trees and living things off it, because of your fantasy of enjoying bare light? You're a fool" (Bulakov 360).
>
> "...Не будешь ли ты так добр подумать над вопросом: что бы делало твое добро, если бы не существовало зла, и как бы выглядела земля, если бы с нее исчезли тени? Ведь тени получаются от предметов и людей...Не хочешь ли ты ободрать весь земной шар, снеся с него прочь все деревья и все живое из-за твоей фантазии наслаждаться голым светом? Ты глуп" (Bulgakov 375).

Not a philosopher or a holy fool, Matvei refuses to argue with the "old sophist [старый софист]," who is represented by Thrasymachus, in Book 1 of Plato's *The Republic*. Thrasymachus angrily accuses Socrates for simply asking questions instead of answering them.

> "[Thrasymachus] listened, burst out laughing very scornfully, and said, 'Hercules! Here is that habitual irony of Socrates. I knew it, and I predicted to these fellows that you wouldn't be willing to answer if someone asked you something'" (Plato *The Republic* 337a).

Thrasymachus has not yet admitted that not only does he know nothing, but that it is impossible for humanity to know everything. Just like Yeshua in *The Master and Margarita*, who calls every man a "good man [добрый человек]," Socrates responds calmly by calling Thrasymachus "wise" and the "best of men," thus pointing out the sophist's flaws with compliments instead of insults (Plato *The Republic* 337a-e). Similar to Thrasymachus who accuses Socrates and his disciples as "fools making way for one another" and not relying on their own answers for insight (Plato *The Republic* 336c).

Freely choosing not to associate with Woland in a conversation that sheds doubt upon the clarity of light is Matvei's decision. Although his refusal protects Yeshua's disciple from darkness, it does not allow him to realize his own inner truth. Woland the

sophist, then points out Matvei's inability to think for himself. "You also cannot argue with me, for the reason I've already mentioned: you're a fool [Ты и не можешь со мной спорить по той причине, о которой я уже упомянул: ты глуп]" (Bulgakov 360; Bulgakov 375). According to Woland's perception, Matvei is a "former tax collector [бывший сборщик податей]", who transformed into a "slave [раб]" for the master, Yeshua, who is the only one in the relationship to realize his unique truth.

After Matvei's retort that he is not a slave, but a disciple, Woland responds, "You and I speak different languages, as usual [Мы говорим с тобой на разных языках, как всегда]" (Bulgakov 360; Bulgakov 375). According to Socratic dialect and Woland's language, this chapter argues that the person who cannot walk his own path and follows another's journey to absorb someone else's inner truth behaves like a slave who expresses someone else's hidden wisdom. By provoking Matvei with insults, Woland is not acting as Socrates, but is aiding Socratic dialectic by showing Matvei that he is not confronting his unique truth. Therefore, Woland is either attempting to lure the slave into the darkness or wanting to guide the disciple into the light, depending upon the reader's interpretation. On the other hand, Matvei fights fire with fire by insulting the devil, rather than walk the footsteps of his master by cooling down the situation with kindness. This hints at the former tax collector's own weakness, as Yeshua recalls Matvei treating himself similarly upon their first acquaintance on the road to Bethphage. While Matvei exercises his free will by following Yeshua into the light and refusing materialism and questions of doubt from Woland, he still does not live up to his fullest potential by

confronting darkness in order to discover his own truth. Instead, Matvei chooses to remain a faithful companion to his master.

Despite Matvei's fierce loyalty to Yeshua's words and actions, the disciple misunderstands Yeshua's message and records his teacher's life and truths incorrectly through embellishments, just as Bengalsky lies on stage by creating meaning in Woland's words.

> "These good people…" Yeshua says to Pilate, "…haven't any learning and have confused everything I told them. Generally, I'm beginning to be afraid that this confusion may go on for a very long time. And all because he writes down the things I say incorrectly...once I peeked into this parchment and was horrified. I said decidedly nothing of what's written there. I implored him: 'Burn your parchment, I beg you!' But he tore it out of my hands and ran away" (Bulgakov 22-23).

> "Эти добрые люди...ничему не учились и все перепутали, что я говорил. Я вообще начинаю опасаться, что путаница эта будет продолжаться очень долгое время. И все из-за того, что он неверно записывает за мной…Но я однажды заглянул в этот пергамент и ужаснулся. Решительно ничего из того, что там записано, я не говорил. Я его умолял: сожги ты, Бога ради, свой пергамент! Но он вырвал его у меня из рук и убежал" (Bulgakov 22).

According to J.A. E. Curtis, Matvei has multiple opportunities to record Yeshua's story accurately since "…he follows Iyeshua around before his arrest, witnesses his death, and also knows the true story of the death of Judas, since Pilate makes quite explicit to him his responsibility for the murder…," (Curtis 148). Similar to Peter, the former tax collector has poor listening skills and does not pay attention to the truth even though it tells him directly to burn the parchment. It is easier for Matvei to choose to stay under the comfortable guidance of his master, instead of attaining a level of equality with Yeshua by realizing his own potential. Deciding to engage in a discussion with doubt, however, would require the disciple to leave the familiarity of the cave in order to venture

into the unknown. Therefore, just as a child with a blanket, the disciple runs away from Yeshua with his writings in order to protect his fairytales, which he quotes as literal truths instead of as spiritual vernacular for a specific audience.

As Socrates states in *The Republic*, "We make use of tales with children before exercises" (Plato *The Republic* 377a). According to Socrates' dialectic in Book II, if anyone is to teach lessons or to create exercises, it should be those who properly understand the material and can explain the meaning of a message. In addition, the lesson must be created under supervisors of the truth, and then the exercises must receive approval through censorship. Socrates and his disciples state that they do not want "…the children near just any tales fashioned by just anyone and take into their souls opinions for the most part opposite to those we'll suppose they must have when they are grown up…" (Plato *The Republic* 377a-c).

While Woland embodies the sophist in Socratic dialectic, Ivan is an example of a student with a dogmatic and uncritical education. Although the Soviet government heavily supervised and censored the written word in order to create state-enlightened propaganda, Ivan Bezdomny, a revolutionary poet, learns manmade, Socialist Realist fairytales that confuse his inner truth. Woland serves as the catalyst for change by exposing his inner core after meeting Ivan at Patriarch's Ponds.

The old sophist uses his magical insight to manipulate Ivan's pride and vanity in his newly found artistic popularity by addressing him with his first and patronymic name. "Gracious, Ivan Nikolayevich, who doesn't know you? [Помилуйте, Иван Николаевич, кто же вас не знает?]" he says, as he takes out a copy of the *Literary Gazette* displaying

Bezdomny's picture on the front page (Bulgakov 16; Bulgakov 16). During their meeting, Ivan hiccups loudly and painfully, as though something in his throat is keeping him from speaking. In conjunction with Ivan's physical discomfort, Woland makes "a repellent impression on the poet" (Bulgakov 11). Ivan's feelings of repulsion towards the foreigner mirror Matvei's foolish behavior of denying what produces an uncomfortable effect on him. Therefore, Ivan simply insults Woland and refuses to take part in the conversation, just as Matvei avoids an argument with the old sophist. Meanwhile, Berlioz finds the stranger interesting and Woland is delighted to have new participants in his dialectic.

> "'You are – atheists?!'
> 'Yes, we're atheists,' Berlioz smilingly replied, and Homeless [Bezdomny] thought, getting angry: 'Latched on to us, the foreign goose!'
> 'Oh, how lovely!' the astonishing foreigner cried out and began swiveling his head, looking from one writer to the other" (Bulgakov 12).

> "Вы – атеисты?!
> Да, мы – атеисты, - улыбаясь, ответил Берлиоз, а Бездомный подумал, рассердившись: «Вот прицепился, заграничный гусь!»
> -Ох, какая прелесть! – вскричал удивительный иностранец и завертел головой, глядя то на одного, то на другого литератора" (Bulgakov 11).

Ivan thinks otherwise, and conveys his disgust by speaking to Woland dismissively and insultingly to get the "foreign goose" off of his back. In addition, he speaks lies about his disbelief in Christ's existence, even after he has just submitted a poem to his editor, Berlioz, illustrating Yeshua's evil life. As a misguided guardian of the Soviet state, Berlioz tries to convince Bezdomny away from his original perception of the truth by telling the poet that his topic should not be whether Jesus was good or evil, but simply that Jesus did not exist (Bulgakov 9). Therefore, Berlioz is not only misguiding Bezdomny from his inner truth, but asking Bezdomny to use his artistic talents to

misguide others from their ideas in order to reteach false education, thereby continuing the puppet show for cave dwellers. Although Ivan listens to Berlioz's insight on political and moral correctness, he is still confused about the non-existence of Christ. His obedient willingness to absorb information demonstrates his desperation to learn and to have an authentic place in society as a messenger of a truth. However, Ivan's confusion also points to his innate philosophical characteristics that questions truth.

Ivan's poetry is the equivalent of Matvei's parables – metaphorical and ideological. Just as Matvei follows Yeshua after being irritated with him, Bezdomny pursues the Woland after his Berlioz's decapitation.

> "Matthew Levi…used to be a tax collector, and I first met him on the road to Bethphage, where a fig grove juts out an angle, and I got to talking with him. He treated me hostilely at first and even insulted me – that is, thought he insulted me – by calling me a dog…I personally see nothing bad about this animal, that I should be offended…However after listening to me, he began to soften…finally threw money down in the road and said he would go journeying with me…" (Bulgakov 23).

> "Левий Матвей...он был сборщиком податей, и я с ним встретился впервые на дороге в Виффагии, там, где углом выходит фиговый саы, и разговорился с ним. Первоначально он отнесся ко мне неприязненно и даже оскорблял меня, то есть думал, что оскорбляет, называя меня собакой...я лично не вижу ничего дурного в этом звере, чтобы обижаться на это слово..." (Bulgakov 22-23).

The difference between the illumination of Matvei and Ivan is that Matvei met Yeshua and Ivan met Woland. When Yeshua speaks to others, he convinces listeners to give away their money in pursuit of a higher attainment. According to the spokesperson for the kingdom of truth, all people are good people (Bulgakov 31). His statements can cause confusion and discomfort, as in the case with Matvei. However, they awaken people to change and to emerge from the cave of darkness in order to greet the light.

Since Yeshua is a fluent speaker of truth, he serves as an honest guide and patient teacher for those who meet him along the road and join him as loyal companions.

Woland, on the other hand, tempts guinea pigs to take money so that he can observe their reactions. In doing so, he reveals the shadows in their souls, which people have no choice then but to shun or confront. By conversing with Ivan's vanity at Patriarch's Ponds, Woland treats the poet no differently than the audience at the Variety Theater. The mad professor tears down Ivan's shields of pride, vanity, and desperation for approval. Without these traits to protect his role in society, Bezdomny finds himself in an asylum. In order to maintain his position in the ideological proletarian writer's community, Ivan needs the secure chains of pride, vanity, and social acceptance, as well as a guide, who is well-versed in the language of mediocre art and manmade truths. Berlioz serves as Ivan's false interpreter and as a spokesman for Soviet ideology. Writing politically dogmatic poetry does not come naturally to Ivan because of his inherent ability to see, even with a blurry perception. Therefore, the Soviet lens that Berlioz gives to Ivan distorts the poet's vision of Christ and misguides Ivan in his exploration for self-knowledge and self-expression.

Working for Berlioz any longer would eventually cause Ivan to lose his inner beat and sell his soul to a lie, just like Bengalsky and Koroviev. Working for Woland never allows the jokester Koroviev the opportunity to speak fairly and honestly for others.

> "…'I've had them up to here, these foreign tourists!' Koroviev complained confidentially, jabbing his finger at his sinewy neck. 'Believe me, they wring the soul right out of you! They come and either spy on you like the lowest son of a bitch, or else torment you with their caprices – this isn't right and that isn't right!..." (Bulgakov 98).

> "...Вот они где у меня сидят, эти интуристы! – интимно пожаловался Коровьев, тыча пальцем в свою жилистую шею. – Верите ли, всю душу вымотали! Приедет...и или нашпионит, как последний сукин сын, или же капризами замучает: и то ему не так, и это не так!..." (Bulgakov 100-101).

Although Koroviev's underlying truth is expressed within the half-explanation of his soul's state of exhaustion, he uses words that can have double interpretations for listeners of various experiences, thus alienating the chairman of the tenants' association Nikanor Ivanovich Bosoy from his honest meaning. Bosoy assumes that the interpreter is actually discussing foreign tourists, who spy and take advantage of services and hospitality. At the mercy of Woland, Koroviev works as a wand for the mad professor's black magic. Therefore, Koroviev is not an empty vessel for truth, like the holy fool, but is instead a tool used for taking apart broken instruments and leaving behind the mess. Through the voices of Fagott-Koroviev, Ivan Bezdomny, and Matvei Levi, Bulgakov shows the fate of those who lie, those misguided, and those illuminated through someone else's truth.

Breaking the Chains

In addition to serving as the only interpreter not in an asylum, Koroviev works as a choir-master who amplifies society's voice by making it sound in harmony amidst its discordant lies. Koroviev emphasizes tone and brings measure to a lost rhythm by returning the people back to their roots with the Russian folksong "Glorious Sea."

> "The checkered specialist-choirmaster bawled out: 'Do, mi, sol, do!' –dragged the most bashful from behind the bookcases, where they had tried to save themselves from singing, told Kosarchuk he had perfect pitch, began whining, squealing, begging them to be kind to an old singing-master, tapped the tuning fork on his knuckle, beseeched them to strike up 'Glorious Sea'.

Strike up they did. And gloriously. The checkered one really knew his business" (Bulgakov 192-193).

"Клетчатый специалист-хормейстер проорал: - До-ми-соль-до! – вытащал наиболее застенчивых из-за шкафов, где они пытались спстись от пения, Корсарчуку сказал, что у того аболютный слух, заныл, заскулил, просил уважить старого регента-певуна, стукал камертоном по польцам, умоляя грянуть «Славное море».

Грянули. Иславн грянули" (Bulgakov 199-200).

Although the "bashful" staff members for the affiliate of the Commission on Spectacles and Entertainment of the Lighter Type show a reluctance to participate in Koroviev's stunt, they also cannot find their own song. Therefore, Koroviev demonstrates that if one cannot find his sense of an inner truth, another composer's melody will fill their souls and another conductor will direct how and when they will sing. Following Woland's footsteps of introducing a challenge and then vanishing, "the director excused himself, said: 'Back in a minute…', and disappeared…[Тут регент извинился, сказал: «Я на минутку!» - и исчез]" (Bulgakov 193; Bulgakov 200).

The staff remains in the building, waiting obediently for the choir-master to return. In the ten minutes of Koroviev's absence, anyone could have left, but the government officials remain waiting for orders. "The staff was overjoyed – he had run away! Then suddenly, somehow of themselves, they began the second verse. They were all led by Kosarchuk…[Радость охватила филнальцев – сбежал. И вдруг как-то сами собой запели второй куплет. Всех повел за собою Косарчук...]" (Bulgakov 193; Bulgakov 200). If Koroviev is not there to conduct and the authorities are lost without a director, then a new leader will just pick up the tune, even if the novice does not have a "perfect pitch [не было абсолютного слуха]" but simply "a rather pleasant high tenor

[довольно приятный высокий тенор]" (Bulgakov 193; Bulgakov 200). Therefore, Koroviev's practical joke shows that the best leader is not an amateur singer, but one's own musical self. Once Koroviev starts the group singing a national folk song, his presence is not needed in the room because they are already in touch with a personal aspect of their collective origin. The vocalists can more easily figure their way out of the cave's tunnel once they can confront their role in the collective, if they even have a role or if some are soloists instead. As Socrates states, for a truth seeker to be in a healthy state of soundness,

> "[One] must look at the natures of the souls that imitate the philosophic nature and set themselves up in its practice, and see what sort they are who approach a practice that is of no value for them and beyond them, and even those who strike false notes, thereby attaching to philosophy everywhere..." (Plato *The Republic* 491a).

While Soviet officials, such as Bengalsky and Berlioz, attach ideology to various art mediums for didactic purposes, Koroviev's riddles and performances demonstrate that he is on the verge of relearning his song through his ability to decipher lies from the bad philosophical joke that he once told. However, he can only complete his melody after being rescued by a holy fool. Koroviev assists Margarita, or Queen Margot, at Satan's Ball by guiding her words and movements. Queen Margot bears the burden for the lost souls by wearing a "heavy, oval framed picture of a black poodle by a heavy chain [тяжелое в овальной раме изображение черного пуделя на тяжелой цепи]" that Koroviev dons on her.

> "…This adornment was extremely burdensome to the queen. The chain at once began to chafe her neck, the picture pulled her down. But something compensated

> Margarita for the inconveniences that the chain with the black poodle caused her, and this was the deference with which Koroveiv and Behemoth began to treat her.
>
> Never mind, never mind, never mind!' muttered Koroviev… 'No help for it, you must, must, must…" (Bulgakov 261).
>
> "...Это украшенеие чрезвычайно обременило королеву. Цепь сейчас же стала натирать шею, изображение тянуло ее согнуться. Но кое-что вознаградило Маргариту за те неудобства, которые ей причиняла цепь с черным пуделем. Это – та почтительность, с которою стали относиться к ней Коровьев и Бегемонт.
>
> - Ничего, ничего, ничего! – бормотал Коровьев...- Ничего не поделаешь, надо, надо, надо..." (Bulgakov 270).

It is almost as if Koroviev understands the weight of the chains that the holy fool carries. Margarita, great-great-great granddaughter of a sixteenth century French queen, is the perfect soul to help absolve the knight Koroviev of his crime. According to A.M. Panchenko, "to become a holy fool, a European had to settle in Russia first. Indeed, many of Russia's holy fools were of foreign origin." (*Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives* 42-43). Although Margarita is Russian, she has inherited French blood and the royal characteristics of her ancestor. A queen and a wanderer through unfamiliar dark territory, Queen Margot possesses the traits of a truth seeking philosopher. She does not dabble in philosophical matters that she does not understand, but instead reads the words of the Master and embraces the truth that she does know, unconditional love. In addition, Margarita's rejection of money and status agrees with Socrates descriptions of these humble philosopher-leaders of the new republic.

> "…the good aren't willing to rule for the sake of money or honor. For they don't wish openly to exact wages for ruling and get called hirelings, nor on their own secretly to take a profit from their ruling and get called thieves. Nor, again, will they rule for the sake of honor. For they are not lovers of honor" (Plato *The Republic* 347b).

Her virtues are demonstrated by her acceptance of an immaterial, hidden wisdom, even as it contradicts the illusion of her wealthy surroundings. Upon leaving for Satan's Ball, Margarita tells her maid Natasha to take her material possessions.

> "'Take all these rags, take the perfume, drag it to your trunk, hide it," cried Margarita, 'but don't take any valuables, they'll accuse you of stealing'" (Bulgakov 232).
>
> "-Берите все тряпки, берите духи и волоките к себе в сундук, прячьте, - кричала Маргарита, - но драгоценностей не берите, а то вас в краже обвинят!" (Bulgakov 239).

Not only do her words point to her disgust of materialism as it is unrelated to her truth, but they show Margarita's compassion for the well-being of others. She not only gives Natasha permission to take her clothes, but she advises her on which items to take and how to hide them so that no one will arrest the maid. Just like one of Socrates' philosopher rulers, she leaves for Satan's Ball so that she can complete her dark journey and realize her full potential of finding her truth, or the Master. Just as Socrates states that "a cowardly and illiberal nature would not, as it seems participate in true philosophy" (Plato *The Republic* 486b), Margarita accepts her fate fearlessly when she leaves the routine of her grim apartment, further establishing herself as a courageous guide and ruler. Rather than remain chained to her isolation, she decides to break free from her own bonds to meet darkness itself. Because she has experience leaving the prison, she can now assist others, who also want to break free.

Margarita's venture finally gives Koroviev a chance to serve an honorable soul, who is not condemned like himself. He assists the queen by guiding her "through the

ballrooms of Moscow [в Москве по больным залам]" (Bulgakov 252; Bulgakov 261) and explaining his knowledge of after-life etiquette and cultural nuances at Satan's Ball.

> "No, not enough, not enough,' whispered Koroviev, 'he won't sleep all night. Call out to him: 'Greetings to you waltz king!' Margarita cried it out…
>
> 'Not enough, not enough,' whispered Koroviev, 'look to the left, to the first violins, and nod so that each one thinks you've recognized him individually…'" (Bulgakov 262-263).
>
> - Нет, мало, мало – зашептал Коровьев, - он не будет спать всю ночь. Крикните ему: «Приветствую вас, король вальсов!» Маргарита крикнула...
>
> - Мало, мало, - шептал Коровьев, - глядите налево, на первые скрипки, и кивните так, чтобы каждый думал, что вы его узнали в отдельности... (Bulgakov 272).

Koroviev demonstrates an understanding of the other souls' possible feelings and future reactions, as he already knows their fate if they have insufficient interaction with the queen. His experience with darkness makes him a qualified interpreter to explain the details of their souls' stories and to instruct Margarita's behavior as hostess at Satan's Ball and as a member of Woland's court.

> "Allow me, Queen, to give you a last piece of advice. Among the guests there will be different sorts, oh, very different, but no one, Queen Margot, should be shown any preference!...He'll notice it, he'll notice it instantly! You must love him, love him, Queen! The mistress of the ball will be rewarded a hundredfold for that…" (Bulgakov 261).
>
> "Разрешите, королева, вам дать последний совет. Среди гостей будут различные, ох, очень различные, но никому, королева Марго никакого преимущества!...Заметит, заметит в то же мгновение! Нужно полюбить его, полюбить, королева! Сторицей будет вознаграждена за это хозяйка бала" (Bulgakov 271).

However, Margarita does not perfectly obey Koroviev. Upon meeting Frieda, she tells her to drink champagne and to forget about her problems. "'What are you doing Queen?!' Koroviev cried desperately but soundlessly in Margarita's ear. 'There'll be a

traffic jam! [-Что вы изволите делать, королева?! – отчаянно, но беззвучно вскричал на ухо Маргарите Коровьев. – Получится затор!]'" (Bulgakov 268; Bulgakov 277). However, in going against Koroviev's judgment, Margarita provides hope and relief for a lost soul and establishes herself as a ruler of her own course. Her power becomes further solidified when Woland tells Margarita that he cannot free Frieda from her eternal fate because each department is in charge of its own affairs. Therefore, as a leader of her own path, Margarita has the power to follow through with the decisions she has made as a benevolent queen.

Although Margarita suffers throughout the night from physical pain and exhaustion from receiving thousands of souls, she never complains. Koroviev helps her by giving her elbow an armrest and her foot a pillow. According to A.M. Panchenko, "The holy fool never attempts to escape from 'beating and bullying.' At least this is what hagiographers affirm. To the contrary, he silently and even gratefully endures the crowd's blows" (*Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives* 62). When Woland asks Margarita if she wishes to say anything upon her departure after the Ball, she responds:

> "No, nothing, Messire…except that if you still need me, I'm willing and ready to do anything you wish. I'm not tired in the least, and I had a very good time at the ball. So that if it were still going on, I would again offer my knee for thousands of gallowsbirds and murderers to kiss" (Bulgakov 281).
>
> "Нет, ничего мессир...кроме того, что если я еще нужна вам, то я готова охотно исполнить все, что вам будет угодно. Я ничуть не устала и очень веселилась на балу. Так что, если бы он и продолжался еще, я охотно бы предоставила мое колено для того чтобы к нему прикладывались тысячи висельников и убийц" (Bulgakov 292).

Not only does Queen Margot have the experience and knowledge to save and guide others out of darkness, but she learns how to communicate with Woland.

Therefore, the holy fool can finally resound independently without an interpreter. Although she is finally able to move freely within the darkness, her knight does not abandon her. When offered a second chance to ask for a wish, Koroviev whispers to her a warning, "Diamond donna, this time I advise you to be more reasonable! Or else fortune may slip away! [Алмазная донна, на сей раз советую вам быть поблагоразумнее! А то ведь фортуна может и ускользнуть.]" (Bulgakov 284; Bulgakov 295). After Satan's Ball, Koroviev hints that he has returned some debts for past sins.

> "'Precious Queen,' squeaked Koroviev, 'I wouldn't advise anyone to meet [Azazello], even if he's not carrying a gun! I give you my word of honour as an ex-choirmaster and precentor that no one would congratulate the one doing the meeting'" (Bulgakov 280).
>
> "-Драгоценная королева, - пищал Коровьев, - я никому не рекомендую встретиться с ним, даже если у него и не будет никакого револьвера в руках! Даю слово чести бывшего регента и запевалы, что никто не поздравил бы этого встретившегося" (Bulgakov 290).

Still speaking gibberish, the false interpreter indirectly tells Margarita about his retirement from a former after-life profession. At Satan's Ball, he does not serve as the conductor of the symphony, but as a purposeful interpreter, who explains each soul's background. Although on earth Koroviev performs stunts and aids the holy fool, the moonlight shows his original image.

> "In place of him who had left Sparrow Hills in a ragged circus costume under the name of Koroviev-Fagott, there now rode, softly clinking the golden chains of the bridle, a dark-violet knight with a most gloomy and never-smiling face. He rested his chin on his chest, he did not look at the moon, he was not interested in the earth, he was thinking something of his own, flying beside Woland" (Bulgakov 379-380).
>
> "На месте того, кто в драной цирковой одежде покинул Воробьевы горы под именем Коровьева-Фагота, теперь сказал, тихо звеня золотою цепью повода,

> темно-фиолетовый рыцарьб с мрачнейшим и никогда не улыбающимся лицом. Он уперся подбородком в грудь, он не глядел на луну, он не интересовался землею, он думал о чем-то своем, летя рядом с Воландом" (Bulgakov 395).

Woland explains to Margarita that, "this is one of the nights when accounts are settled. The knight has paid up and closed his account [...такая ночь, когда сводятся счеты. Рыцарьь свой счет оплатил и закрыл!]," (Bulgakov 380; Bulgakov 395). Assisting Queen Margot allows the jokester to be of service to an individual, who already knows her inner truth. As a holy fool, Margarita surrenders to kenosis by speaking Koroviev's words, or the demonic source of inspiration. Thus, an exchange takes place between Koroviev and Margarita, in which both souls help each other. The queen bestows the knight with a grave responsibility, while the knight guides the queen through darkness. For his service, he becomes fully exonerated for acting truthfully and paying back his debt. Thus, the holy fool's purpose in *The Master and Margarita* is not only to assist society in breaking free from the chains, but to help others find their way out of the dark by being a loyal companion on their way to salvation.

On Love and Kept Promises

Marriage to a husband with a high position in society and who adores her is the façade that Margarita lives behind and that other women covet. However, once she decides to meet her destiny on Tverskaya Street, she surrenders herself to a higher truth as described in the pages of the Master's novel. "Really, there were times when I'd begin to be jealous of it on account of her…[Право, временами я начинал рквновать ее к нему]" the Master tells Ivan (Bulgakov 143; Bulgakov 147). After the Master's disappearance, Margarita serves as the preserver of manuscripts and rediscovered voices.

According to Curtis, Margarita's rereading of the novel serves as the bridge between the two cities of the novel, Yershalaim and Moscow.

> "Margarita reads to herself from the Master's manuscript after it has been resurrected from the flames. These in turn correspond to – and carry on neatly from – Ivan's dream. Margarita's reading therefore confirms the internal unity of the four Yershalaim chapters, and at the same time identifies their version of the events with what appears to be the whole of the Master's novel" (Curtis 136).

Scholars have remarked on the profundity and eternal nature of Woland's words, "Manuscripts don't burn," as it pertains to "the idea that art is indestructible and eternal," (Maria Kisel, "Feuilletons Don't Burn," 582), especially during Socialist Realism under Stalin. Curtis supports Kisel by stating that the line "manuscripts don't burn" was "a statement mildly mocking the Master's incredulity, but which carries within it the full force of Bulgakov's deeply held belief in the ultimate integrity – and durability – of art." (Curtis 186). However, the Master's description of Margarita's dedication to the novel seems to have been forgotten.

> "She waited impatiently for the already promised last words about the fifth procurator of Judea, repeated aloud in a sing-song voice certain phrases she liked, and said that her life was in this novel," (Bulgakov 143).
>
> "Она нетерпеливо дожидалась обещанных уже последних слов о пятом прокураторе Иудеи, нараспев и громко повторяла отдельные фразы, которые ей нравились, и говорила, что в этом романе – ее жизнь" (Bulgakov 147).

It was these pages that she read and reread after the Master's disappearance. Just as Bella's entries give the interpreter insight on rejoicing in life despite its hardship, it is the Master's writings that sustain Margarita during his absence. After all, she had given her life to this work, not sold her soul to the devil. As demonstrated previously, Woland and his entourage free Margarita from the monk-cell of her apartment and help her

reorder her soul, so that she can realize her hidden wisdom - love. When she first refuses Woland's aid to break the bonds of the familiar cave and save her from the lie of her marriage, the dark power Azazello quotes from the Master's novel as a warning:

> "Yershalaim – the great city – vanished as if it had never existed in the world…So you, too can just vanish away along with your burnt notebook and dried-up rose! Sit here on the bench alone and entreat him to set you free, to let you breathe the air, to go from your memory!" (Bulgakov 226).
>
> "Пропал Ершалаим, великий город, как будто не существовал на свете... Так пропадите же вы пропадом с вашей обгоревшей тетрадкой и сушеной розой! Сидите здесь на скамейке одна и умоляйте кго, чтобы он отпустил вас на свободу, дал дышать воздухом, ушел бы из памяти!" (Bulgakov 233).

Here the manuscript's truth is embodied in Margarita as she expresses its existence through her own experiences and inner knowledge. Her unconditional love, support, and preservation of the Master's truth brings his words and the voices of the past to life, while her agreement to do a devil's bargain resurrects the manuscripts from the ashes and brings them into the moonlit night of Moscow. In return for the aid of Woland's court, Margarita saves a few souls, one of them Koroviev. Indeed, manuscripts don't burn, but unconditional love perseveres and never forgets. In the words of Bulgakov:

> "Follow me reader! Who told you that there is no true, faithful, eternal love in this world! May the liar's vile tongue be cut out!
>
> Follow me, my reader, and me alone, and I will show you such a love!"(Bulgakov 217).
>
> "За мной, читатель! Кто сказал тебе, что нет на свете настоящей, верной, вечной любви? Да отрежут лгуну его гнусный язык!
>
> За мной, мой читатель, и только за мной, и я покажу тебе такую любовь!" (Bulgakov 23).

Part 2. The Lost Disciples: Illumination through Illness and Insanity

Yeshua undoubtedly serves as a model holy foolish philosopher, who realizes his truth and preaches that one day this kingdom of truth will come. Like Margarita, this philosopher-king matches Socrates' description of the ideal ruler who avoids money or laurels and accolades, but loves truth and is loyal to what is just. According to Yeshua, "all authority is violence over people, and…a time will come when there will be no authority of the Caesars, nor any other authority. Man will pass into the kingdom of truth and justice, where generally there will be no need for any authority [всякая власть является насилием над людьми и что настанет время, когда не будет власти ни кесарей, ни какой-либо иной власти. Человек перейдет в царство истины и справедливости, где вообще не будет надобна никакая власть]" (Bulgakov 30; Bulgakov 30). The philosopher-king speaks generally about the earth's leaders by labeling them "the Caesars [кесарей]," thus acknowledging the type of leader that exists in many regimes.

Pilate and his default reaction of anger and violence solidify his identity as another one of Yeshua's "Caesars." His threatening nature is exposed when he orders his centurion to explain to "the criminal" who "calls [him] 'good man' [добрый человек]" how to address the procurator, by properly beating him (Bulgakov 20). Just as Woland forces one to confront darker aspects of oneself, Yeshua's presence asks one to see the good from within. The procurator's attitude towards the vagrant philosopher changes

when the holy fool shows that he is a polyglot and keenly observes that the Caesar has a terrible headache.

> "'Admit,' Pilate asked softly in Greek, 'that you are a great physician?'
>
> 'No, Procurator, I am not a physician.' The prisoner replied delightedly rubbing a crimped and swollen purple wrist.
>
> Scowling deeply, Pilate bored the prisoner with his eyes, and these eyes were no longer dull, but flashed with sparks familiar to all.
>
> 'I didn't ask you,' Pilate said, 'maybe you also know Latin?'
>
> 'Yes, I do,' the prisoner replied.
>
> Colour came to Pilate's yellowish cheeks…" (Bulgakov 26).
>
> "- Сознайся, - тихо по-гречески спросил Пилат, - тывеликий врач?
>
> - Нет, прокуратор, я не врач, - ответил арестант, с наслаждением потирая измятую и опухшую багровуб кисть руки.
>
> Круто исподлобья Пилат буравил глазами арестанта, и в этих глазах уже не было мути, в них появились всем знакомые искры.
>
> - Я не спросил тебя, - сказал Пилат, - ты, может быть, знаешь и латинский язык?
>
> - Да, знаю, - ответил арестант.
>
> Краска выступила на желтоватых щеках Пилата..." (Bulgakov 25-26).

The flashing sparks within Pilate's eyes are a characteristic of his Caesar-like nature that rules with a fiery temper. However, Yeshua's acute perception and linguistic knowledge establishes a familiarity with the Caesar, so that he can understand the holy fool and participate in a dialogue with him. The procurator's discussion with Yeshua breaks the bonds that tie him to his position as an earthly ruler. Pilate reprimands himself when he realizes that he is not acting according to the old disciplinarian way of a trial procession because he does not possess the vocabulary or knowledge to explain the

figurative death that he experiences and is manifesting in his headache as it occurs from within.

> "'And why did you stir up the people in the bazaar, you vagrant, talking about truth, of which you have no notion? What is truth?'
>
> And here the procurator thought: 'Oh, my gods! I'm asking him about something unnecessary at a trial…my reason no longer serves me…' And again he pictured a cup of dark liquid. 'Poison, bring me poison…'" (Bulgakov 24).
>
> "- Зачем же ты, бродяга, на базаре смущал народ, рассказывая про истину, о которой ты не имеешь представления? Что такое истина?
>
> И тут прокуратор подумал: «Обоги мои! Я спрашиваю его о чем-то ненужном на суде...Мой ум не служит мне больше...» И опять померещилась ему чаша с темной жидкостью. «Яду мне, яду...»" (Bulgakov 24).

According to Socrates, a potential philosopher-king will not think that human life is "anything great" nor "believe that death" is anything "terrible" (Plato The Republic 486a-b). For Pilate, death would be an end to the punishment sent to him by the gods and intensified by the hot sunlight and scent of rose oil. However, Pilate is indeed experiencing a death of an old self, as he transitions from a dark, sickly anger into an enlightened ruler that can face the truth as it stands before him. Yeshua answers his question:

> "The truth is, first of all, that your head aches, and aches so badly that you're having faint-hearted thoughts of death. You're not only unable to speak to me, but it is even hard for you to look at me. And I am now your unwilling torturer, which upsets me…" (Bulgakov 24).
>
> "Истина прежде всего в том, что у тебя болит голова, и болит так сильно, что ты малодушно помышляешь о смерти. Ты не только не в силах говорить со мной, но тебе трудно даже глядеть на меня. И сейчас я невольно являюсь твоим палачом, что меня огорчает..." (Bulgakov 24).

Both the lives of Pilate and Matvei change after they meet Yeshua. According to Yeshua, Matvei behaved "hostilely at first and even insulted me – that is, thought he insulted me – by calling me a dog…I personally see nothing bad about this animal, that I should be offended by this word… [он отнесся ко мне неприязненно и даже оскорблял меня, то есть думал, что оскорбляет, называя меня собакой...я лично не вижу ничего дурного в этом звере, чтобы обижаться на это слово...]" (Bulgakov 23; Bulgakov 22-23). Like Matvei, Pilate fights Yeshua's words and opposes him with anger. When someone is forcefully "dragged" along the "rough, steep, upward way" out of Socrates' cave "and the guide refuses to let him go before he has…pulled into the light, the person is considerably "distressed and annoyed at being so dragged" (Plato The Republic 516a).

This is the case with both Pilate and Matvei, and the reason for their intense volatile reactions to their new teacher. Pilate's struggle is shown in his waffling between threatening Yeshua's life and trying to find loopholes in the law to declare his innocence. His attitude towards the prisoner changes from night to day, from anger to compassion and from the old self to the new self. Pilate confuses himself when he cries out at Yeshua that the kingdom of truth "will never come," but then seconds later asks the holy fool, "No wife?...Hateful city…[Жены нет?...Ненавистный город...]" (Bulgakov 31; Bulgakov 32).

Pilate's secretary stops recording Pilate's discussion with Yeshua because he cannot find the words to explain the eeriness of Yeshua's intuitive knowledge and philosophy. Unlike Matvei, the secretary decides not to transcribe the conversation

verbatim, and "only stretch[es] his neck like a goose, trying not to let drop a single word [Секретарь вытаращил глаза на аретанта и не дописал слова]" (Bulgkaov 25; Bulgakov 24). While Matvei writes his fairytales and misunderstands Yeshua's words, the secretary mentally records the words of the teacher as they exist, rather than tamper with the truth. As Matvei's parables show, literal wording can cause more confusion than guide a reader towards his or her own perception of a truth, especially when the writer himself does not have a grasp on his or her own perception. Therefore, the secretary behaves more honestly than Matvei, by simply realizing that he does not know how to state what is currently being said and accepts that some details are simply beyond his knowledge. Matvei, however, expresses his love and awe for Yeshua through creative fictional details about his journey to Yershalaim.

> "I don't even have an ass, Hegemon…I did enter Yershalaim by the Susa gate, but on foot, accompanied only by Matthew Levi, and no one shouted anything to me, because no one in Yershalaim knew me then" (Bulgakov 27).
>
> "У меня и осла-то никакого нет, игемон...Пришел я в Ершалаим точно через Сузские ворота, но пешком, в сопровождении одного Левия Матвея, и никто мне ничего не кричал, так как никто меня тогда в Ершалаиме не знал" (Bulgakov 27).

Yeshua says this in response to Matvei's parchment, which has ended up in Pilate's hands. In writing a false record, Matvei is not following his master's footsteps by acting on behalf of humanity, but only worshipping his teacher. This defeats the whole purpose of his teacher's work of helping others reach individual enlightenment and simply causes confusion with his misinterpretation of Yeshua's words. While Yeshua speaks to all "good men" from a place of knowledge from the kingdom of truth, Matvei writes out of love for just one person – Yeshua, as though he were his devoted dog. In

Yeshua's language, Matvei is his "companion [спутник]" who had joined him along the road, rather than a slave or a disciple (Bulgakov 23). Yeshua's words show equality between student and teacher, in which the two are partners strolling together and discussing in vernacular a topic that will lead the student to his or her inner truth.

Unlike Matvei, Pilate does not believe in fairy tales. Since the procurator does not speak the language of worship with which Matvei composes Yeshua's fictional narrative, Pilate is misguided by the document. Pilate follows his pattern of processing information verbatim as it is written according to the law. Unlike Matvei, Pilate does not believe or write in fairytales. Instead, he confronts the source of confusion directly, just as Socrates does in *The Republic*.

> "And what was it in any case that you said about the temple to the crowd in the bazaar?...
>
> I said, Hegemon, that the temple of the old faith would fall and a new temple of truth would be built. I said it that way so as to make it more understandable" (Bulgakov 24).
>
> "А вот что ты все-таки говорил про храм толпе на базаре?...
>
> Я, игемон, говорил о том, что рухнет храм старой веры и создастся новый храм истины. Сказал так, чтобы было понятнее" (Bulgakov 24).

Pilate's meeting with Yeshua is a rude awakening for the procurator to make a decision based upon an intangible truth that is not recorded in already established law nor transcribed by his secretary. The prisoner, however, shows compassion just as Margarita does with Frieda, Natasha, and Koroviev. After releasing the procurator from the bonds of his Roman political perspective, he states that he "would be glad to accompany" Pilate on a "[stroll] in the gardens on the Mount of Olives" (Bulgakov 25), thus offering to continue to lead Pilate into the light. Although Pilate decides that Yeshua is simply a

harmless and mentally ill vagrant philosopher; Pilate surrenders his power as a future enlightened ruler to the body of the "hateful city," thus not embracing his fullest potential to walk his path.

> "The procurator was squinting not because the sun burned his eyes – no! For some reason he did not want to see the group of condemned men who, as he knew perfectly well, were now being brought on to the platform behind him" (Bulgakov 39).
>
> "Щурился прокуратор не оттого, что солнце жгло ему глаза, нет! Он не хотел почему-то видеть группу осужденных, которых, как он это прекрасно знал, сейчас вслед за ним возводят на помост" (Bulgakov 39-40).

Although, Pilate lifts his face to the sun as he waits for the crowd to give him a response (Bulgakov 39), he still refuses to look Yeshua in the face, his guide towards illumination. Similar to Matvei's decision not to engage in a discussion with Woland, Pilate freely chooses not to converse with Yeshua later in the gardens on the Mount of Olives. Although both Matvei and Pilate experience significant internal changes after meeting the vagrant philosopher, the former makes the decision to associate with Yeshua rather than Woland, while the latter makes the decision to converse with neither, but to continue pleading to the gods instead. Understandably Pilate is an example of a cave dweller who would, "…have his eyes full of [the light's] beam and be unable to see even one of the things now said to be true…" after having sat in the darkness for so long (Plato The Republic 516a). Rather than become a master of his own truth through dialogue with Yeshua, Pilate chooses to remain chained in darkness. With not enough time to transition from the trial to decision-making, the procurator willingly surrenders ownership of his road. Since his eyes do not have enough time to adjust to the light, he chooses to make a politically correct decision instead of an honest one. Therefore, Pilate contrasts with

Matvei, who returns after the initial first meeting to join the philosopher on a journey toward illumination.

The washing of hands from Yeshua's execution allows Pilate temporary relief of not acknowledging his weighty decision to allow others to influence his reasoning. Rather than confront the challenge himself, Pilate decides not to choose and leaves the philosopher's fate up to the people. Therefore, Pilate falls down Socrates' slippery slope of truth by condemning his own soul in choosing not to make a decision to break free from confinement of popular opinion. In addition, Pilate, as a potential philosopher-king, sets a misguided example to society by permitting the original holy fool, who chooses to speak his own truth, to be executed.

Being Alone

Yeshua is alone in choosing to speak his truth rather than follow a crowd. As a result, he suffers consequences for his actions. Similarly, Woland tells Berlioz that he is, "Alone, alone, I'm always alone [Один, один, я всегда один]," (Bulgakov 43; Bulgakov 45). As a wanderer and a trickster, Woland is a natural accomplice to the holy fool, who finds ways to awaken others to the shadowy aspects of their inner selves. Light cannot exist without the dark, as the old sophist points out to Matvei. As Socrates explains, the light would be incredibly painful and blinding. Pilate and Matvei experience this upon meeting Yeshua.

Just as a holy fool confuses spectators with his mad mutterings, Woland also confuses acquaintances with his nonsensical jumble: "One, two…Mercury in the second house…moon gone…six – disaster… evening – seven…Your head will be cut off! [Раз,

два...Меркурий во втором доме... луна ушла... шесть – несчастье... вечер – семь...Вам отрежут голову!]" Woland tells Berlioz (Bulgakov 15; Buglakov 15). In addition, onlookers perceive Woland's changing characteristics as a Western foreigner. Similar to the way in which Panchenko describes a holy fool as a wandering seeker in Russia from a Western foreign land, who speaks in a Latin tongue, citizens cannot quite agree on Woland's origins. "'No, rather a Frenchman…' thought Berlioz. 'A Pole?...' thought Homeless [«Нет, скорее француз...» - думал Берлиоз. «Поляк?..» - подумал Бездомный.'" (Bulgakov 11; Bulgakov 10). Woland tells his acquaintances that he is perhaps a German, but is "generally a polyglot [вообще полиглот]" who "know[s] a great number of languages [знаю очень большое количество языков]" (Bulgakov 17; Bulgakov 17). With so many similarities in common, light and dark, clarity and confusion seem to mirror each other as they work together to expose a truth.

However, a truth enacted in darkness is less effective than when it is shown in the light for others to see, such as Yeshua's execution. Instead, confusion ensues when darkness provokes a truth to come out from the shadows. It is imaginable that finding a guide in dark successfully while blind is difficult, unless the seeker meets one standing in the doorway, as in the case with Koroviev and Margarita. However if one finds a blind guide in the dark cave, both will whisper their truths amongst themselves, but both will also hide away after hearing a possible threat that might dim their light, as what happens with Ivan and the Master in the asylum. When this happens, one must either be saved or stumble his own way out of purgatory.

Ivan's transfiguration begins during twilight, when the hustling city's confusion speaks at a hushed volume and the lies make it easier for truth to be shown or heard.

> "The sky over Moscow seemed to lose color and the full moon could be seen quite distinctly high above, not yet golden but white. It was much easier to breathe, and the voices under the lindens now sounded softer, eveningish" (Bulgakov 42).
>
> "Небо над Москвой как бы выцвело, и совершенно отчетливо была видна в высоте полная луна, но еще не золотая, а белая. Вышать стало гораздо легче, и голоса под липами теперь звучали мягче, по-вечернему" (Bulgakov 43).

Twilight marks the hour of the fulfillment of Woland's prediction of Berlioz's decapitation, and Ivan's first spectacle with his source of demonic inspiration, Koroviev. "..If he's a criminal, the first thing to do is shout 'Help!' or else he'll get away. Come on, together now…Ежели он преступник, то первым догом следует кричать: «Караул!» А то он уйдет. А ну, давайте вместе!..." directs the choirmaster (Bulgakov 49; Bulgakov 50). In Woland-fashion, Koroviev vanishes, leaving Ivan to himself to shout help, which backfires and turns the poet into a spectacle. "Two girls shied away from him, and he heard the word 'drunk' [Две каких-то девицы шарахнулись от него в стороун, и он услышал слово «пьяный!»]" (Bulgakov 49; Bulgakov 50). Ivan then points out the onlookers' inability to see the truth in his riddles, accusing them of being an accomplice to the foreign criminal. "Ah, so you're in with him!...What are you doing, jeering at me? Out of my way! [А, так ты с ним заодно?...Ты что же это, глумишься надо мной? Пусти!]" (Bulgakov 49; Bulgakov 50).

Ivan's determined and courageous nature pushes him to catch the shadowy aspects of truth before they fully disappear in the coming darkness, thus he chases his guides, Woland and his entourage, through the dark tunnel of uncertainty. While in his

pursuit of the mad professor, Ivan Nikolaevich he intuitively knows his way around the unfamiliar environment and decides that the foreign criminal must be in house number 13, in apartment 47. It is this inner knowledge that directs him through the streets of Moscow and instructs him to take a candle and paper icon for guidance and protection. Although Ivan, like Margarita, follows his guides into the dark, he also has the insight to guide himself to find his own path through the cave's tunnel.

After running through Moscow's streets, Ivan meets "a pleasant, bearded fellow who was smoking a hand-rolled cigarette, sitting beside a torn white Tolstoy blouse and a pair of unlaced, worn boots [какому-то приятному бородачу, курящему самокрутку возле рваной белой толстовки и расшнурованных стоптанных ботинок]" (Bulgakov 52; Bulgakov 54). Ivan hands his clothes to him, as though inwardly acknowledging a like-minded philosopher, before jumping into the Moscow River, a location that his inner compass led him towards. After diving into the water, Ivan experiences a loss of breath. "…so cold the water was, and the thought even flashed in him that he might not manage to come up to the surface. However, he did manage to come up…puffing and snorting, his eyes rounded in terror…[Дух перехватило у него, до того была холодна вода, и мелькнула даже мысль, что не удастся, пожалуй, выскочить на поверхность. Однако выскочить удалось, и, отдуваясь и фыркая, с круглыми от ужаса глазами...]" (Bulgakov 53; Bulgakov 54).

Ivan leaves the river as a transfigured person with his old self washed away and the new self now emerging to confront the truth. When Ivan returns to retrieve his clothes, both the bearded man and his original clothes have disappeared. All that remain

is the Tolstoyan blouse, a candle icon, and a box of matches, symbolizing Ivan's genuine inner self – a holy fool. Thus, Woland and his entourage inspire Ivan to rediscover his nature as a truth-seeker. With the chains of pride, vanity, and social propriety released, the proletarian writer's community cannot explain the new Ivan and his proclamations about Berlioz's murderer, otherwise known as an anonymous foreign consultant, a professor, and a spy (Bulgakov 63). Rather than act as Pilate and question the source of confusion directly, the cave dwellers assume Ivan has lost his mind and call a doctor. Therefore, the cave dwellers drag the seeker back into the cave of lies.

A dark and thunderous celebration of Ivan's baptism greets the holy fool in his cell at the asylum. Tears silently stream down his face as he looks at the "muddy river boiling with bubbles [мутную кипящую реку]" (Bulgakov 115; Bulgakov 118). The holy fool "cried out pitifully and buried his face in his hands. Pages covered with Ivan's writing lay about on the floor. They had been blown down by the wind that flew into the room before the storm began. The poet's attempts to write a statement concerning the terrible consultant had gone nowhere. [...он жалобно всерикивал и закрывал лицо руками. Исписанные Иваном листки валялись на полу. Их сдло ветром, влетевшим в комнату перед началом грозы. Попытки поэта сочинить заявление насчет страшного консультанта не привели ни е чему]" (Bulgakov 115; Bulgakov 118).

Just as Pilate's secretary listens rather than transcribe Yeshua's words, Ivan has difficulty composing a statement about meeting Woland. Like the GS, who writes a fragmented confession before his prison release, Ivan gives up writing the truth of what actually occurred because he realizes it will do nothing for those who did not experience

what he did. When Ivan splits in two, his hidden wisdom speaks to the voice of the bonds that keep him chained inside the cave.

> "What are we talking about, comrades?" the new Ivan objected to the old former Ivan. 'That things are not quite proper here, even a child can understand. He's a one-hundred-per-cent outstanding and mysterious person! But that's the most interesting thing…A major occurrence, really – a magazine editor gets run over!...Man is mortal and, as has rightly been said, unexpectedly mortal..." (Bulgakov 117).
>
> "- О чем, товарищи, разговор! – возражал новый Иван ветхому, прежнему Ивану. – Что здесь дело нечисто, это понятно даже ребенку. Он личность незаурядная и таинственная на все сто. Но ведь в этом-то самое интересно и есть!...Человек смертен, и, как справедливо сказано было, внезапно смертен..." (Bulgakov 120-121).

Ivan works out his experiences in the comforting presence of the full moon as a night light and under the protective blanket of darkness within the familiarity of a cave, until the nurse and doctor notice his mutterings and calm his expression of the truth with an injection. As Socrates mentions in *The Republic*, one who breaks free from the cave and returns, is "a source of laughter," for others, or as it been said about him, "that he went up and came back with his eyes corrupted," (Plato *The Republic* 517a) from witnessing Berlioz's death. "After dozing for a while, the new Ivan asked the old Ivan sarcastically: 'And what does it make me, in that case?' [Подремав немного, Иван новый ехидно спросил у старого Ивана - Так кто же я такой выхожу в этом случае?]" (Bulgakov 117; Bulgakov 121).

"A fool! [Дурак!]" The Master labels Bezdomny (Bulgakov 118). Although this solidifies Ivan's new identity and transfiguration into a wandering truth-seeker, the following conversation demonstrates the Master as a guide and companion through

darkness, but not into the light, just as Koroviev is for Margarita. Unlike Yeshua of his novel, who considers every man a good man [добрый человек] and is sacrificed in the sunlight under the burning gazes of criticism, the Master relives his story by describing to Ivan his surrender to an asylum under a dismal mid-January night sky after his truth had been slandered by the cave dwellers' accusations. The Master is unable to save Ivan fully because while he can talk openly in darkness, he cannot expose his truth in the light.

It seems that moving in darkness is more comfortable for someone, if that person has never met the light, as symbolized by Margarita's nakedness and flight over Moscow. Ivan's transformation takes place at twilight – an integration of the action of meeting darkness in the daylight. Ivan's hidden wisdom solidifies during a stormy dark night lit up by a full moon when he meets the Master, a shining beacon of truth inside the asylum. Thus Ivan's transformation, remains within twilight, when both light and dark are present, but neither light nor dark exists in its complete form.

Ivan's companion introduces himself as a historian and speaker of "five languages besides my own…English, French, German, Latin and Greek. Well, I can also read Italian a little [я знаю пять языков, кроме родного...янглийский, французский, немецкий, латинский и греческий. Ну, немножко еще читаю по-итальянски]" (Bulgakov 138; Bulgakov 142), thus marking him as a fellow holy fool. When the solitary polyglot won a hundred thousand rubles, he tells Ivan that he spends the money to build a library and rent a two room basement apartment, rather than spend the money on clothes or other temporary material items. The Master reflects the nature of Socrates' philosopher-rulers as he begins his quest to write a book about Pontius Pilate, a

philosopher king trapped within his own dreams, so that he is unable to realize and materialize his hidden wisdom in its entirety.

In addition, the Master confesses to Ivan his dislike of the poet's writings, although he's never read any of his words. According to the Master's logic, all of the puppet-handlers propaganda is all the same, cacophonous lies that project over the masses' inner song. Socrates states that the philosopher will not have any part "in caring for falsehood." Socrates' disciple confirms his teacher's words by saying "He'll hate it" (Plato *The Republic* 490b-c).

As a teacher to the new holy fool, the Master asks Bezdomny if his poetry is any good. "'Monstrous!' Ivan suddenly spoke boldly and frankly [-Чудовищны! – вдруг смело и откровенно произнес Иван]," (Bulgakov 134; Bulgakov 139). The sudden burst of honesty is an expression from the new Ivan, who then promises the Master that he will never record any more falsehoods as truths about reality. Regaining the Master's confidence, his teacher tells Ivan that a critic accused the historian of attempting to publish an apology for Jesus Christ. Ivan cries out "Ah, I remember, I remember!...But I've forgotten your name [А, помню, помню!...Но я забыл, как ваша фамилия!]" (Bulgakov 144; Bulgakov 149). Ivan's recollection demonstrates the acknowledgement of a genuine truth within someone else. Bezcomny's previous submission of a poem on a similar topic about the life of Christ shows the poet's own attempt to express his unique truth, which was influenced by the puppet handlers.

"Let's leave my name out of it. I repeat, it no longer exists [Оставим, повторяю, мою фамилию, ее нет больше]," the historian replies (Bulgakov 144; Bulgakov 149).

Both the nameless and the homeless quiet their voices every time they hear the noise of medical professionals rush through the halls. Though they have seen the "phantoms" of "what is" and have experienced through hidden wisdom "the truth about fair, just, and good things" (Plato *The Republic* 520c), the philosophers act as phantoms themselves by quietly discussing their truths in the dark and under the night light of the full moon, instead of bringing it out into the light. According to Socrates, the cave dwellers who return to the cave after seeing what is will have their eyes "infected with darkness," and if the other cave dwellers "were somehow able to get their hands on and kill the man who attempts to release and lead them up" they would without a doubt kill their guide (Plato *The Republic* 516e-517a). Similar to Yeshua, Ivan himself is also "alone," in his experiences, but Ivan accepts his fate and sees that there are others, who have also suffered, during each spring moon. Like Pilate, he mumbles to himself:

> "'Gods, gods!' Ivan Nikolaevich will begin to whisper, hiding behind the fence and never taking his kindling eyes off the mysterious stranger. 'Here is one more of the moon's victims… Yes, one more victim, like me…" (Bulgakov 394).
>
> "-Боги, боги! – начнет шептать Иван Николаевич, прячась за решеткой и не сводя разгоряющихся глаз с таинственного неизвестного. – Вот еще одна жертва луны...Да, это еще огдна жертва, вроде меня" (Bulgakov 411).

While the Master and the interpreter reflect anonymous monks who learn from the life of another, Ivan Bezdomny mirrors the homeless GS petitioners, who continuously wander into Peter's office to repeat similar stories. Although Ivan eventually leaves the asylum and finds a new role to play in Moscow as a professor of history and philosophy, he perpetually relapses into forgetfulness about writing his hidden wisdom. Despite the lies told to him by mental health professionals that "as a young man [в молодости]" Ivan

"fell victim to criminal hypnotists and was afterwards treated and cured [он стал жертвой преступных гипнотизеров, лечился после этого и вылечился]" (Bulgakov 393; Bulgakov 410), the disciple does not forget his inner truth as it relates to his experiences. Just as Berlioz blocks Ivan's vision in his youth, the Soviet mental health professionals blur his perception and mask over what they do not know by simply stating "that there are some things that he cannot manage [что кое с чем он совладать не может]" (Bulgakov 393). That which is beyond what Ivan can "manage," is the truth from Yeshua's foretold kingdom. In addition, Ivan's profession as an academic, allows him to keep his promise to the Master that he will never again write propagandist poetry. However, the new way in which Ivan examines history and philosophy is seen through a Soviet academic lens, not through his own experience and hidden wisdom. Since new shades are drawn over his eyes, Bezdomny continues to sit in Patriarch Ponds babbling to himself and trying to make sense of the visions of each spring full moon, until he finally reaches a state of presence, in which he can write "the whole sequel" which "Ivan Nikolaevich knows by heart [Все дальнейшее Иван Николаевич знает наизусть]" (Bulgakov 394; Bulgakov 411).

While the Master names Ivan as his disciple, Woland calls the disciple Matvei a slave. For Yeshua, however, the slave is his companion. Thus, the Master, Yeshua, and Woland speak in three different vernaculars. By calling Ivan the name that Matvei gives himself, the Master labels Ivan as the homeless, wandering ghost of the former poet. The professor of history and philosophy Ivan Nikolaevich will have to walk the road alone in order to realize his fullest potential, just like Margarita. Until Ivan can find his own way,

he will remain in purgatory as a lost and a loyal disciple to a truth that he can comprehend only under each spring full moon. The Master's departure is a mixed blessing for those wishing to find truth themselves. While his departure allows Margarita to realize her hidden wisdom, it leaves Ivan stranded in darkness. In order to become his own master, Ivan needs another opportunity of complete clarity, so that he can finally write the sequel of his own truth and experiences.

On Words and Salvation

Although Margarita wishes that she had not left the Master alone, the historian decides to leave his companion and therefore, nearly sacrifices his hidden wisdom and their relationship by surrendering his work to the flames and himself to an insane asylum. Thus, unconditional love for all that is "divine and human" (Plato *The Republic* 486a) is shown not just through slavish loyalty, but through the act of rescuing the words from the ashes and preserving the truth as it exists. The actual following through with the truth as one realizes it, serves as a complete resurrection of the truth.

Margarita begins her journey as a loyal companion of the Master's manuscript, but later finds herself and her inner truth by making the fateful decision to confront darkness in order to rejoin the Master. As a result of the process, Margarita realizes her own potential as a philosopher queen and becomes the benevolent Queen Margot, who absolves others of eternal punishment. Margarita is a representative of unconditional love, but not unconditional love itself, while Yeshua is the original holy fool and a representative of light, but not the light itself. Socrates similarly warns his disciples not to confuse consequences with the definition of what actually is.

> "…As for knowledge and truth, just as in the other region it is right to hold light and sight sunlike, but to believe them to be sun is not right; so, too, here, to hold these two to be like the good is right, but to believe that either of them is the good is not right. The condition which characterizes the good must receive still greater honor." (Plato *The Republic* 508e-509a).

One cannot exist without the other, just like Margarita cannot live without the Master. Therefore, both works, *The Master and Margarita* and *Maidenhair*, demonstrate that the action of recording one's knowledge and experiences leads the way to one's hidden wisdom, while the action of preserving the manuscripts takes a devotion that derives from an act of, or a search for, light and unconditional love. Simply writing one's knowledge or preserving the truth alone will not assist in someone's salvation, as in the case of the Master and Margarita, prior to Azazello's meeting. However, being unable to explain one's experiences also holds a teacher back from realizing enlightenment and from helping others reach theirs, especially if the writer or orator cannot comprehend their truths and restate it in a vernacular, as is the case with Ivan and Pilate. Bulgakov demonstrates in his work that in order to become a complete person, one must both be able to explain his or her truth and experience it, or else produce a confusing dissonance of lies.

Chapter Five: Epilogue

Both *Maidenhair* and *The Master and Margarita* demonstrate how perseverance and consistency can be found through love, even in a world of confusion. According to Shishkin, words alienate people from one another. These works however show that words can pave the way to enlightenment if one internalizes the knowledge that they read and then act upon, such as Margarita's flight and service at Satan's Ball. Although Pilate converses with Yeshua, he cannot understand the effect that Yeshua and the environment produces on him. Unlike Pilate and his secretary, Peter has complete control of his emotions and atmosphere as he records the stories of the nameless and homeless GS petitioners. Just as Ivan and the Master must hide their truths or else risk staying in the hospital, the unnaturally ordered setting of the asylum erases any identity from the room, except for those of Peter Fischer, manager of this white world, and his interpreter, who realizes his truth through his remembrance of childhood experiences and the memoirs of another's life. One might even say that through the realization of his truth, the interpreter freed Bella, since she could not complete the work of recording her own life and needed a biographer to complete the work for her, while the Master was able to free Pilate by recording his conversation and execution of Yeshua. For Shishkin, it is important for a writer to "leave his home country" and "his native language for some time." According to the author, leaving behind what is familiar allows the writer to "see himself and his country as if in a mirror. How could you live your whole life without ever looking in a mirror? A different perspective always helps in understanding your own country and yourself," (Gorski 30). Bulgakov, however, never had the opportunity to leave Moscow.

When he finally did have the opportunity to leave for Georgia on a commission to write a biography of Stalin, he and his wife, Yelena Sergeyevna received a message to return home immediately.

> "Misha had one hand over his eyes to block out the sun and held on to me with the other hand, saying 'What is it that we are rushing to meet? Death, perhaps?'" -Yelena Sergeyevna's diary, August 15th, 1939 (Curtis 287).

Although it seems from Yelena's records that Bulgakov attempted to remain calm prior to a possible execution, the couple drove "furious[ly]" back to Moscow. Stalin's secretariat was said to have read the play and to have made the critique that the general secretary was not to be turned into a "literary image" with "invented words [put] into his mouth," Stalin himself was rumored to have said, "All young people are alike, why write a play about the young Stalin?" (Radzinsky 11). Although Bulgakov never could leave Moscow successfully, he gave his characters the Master and Margarita freedom to leave and experience peace.

The words and lives of the authors emphasize the theme of both novels that experience is the best exercise to realize oneself. Just as a writer should venture from his homeland in order to understand himself, Woland and Yeshua are homeless wanderers, who reflect back to society the brighter and darker aspects of its inner core. The role these travelers play for society is one that serves either as a patient companion or a wise counterpart for those seeking their own truths as they relate to the light and dark. Honest words and individual actions according to each person's unique truths makes sense of the dissonance in the world and creates a smoother melody that accompanies those finding

their way towards an inner truth and a greater compassion that already exists within humanity.

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