

Olga Gurevich

Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita* has been a source of contention for literary critics since its first publication in 1967. Containing brilliant satire, phantasmagoria, and historical prose, the novel is full of parallels and allusions that call out for analysis. Most important are the parallels between the three worlds described in the novel: the "real" world of 1920-30's Moscow, the "phantasmagoria" world of Woland (Satan) and his retinue, and the historical world of Pontius Pilate and his prisoner Yeshua Ha-Notsri (the historical Jesus). A critic's (and any reader's) natural reaction is to draw these parallels by mapping the three worlds onto each other and drawing inferences based on the shared structures of the worlds. However, the mappings between characters and events prove to be much more complex than one might expect. Different critics have come to drastically different conclusions about which characters in one world correspond to which characters in the other worlds. In this paper, I would like to show the source of these disagreements, using the theory of mental spaces [Fauconnier 1997]. I will claim that the three worlds (three spaces) are structured by similar frames [in the sense of Fillmore 1982], but the overall structure of each world is more complex than the generic frame, and multiple common structures can be inferred from the three different worlds. These different structures lead to inconsistent mappings of participants from one space to another. Critics have taken different characteristics of the participants to be important for the mappings (e.g. appearance, name, function, relationship to other participants), and as a result have drawn different parallels between the three worlds. It is a natural expectation to be able to derive the same structure from all three worlds, and sometimes critics have stretched the similarities in order to achieve perfect symmetry