

Title: Ivan Karamazov as Prototype: Another Literary Reminiscence in Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*.

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Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* is saturated with literary echoes. The experience of world culture has demonstrated its integral historical, philosophical, and literary context. Both the abstruse and obvious appeals to Dostoevsky's works can be traced throughout the entirety of Bulgakov's "sunset" novel.

Bulgakov's novel begins with a discussion of the proofs for the existence of God, defining the primary subject of both the work and of the fate of its protagonists. The argument in the Elder Zosima's cell in *The Brothers Karamazov* also begins with the question of God. Ivan Karamazov, the novel's primary hero, in attempting to ground his theory rationally, reflects the contradiction of the philosophical and religious quest for a moral Absolute. Ivan's point of view becomes his own idea that "if there is no God, then everything is permitted." Bulgakov's hero exists in a world in which there is no God, in a setting ideal for a hero of Dostoevsky, but, paradoxically, this does not change the paradigm of moral coordinates and religious doubt. Ivan Bezdomy is a talentless poet who, having written an atheistic poem about Christ (Ivan Karamazov also has a poem about Christ), enters into an argument with Satan, demonstrating the groundlessness of the very idea of the existence of God. (Just as the Demon in Dostoevsky's novel becomes a "defender" of God, so does Woland (Satan) in Bulgakov's novel.) However, if Bulgakov grotesquely parodies Dostoevsky's hero in the beginning of *The Master and Margarita*, by the later chapters Ivan Bezdomy has been transformed. The idea of the bifurcation of the hero, of his transfiguration, directly links Bulgakov to Dostoevsky. For Bulgakov, however, who lived in a different historical reality, Satan becomes the means for the rebirth of his hero, which the Master (the Artist) continues in the mental hospital. In the same way, the meeting of Ivan Karamazov with the Demon leads him to insanity and complete disintegration.

It is obvious that Ivan Karamazov served Bulgakov as the counterpoint of Ivan Bezdomy – namely his quest became the immediate creative stimulus for the appearance of the image of the Master's disciple. This influence of Dostoevsky on Bulgakov can be directly traced through the transformation of Ivan Bezdomy into Professor Ponyrev in the end of the novel.

Bulgakov's orientation on the Dostoevskian tradition of raising the "cursed questions" of existence became the primary philosophical dominant of his last novel.