



Influence of N. Gogol's and M. Saltykov-Shchedrin's Satire on Michail Bulgakov's Prose

Alexander Philippovich Petrenko (Corresponding author)

Pyatigorsk State University, Russia

E-mail: alexander.p.petrenko@mail.ru

Svetlana Anatolyevna Petrenko

Pyatigorsk State University, Russia

Irina Borisovna Fedotova

Pyatigorsk State University, Russia

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Abstract

The article is concerned with the study of literary relationships between the satire of the famous 20th-century Russian writer M. Bulgakov and the works by the Russian classics of the 19th century – N.V. Gogol and M.Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin. The article describes Gogol's and Saltykov-Shchedrin's influence on Bulgakov's satirical poetics, especially in the period of his development as a writer. Special attention is given to the device of grotesque and the motives of mechanicalness and lifelessness, forming the artistic worlds of the writers under study. The authors note that the technical progress and the rapid development of mechanized production in the 20th century, combined with the satirical motive of primitivism, characteristic of Russian literature, left an imprint on the nature of Bulgakov's grotesque. The writers at issue are united by such common feature of the satirical poetics as turning to fantasy, hyperbole, 'strange and queer things'. The article shows the way Bulgakov perceived and embodied the principles of Gogol's and Shchedrin's world perception through the comic mixing of absurd, ghostly and real. Bulgakov's way of seeing the world is characterized as 'delirious reality'. At the same time, Bulgakov, as well as his literary teachers in the sphere of satire, showed oddness and divergence as regularity, while the comicality of fantasy in his works finally turns into the drama of reality.

Keywords: satire, laughter, grotesque, mysticism, fantasy, zoomorphic metaphors

1. Introduction

Michail Bulgakov, the Russian writer of the first half of the 20th century, is widely known not only in Russia, but also beyond its borders. Relying on the Russian classical literary tradition, inspired by Gogol, Pushkin, Dostoyevsky and other classical Russian geniuses, Bulgakov developed his own original approach to philosophical and aesthetical issues, and his own work appeared before the readers as a principally new literary phenomenon.

Bulgakov's talent developed dynamically. His work is quite various: in his novellas, novels, plays and feuilletons we can find combined lyrics and humor, philosophy and fantasy, tragic notes and confidence in people. However, scientific exploration, correct interpretation and objective appraisal of the results of Bulgakov's creative efforts and work didn't immediately come consolidated and firmly established. It can be explained by several factors: Bulgakov's personal political views which caused distrust and hostility of the representatives of the Soviet authorities; differences in social experience and mentality of the researchers; language barriers of the philologists of the world.

Nevertheless, such researchers as M. Glenny (Glenny, 1967), T.R.N. Edwards (Edwards, 1982), R.D. Leblank (Leblank, 1993), D.J.B. Piper (Piper, 1971), E. Proffer (Proffer, 1976; 1984), N. Natov (Natov, 1985), A.C. Wright (Wright, 1978), R.W.F. Pope (Pope, 1977), J.A.E. Curtis (Curtis, 1987), E.N. Mahlow (Mahlow, 1975), E.C. Haber (Haber, 1998) and other authors received interesting results through the study of M. Bulgakov's work and presented the results of their work to the readers. Beginning from the late 1980s, Russian scientists and critics also showed deep interest in the study of the writer's heritage. In general, many philologists, specialists in Bulgakov's study, created a well-grounded foundation for raising and solving problems ensuing from the understanding of the specifics of Bulgakov's literary artistic system.

2. Methods

In literary criticism, two approaches to the study of Bulgakov's work can be identified: the first one is social and political, the second one – philosophical and aesthetical. On the one hand, we can't ignore the specifics of satire, its

means and functions. A necessary condition and an inherent feature of satire is its bitterness. It is characterized by acuteness, submergence into everyday life, interference into contemporary events and processes. On the other hand, philosophical and aesthetical approach gives a deeper, multidimensional comprehension of the literary work. We can draw on M. Bakhtin's statement that reification, which means text interpretation not by other texts but by out-of-text external environment, inevitably leads to the disappearance of endlessness and bottomlessness of meaning. We can decipher, comment and deepen the meaning of a literary work only by the use of other meanings (through philosophical and literary interpretation), when the comprehension of symbolic structures goes far into the endlessness of symbolic meanings (Bakhtin, 1975).

In this research, we consider it important to see Bulgakov's work not as an isolated phenomenon, but from the perspective of the dialogueness of literature, in close association with the work by Bulgakov's predecessors and contemporaries. 'Every word in the text', as Bakhtin argues, 'leads us beyond its boundaries. Any interpretation means correlation of the text with other texts' (Bakhtin, 1979). Thus, it is necessary to include Bulgakov's satire into the historical and literary context, to specify the impact of the Russian classical satire on the work by the writer under study.

Therefore, the analysis of comic forms and devices in Bulgakov's prose must be accompanied by the comprehension of their ideological and artistic functions in the literary work, by the study of the mechanism of their organization into a certain plot, image and style structure, by the revelation of intertextual links inside Bulgakov's satire as well as beyond its boundaries.

3. Results and discussions

Being aware of his close connection with the classical tradition, Bulgakov took his lead from the greatest masters of the 19th century – Pushkin, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy. In the sphere of satire and humor, his role models were Gogol and Saltykov-Shchedrin.

3.1 M. Bulgakov's satire and Gogol's tradition

3.1.1 Bulgakov's "queer realism" and Gogol's literary method

While studying Bulgakov's prose, we can't help noticing the evident preference which the writer renders to the author of "The Government Inspector", "The Nose" and "Dead Souls". Gogol-the-thinker, Gogol-the-literary-artist plays a special role in the formation and evolution of Bulgakov as a writer. For him, Gogol was the national pride of the Russian people, their grandeur and spiritual vigor. It seems that Bulgakov constantly verified his thought, his view of things and characters with those of Gogol's. Bulgakov was deeply agitated by the dramatic collisions of the greatest Russian writer. However, it should be noted that Bulgakov's attitude towards Gogol was not only admiration and worship. To determine the nature and the scale of Gogol's influence on Bulgakov means to understand many things in Bulgakov's view of the surrounding reality, to shed light on some essential features of his work.

During the first ten years of his work, Bulgakov was deeply interested in the fantasy of Gogol's Ukraine and Petersburg novellas, in intrinsic to Gogol romantic and realistic grotesque. It is well-known that one of the most essential features of Gogol's creative literary technique is his peculiar combination of romanticism and realism. According to M. Khrapchenko, Gogol's works reflect such origins of metaphysical romanticism as depiction of people's lives and fates from the point of view of irresistible influence of unreal powers on them (Khrapchenko, 1993).

At the same time, Bulgakov's literary method is delineated in literary criticism as "queer realism" (V. Khimich). The bearing structure of this method lies in the manifold usage of fantasy, in the interrelation of dramatic and epic components, in the fundamental incorporation of mirror depiction and oneiric source (dreams, visions, hallucinations) into the literary cosmography, as well as the increase of the share of 'the incidental' (Khimich, 1995).

Though fantasy, 'mirror depiction', the poetics of dreams, fortuitousness, randomness are primarily used as tools of relativistic consciousness which skeptically treats the very idea of the comprehensiveness of the surrounding world, Gogol and Bulgakov use them within the framework of the 'dialogic way of searching the truth' (M. Bakhtin).

The poetics of the comic in Gogol's and Bulgakov's satire has much in common. In the course of our research we, first of all, pay attention to the satirical feuilleton "The Adventures of Chichikov" (1922), sometimes defined as a short satirical novella. The entire feuilleton is built on the witty use of the plot and characters from Gogol's poem "The Dead Souls", resettled by Bulgakov in the 'offbeat dream' into Moscow of the early 1920s.

The period of the NEP (New Economic Policy), which was the short term of liberalization in the Russian economy, was known not only as the time of economic regeneration of the country, but also as the time of nouveau riches, making profit through the embezzlement of public funds in the atmosphere of chaos and confusion. This strange new world was profoundly extraneous and alien to Bulgakov.

However, "The Adventures of Chichikov" mock not only the drastic stratification of the population based on the level of their income, but also the general destruction of moral principles characteristic of the epoch of large-scale disturbances. Bulgakov kept in mind the characteristics of the revolutionary element, described by the philosopher N.F. Berdyayev in his article "The spirits of the Russian revolution" (1918), where he shows the tenacity of Gogol's character and notes that revolutionary-minded Chichikovs buy and sell imaginary treasures, they operate fictions, not realities... Berdyayev also points out the deep symbolic meaning of "The Dead Souls", which brings this literary work beyond the boundaries of a certain historic epoch. This long-standing, long-lasting mortification of souls is also

perceived in the Russian revolution... Any revolution is a great revealer. It revealed effects and developments which were hiding in the depth of Russia (Sokolov, 1996).

In the feuilleton "The Adventures of Chichikov", the core of the "modern" satirical part of the novel "The Master and Margarita" can be seen: "Satan the Joker" opened the doors of the realm of the dead, and the whole gang made its way toward the Soviet Russia and caused astounding occurrences there. As a matter of fact, this is the skeleton of the future novel, the first version of which emerged in the late 1920s. By the way, the parallels between Bulgakov's Woland and Gogol's Government Inspector were drawn by V. Aristov (Aristov, 2014).

Bulgakov's admiration for the brightness of Gogol's characters, for Gogol's vivid language is clearly seen in "The Adventures of Chichikov". The author of the feuilleton made perfect play with their personal characteristics. He not only simulates their speech, but also includes comic 'inserts', referring readers to the realities of the Moscow of 1920s. Bulgakov sneers at hardly pronounceable abbreviations – another remarkable feature of the post-revolutionary epoch. For the author of the feuilleton, such abbreviations are a sign of the uttermost intricacy of logical connections, abuse of both language and common sense.

3.1.2 Fantasy and humor in Gogol's and Bulgakov's plots

Both Bulgakov's and Gogol's prose can be characterized by such typical element of satirical poetics as an appeal to fantasy, hyperbole, "strange and queer things" (Y. Mann) for comic needs. Gogol, as is well known, widely used various forms of fantasy. He created an intricate system of "covert" fantasy with the sphere of the supernatural coming close to the sphere of the real as much as possible and opening boundless opportunities of the parallelism of versions. Some of the versions are fantastic; others are quite real or even "scientific".

In many works, Bulgakov embodied the principles of Gogol's worldview as a comic mixture of absurd and real, ghostly and actual. Humorous "devilry" in "Diaboliad" and some of the feuilletons, as well as grotesque assumption in "The Fatal Eggs" and "The Heart of a Dog", refer the reader to Gogol's works.

Bulgakov's way of seeing the world was characterized by literary critics as "delirious reality". The writer showed oddness and divergence as regularity, in the way Gogol had done it in his works. The comicality of fantasy finally turns into the drama of reality.

Not only general principles of humorous grotesque manner of writing, but also a number of minor details coincide in the works by Bulgakov and Gogol. For example, we can't fail to notice the compositional similarity of Bulgakov's story "Diaboliad" and Gogol's story "Nevsky Prospect" – in particular, Piskaryov's pursuit of his beauty can be balanced with Korotkov's pursuit of Longjohn (Gudkova, 1990). Korotkov's search has even more in common with the similar actions of the Major Kovalyov in the story "The Nose". The only difference between Bulgakov's and Gogol's description lies in the object of pursuit. Korotkov's object of search somehow bifurcates – on the one hand, it represents indispensable for his social life documents; on the other hand, it denotes Longjohn eluding from his pursuer. In Gogol's story, the nose which escaped from its owner combines both – 'the certificate of identity', without which 'the social status' of the main character is defective, and some high-ranking gentleman – the literary predecessor of Longjohn. It is also necessary to mention the propensity of Longjohn as well as that of Kovalyov's nose for various grotesque metamorphoses.

Another similarity which draws our attention is the similarity between the perception of reality by the dog from Bulgakov's story "The Heart of a Dog" and the 'correspondence' of two dogs in Gogol's story "Diary of a Madman". The dogs' estimation and assessment of people's life sound humorous in Gogol's and Bulgakov's books. The increased awareness of animals which has no explanation in both stories also serves the grotesque purpose.

In fact, though according to the plot of "Diary of a Madman" we assume that Madgy's letters are composed by Poprishchin, not all the information in them can be explained by the mental state of the character. G. Gukovsky underlines that those letters contain information, unknown to Poprishchin, but true-to-life (Gukovsky, 1959). In the same way, in "The Heart of a Dog" Sharikov's narrative is imbued with information that could have been known only to a 'third person', which spoils the illusion of a 'speaking dog'. Pieces of information that couldn't have been known to the dog Sharik include the salary of the typist, the cost of the dinner in the cafeteria, the fact that Professor Preobrazhensky was 'a figure of world-wide importance'. In both stories we deal with the explicit (fictitious) author, whose conditional character in the text as a narrator is not hidden, but exposed and even accentuated by the writers.

Bulgakov and Gogol place high emphasis on the role of fortuitousness in the sphere of creating humor. The violation of logical cause-and-effect laws, sudden deviations from the rules, unprovoked and unpredictable occasions are Gogol's favourite plot devices. They become apparent to the fullest extent in Bulgakov's works, where Chance shatters the steadiness of categorical determinism and serves as an antipode of typicality as a form of stability. At the same time, behind the web of petty ghostly events and unexpected excesses in Bulgakov's works we can easily decipher daily expediency, life appropriateness and fatal predestination of the existence (Khimich, 1995).

The sensation of mirage illusiveness of life appears at such moments when real information is substituted by rumors and speculations. For both writers, this kind of plot solution is represented as a form of 'non-fantastical fantasy'. For example, a lot of absurd things are said about Chichikov in "Dead Souls" (and not only by Nozdryov, but also by other people who are thought to be the backbone of the nation). As a result, the character of Chichikov is distorted, it is complemented by various (mockery and serious) associations.

Bulgakov's Chichikov is also subject to Nozdryov's slander, but it can be attributed to the logics of the character created by Gogol. What is more important, Bulgakov includes the motive of rumors and speculations in his other works which means creative mastering and development of tradition.

For instance, the information about Persikov's discovery of the 'red light', perverted by the reporter Bronsky beyond recognition ("The Fatal Eggs"), soon develops into illogical and absurd rumors. Speculations and fuss around Sharikov's 'hominization' ("The Heart of a Dog") can be compared with the circulation of incredible versions concerning Chichikov's personality in Gogol's poem "Dead Souls".

In Bulgakov's stories, newspapers contribute to the dissemination of absurdity. The refutation of those rumors in press, instead of demolishing rumors, contribute to fever pitch: 'The rumours of a Martian in Obukhov Street are totally unfounded. They have been spread by black-market traders and their repetition will be severely punished'. 'Reports in today's evening paper are even worse,' doctor Bormenthal gets exasperated, '- they say that a child has been born who could play the violin from birth. Beside it is a photograph of myself with the caption: Prof. Preobrazhensky performing a Caesarian operation on the mother' (Bulgakov, 1999).

Rumors as manifestation of 'non-fantastical fantasy' serve as some kind of continuation of fortuitousness. Rumors and speculations queerly distort reality and give rise to solidity of representation of facts.

To sum up, having studied Gogol's and Bulgakov's including into the narration of different forms of 'non-fantastical fantasy', of odd and queer, accidental, rumors and speculations, mishmash and confusion, we can come to the conclusion that *both writers use a kind of combination of 'the right' and 'the wrong', logical and illogical*. This appears to be an essential element of their work, strengthens the impression of commotion, disorder and inconsistency of life. It creates the necessary humorous effect and, undoubtedly, points at succession and development of Gogol's traditions by Bulgakov.

Various modifications of Gogol's plots can be distinguished in Bulgakov's satirical works. As an example, let us consider the feuilleton "The Inspector with Knocking Out" which is a tiny variation to the tune of Gogol's "The Government Inspector". The plot of the feuilleton is formed using a classical literary method: a scene on the scene. The staging is interrupted by slapstick pursuit of the 'member of the board' after the 'member of the club'. The canonical text is filled with contemporary life.

The visit of the deceased with his coffin to the chief's office ("The Adventures of a Dead Man") resembles the rebellion of Akaky Akakievich ("The Overcoat"): a hectic patient, having come across callousness and heartlessness of the secretary, accountant and governor, rushing about in futile hopes to reach Moscow to have an X-ray taken, turns up after death to buy a ticket for the train. At the end of Bulgakov's feuilleton, as well as in Gogol's story "The Overcoat", there are some elements of carnivalization: the deceased comes alive, the humiliated becomes an avenger, and the offender gets his punishment. Upper and lower classes evidently change their positions and it would have been good, but for the opposition 'real – problematic'. This antithesis underlines the fact that continuous real sufferings of the character develop into phantasmal triumph. Actual injustice is crowned by a problematic questionable reward.

Bulgakov also learns from Gogol to create *magic space*, and underlines it by respective reminiscences. Thus, for example, the title of Bulgakov's feuilleton "A Bewitched Place" directly refers the reader to Gogol's work with the same title. The difference concerns the use of humor. Gogol's plot really describes events occurring under the influence of superficial forces. The shopping tent in Bulgakov's story is 'bewitched' in a figurative sense: every new trader feels a strong (almost mystical) desire to steal the goods. Offering a humorous mystical explanation of the events, Bulgakov mocks at people's foibles, their soft spot for temptations.

Another 'bewitched place' is a covered by ice staircase to the library ("Stairway to Heaven"). One of those trying to conquer this insurmountable barrier keeps Gogol's volume close to his chest. But even 'the mystic writer' Gogol fails to help the character to surmount this obstacle, generated by new social reality. Behind the simple down-to-earth explanation of the situation, Bulgakov sees something mysterious, enigmatic and significant, underlined by the author's description. We can trace here the antithesis of spirituality and soullessness, typical of Gogol's work. The breakthrough to knowledge, light, spirituality fails. Those who failed to enter the library are described as 'eaten up by darkness'. Bewitched space entices also the character of the story "Diaboliad" Korotkov, when he is after Longjohn. But the brightest and most vivid demonstration of the magic space created by devil and his helpers who arrive in Soviet Moscow is shown in "The Master and Margarita".

3.1.3 Personal and popular character traits of personages

Bulgakov couldn't go past the famous episode from Gogol's story "The Overcoat", where the name of the main character was being chosen: 'The new mother was given the choice of three names: Mokkey, Sossy, or after the martyr Khozdat. "No," thought the good lady, "those aren't the right sort of names." <...> Better let him take his father's name. His father was Akaky, so let the son be Akaky too. Thus did he acquire the name Akaky Akakievich' (Gogol, 1980).

First of all, we pay attention to the reinforcement of humorous names. But we should also take into consideration *the motive of the ancestral fault*. Y. Mann, giving his comments about this episode, argues that the father's mishaps coming from the unsuitable name are doubled in his son, raised to the second power (Mann, 1995).

Now it's time to compare this episode from Gogol's story with Bulgakov's feuilleton "Vankin the Fool", where the tale goes about choosing names for the two newborn girls. The coincidences concern pressing-in of humorous names,

repeated refusals of the mothers to accept such a name and the motive of the ancestral fault. Gogol's character suffers from his unfortunate name throughout his life, feeling the dark shadow of his father's unhappy fate. Newborn Rose (named after Rose Luxembourg perished in 1919) has even a sadder fate: after hearing the dead march 'in memory of our dear fighters' the infant dies. Bulgakov reconsiders Gogol's tradition by bringing in the present-day social and political implication, choosing other urgent topics for his satire according to his epoch. But he also retains some general intertextual foundation.

The above-described episode with choosing a name from "The Overcoat" is further developed in Bulgakov's story "The Heart of a Dog". Sharikov's name – Poligraph Poligraphovich (by the way, also chosen with the help of the calendar) – serves as a humorous hint at his 'father's' name, Philip Philipovich Preobrazhensky. However, in contrast with Gogol's character who really had a father Akaky and somehow repeated his fate, Bulgakov's characters are alleged children. Neither Rose Luxembourg, nor professor Preobrazhensky was a real parent. Nevertheless, the motive of kinship appears as an essential, though humorous, conceptual element of the works under discussion.

Bulgakov offered his own development of Gogol's topic of a 'humble man'. We should emphasize that Gogol entered the history of literature as a literary artist who studied the problem of the tragic position of an insignificant 'humble' man. The sympathy for his misery determined the humanistic pathos of Gogol's work and of that of his followers in the Russian literature. Behind seemingly simple and uncomplicated stories about Akaky Akakievich Bashmachkin and the miserable clerk Poprishchin, the writer could see the tragedy of a humble man in the cruel unjust world.

The closest to Gogol's type of a 'humble man', a cog in the machine, is Bulgakov's Korotkov from the story "Diaboliad". Arbitrariness, lack of rights, and vulnerability of a person confronted with the soulless bureaucratic state machine are the easily recognized Gogol's characteristics of this Bulgakov's personage. The motive of madness can also be referred here, as it brings together Bulgakov's story with Gogol's "Diary of a Madman". As well as Gogol's humble character, Bulgakov's Korotkov can get rid of his social complex of inferiority intensified by the loss of his place and his documents only in his illusions.

At the same time, Korotkov develops unprecedented energy while struggling for his social rights. This typically Bulgakov's characteristic can be called autobiographical. M.O. Chudakova writes that in "Notes on a Cuff" Bulgakov's character combined the features of some of Gogol's personages with the qualities of another, victorious mindset. We can suppose that one of the effects of Bulgakov's 'small prose' of 1920s lies in the evident discrepancy between a confident intrapersonal position and the intonation of the narrator and his own position in life. Bulgakov complements Gogol's theme of a 'humble man' by the theme of the author's self-assertion (Chudakova, 1979).

Korotkov's loss of his ego is accompanied by a motive of an 'incognito man', which is characteristic of Gogol's works. The first example that comes to mind is Gogol's alleged government inspector-incognito Khlestakov, another is Chichikov who is taken for 'an official sent from the Governor-general's office to conduct a secret investigation' (Gogol, 1996). But the best example is still the main character of "Diary of a Madman" Poprishchin, introducing himself as a Spanish King Ferdinand VIII, who was secretly present in Petersburg.

In "Diaboliad" this motive is humorously related to the loss of documents: the character sarcastically announces that he is Prince Hohenzollern, living incognito (as we know, some of the representatives of the German princely family of the Hohenzollerns renounced their property and retreated to private life).

The same motive interpreted as secret membership in the 'noble class' is included into the novella "The Heart of a Dog": 'I am handsome. Perhaps I am really a dog prince, living incognito, mused the dog as he watched the shaggy, coffee-coloured dog with the smug expression strolling about in the mirrored distance. I wouldn't be surprised if my grandmother didn't have an affair with a Labrador. Now that I look at my muzzle, I see a white patch on it' (Bulgakov, 1989). The theme of 'VIP' person who is unrecognized and unacknowledged, develops in an aspect of genetic and social background of Sharik-Sharikov (in this respect we can also recall Preobrazhensky's and Bormenthal's complaints about their own improper background).

Bulgakov, as well as Gogol, shields a 'humble' man, who feels pressure from the authorities, who has suffered much at the hands of bureaucrats, officials, and inefficient workers. We see it perfectly not only in the "Diaboliad", but also in a whole row of feuilletons, such as "An Effective Means", "Adventures of a Dead Man", "On What Account did the Foreman Get Married?", "Three Kopecks", "Linkage on the Head" and others. They contain descriptions of various malicious insults at simple people – from humiliations, harassments, money requisitions, violation of dignity to assault and battery.

However, in the new historical conditions, when people from the lower classes started to acquire more rights, Bulgakov shifted his attention to other drawbacks of people. Such traits of a 'humble' man as illiteracy, lack of education, lack of culture, in conjunction with aggressiveness and boorishness, became the subject of critical analysis. Lots of Bulgakov's characters possess those unpleasant qualities. But the brightest representative is Sharikov ("The Heart of a Dog"). 'Only all that's changed now – now everybody has the right to...', Sharikov demands, not confused by the fact that his claims for the dominant position in the society are at odds with his personal characteristics.

Bulgakov doesn't very much deviate from Gogol's tradition in depicting a 'humble man' (Sharikov, from the writer's point of view, doesn't deserve to be called *a man*), but he sticks to another idea of the author of "Dead Souls", which consists in showing *a conflict between the feeling of selectness, belonging to the human elite and a real image of a personage who has lost his genuine human qualities.*

The contrast between imaginary significance and real insignificance, between sham loftiness and actual vulgarity serves as a source of deep profound comicality of Gogol's characters. In "Dead Souls" there is a description showing exactly how relative and unstable this significance is: 'I ask you to look at him as he sits among his subordinates — one cannot even utter a word from fear! <...> Prometheus, decidedly a Prometheus! <...> In society and at a party, if everyone is of low rank, Prometheus simply remains Prometheus, but if there is someone a bit above him, *Prometheus will undergo such a metamorphosis as even Ovid could not invent: a fly, less than a fly, he self-annihilates into a grain of sand!*' (Gogol, 1996).

The same metamorphosis occurs in Bulgakov's novella "Diaboliad" with the clerk Dyrkin: 'A chubby little Dyrkin bounced out on a spring from behind the desk, bristled his moustache and barked:

'Be quiet!' although Korotkov had not said a word.

At that very moment a pallid youth with a briefcase appeared in the room. Dyrkin's face was instantly wreathed in smiling wrinkles.

'Ah!' he exclaimed ingratiatingly. 'Artur Arturovich. Greetings, dear friend' (Bulgakov, 1990).

Variants of Gogol's Khlestakov can be seen in Bulgakov's 'drunken inspector of Obstetrics', in 'Lunacharsky's brother' (Satakhin, 2015).

By association with the plot of Gogol's "Marriage" Bulgakov created the feuilleton "The Way Buton Got Married". The connection with Gogol's play is clearly announced right in the epigraph which is similar to the phrase from Gogol's comedy "Marriage". Bulgakov's character inherits from Kochkaryov an unexplainable passion for getting married, due to which the situation in the feuilleton soon becomes absurd.

3.1.4 Bulgakov's and Gogol's humor at the stylistic level

Bulgakov's literary style is close to that of Gogol's through the adherence to a certain range of humor devices and stylistic tropes. In accordance with this statement, we can name characteristics, common for both writers, such as the transference of personages into animals and inanimate beings, grotesque substitution of a man or some part of his body for a mechanism. Grotesque can be manifested at the level of the organization of the whole plot, in the creation of separate images or at the level of style.

In general, in the 20th century Gogol's motives of dummies, automatism and deadliness were assessed as one of the highest achievements of Russian and world-wide grotesque culture. This approach became especially popular in 1920s. It is clearly seen, for example, through the interpretation of "The Government Inspector" in the Meyerhold Theatre (1926). Their interpretation contributed to raising the motives of 'dumminess', automatism and deadliness to the level of the monumental grotesque image of Russia (Mann, 1988).

In Bulgakov's prose of 1920s, the motives of dumminess and mechanicalness play a great role. According to A. Bergson's theory of humor, laughter is predetermined by the mechanicalness of a human's actions. Due to the lack of spiritual content and inner sense, they ossify, stiffen and become formal. Bulgakov's (as well as Gogol's) humor is built in many ways on this principle, sometimes going out beyond those limits, endlessly complicating the whole picture of the comicality.

Actually, we can't help noticing in both writers' works *a psychological foundation of this mechanicalness*. For example, the automatism of a personage's actions at the moment of seeing the alleged general can be explained by utter excitement and nervousness. The Chairman of the local committee behaves like a machine. He automatically fills the documents, rises from the chair and then sits down again several times. It looks as if a mainspring unrolled inside the Chairman. Inner motivation is also peculiar to the grotesque description of the drunkard medical attendant whose eyes 'looked like two sealing wax corks from Russian vodka bottle'. The row of suchlike examples can be continued.

The grotesque *motif of enlivening of the portrait* refers us to Gogol's story "The Portrait", corresponding to the wide context of romantic tradition (from Ernst Hoffmann's stories, Charles Robert Maturin's "Melmoth the Wanderer" to Oscar Wilde's "Portrait of Dorian Gray"). In Bulgakov's work, such enlivening has a humorous coloring. In "Sounds of Uneathly Polka", it happens due to the metonymically built phrase: 'Proletarians hung on the walls...' (instead of 'their portraits'). In "The Game of Nature" the same stylistic device 'enlivens' the portrait of Trotsky: 'The Chairman of the local committee looked into the window, from the window to the portrait of Trotsky, from Trotsky to Vrangel, from Vrangel to the door key'. In the feuilleton "Moscow Scenes" similar enlivening is represented even brighter: 'A spasm cramped the face of photographic Trotsky and his lips parted as if he wanted to say something'. We must underline that in Bulgakov's works 'enlivening' of portraits takes place at the relatively humorous level.

Bulgakov and Gogol are close in their predilection for carnival description, their wide reference to humorous folk culture. Fights and brawls, pursuits and falls, scandals, billingsgate, gluttony, masquerades and other elements serve as a powerful manifestation of menippean satire as a genre tradition. Gogol and Bulgakov are, doubtlessly, the brightest guides of this tradition in the Russian literature.

Carnival qualities are found in Korotkov's pursuit of Longjohn, the clerk Dyrkin receives carnival blows, clownish tears are shed from the eyes of a 'sobbing old man' ("Diaboliad"). Holiday folk laughter is a characteristic feature of the feuilletons "Mademoiselle Jane", "Egyptian mummy", "The Game of Nature", "Fortune's wheel" and others. We suppose, the folk laughter mode and farcical elements appear more vividly in Bulgakov's novel "The Master and Margarita". For instance, the scene of black magic séance in the variety show is brightly farcical. Mr. Sempleyarov,

the Chairman of the Acoustic Committee of Moscow theatres demands exposing of Woland's team's tricks. As a result, Korovyev exposes Sempleyarov's marital infidelity, subsequently the latter gets a blow on his head by an umbrella from his young escort. As a result, a general scuffle begins.

Blows by an umbrella can be interpreted as traditional farcical stick strikes. As far as Sempleyarov is concerned, they do not carry any positive 'optimistic' sense. The semantics of punishment is clearly seen, and not only for his having a soft spot for women. He represents a type of a 'ruling the culture' official, so much detested by the writer. Besides, the scuffle is a method of creating of a festive atmosphere of freedom and permissiveness (even for a short period of time), of violation of laws and standards of the Soviet society, and, finally, of obliterating the last bounds between the executors and viewers.

3.2 'My teacher M.Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin'

3.2.1 Political satire

Undeniable influence on the image structure of Bulgakov's work was exerted by M.Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin, one of the greatest Russian satirists of the 19th century. Bulgakov, the author of "The Master and Margarita", highly appreciated Saltykov-Shchedrin's satire. In his letter to the government of the 28th of March, 1930, he called Saltykov-Shchedrin his teacher.

Bulgakov and Saltykov-Shchedrin can be brought together, first of all, by the political topicality of their works, secondly, by their adherence to fantastic situations and grotesque, as well as by their realistic depiction of people's dreadful traits.

Both satirists had similar points of view on the sources of people's vices and, as a result, on the aims of satire. For a long time, vices were thought of as something old and obsolete. In accordance with this statement, the objects of satire were considered to be something archaic, fusty, out-of-date, and even necrotic. Such point of view was partially true, but not entirely. Saltykov-Shchedrin's thesis about the vice making progress not only in its exterior form, but also in nature, replacing old vices for new ones, made the tasks standing before the satire more exact and vital. It made the writer focus on discovering and exposing the vices that were only springing up (Nikolayev, 1988).

This Saltykov-Shchedrin's thesis acquired special topicality in revolutionary and post-revolutionary epoch, at the time of the general idea that flaws and drawbacks are the results and consequences of capitalism, but the new Soviet regime is capable to release people from moral illnesses forever. Bulgakov, as well as Saltykov-Shchedrin at his time, mocks not ancient vices, but ugly and strong new-born ones.

As we have mentioned before, both writers had brightly exposed the political orientation of satire. M.Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin in his work issues from the theory of ghostliness and illusiveness. The writer understands that liberation from the 'world of ghosts' is a long and difficult way, so people should be reminded that they are under the ghost sway and they are mistaken thinking that they live actual, but not illusive lives (Nikolayev, 1988). The subject of the satirical research conducted by Shchedrin is the dehumanization of people in the power of ghosts, of dark forces of evil.

Bulgakov, continuing Saltykov-Shchedrin's traditions, aspired to mock social vices first of all. He aimed at disposing not only 'dead souls', but also destructive forms of life. The most acute in this sense is the novella "The Heart of a Dog". The carnival of ghosts, which is typical of Saltykov-Shchedrin's satire, finds its development in the work of his ingenious follower.

Most urgent in this respect is using carnival opprobrium of authorities as a means of political satire. Punitive organs of power receive the major part of satire in Bulgakov's works. While trying to establish order and keep the situation under control, militiamen, officers and secret agents get into desperate ridiculous situations. In the epilogue of "The Heart of a Dog", a militiaman, while making the sign of a cross, steps on Zina's both feet, and an examining magistrate loses consciousness when Sharikov (who at the moment is turning back into the dog) appears before him. In the story "The Fatal Eggs", the secret service agents perish infamously, having taken Rökk's words for hallucination. Later, even the army units can't withstand the attack of the gigantic reptiles.

At the end of the story "Diaboliad", agents start indiscriminate and senseless fire on Korotkov which is absurd because the clerk is taken for a bandit. The above-described episodes forestall the novel "The Master and Margarita", in which all the attempts of the secret service agents to capture the Woland's gang fail. The 'opprobrium of authorities' reaches its culmination in the scene of the humorous skirmish with Behemoth the cat.

Both Saltykov-Shchedrin and Bulgakov pay much attention to bureaucrats and officials of all ranks. They both stick to the motive of 'fortuitousness' while elevating a deprived of wisdom and talent man to this or that post.

From the list of mayors in the novel "The History of a Town" by Shchedrin, we get acquainted with the pre-history and the background of the rulers of the town Foolsville: they used to be a cook, a batman, a stoker, a former barber, a runaway Greek and others. The same motive of 'fortuitousness' of getting the high post without having any efficiency or qualities of a leader is found in Bulgakov's characters who happen to get from rags to riches. We shall mention only a few: Longjohn, Rökk, Sharikov, and Shvonder. The same line is continued in the novel "The Master and Margarita" – in the characters of Sempleyarov, Styopa Likhodeyev, Rimsky and other people who can be called round pegs in square holes.

3.2.2 Grotesque nature of the narration

Bulgakov develops in his work such characteristic of Shchedrin's grotesque poetics as mechanicalness, dumminess. In the same way as Foolsville's mayor Brudasty had in his head a mechanism playing two 'tunes' ('I shall ravage' and 'I won't put up with it!'), Longjohn in the novella "Diaboliad" repeats the same phrase at his working place in the Main Central Base for Matchstick Materials: 'You'll get the sack!' People-dummies, people-machines working as officials in the complaint department, where desponded Korotkov finally comes, act in the same manner.

By the way, despite the ambiguous assessment of the literary value of "Diaboliad" (Sukhikh, 2008), we can assert that the genre of grotesque novella proved to be productive (Petrenko, 2013).

The motive of mechanicalness in literature, as V. Gippius states, in fact, couldn't emerge in the epoch of naïve consciousness and prehistoric culture. To spring up it needed such a level of science and technology when the role of the acting man was attributed to a machine (Gippius, 1966). *Technical progress causing rapid development of mechanized production of the 20th century, combined with Saltykov-Shchedrin's satirical motive of primitivism, left an imprint on the nature of Bulgakov's grotesque.*

It is not a mere coincidence that Sharikov's primitivism of thinking is stressed throughout the story by comparing his speech with various apparatus and mechanisms. Doctor Bormenthal writes in his diary: 'His swearing is methodical, uninterrupted and apparently totally meaningless. There is something *mechanical* about it – it is as if this creature had heard all this bad language at an earlier phase, *automatically* recorded it in his subconscious and now regurgitates it wholesale' ("The Heart of a Dog").

As we see from the text, stylistically Sharikov is described as having characteristics of a phonograph. That description directly corresponds to the grotesque image of the mayor Brudasty ("A Little Organ"). Shchedrin's motives in Bulgakov's work reach the peak of development in "The Master and Margarita". We face George Bengalsky with his unscrewed and then put on its place head (as if it was a component of a machine), the suit of Prokhor Petrovich, faultlessly fulfilling his official tasks after the disappearance of its master and so on.

In "The History of a Town" M.Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin ironically exalts the official full-dress uniform, claiming that while executing the duties, the uniform overrides the man. The satirist makes a reservation: it does not mean that a uniform can act and rule irrespective of the man, wearing it. In spite of the negative form of the utterance, Saltykov-Shchedrin gives an overtone of possible independent actions of the official uniform. M. Bulgakov drops the other shoe and actualizes this possibility on the pages of his novel: the full-dress uniform continues to execute the bureaucrat's duties after his disappearance. Satirical acuity of Bulgakov's plot is indubitable: the official thoughtlessly fulfills unnecessary work in a useless committee, as if he were a small screw in a huge machine.

After the manner of Shchedrin, Bulgakov pays his attention to the administrative ardor of different chiefs who try to conquer, restrain and keep under control the 'living matter', the nature, living according to its laws. We should mention here a great and mighty grotesque character of Ugryum-Burcheyev ("The History of a Town"), whose exploits include his implacable desire to 'eliminate' the river, flowing 'without permission' and demonstrating its independence from anyone. An idea of inadmissibility of forceful intervention of a man into natural and social processes is profoundly expressed by Bulgakov in his works "The Fatal Eggs" and "The Heart of a Dog". The main characters of the novellas, Professor Persikov and Professor Preobrazhensky, carry out biological experiments, denying evolution and resulting in violent revolutionary changes. In fact, their actions have catastrophic consequences.

Another peculiar feature of grotesque depiction in Saltykov-Shchedrin's satire is a 'man-animal' phenomenon. Zoologization is with extreme accuracy expressed by Shchedrin in his "Fairy-Tales". It resonates with Bulgakov's grotesque as well. Features of a sun-cured vobla with dried out brain, 'wild landowner' combining the characteristics of a man and those of a beast are, first of all, interpreted in the character of Sharik-Sharikov with the humorous and at the same time dreadful combination of the doggish and human. When Saltykov-Shchedrin spoke of 'the greatest aim' of a satirist in depicting of a 'siren the other way round', he meant the necessity of showing something carrying human appearance, but inhuman ideas (Nikolayev, 1988). The character of Bulgakov's Sharikov – half-man and half-dog – is one of the solutions to this task. Besides, the device of zoologization is widely used in the novella "The Fatal Eggs" and in a number of Bulgakov's other works.

One more similar feature of Saltykov-Shchedrin's and Bulgakov's prose is the true description of the shadow traits of character, of customs and ways of a man in the street. The satirical depiction of the people, given by Shchedrin in his generalized characters, serves as a reference point for Bulgakov, who lays an emphasis on the denunciation of illiteracy, ignorance, backwardness of the representatives of the masses.

Such a generalized character, *representing the mass* with clear-cut Shchedrin's intonations is found, first of all, in those Bulgakov's feuilletons where there is a description of numerous assemblies, meetings and gatherings. But there are also cases of creating separate individual characters of lower-class people in Shchedrin's vein.

4. Conclusion

Bulgakov's literary life started at the time when classical literature was perceived as something remote and even alien. But Bulgakov didn't feel any gap between 'old' and 'new' art. For him, classical literature was a sign of a norm, a kind of a moral guide, a source of confidence in inevitability and significance of the chosen way.

One of the most important tasks at the time of the breakdown of cultural relations for M. Bulgakov was eliminating this evident gap. The writer was not only connected with the classical traditions, but also creatively worked them over. Bulgakov was simultaneously a classic and an innovator, a pioneer who managed to create his original literary world.

N.V. Gogol and M.Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin exerted a certain conditioning influence on Bulgakov's satirical style. These writers are bound by many things, especially by their grotesque manner of narration, by their drawn towards odd, queer and unusual, by the motives of puppetness and mechanicalness, usage of zoomorphic metaphors, depicting of farcical scenes, political acuteness and by moral and philosophical deepness of their satirical accusations. The topic of the small 'humble man' is also common, though its comprehension is quite ingenious with each of the writers under study. Thus, after the 1917 revolution in Russia, when second-class people began to acquire great rights, Bulgakov took to criticizing illiteracy and cultural backwardness combined with aggressiveness and boorishness.

The significant feature of Bulgakov's satirical talent is a tendency for irony and self-irony. Irony makes the writer's mockery more lambent, it leads the narration away from schematic and straightforward censure of the vice. Having chosen irony as his weapon, Bulgakov declined the role of a teacher or that of a preacher. Through the ironic narration, the tragic rejection of the reality can be seen. At the same time, irony gives a soft tincture of lyrics, revealing Bulgakov's sincere love to people and his anxiety about the fate of the country.

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