

Abstract

This bachelor thesis deals with the novel *Master and Margarita* (1967) and the life of its author, Russian writer Mikhail Bulgakov (1891-1940). The thesis follows the process of acceptance of the novel by the Soviet society. By taking into consideration its creation and Bulgakov's life it identifies the factors, which lead to the book's final acceptance. It also deals with literary authorship, relation between the book and the author, and changeability of this relation during different phases of the acceptance. The thesis assumes the existence of the relation; therefore, it uses the concept of the death of the author and the literary theory of the "real" author.

The thesis is based on content analysis of the novel and literature describing Bulgakov's life and the Soviet cultural policy. It uses social and historical analyses of Soviet or Russian society and analyses of the novel.

The research follows the part of Bulgakov's life, which he had dedicated to the novel, it analyses the novel and follows its publication and acceptance by the society. It discovers that the unofficial acceptance was influenced by double factors – the outer factors resulted from the Soviet literary policy and the inner factors came out of the society. The most influential factor was the fact that the novel was different from the known official literature, which led to shock and excitement. The readers did not know much about Bulgakov because of the cultural policy; therefore, they created their own version of him based on the book. The policy restricted the novel's reach until glasnost enabled opening of the archives, that was when the society understood the content parallels within the story and romanticised the author.

The thesis confirmed that the acceptance of the book was influenced by its relation to Bulgakov. His authorship's influence was direct and indirect. The direct relation consists of facts observable within the story (Bulgakov's experience, allusions to 1930s). The indirect relation passively results from Bulgakov as an individual – it consists of timing, environment, and development of the cultural policy. Specific environment established specific foundations for the book, one without the other would have different effect.

The concept of the death of the author is noticeable within the process of reading by the Soviet society, but it is a passive elimination of the author. The readers did not know Bulgakov, that is why they read the book without him, but they needed an author, therefore they created their own version of him based on their interpretation of the story. The novel carries a subjective testimony about its author; therefore, it is possible to affirm the theory of the "real" author – the novel creates a part of Bulgakov's identity.