

Lycius' Dilemma

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Lycius' Dilemma

The Master and Margarita and Lamia are the vastly different works of two men from far flung times and places. Though the histories and plots of these works diverge, their thematic elements resonate. Each text invokes a dualism of worlds: the world of the imagination and the world of reality. The imaginative [realm](#) is a mythic space of love, creativity and magic. Paradoxically, the characters that speak for the realm of imagination are those aligned with the devil (Lamia and Woland). Reason control and mortality characterize the realm of reality and its representatives are Appollonius and the Muscovites. The source of conflict and distress in these works arises from the seemingly unbridgeable [schism](#) between these two worlds. The dilemma of Lycius in Lamia and the Master in The Master and Margarita is this fundamental incompatibility of worlds. These mediating figures can be seen (allegorically or literally) as artists attempting to reconcile the space of creation and imagination with the everyday world that "will clip an angle's wings, / Conquer all mysteries by rule and line" (Lamia, Pt. II, 234-235). Keats and Bulgakov offer varying representations and outcomes to Lycius' dilemma.

In these texts Appollonius and soviet Moscow society function inimically to the forces of

imagination and negative capability. These characters represent sobriety and reason. They attempt to limit and control the narrative and the forces of the imagination-which often exceed their powers. A systemic vision of knowledge binds both the Muscovites and Appollonius. Both parties rely on the certainty of this knowledge to inoculate them from the more frightening and unstable aspects of existence. Through [categorization](#) they hope to contro...

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...er will live a life of writing and love, but without any hope of communicating his ideas to his society: he is completely cut off from the community. The intrusion of reality (Appollonius) destroys Lycius and his relationship with Lamia. However discouraging these endings seem, they are after all texts that have reached us and communicated something to us. Though the artist might die and though society might not understand, the truth of Woland's words remains: "manuscripts don't burn" (Bulgakov, 245). The text survives as a testament to the power and possibility of the artistic spirit.

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