Bulgakov could not write a realistic novel about Jesus (just as Bezdomny wasn't permitted to assert the same in his poem). By defamiliarizing Jesus as Yeshua, Bulgakov might have tired to appease his Soviet critics by asserting: "This isn't about Jesus Christ of Christianity, it's about a *fictional* character called Yeshua Ha-Nostri."
A roman à clef ([Ro-máhn a klay]) This text, French for "novel with a key," is a novel describing real-life events behind a façade of fiction. The "key," not present in the text, is the correlation between events and characters in the novel and events and characters in real life.

In the "Pilate Chapters" of The Master and Margarita, the "key" is the intertext, the Gospel of John.

The reasons an author might choose the roman à clef format include:

• Satire;
• Writing about controversial topics and/or reporting inside information on scandals without giving rise to charges of libel;
• A roman à clef also gives the author the opportunity to turn the tale the way the author would like it to have gone.

Intertexts for M&M (so far):

Since its original use in the context of writings, the roman à clef technique is also used in the theatre and in movies, like The Great Dictator depicting Hitler and nazism.

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Defamiliarization—a Russian Formalist technique

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yeshua</th>
<th>vs.</th>
<th>Jesus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ha-Nostri</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Begs not to be killed</td>
<td>Accepts his fate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 27 years old</td>
<td>33 years old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. No family</td>
<td>Mary/Joseph</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. from Gamala</td>
<td>from Nazareh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Walked into Yershalaim</td>
<td>Rode donkey into Jerusalem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. One follower</td>
<td>Twelve apostles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Casual/flippant attitude and tone</td>
<td>Formal/solemn attitude and tone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pilate = Hegemon = Hegemony

The carnivalesque: a term coined by the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin that refers to a literary mode which subverts and liberates the assumptions of the hegemony through humor and chaos.

For Bulgakov, the hegemony is the Soviet government. He will subvert and liberate the authoritative views of the Soviet regime through this humorous and chaotic novel!

Yeshua/Hegemon : : Bulgakov/Soviet Hegemony

"Among other things," continued the prisoner, "I said that every kind of power is a form of violence against people and that there will come a time when neither the powers of the Caesars, nor any other kind of power will exist. Men will enter the kingdom of truth and justice, where no such power will be necessary."

"Go on!"

All power (hegemony) will end 22
Michel Foucault's "Power Theory"

1. 
2. 
3. 

The vagrant philosopher turned out to be mentally ill. In consequence of which, the procurator does not confirm the death sentence pronounced against Ha-Nostri by the Lesser Sinedrion. However, in view of the fact that Ha-Nostri's insane, utopian speeches might cause unrest injured in Yershalaim, the procurator is removing Yeshua from Yershalaim and sentencing him to confinement in Strato's Caesarea on the Mediterranean, that is, the site of the procurator's residence. (20-21)

Although Pilate believes that the marginalized Yeshua Ha-Nostri is only "insane" (21), the prisoner must be killed (26). Why?

Rudolf Otto's Concept of the "Numinous"

Otto was one of the most influential thinkers about religion in the first half of the twentieth century. He is best known for his analysis of the experience that, in his view, underlies all religion. He calls this experience "numinous," and says it has three components. These are often designated with a Latin phrase: mysteriorm tremendum et fascinans. As mysterium, the numinous is "wholly other" -- entirely different from anything we experience in ordinary life. It evokes a reaction of silence. But the numinous is also a mysterium tremendum. It provokes terror because it presents itself as overwhelming power. Finally, the numinous presents itself as fascinans, as merciful and gracious.

"Mysterium tremendum et fascinans"
(fearful and fascinating mystery):

"Mysterium": Wholly Other, experienced with blank wonder, stupor

"tremendum":
  o awe-full-ness, terror, demonic dread, awe, absolute unapproachability, "wrath" of God
  o overpoweringness, majesty, might, sense of one's own nothingness in contrast to its power
  o creature-feeling, sense of objective presence, dependence
  o energy, urgency, will, vitality

"fascinans": potent charm, attractiveness in spite of fear, terror, etc.

Sources:
- Alles, Gregory O. [http://www.netrax.net/~galles/]
- [http://www2.kenyon.edu/depts/religion/fac/Adler/reln101/Otto.htm]
Major Theme(s)

1. In the Soviet Union atheism was the official position. Bulgakov, via the Professor, disagrees; he asks: "if there is no God, then, the question is, who is in control of man's life and the whole order of things on earth?"

2. The Soviet Revolution promised equality and prosperity for all individuals. Bulgakov critiques this promise, showing the inequality and the breakdown of Russian life and traditional values.

3. What is Truth? Who or what controls Truth and/or has access to it? How much can we trust the hegemony to define Truth for us, well, truthfully?

4. What does it mean to use the signifiers "evil" or "good"? Are these terms necessarily binary oppositions, or are they two facets of the same thing?

5. What effect does an experience with the Numinous have on people? What really causes change? The government? The Transcendent?

Our first major theme, "Who is in control?" suggests Bulgakov's insistence on the existence of God, even though the Soviet authorities promoted official atheism. We have already seen on page eight that Woland offered his sixth proof of God: "if there is no God, then, the question is, who is in control of man's life and the whole order of things on earth?"

In chapter two, Yeshua echoes Woland's proof in his own restatement on page 19:

"What would you have me swear by?" asked the unbounded prisoner excitedly.

"Well, by your life," answered the procurator. "It is most timely that you swear by your life since it is hanging by a thread, understand that."

"You do not think, do you, Hegemon, that you hung it there?" asked the prisoner. "If you do, you are very much mistaken."

Pilate shuddered and answered through his teeth, "I can cut that thread."

"You are mistaken about that too," retorted the prisoner, smiling brightly and shielding himself from the sun with his hand. "Don't you agree that the thread can only be cut by the one who hung it?"

Chapter 3 tonight: "The Seventh Proof"!
BULGAKOV = YESHUA = WOLAND