

## **A DEAD MAN'S MEMOIR (A THEATRICAL NOVEL)-A METAFICTION CAUGHT BETWEEN THE COGS OF THE MACHINERY OF HISTORY AND THEATRE?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*A Dead Man's Memoir* is a unique Russian 'Roman a clef' written by Mikhail Bulgakov that unusually dissolves the demarcation between history and fiction. An amalgamation of the three genres of memoir, theatre and the novel it tells the absurd struggle of a creator, his 'year of prosperity' followed too soon by a 'year of catastrophe'. In a game of snakes and ladders he is fed to the insatiate whim of the dice. Sergei Maksudov's abortive revolt against the curtailment of creative freedom is narrated dramatically through incidents of dark humour, ridiculous devotion, illusive hope and 'nightmarish dreams with misplaced loveliness'. The fine line between the living and the dead, sanity and insanity, story and propaganda, creative freedom and expurgation are dexterously weighed in the face of Soviet repression. This paper examines the explosion and implosion of the artistic voice garbled by the written word of History and the cens(u/o)ring of dynamic Theatre.

**KEYWORDS:** Roman a Clef, Memoir, History, Theatre, Metafiction, Historiography, Historiographic Metafiction