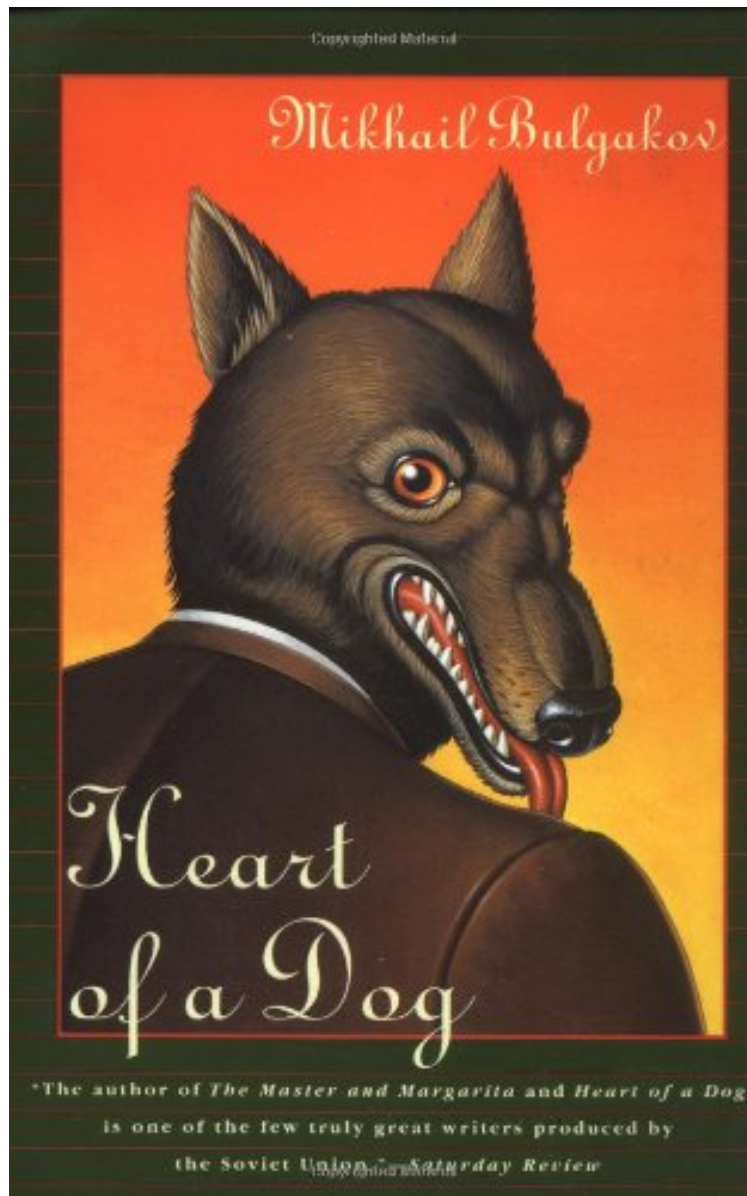


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## Heart of a Dog

Mikhail Bulgakov

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#146499 in Books Mikhail Afanasevich Bulgakov Mirra Ginsburg 1994-01-21 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.25 x .35 x 5.391, #File Name: 0802150594123 pages Heart of a Dog | File size: 74.Mb

**Mikhail Bulgakov : Heart of a Dog** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Heart of a Dog:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. More than casual reading By Dinko Perkovic I read this book in my

teen age and wanted to have a copy for occasional re-visit. My native language is not Russian so I never read it in original, though, but English translation does not do it right in representing the style of writing. I believe that this work is greatly misjudged and underestimated – if by nothing else then by the comments left by readers. Knowing history of this author and historical circumstances can help to understand it and see the layers of this quick read. Bulgakov's focus is on people and humanity but he is not short in criticizing "new" socialist society introduced in large scale experiment post November of 1917 soviet revolution. I never found as concise critic of socialist experiment soviet style and pointing out what's wrong with the way it was executed, as here – literally, one page says it all. Bulgakov is humanist, optimist without much hope left. His work represents that, universally and timelessly. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Entertaining Satire By Emily Mikhail Bulgakov's book Heart of a Dog is a satire about the soviet people. Bulgakov uses allegory to present his thesis: The forceful conversion of the Russian people into Soviet citizens was unnatural and unsuccessful. The symbols Bulgakov used were a dog named Sharik (a symbol of the Russian people), and a professor named Dr. Preobrazhensky (a symbol for the soviet government). Sharik represents the Russian people in three ways: 1) Sharik was impoverished and on the verge of death, much like the Russian peasants in Tsarist Russia prior to the revolution. 2) Sharik was then forcibly transformed, similar to how the Russian people were forced to accept the new doctrine under the Soviet Union. And 3) in result of the procedure, Sharik became something he was not meant to be. Just like the Russian people became different after the government shift. Dr. Preobrazhensky represents the soviet government in two ways: 1) Dr. Preobrazhensky offered food and shelter to Sharik, like the Bolsheviks had offered prosperity to the people if they accepted their ideology. And 2) Dr. Preobrazhensky then performs a grotesque operation on Sharik in order to change him, much like the Soviet government had conducted purges in order to change views of the Russian people. That the change of the Russian people was drastic and unnatural. I personally loved the clever symbols he used through the book. Some were subtle, such as how Sharik prior to his transformation criticized the proletariat, the group of people whom communism favors. But then after he is transformed into a human he begins quoting Engels, the man who created socialistic theory with Karl Marx. In my opinion, Bulgakov made a clever satire in which he got an important message across. Bulgakov succeeded presenting a critical idea in an entertaining form of satire. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Outrageous, entertaining, satire of Communism's efforts to remake human nature By C. Collins Mikhail Bulgakov is a master of the outlandish and the surreal. And this book is full of both. Just when you think Bulgakov can't get any more outrageous, he surprises you with odd twists and turns. The novella begins with a charming tale of a stray dog but this is no Walt Disney tale, for this dog becomes the pet of a renowned Moscow professor of medicine who plants human glands into the dog's body and the dog becomes a monstrosity. Communism has presented itself to the world as a scientific political theory and I felt like Bulgakov was trying to tell us that despite the science behind Communism, the brute aspects of humanity can't be washed away. As a sub-human, part-dog creature, we see behaviors that are rude, boorish, violent, but all too human. Human nature, including the worst aspects of human nature, exists even after scientific Communism has taken over. The goal of creating a new breed of man, which was one of the goals of Communism, is impossible and backfires in the writing of Bulgakov. I am reminded of his masterpiece, the Master and Margarita, where the Communist outlaw God but they forgot to outlaw the Devil. The book was written at a time when there were physicians who were injecting patients with hormones or glands of sheep fetus or monkey gonads to bring about everlasting youth or sexual stamina. Bulgakov takes this theme and runs with it. The dog Sharik becomes the human Sharikov, and as such becomes the image of the dull intelligence, short temper, crudeness, non-verbal, non-rationalizing, violent, prejudicial, of the worst group of lower class, lower income persons. Bulgakov would have us see that the Communist experiment can allow this type of person to gain power and influence and to be very socially destructive in their actions. Moscow must have been chaos in the 1930's as one complete political and economic system is being replaced by another, and thus there is much room for human brutes to rise in a totalitarian system that allowed no dissent. I don't want to give the impression that the book is all ideology, since in fact, it is highly inventive, entertaining, and outrageously satiric. The scenes are vivid and well written, easily imagined. I recommend this short book. It reminded me of the George Orwell's Animal Farm mixed with Mary Shelly's Frankenstein. I know other reviewers have made this comparison but it is a great description of the book to someone who has not yet read it.

I first read Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* on a balcony of the Hotel Metropole in Saigon on three summer evenings in 1971. The tropical air was heavy and full of the smells of cordite and motorcycle exhaust and rotting fish and wood-fire stoves, and the horizon flared ambiguously, perhaps from heat lightning, perhaps from bombs. Later each night, as was my custom, I would wander out into the steamy back alleys of the city, where no one ever seemed to sleep, and crouch in doorways with the people and listen to the stories of their culture and their ancestors and their ongoing lives. Bulgakov taught me to hear something in those stories that I had not yet clearly heard. One could call it, in terms that would soon thereafter gain wide currency, "magical realism". The deadpan mix of the fantastic and the realistic was at the heart of the Vietnamese mythos. It is at the heart of the present zeitgeist. And it was not invented by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, as wonderful as his *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is. Garcia Marquez's landmark work of magical realism was predated by nearly three decades by Bulgakov's brilliant

masterpiece of a novel. That summer in Saigon a vodka-swilling, talking black cat, a coven of beautiful naked witches, Pontius Pilate, and a whole cast of benighted writers of Stalinist Moscow and Satan himself all took up permanent residence in my creative unconscious. Their presence, perhaps more than anything else from the realm of literature, has helped shape the work I am most proud of. I'm often asked for a list of favorite authors. Here is my advice. Read Bulgakov. Look around you at the new century. He will show you things you need to see.

Dystopian novelette by Mikhail Bulgakov, written in Russian in 1925 as *Sobachye serdtse*. It was published posthumously in the West in 1968, both in Russian and in translation, and in the Soviet Union in 1987. The book is a satirical examination of one of the goals of the October Revolution of 1917: to create a new breed of man, uncorrupted by the past and above petit bourgeois concerns. In addressing this subject *The Heart of a Dog* savages the rigid Soviet mind-set, science fiction, and a pseudoscientific theory of the 1920s that held out the promise of sexual rejuvenation through surgical transplantation of monkey glands. -- The Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of Literature