



ANIMAL FARM - INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is a renowned literary work that has gained an almost mythical status in popular culture.

- Despite its widespread recognition, it is interesting to note that many individuals who are familiar with the book have never actually read it.
 - This can be attributed to the fact that the book's reputation precedes itself, making it a household name and a staple in the realm of literature.
 - Orwell's *Animal Farm* is often compared to his other famous work, *1984*, and it is considered a classic in the genre of political satire.
 - Its lasting impact on society can be attributed to its timeless themes and messages, which continue to resonate with readers even today.

THEMES: INTRODUCTION

The book's ability to evoke thought and spark conversations about

- power,
- oppression,
- and the dangers of totalitarianism has cemented its place in literary history.
 - Its powerful tale of tyranny
 - and its cyclical nature serves as an urgent moral response to the politics of Orwell's time and continues to resonate with audiences today.
 - The book is renowned for its famous slogans, such as
 - "Four legs good, two legs bad"
 - and "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others",
 - which serve as a critical commentary on the politics of equality.
 - Additionally, the indistinguishability of the men and pigs at the end of the story highlights the dangers of power and the ways in which those who resist their oppressors can end up becoming like them.
 - At the time of its publication, Orwell was already well-established as a writer, having produced a variety of works in both fiction and non-fiction.
 - *Animal Farm* represents a departure from his earlier works, demonstrating his versatility and ability to engage with a wide range of themes and styles.





CONTEXT: GEORGE ORWELL'S CAREER

George Orwell's literary career began with the publication of his imperial novel, *Burmese Days*, in 1934.

- Set in Burma, the book is a fictional retelling of Orwell's experiences as an imperial policeman, a career he pursued between 1922 and 1927.
 - Orwell's disillusionment with the Empire and its despotic nature led him to leave the profession and write critically about it through his fiction.
 - One of Orwell's early works, *A Clergyman's Daughter*, tells the story of a young woman who lives under the oppressive thumb of her father, Charles Hair.
 - Through a series of misadventures, she finds herself lost and adrift in the heart of London, before eventually finding her way back home.
 - The novel is a commentary on the tyranny of domesticity and the servitude faced by women in the early 20th century.
 - Orwell's satirical work, *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying*, is a novel about the bookish life of London and the tyranny of capitalism.
 - A few years later, he wrote *Coming Up for Air*, which shifts focus from domesticity and empire to the impending fear of World War Two and the forces of tyranny that were making the war a likelihood.
 - The novel is a manifestation of dread, and a thread of fear and oppression runs throughout Orwell's works.

RECURRING THEMES: GEORGE ORWELL'S INTERESTS

A scrutiny of George Orwell's entire corpus of fiction reveals a recurring theme of interest in

- power,
- tyranny,
- slavery,
- and servitude.

- Animal Farm, his most renowned work, serves as a testament to this ongoing preoccupation.
 - Through the lens of a fable about farm animals, Orwell explores these themes with great economy, making the book a powerful and impactful statement on the state of the world.
 - It is important to note that Animal Farm was written during the later stages of World War Two, a time when the so-called Big Three -
 - Great Britain,
 - the United States of America,





- and Soviet Russia - had formed a unified front against fascism.
 - For Orwell, who was a critic of Soviet Russia, this political climate made things difficult for him as a writer.
 - In a letter to a contemporary Russian literary historian, he wrote of his doubts about the publication of *Animal Farm*, describing it as a "little squib" that he hoped would be amusing but was not politically acceptable.

PUBLISHING CONTEXT

The publication of George Orwell's "Animal Farm" was met with some challenges.

- The author initially sought to publish the novel with Faber and Faber, and sent a draft to T. S. Eliot, a modernist poet who was also employed at the publishing house in an editorial position.
 - However, Eliot expressed his doubts about the book's political perspective, stating that while it was a "distinguished piece of writing" and the fable was "very skilfully handled," it was not the right time to criticise the political situation in that way.
 - Despite Eliot's reservations, Orwell found a publisher in Secker and Warburg, who released *Animal Farm* in 1945.
 - His contemporary, the novelist Graham Greene, praised the book, calling it a "sad fable" that demonstrated Orwell's fine talent for creating something truly tragic, not just a distant echo of human flaws.
 - Orwell himself was frustrated by the growing public perception of Stalin, the Soviet dictator, as someone who was becoming immune to criticism in the eyes of many influential people in Great Britain due to the Big Three Alliance during World War II.
 - He felt that there was a deceptive respectability surrounding Stalin, and saw this as a reason why it might be unwise to criticise him.
 - Despite these challenges, Orwell's *Animal Farm* went on to become a classic of political satire, and continues to be widely read and studied to this day.

WHY ORWELL CHOSE TO WRITE IN THE FORM OF AN ALLEGORY

Allegory is a narrative in which events or people are presented symbolically so that a deeper meaning is carried by the narrative than the story it seems to be telling.





- Allegory is often used to teach a **moral lesson**.
 - On one level Animal Farm is a satiric allegory of Russian Communism, of that period between the Revolution of 1917 to the Teheran Conference of November 1943 (the month in which Animal Farm was begun) when Stalin the leader of the USSR met the leaders of the Western allies, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, to discuss mutual aid against Adolf Hitler.
 - **Through allegory the 'Soviet myth' as Orwell saw it could be criticised from the distance that this device allowed.**
 - A direct attack in the form of polemic, of
 - essay
 - or article, was not possible.
 - **Orwell had tried but failed to get anything critical of the Soviet Union published because of the strong pro-Russian feeling in Britain at the time.**
 - **Stalin had become, after the Teheran Conference, a friend and ally of the West.**
 - **Animal Farm was written between November 1943 and February 1944 when this feeling was at its height**

SATIRE AS A STYLE

Satire can be described as both a style and a genre of literary writing.

- As a style, satire is characterised by the use of
 - irony,
 - sarcasm,
 - and humor to ridicule or criticise
 - people,
 - organisations,
 - or society as a whole.
 - **It is often used to expose and challenge**
 - social,
 - political,
 - or cultural issues and to provoke thought or change.
 - **Satirical writing can take on many different forms, including**
 - essays,
 - articles,
 - novels,
 - plays,
 - and poetry.





SATIRE AS A GENRE

As a genre, satire typically involves works of fiction or non-fiction that use satirical techniques to critique and mock human behavior and society.

- Examples of satirical genres include
 - satire news,
 - political satire,
 - social satire,
 - and dark satire.
- Satirical works are often intended to be humorous, but they can also be
 - critical
 - and confrontational,
 - highlighting the problems and flaws of society in an effort to spur change.
 - Overall, whether it is considered a style or genre, satire is a powerful tool for writers to use to challenge and engage readers on a wide range of issues.

HOW ORWELL USES POLITICAL SATIRE

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is a classic example of political satire, in which Orwell uses the allegory of a group of farm animals who rebel against their human owner to criticise the events leading up to the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalinism. Through his use of satire, Orwell is able to convey his message in a way that is both entertaining and thought-provoking, while also drawing attention to the absurdity and injustice of the events he is critiquing.

One of the key ways in which Orwell uses satire in *Animal Farm* is through his portrayal of the animal characters. By giving them human-like traits and personalities, Orwell is able to create a sense of empathy and connection with his readers, while also highlighting the flaws and foibles of human nature. For example, the pigs in the novel are depicted as intelligent and charismatic leaders, but also as manipulative and power-hungry, as they gradually take control of the farm and establish their own authoritarian regime. Through their actions, Orwell is able to draw attention to the dangers of political ambition and the corrupting influence of power.

Another way in which Orwell uses satire in *Animal Farm* is through his critique of the Russian Revolution and its aftermath. Through his portrayal of the animal rebellion and the subsequent establishment of a new social order, Orwell is able to draw parallels with the events leading up to the revolution and the rise of the Soviet Union. For example, the character of Napoleon, who represents Stalin, is shown to be a ruthless and oppressive leader who betrays the ideals of the revolution in order to consolidate his own power. Through his depiction of Napoleon, Orwell is able to criticise the cult of personality and the totalitarianism that emerged under Stalinism.

The effects of Orwell's use of satire in *Animal Farm* are profound and enduring. By using humor and irony to critique political power and authority, Orwell is able to engage readers in a way that is both entertaining and thought-provoking. Through the allegory of the animal rebellion, he is able to draw attention to the dangers of political corruption and the need for transparency and accountability in government. Moreover, his use of satire in





Animal Farm has inspired countless other works of political satire, from television shows like The Daily Show and Saturday Night Live to novels like Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* and Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*.

In conclusion, George Orwell's use of satire in *Animal Farm* is a powerful tool for critiquing the events leading up to the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalinism. Through his portrayal of animal characters and his critique of political power, Orwell is able to engage readers in a way that is both entertaining and thought-provoking, while also highlighting the absurdity and injustice of the events he is critiquing. The enduring legacy of *Animal Farm* is a testament to the power of satire to challenge and engage readers on a wide range of political and social issues.

WHY ANIMAL FARM IS SO POPULAR

The novella *Animal Farm* by George Orwell is a powerful allegory that has captivated readers since its publication.

- One of the most poignant moments in the book is the fate of Boxer, the loyal cart horse.
 - The first readers of *Animal Farm* were immediately struck by its critical acuity and insight into the Russian totalitarian state,
 - a perspective that was viewed as misguided or inopportune by some,
 - but nonetheless deeply felt.
 - One such contemporary of Orwell was the writer Cyril Connolly, who praised the book as one of the most enjoyable to be published since the end of the war.
 - He lauded the deliciously written prose, which displayed the same feeling, penetration, and economy of language that characterised Orwell's master, *Jonathan Swift*.
 - *Animal Farm* is a simple story with a simple moral point, yet it is told with great efficiency in a short space.
 - This has led many readers, then and now, to marvel at Orwell's ability to pack so much into such a simple fairy tale.

BOXER'S FATE AND THE DANGERS OF BLIND FOLLOWING

Boxer, the strong and loyal workhorse, is one of the most tragic characters in George Orwell's novel "*Animal Farm*". His fate serves as a powerful commentary on the dangers of blindly following leaders and ideologies without questioning their motives and actions.

Boxer is introduced in the novel as a dedicated and hardworking animal, who takes great pride in his ability to work and his loyalty to the other animals. He is portrayed as a symbol of the working class, whose labor is exploited by those in power. Boxer's dedication to Animalism, the revolutionary ideology that aims to create a society where





animals are free from human exploitation, is unwavering. He repeats the mantra "I will work harder" throughout the novel, embodying the ideal of self-sacrifice for the common good.

However, despite his hard work and dedication, Boxer is eventually betrayed by the leaders of Animal Farm. When he becomes injured and is no longer able to work, the pigs send him to the knacker's to be slaughtered for meat, despite promising him medical treatment. This is a clear example of the pigs' betrayal of their own revolutionary ideals and their willingness to sacrifice their most loyal followers for their own benefit.

The fate of Boxer is particularly tragic because it highlights the inherent cruelty and injustice of totalitarian regimes. Boxer's loyalty to the pigs is based on his belief in the revolutionary ideals of Animalism, but he fails to see the corruption and betrayal that is taking place around him. His tragic end serves as a warning to readers about the dangers of blindly following leaders without questioning their actions and motives.

The effect that Boxer's fate has on the reader is profound. Orwell uses the character of Boxer to highlight the dangers of totalitarianism and the importance of critical thinking and questioning authority. Boxer's dedication to the pigs is based on his belief in their ideology, but he fails to see the corruption and betrayal that is taking place around him. This serves as a warning to readers about the dangers of blindly following leaders without questioning their actions and motives.

Furthermore, the tragic fate of Boxer evokes strong feelings of empathy and sympathy from the reader. Boxer is a character who is hardworking, loyal, and self-sacrificing, and his betrayal and ultimate fate are deeply upsetting. The reader is left with a sense of sadness and frustration at the injustice of Boxer's fate, as well as a renewed appreciation for the importance of questioning authority and fighting against totalitarianism.

In conclusion, Boxer's fate in "Animal Farm" is a powerful commentary on the dangers of blindly following leaders and ideologies without questioning their motives and actions. His tragic end serves as a warning to readers about the inherent cruelty and injustice of totalitarian regimes, as well as the importance of critical thinking and questioning authority. The effect that Boxer's fate has on the reader is profound, evoking strong feelings of empathy and sympathy and leaving a lasting impression on those who read the novel.

