

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin white lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming larger, more prominent clusters.

Animal Farm

Written by George Orwell

Published by sanmarco-sf

Table of Contents

Animal Farm Summary	1
Animal Farm Movie	2
Animal Farm Book	3
Animal Farm Sparknotes	4
Animal Farm Characters	5
Animal Farm Pet Hospital	6
Animal Farm Quotes	7
Animal Farm Berkeley	8
Animal Farm Themes	9

Animal Farm

By George Orwell

Animal Farm Summary

A farm is taken over by its overworked, mistreated animals. With flaming idealism and stirring slogans, they set out to create a paradise of progress, justice, and equality. Thus the stage is set for one of the most telling satiric fables ever penned – a razor-edged fairy tale for grown-ups that records the evolution from revolution against tyranny to a totalitarianism just as terrible.

When *Animal Farm* was first published, Stalinist Russia was seen as its target. Today it is devastatingly clear that wherever and whenever freedom is attacked, under whatever banner, the cutting clarity and savage comedy of George Orwell's masterpiece have a meaning and message still ferociously fresh.

Animal Farm Movie

Amazon's very Orwellian involvement with this book at the end. If Amazon ever partnered Facebook they'd own us.

This is not really a review, but one of those moments where everything that was clear to you suddenly becomes utterly muddled and you really can't say what lies beneath the murky waters although a moment before you were sure you could.

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I'm reading Christopher Hitchen's astonishingly percipient and brilliant *Arguably: Essays*. I read *Animal Farm* too young to identify the individual animals with actual characters on the stage of communism (the old boar Major is Marx, Farmer Jones is the Tsar, the pigs Napoleon and Snowball, Stalin and Trotsky respectively) so this essay is giving me a lot to think about. So far, nothing more so than this quote (below).

(Background to the quote): A group of Ukrainian and Polish refugees in a displaced persons' camp had discovered sympathetic parallels with their own plight in Orwell's parable and had begged him for permission to translate his almost-totally unknown book. But...

The emotions of the American military authorities in Europe were not so easily touched. They rounded up all the copies of *Animal Farm* they could find and turned them over to the Red Army to be burned. The alliance between the farmers and the pigs so hauntingly described in the final pages of the novel were still in force.

The book is banned in Cuba, North Korea, Burma, Iran, Kenya and most Arab countries. It is banned in the UAE not because of its content but because it has anthropomorphic talking pigs which are unIslamic (is this not Orwellian in itself?). It is still censored in Vietnam. These nations wouldn't want ordinary people reading the book and looking at their own ruling porcine elites and seeing any parallels now would they? Who knows what kind of thoughts and actions that might lead to?

Amazon and Animal Farm

On 17 July 2009, Amazon.com withdrew certain Amazon Kindle titles, including *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell, from sale, refunded buyers, and remotely deleted items from

purchasers' devices after discovering that the publisher lacked rights to publish the titles in question. Notes and annotations for the books made by users on their devices were also deleted. After the move prompted outcry and comparisons to Nineteen Eighty-Four itself, Amazon spokesman Drew Herdener stated that the company is "changing our systems so that in the future we will not remove books from customers' devices in these circumstances." However, Amazon does not seem to a guarantee in its ToS that they won't don't this again and I understand that authors have the ability to edit (read 'change') parts of their books. This is because you can't buy a Kindle book, only rent one and Amazon can update (read 'change') them. Wikipedia and other sources

Next step: Fahrenheit 451. Get the firemen out to burn the books, only ebooks allowed where content can be controlled.

Original review 30 Oct 2011, updated several times. ...more

This review has been hidden because it contains spoilers. To view it, [click here](#).

This is a book I've been meaning to read for ages but never got around to - last week I not only read it but gave a lesson on the historical context for the grade 8 class, who will be reading this book and The Wave. As I found, out of the class of 24, about 20 of them had already read the book, and at least one kid knew it was an allegory of the Russian Revolution. Still, my lesson wasn't totally redundant :)

For anyone who isn't familiar with the story, Animal Farm is about the animals on a farm This is a book I've been meaning to read for ages but never got around to - last week I not only read it but gave a lesson on the historical context for the grade 8 class, who will be reading this book and The Wave. As I found, out of the class of 24, about 20 of them had already read the book, and at least one kid knew it was an allegory of the Russian Revolution. Still, my lesson wasn't totally redundant :)

For anyone who isn't familiar with the story, Animal Farm is about the animals on a farm in England rising up against the incompetent, cruel farmer (Mr Jones, who represents the deposed Tsar, Nicholas II) and taking over the farm, renaming it Animal Farm (USSR) and - so the glorious vision intended - running it for themselves, so their lives would be better.

The vision is given to them by a pig, Old Major, who dies not long afterwards. Old Major probably represents Vladimir Lenin and Karl Marx, and it's not the socialist ideal put forward that is critiqued by this book but how that vision is corrupted by certain other characters, namely another pig called Napoleon, who represents Joseph Stalin. Napoleon chases a pig called Snowball (Leon Trotsky) off the farm with his personally trained dogs (while still just the General Secretary of the Party, Stalin recruited people who would follow him blindly, so that when Lenin died in 1924 he was able to defeat Trotsky for the leadership position and his "dogs" kept everyone else in line).

The pigs then take charge, and with their literacy skills keep changing the rules the animals established in order to suit themselves, using a pig called Squealer to convince the other animals that their

Animal Farm

memories are faulty. After all, as the drafthorse Boxer keeps saying, "Comrade Napoleon is always right".

Boxer is - for me - the most heartbreaking character in the novel. He represents the peasants, and is the most hardworking animal on the farm. He has utter faith in the leadership of Napoleon and works himself to the bone - literally. His reward is very telling, though I don't want to give it away. Most of the characters represent either a person, several people or groups of people, and for the complete list you can check it out on Wikipedia.

Orwell, while a socialist, was very cynical about Stalin's communist USSR - and for good reason! Animal Farm is a very well-written critique of how socialist ideals are corrupted by powerful people, how the uneducated masses are taken advantage of, and how the dictator or communist leaders turn into capitalists (just look at China). It's a wonderful example of how effective the allegorical style/format can be, and a well-deserved classic. ...more

Animal Farm Book

The only good pig is a dead pig.

Yeah, yeah, everyone claims Orwell wrote this as about the Russian Revolution, Stalin, and the rise of Communism.

Pshttt. Whatever.

You know what I think he was really saying?

Beware the Other White Meat!

Ok, maybe not.

Look, I know what you're thinking, That pig looks adorable!, but the next thing you know, that piggy is all grown up and stealing your cookies!

And you'll let it steal your cookies because Mr. Pig has convinced you that giving up your cookies every
The only good pig is a dead pig.

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And you'll let it steal your cookies because Mr. Pig has convinced you that giving up your cookies every day was a part of the original agreement! Besides, what do you know, you're just a stupid sheep...

Plus, it's just a cookie, where's the harm?

Not to mention, the last guy who complained about giving up his cookie ended up mauled by that dog. Probably just a coincidence, though.

Right?

But it's ok because pigs are smart. That's what everyone says, right? Smarter than you are, at any rate. And if the pig says it's ok, then it's ok.

I mean look at it! It couldn't possibly have anything but your best interests at heart!

Alright, I'm outta pig gifs.

So, I thought this was a pretty cool book. Sure, it's supposed to be about Russia, but it could just as easily be about the working class in my country.

Bottom line?

We need to stop listening to the spin doctors on the boob tube and start thinking for ourselves.

Question everything, especially the things we think we know are true. It might be a good idea to teach our kids that it's ok not blindly believe everything we tell them, too. Besides, if we're right, then our ideals can stand up to the scrutiny of children. Otherwise, we risk raising a generation of idiots.

Oh! I found one more pig gif!

...more

A perfect book. People will still be reading this in a thousand years time, when communism is just a footnote.

Animal Farm Sparknotes

“All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.”

Those damn PIGS.

I can't even.

Funnily enough, I read this book as a child and thought that it really WAS about animals. I remember thinking, Evil Pigs, I'm glad you're bacon in MY world, and Poor Hardworking Horsies, come live on my farm instead. You can have all the hay and makopa you want (sadly, no apples, tropical climate).

I reread it after education spoiled my natural inclinations for fast and absolute punishment of evildoers and eternal rewards for the good. I do find it pleasantly strange that these animals are symbol. Funnily enough, I read this book as a child and thought that it really WAS about animals. I remember thinking, Evil Pigs, I'm glad you're bacon in MY world, and Poor Hardworking Horsies, come live on my farm instead. You can have all the hay and makopa you want (sadly, no apples, tropical climate).

I reread it after education spoiled my natural inclinations for fast and absolute punishment of evildoers and eternal rewards for the good. I do find it pleasantly strange that these animals are symbols for political stereotypes and yet people still appear in the book. Isn't that CRAZY? That's literary perversion in a class all its own.

I'm thankful I read this in my formative years, before I had all this intellectual baggage (emphasis on baggage, piano on the intellect), because I got to appreciate it like a child would, almost like the way I appreciated Charlotte's Web. To me, back then, it was just another story about animals, albeit a wordy one, with no pictures.

Which is probably why I still experience a certain righteous thrill when eating crispy bacon. ...more

Animal Farm Characters

564. Animal Farm, George Orwell

Animal Farm is an allegorical novella by George Orwell, first published in England on 17 August 1945. According to Orwell, the book reflects events leading up to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and then on into the Stalinist era of the Soviet Union. Orwell, a democratic socialist, was a critic of Joseph Stalin and hostile to Moscow-directed Stalinism, an attitude that was critically shaped by his experiences during the Spanish Civil War. The Soviet Union, he believe

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Old Major, the old boar on the Manor Farm, summons the animals on the farm together for a meeting, during which he refers to humans as "enemies" and teaches the animals a revolutionary song called "Beasts of England". When Major dies, two young pigs, Snowball and Napoleon, assume command and consider it a duty to prepare for the Rebellion. The animals revolt and drive the drunken and irresponsible farmer Mr. Jones from the farm, renaming it "Animal Farm". They adopt the Seven Commandments of Animalism, the most important of which is, "All animals are equal."

Snowball teaches the animals to read and write, while Napoleon educates young puppies on the principles of Animalism. Food is plentiful, and the farm runs smoothly. The pigs elevate themselves to positions of leadership and set aside special food items, ostensibly for their personal health.

Some time later, several men attack Animal Farm. Jones and his men are making an attempt to recapture the farm, aided by several other farmers who are terrified of similar animal revolts. Snowball and the animals, who are hiding in ambush, defeat the men by launching a surprise attack as soon as they enter the farmyard. Snowball's popularity soars, and this event is proclaimed "The Battle of the Cowshed". It is celebrated annually with the firing of a gun, on the anniversary of the Revolution.

Napoleon and Snowball vie for pre-eminence. When Snowball announces his plans to modernize the farm by building a windmill, Napoleon has his dogs chase Snowball away and declares himself leader. ...

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Animal Farm

Is this novel important? Yes.

Is it a brilliant allegory? Sure, if you read enough history to pick it apart.

But is it a good story? This is where I'm diverging from the group. I (personally) did not enjoy reading it. My rating/review reflects that. All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others. Okay, this is why I avoid "great literature."

I get that this is an important novel, but good lawd. I did not enjoy it. A Big Effing Disclaimer

Just because I don't like a novel doesn't mean I didn't "get" it.

Is this novel important? Yes.

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But is it a good story? This is where I'm diverging from the group. I (personally) did not enjoy reading it. My rating/review reflects that.

I'm no longer in any English class, therefore I'm under no obligation to pretend to enjoy the book.

I agree it is important, that it sends an essential message but that doesn't change the fact that I didn't like it.

But this is only one opinion, and my interpretation may differ from your (equally valid) view on this novel. Farmer Jones, a mean old bastard, owns the Manor farm where he keeps his animals (a variety of pigs, sheep, cows, etc) essentially in enslavement.

He doesn't take particularly good care of these poor creatures and (as a result), they begin to consider some very...interesting ideas. Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is lord of all the animals. He sets them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving, and the rest he keeps for himself. Led by Napoleon and Snowball, two pigs, the animals form a revolt and soon take over the farm for themselves.

They have a list of rules, a set of standards and a few catchy sayings. Four legs good, two legs bad. But, as things often do, everything goes south.

Napoleon takes over and runs Snowball out of town.

Soon their peaceful, and idyllic, barn is in upheaval. Animals are dying left and right. Everyone is quickly turning to violence, and soon there might not be anyone left at all. The only good human being is a

dead one. Without further ado - this book sucked.

And no, being a brilliant allegory does not excuse it for being a sucky book.

I suppose, I could go into more of an analysis mode - break down this and that...relate it to the allegory and compare against the real-life events.

...but I'm no longer in any sort of English class, so I'm under no obligation to write anything deeper for my analysis.

I absolutely loved it when all the animals were working together and helping each other live their best possible lives...and when things went south, oh did I hate this book.

To put this into context - 1984 was really well done. The characters, the narrative, etc. Even if you took away any of the main themes, you are still left with a great story.

Animal Farm... not so much. Without the allegory, it feels flat to me.

So much needless death and destruction.

So much hate and violence.

All without a valid reason or cause. (Yes, there is a reason if you look into the allegory, but without knowing that the audience is left in limbo.)

Characters are introduced solely to kill them off, and my heartstrings were yanked here and there without any payoff.

It felt like George Orwell just threw the characters around cause he wanted to force a narrative on his audience and I absolutely hated it.

10/10 would not recommend.

[Blog](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) ...more

Animal Farm Pet Hospital

I first read this in Grade 11 and decided it was my favourite book. I knew a reread needed to happen right away, but it took me four years to finally get around to it when my boyfriend gifted me this beautiful illustrated edition. Animal Farm is a book I often think about and often quote, and it was a bit nerve-wracking to go back to it to see if it actually lived up to everything I had built it up to be. Thankfully, I'm thrilled to say it did.

In many ways it's a little bit underwhelming the second time around, because the plot (which lots of people will already know because it's a retelling of the Russian revolution) is extremely simplistic. This meant, however, that I was able to focus more on motivations and symbols and the other meaty stuff outside of the plot (which, don't get me wrong, was still hella exciting).

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The big question: is this still my favourite book? Yes. I've not yet read a book that so succinctly and simply drives home an idea with wonderful intricacies and nuances. After all this time I also feel so comfortable with this book, I get it and love talking about it and see reflections of it all the time. Also, in response to this edition, I loved the illustrations. They were sinister and childlike and felt like political caricatures - I think Orwell would like them. Apparently Andy Serkis is going to be making a film adaptation of Animal Farm and I'm super jazzed. That doesn't really have anything to do with this review, but I wanted to share my joy.

Finally, thank you to Greg for gifting me this pretty book, reading it aloud with me over FaceTime, and letting me go on big rants about why Benjamin is the WORST.

June 23rd, 2012:

One of my favourite classics. Absolutely brilliant. Just great. Read it in Grade 11 and never looked back! Really introduced me into loving classics. ...more

"I won't read again to this writer", that was my first impression to "ANIMAL FARM".

George Orwell was recommend to me by his two most famous books:"ANIMAL FARM" and "1984", and I had started reading "ANIMAL FARM" first by chance.

Then I though that Orwell, almost, hadn't have something to talk about in his other book; because he "has summarized up all what is happening in the occupied revolutions".

Later, I knew that "1984" was about Dystopian world that occurs after ANIMAL FARM's world. and Over

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Overall, the book was full of simple comprehensive metaphors, and reminded me of Bolshevik traitors comrades like Trotsky and Kautsky, LOL.

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Animal Farm Quotes

This book is featured on Shabby Sunday @ <https://readrantrockandroll.com/2018/...>

I read Animal Farm when I was in college and it was one of those reads where you think it's going to be boring, but it turns out to be a favorite. It's an allegorical tale representing the Russian Revolution where the characters in the book represent people during this time.

I won't go into the plot too much, but in a nutshell, this story is about a group of farm animals who rise up against the evil farmer who cares. This book is featured on Shabby Sunday @ <https://readrantrockandroll.com/2018/...>

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I won't go into the plot too much, but in a nutshell, this story is about a group of farm animals who rise up against the evil farmer who cares for them. They basically take over the farm by cause of Old Major (Marx/Lenen), the pig all about change. He gets all the animals together into an uprising against Mr. Jones, the farmer (Tsar Nicholas II). The animal characters then run the farm themselves and develop their own hierarchy being lead by Snowball (Trotsky) and Napoleon (Stalin). In a way, the story reminds me of an Aesop's Fable because the animal characters in the book have human characteristics and there are morals and messages that are quite obvious. Young readers can read it and they won't pick up on the meaning. I just think it's a story about a group of rebellious farm animals against humans, but I believe the message that Orwell wanted to express is that power corrupts. Also that people need to think for themselves, educate yourself and make your own decisions. Don't let others think for you.

Someone recently asked me who my favorite character was in the book which is a really difficult question to ask, in my opinion. I liked a handful of the characters including Boxer, Snowball, Benjamin, and Clover, but if I had to choose a favorite, it would have to be Snowball. Snowball's ideas were in the best interests of the animals and he was always fair. He wanted to educate the other animals and make life easier for them. He was intelligent, brave, and stood up for his beliefs which is why he's my favorite character in the book.

I'm not sure exactly how old my edition of Animal Farm is because no publication date is given, however, Goodreads seems to have this Signet Classic published in 1956. This thin paperback is in great shape for it's age with clean, crisp pages.

My rating on this one is 5***** ...more

Animal Farm

Under the leadership of the pigs, the animals of Manor Farm overthrow their human owner and go into business for themselves with all animals doing their part. However, some parts involve a lot less work than others and things quickly change...

I somehow managed to dodge this landmine in high school and the ensuing couple decades. However, I had a few conversations about it at work and decided it was time to give it a read.

Animal Farm is a dystopian tale of revolution and the ensuing government. A Under the leadership of the pigs, the animals of Manor Farm overthrow their human owner and go into business for themselves with all animals doing their part. However, some parts involve a lot less work than others and things quickly change...

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Animal Farm is a dystopian tale of revolution and the ensuing government. According to everyone, it's an allegory of the Russian revolution of 1917. However, it could easily be an allegory of every revolution ever. Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.

The revolution happens fairly quickly. The pigs organize the other animals and send farmer Jones out on his ass. After that, the future looks bright for about fifteen minutes. Then the pigs start maneuvering against each other and fucking over the other animals. There's also scapegoating, lying, rewriting history, and all sorts of things no government today does. That was sarcasm, before anyone decides to chime in.

This is a powerful little book with many messages. Power corrupts. Communism doesn't work. Those who don't know the past are doomed to repeat it. People are dicks.

There are some classics that are as dry as a geriatric's vagina and pretty joyless to read. Other classics are fairly easy reads containing a wealth of wisdom. Animal Farm is firmly in the second camp. In today's uncertain political climate, it is definitely a must read, although it may be a case of closing the barn door after the horse has already left. Five out of five stars.

...more

Animal Farm Berkeley

ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS !

In the start, I thought this book would be from the view point of animals; about how they are treated, how they expect to be treated and how man is cruel towards them.

But but but;

I am amazed at how Orwell criticizes the political maneuvers and totalitarian rule, using animals to explain what humans do. The author beautifully portrays the way a revolution is started to stop what is happening and going full circle comes to the same point i ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS !

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But but but;

I am amazed at how Orwell criticizes the political maneuvers and totalitarian rule, using animals to explain what humans do. The author beautifully portrays the way a revolution is started to stop what is happening and going full circle comes to the same point it started from. Just the face of power is changed.

This book tells how the ruling class makes fool of the working class, uses their energies and resources for their own pleasure. What happens behind the closed doors of power.

How the working class is being brain washed that they are happy and satisfied and free despite of the obvious slavery they have been undergoing.

My favorite character was Benjamin (yes, a donkey) , who remains a neutral throughout and says nothing despite understanding everything.

A huge applause to Orwell for being able to explain human psyche, political and social dilemma wrapped in the form of this story. ...more

Animal Farm is a dystopian tale of revolution and the ensuing government that takes over afterwards. It could easily be a symbolism of most revolutions that occur in history. A new leader comes in and itâ€™s the same as the old leader. Rinse. Repeat.

(Note to self):

Must. Not. Get. Too. Political. With. This. Review.

I absolutely loved this book and the tale of this animal farm should concern anyone that believes in a free-thinking society. All it takes is a revolution, distrust in facts, listening t Animal Farm is a dystopian tale of revolution and the ensuing government that takes over afterwards. It could easily be a symbolism of most revolutions that occur in history. A new leader comes in and itâ€™s the same as the old leader. Rinse. Repeat.

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Animal Farm

I absolutely loved this book and the tale of this animal farm should concern anyone that believes in a free-thinking society. All it takes is a revolution, distrust in facts, listening to false propaganda of any new administration and not questioning the slow changes that occur that gives government total control over personal freedoms and liberties.

Animal Farm is a simple tale but it's well written and holds many timeless truths. It's a story of power and the absolute power that can corrupt any type of democratic society.

George Orwell was a flippin' genius to write this tale.

Just read it. It terrified me and it should terrify you as well. ...more

Animal Farm Themes

George Orwell got stunned for a while when I finished Animal Farm-a masterpiece from George Orwell- for the novella depicts our society so perfectly- the role of power, how corrupts those who are apex of a social system and eventually they eliminate their competitors, and it happens with almost every social system, it's like a treatise on our society.

Napolean is not inherently evil, Napoleon's subsequent adoption of nearly all of Mr. Jones' principles and after that the animals treat fellow ani George Orwell got stunned for a while when I finished Animal Farm-a masterpiece from George Orwell- for the novella depicts our society so perfectly- the role of power, how corrupts those who are apex of a social system and eventually they eliminate their competitors, and it happens with almost every social system, it's like a treatise on our society.

Napolean is not inherently evil, Napoleon's subsequent adoption of nearly all of Mr. Jones' principles and after that the animals treat fellow animals as human do their fellow counterparts.

The original commandments are:

Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.
Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.
No animal shall wear clothes.
No animal shall sleep in a bed.
No animal shall drink alcohol.
No animal shall kill any other animal.
All animals are equal.

Some commandments were later changed-

No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets.
No animal shall drink alcohol to excess.
No animal shall kill any other animal without cause.

The pigs and dogs take most of the power for themselves, thinking that they are the best administrators of government. Eventually the power corrupts them, and they turn on their fellow animals, eliminating competitors through propaganda and bloodshed.

The novella is a fable where an imaginative narrative is used, the allegorical nature allows anyone to read the novel without the need to understand the historical significance although it makes the characters easily identifiable for those who know the historic parallels.

The narrator is an uninvolved third person who we know nothing about and never see, and who is not biased to any side. He weaves in and out of the creatures' heads, cluing us into things like Clover's distress about the executions.

The voice of narrator is passive for most of the book as the narrator remains strictly neutral throughout the book .

"It was noticed that they were especially liable to break into "Four legs good, two legs bad" at crucial moments in Snowball's speeches."

In Animal Farm, personification is a common theme.

“the pigs could already read as well as write perfectly.”

Irony is also a literary element which features throughout in all its forms. It doesn't make any difference to animals when one leadership / social system is replaced with another one- their fate remains the same " Some animals are more equal than others"

We see that irony is used to show the eventual fate of animals- however narrator never involves himself, he shows his helplessness through irony- one notices that it's quite ironic that eventually 'Pigs' become indistinguishable from the humans as they acquire characteristics of human-, in the end pigs can be seen toasting not to Animal farm but to “The Manor Farm” .

Orwell used satire to show his disapproval of the "system." Satire makes light of a very serious issue by making it almost ridiculous and is a literary technique widely used.

Though Orwell used the allegorical farm to symbolize the communist system of Soviet Russia but I find that the novella represents the corruption of power which can be associated with any social system.
...more

George Orwell's Animal Farm is undeniably one of the best short novels ever written in the English language. It is a deceptively simple tale, which even older children could read. About an animal uprising,

Animal Farm

it is written in the style of a fable, and yet it can be read on so many levels. It is clearly both a satire and an allegory, a dystopian tale, and its author George Orwell made no secret of what regime, and which politicians, he was so mercilessly parodying. Yet as with all great novels, it speaks to us today and holds many timeless truths. It is the sort of novel where a reader will find new depths in each rereading.

The inspiration for the novel came from a real-life episode. Orwell had just left the BBC, in 1943, and was uneasy about some propaganda he could see distributed by the then "Ministry of Information". He says,

"I saw a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge carthorse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat."

George Orwell wrote *Animal Farm* between November 1943 and February 1944, but the novel was not published straightaway, because of the USSR's status as an ally in the Second World War. George Orwell was a socialist writer, so the fact that he chose to do such a savage critique of the Soviet Union may come as a bit of a surprise to a present-day reader. One might have expected him to choose the far right, rather than the far left. But he personally felt that the Soviet Union (now Russia) of that time had itself become a brutal dictatorship, and that its original ideals had become perverted.

Animal Farm was subsequently published in England in 1945, just after the war, and ironically it quickly became a great commercial success when it did finally appear, partly because the Cold War so quickly followed the Second World War. However the book was immediately banned in the USSR and other communist countries. To this day it is still banned or censored in some places; the United Arab Emirates, Cuba, North Korea, and China.

In his story George Orwell chronicles the rising to power of Joseph Stalin, who is depicted by the pig "Napoleon" in the novel. The story parallels his emergence as a natural leader, and gradually follows his rise to power as a dictator. Near the beginning of the novel, the farm animals overthrow their oppressor, the farmer "Mr Jones". This is a direct analogy to the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917, when the Russian Tsar Nicholas II, who had abdicated in February, was executed by the Bolsheviks along with the rest of his family, in July 1918. Interestingly, Orwell said the drunken farmer Jones, who neglects his animals, was based on the real life Tsar Nicholas II.

But their democratic coalition of animals, all with a vision of independence, comfort and freedom from constraints, is gradually broken down. There is straightaway a consolidation of power among the pigs,

who do no work because they are the "brainworkers" with what is tacitly agreed as superior intelligence. Just as the Soviet intelligentsia did, the pigs establish themselves as the ruling class in the new "free" society. In Animal Farm they then immediately begin to manipulate and control the new state for their own benefit.

At the start of the novel, "Major" a middle white boar, has a dream, which he relates to all the animals, in a lengthy impassioned speech. It is a dream of the future, and of freedom for all creatures. It captures their imaginations, and inspires their actions from then on. Major is based on a combination of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. Just as Lenin's embalmed body was put on display for the people,(view spoiler)[Major's skull is initially mounted as an emblem for the animals to revere, although by the end this is removed, and the animals are expected to worship Napoleon. (hide spoiler)] Major's principles provide the foundation for the code of the revolution and the philosophy of "Animalism".

The other main character at the start of the novel is the pig, "Snowball" who is based on Leon Trotsky. Just as in the Soviet Union, these two characters vie for power, with "Napoleon" using subterfuge and manipulation to his own ends. He arranges false confessions, show trials and executions to enforce his power, frequently changing history as the story unfolds. "Squealer" is a pig who works on behalf of Napoleon, employing various devious means to misrepresent and confuse the animals. He is apparently based on Molotov. Squealer speechifies, using elaborate philosophical ideas which the animals cannot really follow, often using the Socratic dialogue to get the answer he desires. And this is always used to justify the pigs' greedy and unprincipled behaviour; anything which is self-serving and goes against the original ideas of fairness. George Orwell is keen to show the corruption of "Animalist" ideals by those in power, not that the ideals themselves were wrongly held. In 1947, George Orwell wrote,

"For the past ten years I have been convinced that the destruction of the Soviet myth was essential if we wanted a revival of the socialist movement ... I thought of exposing the Soviet myth in a story that could be easily understood by almost anyone and which could be easily translated into other languages."

For instance, Squealer works on the animals so that they accept a slogan which is almost the direct opposite of its original, "Four legs good, two legs bad" becomes "Four legs good, two legs better" overnight, as bleated by the impressionable, keen to follow, sheep. The reason for this is clear from the story. And "Snowball" (based on Trotsky) is (view spoiler)[thus expelled from the revolutionary state (hide spoiler)] by a malicious comrade eager to dominate, using any violent means available to achieve his ends. Nobody knows who they can trust any more.

The irony is at its highest in the depiction of corruption; the tyranny and hypocrisy of the pigs as led by Napoleon. The food rations get increasingly smaller, yet it is "proved" to them that they are all much better off than they were formerly under Farmer Jones. The animals' ideology of liberation and equality gradually disintegrates. The rules change secretly, slowly and silently, so nobody is sure what is really the truth any longer. History is rewritten; memories become unreliable; the brainwashing is slow and subtle. The animals can read, but there is little documentation, except for seven commandments, painted on the barn wall,

- (view spoiler)[1. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.
2. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.
3. No animal shall wear clothes.
4. No animal shall sleep in a bed.
5. No animal shall drink alcohol.
6. No animal shall kill any other animal.
7. All animals are equal. (hide spoiler)]

Yet over time, each of these is amended, to the advantage of the pigs, until in the end there are no words showing at all, and the final famously nonsensical maxim is spouted without question,

"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

(view spoiler)[The rousing song "Beasts of England", which all the animal took as their National Anthem at the beginning of the story, is banned. The symbol depicting the horn and hoof, on their green flag, which indicated their Animalism philosophy and power, is obliterated. (This was similar in real life to the hammer and sickle on the Soviet flag.) (hide spoiler)] The novel is a dual critique against the Stalinist regime of violence, but also against the imposed rhetoric, against the language employed, logic and ideals.

Another character indicated by George Orwell is his depiction of Adolf Hitler, as one of the farmers, "Mr Frederick", who wants to take over the renamed "Animal Farm". But there are many minor characters whom we all recognise in our own lives. Take the cat, who votes for both sides at the same time. Who has never come across a "two-faced" person? Or the pony "Mollie", the stereotypically vain and lazy original Essex girl, with her penchant for wearing ribbons in her hair and looking at herself in a mirror, regardless of any greater good which may come about by a little hard work. The story of the carthorse "Boxer" will break your heart. His courage, his steadfastness; with his personal motto, "I will work harder!" he is the archetypal salt of the earth. But he is naïve and gullible, and the reader fears that he will be taken advantage of to a devastating conclusion. You will cry, internally at least, but you will also laugh with this book. Here is an extract from the pompous poet pig, Minimus's, eulogy about Napoleon.

"Friend of the fatherless!
Fountain of happiness!
Lord of the swill-bucket!"

The conclusion of the book is predictable, but perhaps not in quite the simple way the reader expects. Yes, the oppressed become the oppressors, but in a fiendishly clever denouement.

All the political manipulations of the novel are recognisable today. Wherever you live, you will not have to look very close from home to find such a regime. And also, the brilliance of this novel is that those characteristics of scheming, dishonesty, cynicism, and underhanded ways of achieving a particular end,

Animal Farm

are not confined to politics. Who has never watched a skilled manipulator diverting attention from one major problem by concentrating on a minor one? It may have been in politics - or it may have been in a committee meeting - or even, dare it be said, around your own dinner table. Large or small scale, these observations by George Orwell are, sadly, truths about the human condition and human behaviour. They are timeless, and present in any institution, cooperation, business, family - in fact any group of people. One critic has even suggested that Orwell has put himself in the novels as Benjamin, the donkey, a wise old creature who is the only one who pessimistically repeats, "Life will go on as it has always gone on - that is, badly."

Have you actually read Animal Farm? No? Then please do. You read it years ago? Then try reading it again. It is an outstanding novel, with the hallmarks of a true classic; it is both entertaining and profound. ...more