

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
AMMAR THELIDJI UNIVERSITY– LAGHOUAT  
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT



**Allegory as a Literary Device in  
George Orwell's  
*Animal Farm* (1945).**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master  
in Civilization, Literature and Language Teaching.

**Candidate:**

Nadjat CHERIGUENE

**Supervisor:**

Mr. Sayah KHALFA

**Jury Members:**

Chairman: Mr. Aribi Ibrahim

Examiner: Ms. Houcine Aicha

Mrs. Ibtissam Touhami Adi

Academic Year: 2017/2018

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my parents, family and loved ones...

## **Acknowledgements**

Firstly, I would like to thank my Supervisor Mr. Khalfa for his time and guidance. Special thanks go to the members of the jury, Ms Houcine Aicha, Mr. Aribi Ibrahim and Mrs Touhami Ibtissam. Thank you for consulting my humble work.

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## **Abstract**

The power of allegory lies in its flexibility. This device can simplify what is complex and present it in a simple comprehensible way. It has been used by writers and poets since antiquity and it is still being implied by modern writers. George Orwell's *Animal farm* (1945) is a political allegory; it symbolizes the Bolshevik revolution that has occurred in Russia in 1917. The Bolsheviks were communists who rebelled to overthrow the Russian emperor Czar Nicholas II. The revolution ended with success, however, the power-hungry leaders lead to the corruption of Russia, and it became worse than it has ever been in Czar's days. Russia is represented by the farm in the novel, while the abusive leaders are symbolized by the pigs. Allegory has the power of both a metaphor and a narrative. It is implied by political writers either to openly satirize a situation or to add a mysterious touch to their works; by embodying their political opinion inconspicuously in an allegorical works.

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# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

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Since the very early beginnings of literature in ancient times, allegory has been an omnipresent device in literature. In its beginnings it used to be more religious and spiritual rather than political as in modern times. The purpose of allegorical myths was to invite people to stay religiously committed and obedient and teach them morals; it was more likely concerned with sin and salvation. John MacQueen states that “*The Origins of allegory are philosophic and theological rather than literary*” (qtd. in P.R. Lalitha 76). In this quotation, MacQueen clarifies that allegory in the beginning was not written for literary purposes, not for thinking nor for entertainment, its purpose was purely philosophical, divine and religious.

According to *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* “*The best known allegory in the English language (if not in the world) is Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress (1678)*” (20). Therefore, allegory represents the Christian doctrine of salvation. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is a work in which allegory of ideas is greatly sustained. Myth for example, is a form of allegory and it is an attempt to explain universal facts. As a matter of fact, most myths in classical literature are allegorical. M.H. Abrams describes allegory as a “*a narrative fiction in which the agents and actions and sometimes the setting as well, are contrived to make coherent sense on the literal or primary level of signification and at the same time to signify a second correlated order of agents, concepts and events*” (4).

Allegory has always been present in narratives, from antiquity, to the medieval times to Renaissance and even in present. In her introduction to *Thinking Allegory Otherwise*, Brenda Machosky suggests that “*allegory is thriving [even] in the twenty-first century,*”

What makes allegory very ancient is the fact that it has always been very familiar and common to the human mind; it is a figure of speech, a way to see things, a tool of expression and transmission of ideas (Cuddon 21). Despite its very ancient roots, allegory is still alive in modern works. However, it is used for different purposes at present. Instead of teaching morals or strengthening people's belief; allegory today is used to raise consciousness, to

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satirise or to criticize. While reading an allegorical work, the reader starts to figure out some hints that lead them to the hidden message that the writer aims to transfer.

There are two main types of allegory, the allegory of ideas and the political allegory. The second type is usually written either to satirize and ridicule a person or a situation or to keep the writer's political views hidden. *Animal Farm* (1945) is considered as a political allegory. For example, George Orwell has chosen to criticize the Soviet Russia in an allegorical 'fairy story' instead of criticizing it in a critical essay.

This research aims to explain what the device of allegory is and its power to transmit a message to different categories of readers. Political writers tend to write allegorical stories instead of direct critical essays; because allegory simplifies the message and makes it more comprehensible to the public. This powerful tool is also used to raise awareness; which could be another reason why writers tend to imply it in their works.

Among the long list of the allegorical works, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* has been selected for this dissertation. This work attempts to examine the allegorical and satirical traits of the novel. The novella suggests the possibility of political corruption and the dominant circumstances of the Russian Revolution in 1917.

Valerie Meyers describes *Animal Farm* as "*an allegory of revolution.*" (qtd. in Bloom 23) she argues that the story "*is based on the first thirty years of the Soviet Union, a real society pursuing the ideal of equality. His book argues that this kind of society hasn't worked, and couldn't*" (ibid 25). At the surface, it seems a simple and plain animals' story, yet a closer look can tell that it is a moral story that describes the social unfairness and political rottenness that were prevalent at that time. Moreover, the novel *Animal Farm* shows an eloquent and witty use of allegory in order to best reach its ends.

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The following questions are formulated in order to reach the aim of our study, taking the George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as a case study:

1. Does Orwell intend to hide his criticism of the U.S.S.R<sup>1</sup> when he puts his political views in an allegorical “fairy story?”
2. Since Orwell attacked the U.S.S.R, which was seen as a socialist country, is he an anti-socialist writer?
3. Although Orwell is a great writer, he uses simple language in his fable, why is that?
4. Why has Orwell chosen to use animal characters for his novella, in which he criticizes a country's politics?

From the previous question, it is hypothesized that political writers, such as Orwell, write political allegories in order to keep the figurative meaning mysterious. That is to say, what the writer aims to criticize would not be obvious in an allegory, so this device would be a way to keep his political opinion hidden and private.

This Dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter aims at giving a clear image about allegory. Using M.H. Abrams's *Glossary of Literary Terms* as a primary source, the chapter attempts to give a full definition of the literary term and suggest Abrams's division of the existing types of allegory. It also attempt to provide brief examples about its use in some popular work; from Plato's *cave* to George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

For a clearer vision about the novel, the second chapter will tackle its historical and social background as well as providing a summary of *Animal Farm*. We will also attempt to investigate the circumstances that have shaped Orwell's political thinking and inspired his political writings. This chapter also attempts to highlight and explain the aspects of Communism and Marxism within the novel.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S.S.R: It is an abbreviation of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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The final chapter will attempt to investigate Orwell's choice of expressing his political opinion in a beast fable, instead of simply writing a direct critical essay. Morris Dickstein entitles *Animal Farm* as "*history as a fable*" (qtd. in Rodden 133). We will try to compare some of the main elements of the story with actual events from the Russian history.

The pigs in the novel gain absolute power. However, their plan goes wrong, they end to fail the farm and betray the animals. In the end, they turn the setting from a utopian place to a dystopian totalitarian one, because after all "*Absolute power corrupts absolutely*" (Lord Dalberg-Acton).

Although Orwell has faced difficulties in publishing his work *Animal Farm*, it has turned out to be one of the most successful allegories in modern literature and a masterpiece of political satire. Despite the fall of Soviet Communism and the end of the Cold War, Orwell's work still gets the attention it deserves today, the power of his work lies in the power of allegory in transmitting a message and allowing the reader to make the links and comparisons, which makes the work timeless.

## **Chapter One: Definition and Background**

**1. Introduction.**

**2. Definition of Allegory.**

**2. A. Allegory VS Symbolism.**

**2. B. Origins of Allegory.**

**3. Types of Allegory.**

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**4. C. Allegory in High and Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Enlightenment.**

**4. D. Allegory in Modern Literature.**

**5. Conclusion.**

# Chapter One: Definition & Background

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## 1. Introduction

Allegory is a concept that has been differently understood over time, yet it has regularly been used by writers to articulate and construct their roles as authors. Angus Fletcher describes allegory as being a “*protean device*” (1) as it is a flexible device that can embrace any literary genre. It has developed different meanings and purposes along different eras.

As it is the core of this research, this chapter introduces allegory as a literary device, a figure of speech and a narrative. Thus, we try to highlight the main difference between allegory and symbolism, as the two concepts are often mixed up. As such, a definition of each is needed. We will mention the main existing types of allegory; distinguished by M.H. Abrams. In addition to that, the reader will be able to take a glimpse at the most primary works of allegory in the history of literature. We will try then to set an approximate timeline and classify the allegorical works across it. It is not easy to depict each era’s exact beginning and end, which makes the classification of the literary works among the timeline a little blurry; that is why we have gathered some eras in one title, for we can hardly precise some works’ period of emergence and classification.

## 2. Definition of Allegory

The terms allegory has been derived from the Greek word “*allegoria*” and it means speaking otherwise (Cuddon 20). The literal meaning of the term allegory can be therefore resumed as “*saying one thing and meaning another.*” *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines allegory as follows:

*a story or visual image with a second distinct meaning partially hidden behind its literal or visible meaning” In a written narrative, allegory involves a continuous parallel between two (or more) levels of meaning in a story, so that its persons and*

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*events correspond to their equivalents in a system of ideas or a chain of events external to the tale.* (Baldick 5)

In simpler words, allegory is a narrative that has a second meaning beneath the surface one, it has a literal meaning and a figurative meaning which is hidden. An allegorical story is a split level story. That is to say, the reader reads the story on a basic level, like any other regular story, they would then understand the story and the events. However, they will also need to understand what the elements of the story stand for and what they symbolise, by reading the story on a figurative level.

An allegorical story is a story in which characters, setting and actions symbolise something already existing. As defined by the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*<sup>1</sup>, allegory is a “*symbolic representation*”, it could be used to satirize something as it could be used to explain and simplify something that is complex in order to make it more comprehensible to the public. Taking *Animal Farm (1945)* as an example, Orwell has satirized a political doctrine and has simplified it into a plain animal story. This technique makes the idea clearer, more comprehensible and funny even to young readers. At the same time, his novel is a serious, critical, eye opening story. In an allegory, the author takes one metaphor or lesson, and uses the entire narrative to transmit his idea or teach a moral or a lesson.

Childs and Fowler describe allegory as being “*an extended metaphor in which characters, actions and scenery are systematically symbolic, referring to spiritual, political, psychological confrontations*” (4). It is one of the most fruitful forms of rhetorical interpretation. It invites the reader to compare the familiar with the unfamiliar. It can be written in the form of fables<sup>2</sup>, parables<sup>3</sup>, poems and stories; however, it is not restricted to language. Illustrations of allegory can be found in other forms of art, such as painting,

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<sup>1</sup> Merriam George and Charles. Merriam-Webster. 2nd. Web.

<sup>2</sup> see page 41

<sup>3</sup>Parable: a simple didactic story, in prose or verse, it is used to illustrate a moral or a spiritual lesson.

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sculpture, drama or even films. “*Allegory has also been performed in more concrete media, particularly in public buildings and monuments, where figures or other conventional images are designed to express meaning.*” (Machosky 4)

The principle technique of allegory is “*personification*” and “*metaphor*” (Baldick 5), to personify something non human or an abstract quality is to give it human characteristics; while the metaphor is when something is said to be another.

### 2. A. Allegory and Symbolism

Allegory is defined as “*a symbolical narrative*”<sup>4</sup>. An allegorical work transmits its hidden message through symbolic figures, actions and events. Almost every element in the allegorical work symbolises something. Allegory and symbolism are very connected that people tend to confuse them; despite the fact that the two are interrelated, they are somehow different. Indeed, allegory is larger than symbolism.

According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, symbolism is defined as “: *the particular idea or quality that is expressed by a symbol*”, it is also defined as “*the use of symbols to express or represent ideas or qualities in literature, art, etc...*” Therefore, a symbol is a concrete object that represents an abstract idea. For instance, the heart symbol is a representation of love. On one hand, the symbol in the narrative could stand for a one character, one setting or one event. Different symbols together form an “*extended piece of symbolism*”, which is the allegory (Flanagin).

On the other hand, allegory is a complete narrative, “*an entire piece that stands as an extended metaphor*,” (Baldick 5) as it follows the entire pattern throughout. It is when the writer uses symbolism in a longer form, its purpose is to reveal a hidden meaning, and the reader needs to figure out what each element of the story is symbolic of. Allegory is a set of symbols, while symbolism can stand for one item and symbolise one quality. Allegory is like

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<sup>4</sup>“Allegory.Def.2.” Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web.

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a big image and symbolism is the puzzles that form that image. Thus, an allegory cannot exist without symbols.

Orwell's *Animal Farm*, for instance, is highly symbolic; many of its elements including characters stand for historical figures and events. The character names themselves are very symbolic, suggestive of their personalities or their historical roles (Course Hero). The antagonist's name, Napoleon for example, is known to be the name of the famous powerful emperor of France. That character in the novel has an absolute power over the rest of animals.

Old Major appears in the beginning of the novel, an old wise boar, he is highly estimated and respected by animals. Major in fact is a high military rank held by an army officer. As for the owner of the farm, Mr Jones, his name is common in English, so his name may represent a common ordinary man who owns a farm. Snowball the pig, is a soft, smart, harmless character. Just like his name, Boxer the horse is strong, a hard worker and a fighter. Squealer<sup>5</sup> the pig, always cries false announcement to the farm animals.

The windmill in the novel is a symbol of hope. By building the windmill, the animals were looking forward to get equal benefits from it, which will result in providing a better life for everyone. However, after the corruption of the farm, the windmill becomes nothing but a source of exhaustion and hard labor, with almost no benefits.

### 2. B. Origins of Allegory

The origins of allegory are believed to be very ancient, it becomes hard to trace when precisely it was first used.

*The origins of allegory are very ancient, and it appears to be a mode of expression (a way of feeling and thinking about things and seeing them) so natural to the human mind that it is universal. Its fundamental*

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<sup>5</sup>“Squeal.” Def 1: a long, high-pitched cry or noise. (Dictionary.com), 1995, Web.

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*origins are religious.* (Cuddon 21)

In this vein, Brenda Machosky asserts that the device of allegory is very old, that there is no specific date of its emergence. She claims that allegory may have existed since language was first created: “*Allegory is perhaps as old as language itself and certainly as variable as the languages and styles in which it has been written*” (1). The various uses and definitions of the latter were already set by classical writers. They regarded both the mode of writing and the form of reading and interpreting various texts.

Homer’s *Odyssey* (8<sup>th</sup> c. B.C), a Greek epic poem, can be considered as an allegory, as it is rich in symbols and imagery. It implies the element of myth<sup>6</sup>, which is a form of allegory. Other Roman poets had an allegorical design in their writings; such as Virgil (70BC-19BC), Ovid (43BC- AD 18) and Statius (AD 45-96). In addition to using allegory as a mode of writing, they also considered it a way of interpretation.

### 3. Types of Allegory

Allegorical works tend to hide a meaning within them, either a political or a moral one. M.H. Abrams distinguishes two main types of allegories are distinguished, according to their function: allegory of ideas and historical allegory (5).

#### 3. A. Allegory of Ideas

In the allegory of ideas, literal characters stand for concepts, while the plot stands for a doctrine or a thesis. In this type, the elements of the story (including characters, setting, events and actions) represent moral qualities or abstract ideas; its aim is to teach morals and lessons. This type of allegory was mostly common in medieval literature and in religious stories.

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<sup>6</sup>Myth : it is a form of allegory, a kind of traditional and anonymous story, at first the term did not mean fiction, Homer used the term “muthos” to mean narrative and conversation, the term is later used by the Greek to mean fiction (Cuddon). Derived from “muthos” in Greek and it means anything uttered by word of mouth

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John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is seen as "the best known allegory in the English language (if not in the world)" (Cuddon 20). It is a religious allegory that has been written in two parts (1678) and (1684). Bunyan has written the story while he was in prison, where he had stayed for twelve years. He had been accused for "holding unlawful assemblies and not conforming to the national worship of the church." Bunyan was a Puritan writer, although he was separated from his wife and children, he was ready to "venture them all with God." The writer has produced *The Pilgrim's Progress* thanks to a dream vision; hoping that his work will strengthen his family's faith. While Bunyan took his pen to write *Pilgrim's Progress*, in his apology he writes that he "Fell suddenly into an allegory, About their journey and the way to glory. . . ." (Pictorial *Pilgrim's Progress* 1).

The Protagonist Christian leaves his family, and the story tells the events he goes through during his pilgrimage, the work "allegorizes the Christian doctrine of salvation" (Abrams 5). Christian, warned by Evangelist, flees the City of Destruction, which is believed to symbolize earth; he makes his way laboriously to the Celestial City, which symbolizes heaven. On his way he encounters characters with names such as Faithful, Hopeful, Hypocrisy, Talkative, Piety, Prudence, Formalist, Help, Giant Despair, etc. Christian passes through places like the Slough of Despond, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and Vanity Fair.

### 3. B. Historical/Political Allegory

In political allegory, the elements of the narrative symbolize historical figures and events, as it carries a political message. For example, in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, the setting of the farm stands for Russia, while the characters stand for historical leaders or the Russian working class.

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*Allegorical thinking permeated the Christian literature of the middle ages, flourishing in the \*morality plays<sup>7</sup> and in the \*dream visions<sup>8</sup> of Dante and Langland. Some later allegorists like Dryden and Orwell used allegory as a method of satire; their hidden meanings are political rather than religious.*

(Baldick 6)

In this quotation, Baldick states that the allegorical thinking has been present in the medieval Christian literature, and has bloomed in the morality plays. In addition to dream visions, which is a form of literature that was very popular in the Middle Ages, this mode applies to Dante's *Divine Comedy* and to William Langland's *Piers Plowmen* (1366-99), which is considered the best known English vision poem. In addition to these two works, the mode also includes Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, which is believed to have had a great influence on the genre. The French *Roman de la Rose* (13<sup>th</sup> century) is another dream allegory that has a wild influence on the period, it is even claimed that it has been probably translated by Chaucer (Cuddon 242). Chaucer himself implies this mode in his work *The House of Fame* (1379-80).

In the previous statement, Baldick says that the allegory of modern times is no more written for religious and moral purposes, but it is more used as a technique of satire by allegorists, like George Orwell, he could be pointing at his two dystopian novels, *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1949). He then refers to John Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), a satirical poem. Abrams explains the latter as follow:

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<sup>7</sup>Morality plays are allegorical plays popular especially in the 15th and 16th centuries in which the characters personify abstract qualities or concepts (such as virtues, vices, or death)

<sup>8</sup> Dream Visions or Dream Allegory, very common in medieval times. It is a tale which is represented in a dream framework. By common convention the writer goes to sleep, in agreeable rural surroundings and often on a May morning. [The narrator sleeps and experiences a narrative dream] He then beholds either real people or personified abstractions involved in various activities. (Cuddon 242)

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*John Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel ...a historical allegory, King David represents Charles II, Absalom represents his natural son the Duke of Monmouth, and the biblical story of Absalom's rebellion against his father. . . allegorizes the rebellion of Monmouth against King Charles. (2). (5)*

In Addition to the previously distinguished types of allegory, Abrams goes even further by dividing these two types into further subtypes. Sustained allegory and episodic allegory; these two divisions may exist in both types of allegory.

Abrams argues that the sustained allegory has been written in all literary periods. However, it was at its peak in the medieval era, the age when allegorical masterpieces have been produced, including dream visions. M.H. Abrams classifies *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a sustained allegory of ideas, where “*the central device is personification*” (5), mainly of abstract entities such as vices and virtues.

For episodic allegory, there could be only a single episode, an allegorical piece, which exists among a non allegorical work. For example, in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), the allegorical episode is found in book II, where Satan encounters his daughter Sin and with Death; who is represented as an illegitimate child of their relationship.

### 4. A Historical Overview of Allegory in Literature

Allegory has been used throughout history in all forms of art; thanks to its great power of illustrating complex ideas and concepts, in ways that are easily digestible and tangible to its readers, viewers and listeners (Sharma). Abrams sees that allegory is a narrative strategy which may be employed in any literary form or genre (6). Various literary narratives such as the fable, the parable and the exemplum<sup>9</sup> may also be classified as allegories.

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<sup>9</sup>Exemplum :a story that is usually told in religious speeches, it's aim is to support an argument or to point a moral. Chris Baldick defines the term in his dictionary as “a short tale used as an example to illustrate a moral point, usually in a sermon or other \*DIDACTIC work. The form was cultivated in the late Middle Ages” (89).

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Through observing MacQueen's book, *Allegory*, the latter is classified through history as follow: Greek and Roman allegory, Biblical Allegory, Medieval Allegory, and finally Allegory and Satire. "*Historically, the rise of allegory accompanies the inward-looking psychologizing tendencies of late antiquity and medieval Christianity,*" Such as in C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, 1938). (Childs and Fowler 4)

### 4. A. Allegory in the Classical Age

There are multiple examples of allegory of ideas found in classical literature. One of these examples is Plato's *Cave*. Plato was among the very first who came up with an example of allegory, the myth. In fact, he was the founding father of many aspects of allegory, since he was a philosopher, he took into consideration the fact that the human mind is minor in front of complex knowledge; that is a major reason behind his use of the myth, "[which] is an attempt to explain universal facts and forces"<sup>10</sup> (Cuddon 21).

In his myth, *The Cave*, Plato attempts to explain how hard it is to educate the people around him (Gendler). By illustrating a story that takes place in a cave setting, where three prisoners have been chained there all their lives. They have never been in touch with the outer world. All they have seen is shadows, which were reflected on the cave wall in front of them. Thanks to a fire that was set behind them, they were able to see the shadows. They have always believed that the shadows were real, and did not realize that they were only reflections of people and other objects.

Once, one of the prisoners suddenly breaks free. He finally gets to leave the cave to discover the world; it is hard for him to believe that the objects around him are real, as he has always believed that only shadows were real. The free prisoner goes back to the cave, to tell his comrades about his discovery. However, no one seems to believe him, in contrary, they think that his journey outside only made him stupid and blind. Instead, they fight him and

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<sup>10</sup>The myth often carries deep truths and expresses fundamental matters of life and death, divinity and existence.

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violently resist any attempt to free themselves, they wanted to stay chained to the wall. The idea of this allegory reflects how some people are comfortable in their ignorance, and resist any attempt to receive new knowledge with an open mind.

Although Plato is one of those who implied the device of allegory; he is argued to have expressed “hostility” towards it, through Socrates in *The Republic* (380c. B.C). Socrates sees that children should not be listening to stories about Gods, instead, he speaks about the educations he thinks they should receive. He claims that “*children cannot distinguish between what is allegory and what isn't*” (Tambling 8). Socrates has always feared the double meaning that Plato’s allegorical writings carried, firstly at the level of meaning and secondly at the level of the language used in meaning which might lead to misinterpretation, because it is “*offering dangerous meaning inadmissible to adult common sense which expects language to convey a single truth*” (Tambling 8). In this latter, the binary nature of allegory is seen as a possible source of misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

### 4. B. Allegory in Early Middle Ages

The middle ages have occurred between the fifth century and the fifteenth century. As it is aforementioned allegory is classified into two types: allegory of ideas and allegory of politics. Interestingly, the first type was dominating particularly in medieval literature, in which characters personify abstract concepts as the story attempts to teach the audience a lesson.

The first and probably most recognized “pure” medieval allegory is *Psychomachia*, (The War of the Soul), by Prudentius, a Late Antique Latin poet from the early fifth century. In this work, virtues like Hope, Sobriety, Chastity and Humanity are in conflict with Pride,

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Paganism and Avarice in Christian's soul. The conflict is illustrated as a battle in the style of Virgil's *Aeneid*.<sup>11</sup>

### 4. C. Allegory in High and Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Enlightenment

Allegorical literature dominated the middle ages and passed to the Renaissance period. Dante is considered as the most important poet in the late middle ages/early Renaissance, he wrote his "*Convivio*" between (1304-1307). Dante suggested that writings ought to be understood in four senses, the literal, the allegorical, the moral and finally the anagogic<sup>12</sup>, which is above them all. He sees that allegory sugarcoats the truth as it, according to him, it hides the truth under "a beautiful lie." Dante's famous work, *The Divine Comedy*, originally named "*La Commedia*," is divided into three major sections: Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso. The narrative counts the story of Dante's journey to God from darkness and error to light seeing and redemption. Dante's biblical allegory is illustrated by MacQueen as:

*The redeemed souls after death compared themselves to the Israelites after their departure from Egypt, typologically [allegorically] they celebrate their redemption through Christ, tropologically<sup>13</sup> [ or morally] their conversion from the sorrow and misery of sin to the state of grace; anagogically, their passage as sanctified souls from the bondage of corruption of their world to the liberty of everlasting glory. (qtd. in Lalitha. P.R 85)*

Morality Plays were common in this period, written in a variety of verse forms. They are defined as "*dramatized allegories of a representative Christian life*" (Abrams 166).

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<sup>11</sup>The Aeneid is a Latin epic poem in twelve books by Virgil, which relates the travels and experiences of Aeneas after the fall of Troy.

<sup>12</sup>Anagogic : anagogical (Gk 'mystical sense') The anagogical meaning of a text is its spiritual, hidden, allegorical or mystical meaning. Thus, anagogy or anagoge is a special form of allegorical interpretation. Especially in the Bible, for example.

<sup>13</sup> Tropology : a mode of biblical interpretation stressing a moral meaning inhering in the metaphorical character of language.

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These plays come under the form of a quest of salvation and life and death matters. Its plot includes “*crucial events*” which are represented in temptations, sinning and climactic confrontation with death.

The medieval Drama “*Everyman*” is an old English morality play. It has been written in the fifteenth century, Everyman, the protagonist, must get ready to face death and be judged for his actions. In fact, Everyman stands exactly for what his name indicates. He is supposed to be an example for every man. The moral lesson behind this drama is to invite people to do good in life before death takes their lives away. The play is still revived in theaters today. “*The Castle of Perseverance and Mankind*” is another English morality play that has been written in the same century. Since the end of morality plays, allegorical drama has been scarce.

Immediately after the end of the Middle Ages, visual arts were flourishing the Italian Renaissance. For English Renaissance, the dominating forms of art were mainly music and literature. This period is believed to have started in the late fifteenth century and have ended by the late seventeenth century.

“*The Protean Device*” had been prevalent in the Renaissance period as it has provided a powerful tool for expressing new concepts and ideas. In this era, there was a great reliance on old cultural legacies in interpreting new notions and forms. Allegory was a strong rhetoric device which bridged between the old and middle cultures via parables, religious tales, imageries, etc. Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* (1590) is an English epic poem in the form of a verse romance; it fuses moral, religious, historical and political allegory.

Yet, the interest in allegory faded away after the Renaissance era. It is an era where abstract ideas start to get devalued. In an age of materialism, cultures start to pour their interest in more touchable and seeable things; that would result in preferring direct ideas in writing instead of allegorizing abstract things.

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In *Dark Conceit: The Making of Allegory* (1959), Edwin Honig argues that Enlightenment empiricism drove allegory into a “*literary dead end.*” He assures that by the late seventeenth century allegory was a dead genre no return, However, he argues that “*allegory turned to revitalization during the Romantic revival.*” (39)

The Enlightenment, or the post Renaissance period is the transition from the medieval world to the modern one. Odes, which are lyrical poems, were common in this period. In John Keats’s ode “*Autumn*” (1820), The second stanza personifies a female figure in the middle of the harvest season activities. William Collins’s “*Ode on the Political Character*” (1747) is an allegory of poet’s power of creative imagination.

Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) is also seen as an allegory. It is a satire against philosophical and scientific pedantry (Abrams 6). Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) has also been interpreted as an allegory, where England is represented by Wonderland; and Queen Victoria is represented by the Queen of hearts in the novel.

### 4. D. Allegory in Modern Literature

Unlike Billy Collins, Angus Fletcher argues that the device of allegory is “*omnipresent in Western literature from the earliest times to the modern era.*” (1) That is to say, allegory is not really a “dead genre”; it is still alive in modern works, except that its purpose has changed overtime. The use of satire, which is a form of allegory, becomes more common than the religious allegorical stories. It is more likely to be used by political writers either the ones who would openly share their political views, or those who tend to hide it behind an allegory.

As for modern literature, political allegory is more apparent than that of ideas. *The Wizard of Oz*, written by L. Frank Baum and published in 1900, during the peak of The Gilded Age. The story has been interpreted as an allegory of the Populist period in America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The book had been considered a regular American children’s story,

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until one day in the year 1963, a high school teacher named Henry Littlefield gave his interpretation of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*; that have changed how the world looked at the book ever since. Mr. Littlefield was an educator, an author and a historian. He claimed that the book was a political satire, and he made links between the events of the book and events that took place in America in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the story the main character Dorothy needs to meet the Wizard of Oz, a good witch offers her silver shoes and sends her along a yellow brick road, on her way she faces several dangers in addition to a scarecrow who wants a brain, a cowardly lion who wants courage, and a tin man who wants a heart. In the end of the story Dorothy's silver shoes save her; the solution was in front of her all the time. According to Mr. Littlefield, the book is an allegory that represents the events that lead to the Populist movement in America. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century was prosperous for some, industry and economy was prosperous in the North. However, it was the opposite for farmers in the South. Farmers and workers then decided to unite and make a movement against the elite. The movement later had grown into the People's Party that put William Jennings Bryan at reach of presidency at that time. (Parker)

According to Mr. Littlefield, the scarecrow stands for the farmers, the tin man represents the industry labourers who were abused and dehumanized by the factory labour; while the cowardly lion is a representation of William Jennings Bryan who needed courage to adopt the populist's radical program; and it is claimed that "Oz" is an abbreviation for ounces, which is a unit.

A decade before the book was published, farmers suggested to add silver to the gold standard in order to put more money in circulation and make it easier for them to borrow money, adding silver to the gold supplies was a suggested solution, in the story the silver shoes were the solution. Henry Littlefield's interpretation had been widely accepted that even American history books mentioned it in their political discussions of the late nineteenth

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century. However, it is still debatable if Mr. Littlefield's theory is correct about L. Frank Baum's work. Who claimed in the beginning of his book that it was just an innocent children's story, perhaps it is true and perhaps he intended to keep his political views private.

There have been other allegorical works in the nineteenth century, M.H. Abrams claims that sustained allegory has been present in all literary periods, however, "*it is the form of such major nineteenth-century drama*" (6), providing examples such as Goethe's *Faust* (1829) and Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1820).

Other examples of the twentieth century allegory are Thomas Hardy's *Dynasts* (1908), which Abrams considers as "*a sustained allegory*"; and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, a political satire.

In his poem "*The Death of Allegory*", Billy Collins laments the loss of abstractions by saying "*I am wondering what became of all those tall abstractions that used to pose, robed and statuesque, in paintings and parade about on the pages of the Renaissance*" (276). He reflects on the process by which the abstractions of allegory have been banished to a "*Florida of tropes*".

Collins announces that "*exactly the kind of thing we now prefer, [are] objects that sit quietly on a line in lower case*" (276). Collins is somehow nostalgic to the time when unseen objects and abstractions such as truth, courtesy, villainy and allegorical places (the Garden of Mirth, the Bower of Bliss, etc.) were conventions, opposed to the mundane and materialistic nature of the modern world. The death of allegory is part of the process whereby the modern age has become insipid and lifeless.

Despite its power of illustration and flexibility, allegory risks to be disvalued and have a poor reputation, in the mid twentieth century. Childs and Fowler assume that "*allegory fell into some critical disrepute*", and describe it as "*(dissociated', 'naive', 'mechanical', 'abstract')* though it flourished in satire, underground literature and science fiction" (4).

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Other critics, like Craig Owens, have allied postmodernist writing with allegory because of its tendency towards irony and parody. (Childs and Fowler 5)

In her book, *Reinventing Allegory* (1997), Theresa M. Kelley studies the reasons behind the literary mode's survival across all these eras, from the late Renaissance to the postmodern present.

### 5. Conclusion

Allegory has enriched British literature from the ancient Anglo-Saxon "Seafarer" to George Orwell's *Animal Farm* who subtly castigated totalitarianism. Allegory has always been present to change, challenge and inspire.

The length of an allegory is not determined; it can be as short as a verse, as it can be a multi volume book. It is present everywhere, in literature, in museums, in different forms of art, on buildings and in many aspects of life.

Allegory is a powerful tool that has been present in countless works through the history of literature, art and drama. It has been applied by several writers, painters and poets in their works, for different purposeful reasons. The "protean device" is very vast; it has been so largely used that one chapter is not enough to discuss all of its aspects. In his book *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*, Angus Fletcher asserts that "no comprehensive historical treatment of [allegory] exists or would be possible in a single volume." (1) Saying that he only hopes to get to "the essence of the mode" through his book, which is composed of more than four hundred pages.

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### 1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, allegory has been introduced as a whole, mentioning its main existing types as well as few examples. For the present chapter, we have selected a modern allegorical work by George Orwell. It is an allegory of the corruption of communism and the events behind the Russian revolution. We will introduce the writer and try to discuss some of the major events in his life that sculptured his political mind at that time. In order to be able to make connections between the story and what it stands for politically and socially, a brief summary of the story is needed. In addition to defining Communism and Marxism, this chapter attempts at highlighting their aspects in the novel. We will also attempt at giving a historical overview of the novel.

### 2. George Orwell: A Critic and a Political Writer

#### 2. A. Early Life and works<sup>1</sup>

At a young age, “*Between the ages of about seventeen and twenty-four*”, George Orwell thought of abandoning the idea of writing. However, he expresses that he would do that while being conscious that he would be “*outraging [his] true nature.*” At times, writing was a necessity for Orwell. Sometimes, he writes in order to break free from his bad memories. The writer has realised that one day, sooner or later, he would “*settle down and write books*” (CEJL 1: 1).<sup>2</sup>

After his failure to win a university scholarship, Orwell has joined the Indian Imperial police to work as a British officer for five years; in “*Why I Write*” he describes this job as “*an unsuitable profession*” (CEJL 1: 4). Joining the Indian army in Burma opened his eyes to see the dark side of Imperialism. For the first time, Orwell is now conscious that a working class

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<sup>1</sup> For a brief biography about George Orwell, see (Appendix A).

<sup>2</sup>CEJL: Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, this collection gathers Orwell’s letters, essays, reviews, and journalism of thirty years (1920-1950) .Edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus and divided into four rich volumes.

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exists. The experience was not pleasing; George has experienced poverty and a sense of failure. It is true that this phase fed his natural hate to authority; however, it was not enough to decide his political path. “*There he had such experiences that would later inspire such essays as ‘A Hanging’ and ‘Shooting an Elephant.’ Guilt-ridden and disgusted by the murders he had seen*” (Bloom 10). Orwell expresses his nightmarish experience in Burma, saying that they “*afterwards stayed so hauntingly in [his] mind that [he] was obliged to get rid of them*” in *Burmese Days*, his first novel. (qtd. in Bloom 10)

Not only has the experience in Burma had a great impact on the writer, but also the Spanish Civil War was of a great influence. When the latter has begun in 1936, Orwell has joined the Republicans and the resistance against the Franco Uprising, he has actually fought for a communist political party, the POUM<sup>3</sup>, but the experience was troublesome. Stalinists have attacked the POUM members; they have arrested and tortured some, and have killed others. Orwell got shot in the throat by an enemy; after his recovery, he has decided to dismiss from the Spanish conflict. He and his wife were accused for treason for escaping the conflict. The latter has a great role in shaping the writer’s political character, which happens to affect his writings later on. Orwell has written a book about the Spanish Civil War in *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), this work is of a satirical genre, it includes the writer’s personal account of experience and observation in the war. Orwell openly and frankly admits that his book is a political one in “*Why I Write.*”

Once, a publisher has asked Orwell whether he can write a book about the problem of unemployment. The writer then spends some time in industrial areas in England; there he observes the hardships the working class has to go through. He does not only witness unemployment, but he also witnesses poverty, hunger, dangerous mining conditions in which workers live in, poor slum homes and social injustice. Bloom claims that this experience

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<sup>3</sup> POUM : Partido Obrero de Unification Marxista, i.e Unified Marxist Workers’ Party

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pushed Orwell closer to socialism (11). Orwell has written an autobiography about this experience in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937). The latter is another experience that has further sharpened Orwell’s political orientation.

Not only *Homage to Catalonia*, *The Road to Wigan Pier* and *Burmese days* are autobiographies, George Orwell’s works were often inspired by experiences he has been through, or by places he has been to. *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) is another memoir of the writer, divided into two parts on the theme of poverty in the two cities.

According to John Rodden, George Orwell’s interest in politics evolved in the 1930’s. He sees that Orwell’s talent did not lie in traditional fiction, which was clear in the four novels<sup>4</sup> that he has published between 1933 and 1939. He sees that it is obvious that “*what profoundly interested Orwell were political questions*” (Rodden 1). Harold Bloom agrees that Orwell has a political touch in his writings; however, he claims that it was not clear yet when Orwell was in the phase of writing fictional novels. He quotes Orwell’s comment after he has written his third novel *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936): “*it is invariably where I lacked a political purpose.*” In addition to that, Orwell describes his non political novels as “*lifeless books.*” (qtd. in Bloom 11)

In his essay “*Why I Write*” (1946), Orwell expresses his desire “*to make political writing into an art*”. His starting point is realizing the unfair lifestyle the majority of people have to live, in addition to a sense of partisanship on behalf of the writer. In the same essay, George Orwell clarifies that his writings are mostly political and not just fictional by saying “*I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose*”. (CEJL 1: 6)

### 2. B. Orwell’s Political Views

It is not an easy task to depict the writer’s exact political thoughts, he may sound like an anti-communist; since he has written *Animal Farm* which attacks the USSR, but it is not

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<sup>4</sup>*Burmese Days* (1934), *A Clergyman’s Daughter* (1935), *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936), *Coming up for the Air* (1939).

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exactly the case. In fact, Orwell was never an anti communist, not to forget that he was involved in a communist party, the POUM. However, the events that he has been through drove him to dislike communism, or more specifically totalitarianism.<sup>5</sup>

What really irritates Orwell is not communism itself, but the corruption of communism which leads to totalitarianism. Orwell’s political orientation was clearer after the Spanish Civil War. In his essay “*Why I write*” Orwell says that “*every line of serious work that [he has] written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic Socialism*”. (CEJL1: 5) From the previous quotation, we can understand that George Orwell is a democratic socialist. He is not an anti socialist; he is just against the totalitarian forms of socialism. The previous quote answers our second research question.<sup>6</sup> As such, we do not think that the writer’s main target is to criticise communism in *Animal Farm*. The idea that Orwell aims to clarify is what happens when governments abuse the power they are given. He just dislikes the idea of how the working class is abused and manipulated by the powerful ones. Orwell is conscious of the effect media has on people, he has already worked for the BBC and for the censorship and propaganda in 1941.

In the following statement, Orwell expresses the negative feelings he had towards The Soviet Union. He states that although he has never been to Russia, he knows too much about it just through reading. He also describes Stalin’s methods as being “*barbaric and undemocratic*”:

*I have never visited Russia and my knowledge of it consists only of what can be learned by reading books and newspapers. Even if I had the power, I would not*

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<sup>5</sup> Totalitarianism: Derived from the word “Total”, it is when one group or party has total control of everything. The term has been used to describe the dictator political systems that tend to abuse power.

<sup>6</sup> Since Orwell attacked the U.S.S.R, which was seen as a socialist country, is Orwell an anti-socialist?

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*wish to interfere in Soviet domestic affairs: I would not condemn Stalin and his associates merely for their barbaric and undemocratic methods. It is quite possible that, even with the best intentions, they could not have acted otherwise under the conditions prevailing there.*<sup>7</sup>

In the same line, Orwell made his own position clearer when he admitted his conviction that the destruction of the Soviet Union is necessary to triumph the Socialist movement (ibid). It may sound a little paradoxical that Orwell is a democratic socialist; yet, he attacks the U.S.S.R that has the word “Socialist” on its name. He simply disagrees with its name; he denies that it is a Socialist country. Orwell sees that even believing that Russia is socialist, is itself a corruption of the original idea of Socialism. (qtd. in Bloom14)

### 3. A. Historical Background of the Novel: “*The Story Behind the Story*”

Harold Bloom claims that the idea of *Animal Farm* came to George Orwell during last days of the Spanish Civil War. In 1943, Orwell was working as a literary editor at the socialist weekly *Tribune* when he already started working on the manuscript of *Animal Farm* (Bloom 12). It is said that Orwell used to read entire passages for his wife, Eileen, and consider her suggestions. Some characters are named after pets that he had owned in the past, he owned donkeys in Burma and his wife raised chickens and goats. Eileen passed away before the novel was published. Orwell then tries to find a refuge in writing as he has published over a hundred articles and reviews in the following year.

### 3. A. Difficulties in Publishing the Novel

It was not easy for George Orwell to publish *Animal Farm*. The book was rejected over and over by several publishers; including T.S Eliot, who was a director at *Faber & Faber* at that time. In the summer of 1944, Orwell wrote a letter to T.S Eliot saying that if he

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<sup>7</sup>Preface to the Ukrainian edition, CEJL III: 406.

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reads the manuscript he would realize its meaning, which was not “*acceptable*” at that time. Orwell is obviously conscious that the work was not appropriate for the period; yet, he insisted that he “*could not agree to make any alterations except a small one at the end which [he] intended to make.*” In the same letter, Orwell rectified that he could not change that description. Orwell received a reply from T.S Eliot saying that Orwell’s pigs are far more intelligent than the other animals, and therefore the best qualified to run the farm<sup>8</sup>

Even Victor Gollancz, who had published most of Orwell’s works, was hesitating to publish the latter due to some political reasons. When a publisher, Jonathan Cape, almost accepted the book, he received an advice from the Ministry of Information to not provoke the Soviet Union. It was discovered later that the official who sent the warning was a Soviet Spy.<sup>9</sup>

*Animal Farm* was finally accepted by Fredric Warburg's small press. The novel was officially published in England in 17th August 1945. Orwell wrote to Warburg asking him if David Low, a political cartoonist, would be interested in making the illustrations for the book; David Low gladly replied that he had “*a good time with ANIMAL FARM*” and described it as “*an excellent bit of satire - it would illustrate perfectly.*”

After the novel had a successful release, George Orwell is asked for a Ukrainian edition. The latter has been translated by Igor Shevchenko and published in 1947. In his preface to the Ukrainian edition, “*Kolghosp Tvaryn,*” Orwell has no problem in exposing that his work is a political allegory of the Russian Communism and refuses to give any additional comments on the work. He says that “*if it does not speak for itself, it is a failure.*” and he adds:

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<sup>8</sup> George Orwell, letter to T.S Eliot, 28 June 1944. Letters of note, Shaun Usher,2009. Web.  
T.S Eliot, letter to Orwell,13 July 1944. Letters of note, Shaun Usher,2009. Web.

<sup>9</sup> “7 Fascinating Fact about George Orwell.” Biography. Web.

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*...I should like to emphasize two points: first, that although the various episodes are taken from the actual history of the Russian Revolution, they are dealt with schematically and their chronological order is changed; this was necessary for the symmetry of the story. (ibid)*

Orwell does not seem to be afraid of sharing his political views, he nor minds criticizing what he thinks is wrong. In contrary, he has afforded the production costs of a Russian language version printed on thin paper which was intended for Russian soldiers and those behind the Iron Curtain. It is claimed that Orwell refused to receive any royalties neither for the Ukrainian edition nor for other translated editions; so that even poor people could afford the book. (Penguin Preface 2000)

### 3. B. A Summary of the Story

The story takes place in Mr Jones' farm, the 'Manor Farm'. Old Major, a wise old boar, calls the animals for a meeting. He tells them about a strange dream of which he had the previous night; "*It was a dream of the earth as it will be when Man has vanished*" (15).

Old Major asks the farm animals to free themselves from the oppression and the exploitation of "*Man*" who is "*the only creature that consumes without producing*" and takes the animals' products to consume them and trade with them. In his address, Old Major provides the animals with shocking evidences about them being exploited and abused to death. He reminds them that none of them is free; once an animal is above a year old, he shall turn into a miserable slave, if not slaughtered.

On the bright side, Old Major attempts to drive their attention to how strong they are if they set it together and he provokes a rebellion. He sets some rules for the animals to follow which will be later named The Seven Commandments (see appendix C). Three days after Old Major's death the pigs, the cleverest of all animals, start to elaborate the principles

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of Animalism under the guidance of the pre-eminent ones namely: Snowball, Napoleon and Squealer. Jones forgets to feed his animals and provokes a revolution and is chased away from his farm. The pigs teach themselves the alphabets, in order to be able to write and read; using an old spelling book which belonged to Mr Jones’s children. The old name of the farm “MANOR FARM” is painted out by snowball and replaced with the name “ANIMAL FARM” (28).

The rebellion is very successful at the beginning. Animals start to meet every Sunday to debate the farm policy under the supervision of the pigs. Napoleon, however, starts to show some power-thirst symptoms, by taking apples and cow milk for him and other pigs. Squealer explains that milk and apples are good for pigs’ mental health to carry on the wise-governing and the maintenance of the common welfare. *“It is for YOUR sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back!”*(Orwell 40). Squealer threatens the animals with the return of Mr. Jones every time they try to speak, make a remark or have a doubt. Their ex keeper was a major threat and their biggest fear; they would keep silent thinking that the pigs cannot be worse than Mr. Jones.

Jones tries to take back his farm but fails thanks to Snowball’s “tactic” in the so-called The Battle of Cowshed. Snowball’s innovative idea of building the windmill to provide the farm with power and electricity is constantly opposed by Napoleon, who later summons his dogs to ban Snowball from the farm forever. Later, Napoleon announces the idea of the windmill and claims it as his own, not only that but he also attributed every calamity to Snowball. Throughout the next years, Napoleon develops progressive greed and eagerness to rule the farm alone; he even announces that the weekly meetings are no longer necessary.

After the storm hit the farm, the windmill was destroyed. In spite of the exhaustion of the animals, Napoleon orders them to rebuild it. He is no more addressed to as “brother” but

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as “father”, he executes the animals in public after forcing them to confess. He would execute anyone who disobeys him or who is opponent to him. The seven principles of Animalism are violated one by one and their structure is reformulated to meet the pigs’ desires. Each time, Squealer attempts to manipulate the animals’ minds and explain that the principles have always been the same since the beginning of the revolution and that they only lack a good memory to remember what is written on the wall, if they are ever able to read. Life in animal farm becomes even harder than it was in Jones’ days; pigs grow “more equal than others”. To show that they are more equal than other animals, Napoleon and the pigs start to walk on their hind legs, dress and behave like humans. Their goal is to keep running a farm where other animals work more and eat less. At the end, Napoleon toasts “to the prosperity of the Manor Farm”.

### **4. Marxism and Communism in Animal Farm**

*Animal Farm* is in fact inspired by Marx’s theory. Old Major believes in equality; without his suggestion, there would be no revolution. He is the founding father of Animalism, which in fact stands for communism.

The origins of communism go back to the nineteenth century. It was first introduced by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Together they wrote *The Communist Manifesto* which was first published in England in 1848. This work is believed to be of a great influence on the political world.

#### **4. A. The Concept of Marxism**

Karl Marx (1818-1883) is a German economist, philosopher, historian, political theorist, sociologist, journalist and revolutionary socialist. He is opponent to Capitalism<sup>10</sup> and sees it as a system where the workers are abused by their employers. He thinks that it is

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<sup>10</sup>Capitalism is an economic system that is based on the ownership of resources by individuals or companies and not by the state. Business and industry are run and controlled by private owners.

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unfair mainly to the workers whom he called “proletariat”<sup>11</sup>. This class was abused by their employers as they were getting poor salaries for hard labour. As such, the word “capitalism” simply meant giving a poor price to the product a worker makes then re-sell it with a much higher price as profit.

In *The Communist Manifesto* Proletariat is described as “*that class of society which lives entirely from the sale of its labor and does not draw a profit from any kind of capital*” (Marx and Engels 42). Indeed, the key to a communist country lies in the making of a classless society, which will lead inevitably to the achievement of a utopian society through applying several regulations and governing methods. He also believed in equality as a tool to ascertain a more peaceful and fairer place to humans. According to Marx, an ideal society is a “classless society”.

In order to achieve the idea of Utopia, Karl Marx describes three major phases. First of all, the proletariat must rebel to overthrow the existing government. Before moving to the next phase, Marx sees that the existing system must be destroyed. In the second phase, Marx suggests that there must be a leader who takes the lead of everything and control everything in education, religion, employment, private property, wealth and even marriage. That, according to Marx will assure abolishing class system from society. After accomplishing the two previous phases, the idea of utopia will be achieved automatically in the third phase.

The middle/upper class known as “the bourgeoisie”<sup>12</sup> is given power over their proletariat. The workers are being exploited; their employers take from them more than they give to them. Proletariat are compared to slaves : “*The slave is sold once for all; the proletarian must sell himself daily and hourly [ . . . ] The slave counts as a thing, not as a member of society. Thus, the slave can have a better existence than the proletarian*” (Marx

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<sup>11</sup>Proletariat is what is called by Marx and Engels “the working class of the 19<sup>th</sup> century” (42).

<sup>12</sup> The bourgeoisie or the bourgeois class: it is the class of the big capitalists, who in all advanced countries are in almost exclusive possession of the means of subsistence and those means (machines, factories, workshop, etc.) by which these means of subsistence are produced. (Mark and Engels 38)

## **Chapter Two: The Historical and Social Background of 'Animal Farm'**

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and Engels 44). In contrary, in a socialist society, people work to produce the good and then they get to share the good equally.

Marx believes that one day the proletariat will rise to overthrow their wealthy employers and will be the ones who reconstruct society. He also suggests that the aim of Communism is "*the formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat*" (22).

### **4. B. The Concept of Communism**

Communism is a political doctrine whereby the state owns all industry and land. It believes in an economic system in which the state controls the means of production on behalf of the people. Its aim is to create a society where everyone is treated equally. It is seen as a branch of Socialism. In *The Communist Manifesto*, communism is defined as "*the doctrine of the conditions of the liberation of the proletariat*" (Marx and Engels 42). Marx is very concerned with breaking the proletariat free from their brutal, abusive owners and have the right to have proper salaries and lives.

In a communist nation, there is no private ownership or property. The government owns everything and controls everything including property, business and education in which all workers are employed by it. Karl Marx defends Communism as not being limiting as he argues that it only limits the powerful from enslaving others. He says "*Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labor of others by means of such appropriation*" (Marx and Engels 24).

One of the key elements to reach a Utopian society is believed to spread communism all over the world. Consequently, there would be neither boundaries, nor nationalities since communism, under the control of common laborers, would be the only nationality. "*we cannot take from them [the proletariat ] what they have not got* ", Marx argued since the

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proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word. Hence, Marx redefines the capitalist vision of a country ruled by few capitalists that were dominating the world's industry and exploiting its natural and human resources to meet their 'individual' needs. Marx proposes a totally opposite and radical solution to the decadence caused by the capitalist policy which lead the industrial mechanism to over production and consequently to the depression and unemployment of the population.

### **4. C. Marxism in Animal Farm**

After being in touch with the working class, George Orwell has come to be conscious of the problems the workers face. The writer was inspired by Marxism when he wrote his novel. The theory of Karl Marx aims to guarantee the proletariat's rights, it is exactly what Old Major wants to achieve in the farm. So, Old Major's idea of rebellion came to him from a dream he had about how earth would be without humans.

In fact, Old Major in the novel symbolises Karl Marx; they both share a utopian vision of the future. Old Major wants to save the animals from their deadly fate and hard labor. Just like the proletariat, animals get as much food as it keeps them alive “*we are born, we are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies, and those of us who are capable of it are forced to work to the last atom of our strength*” (Orwell 10). The latter is an allegory of the proletarians and the poor salaries they get. Old Major is the founder of Animalism. His ideology suggests that “*all animals are equal.*” Yet, he dies before his idea is applied. He provokes a rebellion as he claims that a revolution must take place on behalf of the animals. After that, he suggests that they must overthrow their human keeper in order to have control over the farm.

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### 4. D. Aspects of Communism in the novel

#### 4. D-1. The Rebellion

The animals are growing fed up and tired of how Mr Jones treats them. Yet, no one dares think of a revolution; until it is suggested by Old Major. The animals realise their true power; they listen to Old Major and try to stand out when their master treats them cruelly. A rebellion means change! By revolting, the animals plan to get rid of Mr Jones and therefore live happily ever after without him. Mr Jones in fact stands for the Russian Czar Nicholas II, the way he treats his people has turned them against him. Under his rule, people were underpaid; his abuse of power provokes the revolution in the first place.

The revolution takes place in 1917 by a group of communists, the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin. In fact, Old Major can stand for both Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, as the two are communists and share the same aim. The farm animals who rebel against Mr Jones represent the Bolsheviks<sup>13</sup> who have revolted against Czar. The revolution works successfully and the evil ruler is overthrown with success.

After the animals succeed to take control of the farm from their human keeper; they decide to celebrate their new life style every week: by making Sunday a day off for everyone, holding a flag hoisting-ceremony and singing "The Beasts of England," a song of which Old Major has taught them. The flag is designed by Snowball using an old green table cloth and white paint. He paints a horn and a hoof "*to represent the green fields of England, while the hoof and horn signified the future Republic of the Animals which would arise when the human race had been finally overthrown*" Snowball explained (Orwell 34). The flag of Animalism is in fact an allegory of the Communist flag after the Russian Revolution in which we remark a similarity between the two designs (See Appendix B). The Communist flag is red and has a

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<sup>13</sup> Bolsheviks are members of the Russian Social Democratic Party, they sought to overthrow Czar and gain power in the October Revolution of 1917.

## **Chapter Two: The Historical and Social Background of ‘Animal Farm’**

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sickle and a hammer on it, which together represent the unification of agriculture and industry, while the red color stands for revolution.

### **4. D-2. The Concept of “All Animals Are Equal”**

In a communist society, there is no wealthy or poor; everyone is equal and the working class owns everything. They all work towards the same aim. This community distributes what it produces based on need; nothing is obtained by working more than required. Everyone works equally and gets rewarded equally. *“From each, according to his ability, to each, according to his need.”* Karl Marx

Old Major and Karl Marx strongly believe in equality, Marx thinks that it is achieved through abolishing private property; while Old Major thinks that it is achieved through abolishing the humans. Neither Major nor Marx live to witness the rebellion of which they have called for.

It is claimed that *“No one believes more firmly than Comrade Napoleon that all animals are equal”* (Orwell 59). This line is enough to gain the animals’ trust, however they are getting stabbed in the back every day by Napoleon. The biggest betrayal is when he summarises the latter to *“all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.”*

Some critics suggest that the character of Old Major may stand for both Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. After Old Major’s death, his skull was put on display by Napoleon so the animals could salute it, to show gratitude for the change he has brought to the farm. In real life history, Vladimir Lenin’s body was put on display in the Soviet Union.

### **4. D-3. The principles of Animalism in the Novel**

Animalism actually stands for Communism. In his speech, Old Major explains to the animals that they should make friends with each other; he tries to explain to them that Man is

## Chapter Two: The Historical and Social Background of 'Animal Farm'

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the only enemy they should consider. Old Major sees that all human habits are evil and advises the animals to avoid man's lead:

*Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy. Whatever goes upon four legs is a friend . . . do not adopt [man's] vices. No animal must ever live in a house, or sleep in a bed, or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or touch money, or engage in trade . . . No animal must ever kill any other animal. All animals are equal. (15)*

After the death of Old Major, the animals decide to start following the principles that he has created for a prosperous life. The Commandments of Animalism are summarised in seven main commandments (see Appendix C). They are written in big white letters on a tarred wall.

However, some of the animals face trouble understanding the commandments, due to their short intelligence. *"It was also found the stupider animals, such as the sheep, hens, and ducks, were unable to learn the seven commandments by heart"* (Orwell 37). That is why Snowball summarized the commandments in one: *"Four legs good, two legs bad"*. The other animals would agree to anything that the pigs come up with. The pigs' good vocabulary was too complicated for most animals to understand, so whatever the pigs had to say always sounded smart and animals approved to follow it.

Unfortunately, the commandments were not respected by the pigs. After Napoleon and his pigs took control over the farm, they have allowed themselves to break these principles and later modify them to suit their own desires. They slept in beds, drank alcohol, traded with other farms, Napoleon killed animals, etc. The corruption of Animalism made the farm a happy place for the pigs but a hellish place for the other animals. In the end, Napoleon allows himself to reduce the commandments in *"all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others"*. The latter is the most famous line in the book.

### **5. Conclusion**

In theory, the idea of Karl Marx sounded very achievable and ideal for a society where everyone gets equal rights. However, when applied, it was not the case. Karl Marx died before his theory was put into practice. Orwell sees that the Socialist ideals set out by Marx and Engels have been cheated by the Russia Communists. According to him, the Western commitment and loyalty to Russia was covering up for Stalin's hypocrisy (Bloom 14).

This Chapter aimed to investigate the writer's political character, which was inspired by Marx. He does not criticize communism itself, but he illustrates what would happen when it is in the wrong hands, because communism gives total control to government. If the government is corrupt, the whole country will live in a misery.

## **Chapter Three: An Allegorical Reading of George Orwell's *Animal Farm***

**1. Introduction**

**2. *Animal Farm*: A Fable and a Political Satire**

**3. Orwell's Method of Characterization in the novel**

**3. A. Pigs in Control**

**4. From Utopia to Dystopia**

**4. A. The Corruption of Animalism**

**4. B. A Totalitarian Farm**

**5. Conclusion**

## Chapter Three: An Allegorical Reading of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

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### 1. Introduction

In the final chapter, we will tackle *Animal farm* as an allegorical work. The fable and the satire are forms of allegory as they are both implied in the novel. In addition, we will attempt to make a comparison between some of the main elements of the novel including characters, and the historical figures and events that they symbolise. We will also attempt to explain how corruption can turn a utopia to a dark dystopia. In the end, the pigs turn out to be greedy and selfish. They only want a utopia for themselves and do not care if the rest of the animals live in a deadly dystopia. The rest of the animals are innocent but they are easily manipulated due to their poor education. In his book, *Bloom's Modern Critical*

*Interpretations: Animal Farm*, Harold Blooms describes the novel as:

[A] *brief, concentrated satire, subtitled 'A Fairy Story', can also be read on the simple level of plot and character. It is an entertaining, witty tale of a farm whose oppressed animals, capable of speech and reason, overcome a cruel master and set up a revolutionary government. They are betrayed by the evil power-hungry pigs especially by their leader, Napoleon, and forced to return to their former servitude.* (26)

The fact that *Animal Farm* is an allegory subtitled “*A Fairy Story*,” raises the question whether the writer has intended to hide his political opinion. To answer that question<sup>1</sup>which is also our first research question, we have quoted few passages from George Orwell's “*Why I Write*,” in the previous chapter. The essay and the Ukrainian preface together provide enough evidence that the writer openly reveals that his book is an allegory of the Russian communism. So using the device of allegory for Orwell is not intended to keep his political views private. However, he wants his critical message to reach a larger category of people; by simplifying it to them and making it a little humorous and fun to read.

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<sup>1</sup>Does Orwell intend to hide his criticism of the U.S.S.R when he puts his political views in an allegorical “fairy story?”

## **Chapter Three: An Allegorical Reading of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.**

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*Animal Farm* can be read on a double level. Even if the reader is not familiar with the historical events it symbolises, they would still enjoy the story. For that reason, it is said that when the novel was first published, librarians had mistaken it for a children's fable. The book stores stocked it in the children books' section. However, Orwell had to walk to the stores and ask them to move it to the adult books' section. (Course Hero)

### **2. Animal Farm: A Fable and a Political Satire**

Allegorically speaking, *Animal Farm* is not only "A Fairy Story," it is a story of a satirical genre. George Orwell explains that his novella is a satire by saying: "*I intended it primarily as a satire on the Russian revolution*" (qtd. in Dwan 655). A satire can be described as "*the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation.*" (Abrams 6)

Although Orwell is a democratic socialist, he tends to minimize the Russian communism in a satirical manner. In his novel, he targets Stalin and the Russian propaganda especially.

The novel comes in the form of a fable or more specifically, a beast fable. On one hand, the fable is a short story where non human characters or inanimate things are personified and act like humans. This genre of stories exemplifies human behavior. On the other hand, in the beast fable, the characters can only be animals, "[they] *talk and act like the human type they represent*" (Abrams 6). George Orwell expresses how he has first got the idea of *Animal Farm* and explains his choice of using animal characters in his Ukrainian preface. Orwell sees that the proletariat and the animals are oppressed in the same manner. In fact, they both ignore their true power. The following statement would be the answer to our fourth research question<sup>2</sup>:

[Once] *I saw a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge cart-horse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. It struck me that if*

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<sup>2</sup>Why has Orwell chosen to use animal characters for his novella, in which he criticizes a country's politics?

## **Chapter Three: An Allegorical Reading of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.**

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*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.* (CEJL3: 406)

David Dwan describes *Animal Farm* as a “transparent allegory” (655), meaning that it is not mysterious as what the story symbolises is clear. George Orwell reveals that his book “was the first book in which [he] tried, with full consciousness of what [he] was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole” (CEJL1: 7).

The novella is written in simple language. It is understandable and does not include any complex terms or ideas. The writer justifies his aim behind using simple vocabulary in the following quote, which is also the answer to our third research question<sup>3</sup>: “*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*”(CEJL3: 406). Orwell wants his voice to reach a larger category of people, from different generations and nationalities. Not to forget that the writer has afforded Ukrainian copies for soldiers and Ukrainians behind the iron curtain. These in fact, were the ones who were mostly concerned with it.<sup>4</sup> They who were under Stalin’s rule, unconscious of the corruption and the manipulation they lived under.

### **3. Orwell’s Method of Characterization**

Orwell reveals the corrupt political system of Russia through several characters in the novel. Mr Jones inherits the farm just like Czar Nicholas II inherited the throne of Russia. The country was ruled poorly when he was its emperor. However, after the Bolshevik revolution took place; three hundred years of rule for the Czars came to an end and Nicholas II was successfully overthrown. Mr Jones is seen to represent Czar, as he was poorly

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<sup>3</sup>Although Orwell was a great writer, he uses simple language in his fable, why is that?

<sup>4</sup>The dictator Stalin starved the Ukrainian people in 1932-1933; he intended to destroy anyone who seeks independence from his rule.

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managing the farm, forgetting to feed the animals and treating them with carelessness. The animal revolution is an allegory of the Bolshevik revolution; it results in successfully overthrowing the owner. The animals who rebel are a symbol of the rebellious Bolsheviks. *“Of course, the animals are designed to represent working people in their initial social, economic, and political position in the society not just for Animal Farm but of England in general”* (Letemendia 129).

### **3. A. Pigs in Control**

After the revolution, two categories of animals emerge: the pigs, the educated minority, they take the lead and make decisions for the farm and give orders. As such, the rest of the animals are supposed to obey as they are supervised by the pigs. This category of animals is very easily persuaded which makes them a subject of manipulation. Unlike the rest of the animals, the pigs do not do any manual labour. They claim that they are in charge of the “brain work.” They keep the milk and the apples for themselves which they claim are the pigs’ brain food. They make the animals believe that they do that so their brains can function properly and thus, keep Mr Jones away.

Although they are the only animals who consume without producing, the pigs are more educated than the rest of the animals. They automatically take the lead after Old Major’s death and teach themselves more about reading and writing. However, they do not emphasise education on the rest of the animals. Since the pigs are the cleverest animals, they allow themselves to take advantage of the other animals’ ignorance.

Despite his non-productivity, Napoleon secretly seeks to be in charge of the farm. However, he needs to overthrow his competitor first, Snowball. When two of the farm dogs whelp puppies, Napoleon takes them away from their mothers, claiming that *“he would make himself responsible for their education”* (Orwell 38). However, when the nine puppies grow to become big and strong dogs, he uses them for his favour. He trains them to work as his

## **Chapter Three: An Allegorical Reading of George Orwell's Animal Farm.**

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army and later gains power thanks to them. The dogs are seen to symbolise Stalin's secret police, KGB.<sup>5</sup>

Unlike the other pigs, Snowball was making efforts to help the animals evolve. He has formed many committees for the animals including 'the Wild Comrades' Re-education Committee' in addition to instituting classes in reading and writing. Although the animals could not make much progress, some were able to spell some letters at least. Unfortunately, Snowball's collaboration to the farm comes to an end when he is chased away by Napoleon's dogs. Snowball was everything that Napoleon hates, a better speaker and a smarter pig. Since he is gone, he no longer makes a threat to take the lead of the farm.

However, despite his absence, Snowball is still accused for any harm that goes in the farm. "*He is like Trotsky, for whom Orwell had respect*" (Bloom 17) Snowball is representative of Leon Trotsky, he and Napoleon were the most active members in the farm but they were always in conflict. The two pigs allegorise Stalin and Trotsky and the conflict between them is a metaphor of the power struggle Stalin and Trotsky had after Vladimir Lenin's death. Snowball's chase away is also a metaphor of Trotsky's exile by Stalin, after his banishment he was assassinated.

Step by step, and with the help of Squealer, Napoleon succeeds to take the lead. He is no longer a regular pig, the animals start to refer to him formally such as "*our Leader, Comrade Napoleon,*" "*Father of all animals,*" and other formal titles.

Napoleon grows narcissistic, greedy and power-hungry every day, he wants to be praised by the animals. He claims that every fortunate event that occurs in the farm is thanks to him; and the animals naively believe that. "*It had become usual to give Napoleon the credit for every successful achievement and every stroke of good fortune . . .* [Two cows exclaim that] *Thanks to the leadership of Comrade Napoleon, how excellent this water*

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<sup>5</sup>KGB: (Russian abbreviation for Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti) and it means Committee for State Security, it was the main security agency for the Soviet Union from 1954 until its break-up in 1991.

### **Chapter Three: An Allegorical Reading of George Orwell's Animal Farm.**

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*tastes!*" (95) The animals work sixty hours a week under his rule. In addition to that, he announces that there will be work on Sunday afternoons too. The animals work patiently, especially when they hear Moses's stories. He is a tame raven who always tells the animals about Sugar-Candy Mountains, it is a place where animals go after death. Moses says that the harder animals work, the higher chance they have to go to heaven. The raven is claimed to allegorise the church (Bloom 19). In addition to the secret police and propaganda, the Russian Orthodox Church was in Stalin's favour, it was giving people hope and pushing them to work hard without complaint.

There would be no revolution without the animals. Yet, despite their successful collaboration to the farm, they still lack education and self-confidence. It is claimed that Orwell is not illustrating the hopelessness of the proletariat yet he is emphasising the importance of education and self-confidence in any working class movement. (Letemendia 129)

Under Napoleon's rule, 'Beasts of England' is abolished; it was a song of which Old Major has taught the animals. Instead, Minimus, a poetic pig, has composed another song. He also composes a poem which he names 'Comrade Napoleon'. Napoleon likes the poem and wants it carved on the big barn wall, with his portrait on top (Orwell 96). "[Napoleon] is representative of Stalin in his willingness to desecrate and his corruption, though he also shares characteristics with the French leader" (Bloom 17). Back to Russian under Stalin's rule, Stalin wanted to be praised by the people and his portraits were all over the country, from schools to factories. Bloom sees that Napoleon also represents "*extreme political tyranny*" (17).

Just like Stalin, Napoleon is neither a smart character nor a good speaker. In fact, he would not be able to reach power without Squealer the pig. It is claimed that Squealer is an allegory of the Russian newspaper, *Pravda* (Bloom 18). He works for Napoleon as he is the

### **Chapter Three: An Allegorical Reading of George Orwell's Animal Farm.**

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link between him and the animals. He always succeeds at convincing them with what Napoleon wants them to believe, thanks to his speaking skills. "*The others said of Squealer that he could turn black into white*" (Orwell 20).

After the windmill's destruction, the animals spend two years rebuilding the windmill of which Napoleon announces that it would be named after him, 'Napoleon Mill'. This time the walls of the windmill are much thicker. However, it is destroyed again due to an intentional explosion. In spite of the exhaustion and disappointment of the animals, Squealer tries to persuade the animals to rebuild another windmill: "*we will build another windmill. We will build six windmills if we feel like it*" (107).

No animal has collaborated to building the windmills more than Boxer, a strong hard working horse. He would follow and believe anything Napoleon says; his two mottos are "*I will work harder*" and "*Napoleon is always right.*" Boxer would wake up earlier to work for extra hours. However, once he becomes ill and less productive, he is strongly betrayed by the pigs. They decide to send him to the slaughter house in exchange for a case of whiskey. Squealer tries to mislead the animals, by saying that they have sent Boxer to the hospital. He claims that Napoleon has paid for Boxer's expensive medicines and that he has received the best care that a horse could ever receive before his death (126). Bloom argues that Boxer's name is a nod to the Boxer rebellion which signalled the beginning of Communism in China (17). Boxer and the other farm horses are also seen to represent the simple working class of Britain.

It is agreed that the neighbouring farms Foxwood and Pinchfield, with which Napoleon engages in trade, represent England and Germany. Bloom explains that Mr Pilkington -the owner of Foxwood- symbolises "*the English ruling class who eventually align themselves with Russia*" (19). While Mr Frederick is seen to represent Hitler, and his farm, Pinchfield, stands for Germany.

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### **4. From Utopia to Dystopia**

After the overthrow of Mr Jones, the animals start to divide the tasks. Despite the fact that they had to work hard, they managed to happily maintain in harmony. They all collaborate equally and benefit equally. The animals are finally happy to get to run the farm alone without their oppressive, drunkard, careless human owner. They get to eat what they harvest. The animals live in a harmony and work on building the windmill for a better life. It is planned that the windmill will provide the farm with power and electricity. However, before the animals reach their goal, they are betrayed by their comrade Napoleon. The farm under his rule becomes much worse than in Jones's days. The animals get less much food, they are getting skinnier and weaker, day after day. However, Squealer always proves the opposite with his fake statistics. As he keeps manipulating them to believe the opposite of what is happening in the farm.

#### **4. A. The Corruption of Animalism**

The pigs violate the seven commandments of Animalism one by one. Each time they break a rule they make an edit by adding a word to a commandment. The edit is made with capital letters at the end of the sentence. For example, after the pigs started to sleep in beds, they have edited the fourth commandment to "No animal shall sleep in a bed WITH SHEETS" (71) and when they broke the rule that forbids drinking alcohol, the fifth commandment was edited to "No animal should drink alcohol TO EXCESS" (111).

With such editions, the pigs sound to not have broken the rules. Although few animals have doubts about the editions, Squealer convinces them otherwise. He manipulates their minds, taking advantage of their stupidity and poor memory. The lack of education and self-confidence on the behalf of the animals leads them to blindly believe what they are told, especially the sheep. The sheep are seen to represent the people who blindly believe in the government and follow its lead.

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### **4. B. A Totalitarian Farm**

In a totalitarian society, the leaders use fear to paralyse their people from revolting or from speaking their minds. Fear is usually grown in people through the practice and abuse of power such as public executions, throwing protests in jail and bringing harm to whoever is opponent to the head of the state.

Napoleon announces that the farm lacks material. He suggests that Animal Farm should get involved in trade with other farms using what the animals produce in exchange for other things from outside the farm. Without taking the hens' permission, he makes a deal to exchange four hundred eggs per week. However, the hens refuse to surrender their eggs of which they are about to lay. They protest and would rather break their eggs than to sacrifice them for Napoleon, which in his eyes is a murder. The hens get punished for not following the orders as they are starved to death.

Napoleon starts to practice public executions on the animals using his dogs who would immediately tear any guilty animal apart. Whoever has a confession to make, even for stealing food, gets slaughtered. The animals start to confess one after one, waiting for their turn to get killed.

*And so the tale of confessions and executions went on, until there was a pile of corpses lying before Napoleon's feet and the air was heavy with the smell of blood. Which had been unknown there since the expulsion of Jones. (Orwell 87)*

Napoleon's acts violate a very important commandment, which forbids any animal to kill another. The sixth commandment is then edited to "*No animal shall kill any other animal WITHOUT CAUSE*" (93). By that Napoleon claims to have a 'cause' to kill. Orwell aims to illustrate the cruelty and injustice of Stalin through the character of Napoleon. The Soviet

## **Chapter Three: An Allegorical Reading of George Orwell's Animal Farm.**

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leader committed unfair crimes; the workers who have failed to achieve his five years plans on time were either executed or sent to the gulags<sup>6</sup>.

V.C. Letemendia sees that the pigs are the most absurd animals in the farm regardless to their intelligence. They begin to dress like humans and act like humans and attempt to assume a human identity of which does not belong to them (129). The pigs slowly turn into copies of their human oppressors and adopt the human vices of which Old Major had told them to avoid. In the end of the novel, the pigs and humans manage a meeting; it is hard to tell which is which. Napoleon gets involved with Mr. Pilkington, Bloom explains that "*their interactions are a metaphor for the Teheran Conference of 1943*" (19).

### **5. Conclusion**

This chapter aimed at giving explanation of some main events and characters in the novel and what they stand for historically. It also attempted to give an image about the farm after the corruption. We have provided some examples from the novel which exemplify the horror that occurs after the pigs corrupt the principles of Animalism. The latter allegorises the corruption of communism in the Soviet Russia. The power of the dictator Stalin was limitless; especially that he had his secret police and *Pravda* strengthening him.

The Russian Revolution was supposed to make life better and save Russia from Czar. However, life was much worse after the Bolshevik revolution, as Stalin was crueler due to the absolute power of which he enjoyed. Absolute power leads to totalitarianism, as one leader or party is given total control. John Acton asserts that absolute power will never remain clean and it will always be corrupt. "*Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*" (Lord John Dalberg-Acton.)

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<sup>6</sup>Gulags: a system of labor camps maintained in the former Soviet Union from 1930 to 1955 in which many people died.

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In the end, the animals' dream remained a dream; and Major's dream was partially achieved. It is true that the farm became a place where man is banished. However, the true enemy is closer than the animals can imagine. The rebellion resulted in turning the farm into a dystopian place, it is only going from bad to worse; the pigs turn out to be worse than Mr Jones.

# **General Conclusion**

## General Conclusion

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This research aimed to highlight the satirical traits in George Orwell's allegory, *Animal Farm*. In this line of thought, Morris Dickstein describes it as “*the book which brought together [Orwell's] gifts as a novelist with his commitment as a political writer*” (qtd. in Rodden 133). Through reading the story, the reader is able to draw parallels between the characters in the story and the actual historical events and the figures that they allegorise.

In the first chapter we have presented the device of allegory depending on a couple of dictionaries as primary sources; such as *The penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms* and M.H. Abrams's *Glossary of Literary Terms*. We have then explained Abrams's division of allegory into two main types: allegory of ideas and political historical allegory. The first type was mainly dominant in ancient religious works. In Classical literature, writers used to tell stories about Gods. However, some philosophers, including Socrates, did not like how the device of allegory was being used; mainly due to dual meaning it carries. Tambling explains that Socrates finds the device inappropriate for young readers.

The allegory of ideas was also used in the Middle Ages. It was mainly used in religious works that tackle death and life matters. Such works allegorise heaven, hell and the soul's journey to God, for example Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Other works like Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and morality plays such as “*Everyman*” used to teach people religious manners and strengthen their faith in God. Usually, the religious allegories tend to give the ideal image of a good Christian; a model that people are supposed to follow. We have mentioned few other allegorical works from other eras. The first type of allegory was taking over literature until the second type, political historical allegory, took over in the modern literature. At this point, allegory has started to become a satirical tool. Orwell is one of the writers who has used the device to allegorise how totalitarian governments work.

For the second chapter, we have selected a modern allegory, *Animal Farm*. The latter is not a plain fable, it is purely political. We have investigated the reasons why the writer has

## General Conclusion

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chosen to express his political opinion and critics in a fable. The Advantage of writing an allegory instead of a critical essay lies in its flexibility. If George Orwell criticized the dictatorship of Stalin in an essay, it would be set and fixed, as the essay will refer only to the Soviet Union forever. However, criticizing the dictatorship and totalitarianism of Stalin in a novel, makes it also applicable to other dictators from around the world and in different eras.

George Orwell might be elastically interpreted, at first glance, the novel might sound to criticize communism itself. However, after following the events of the story, it turns out to criticize the corruption and the totalitarian form of communism. Although Orwell is seen as a democratic Socialist, he targets the Soviet Union that has claimed itself as a Socialist country at that time. We have answered our second research question through Orwell's explanation that "*Nothing has contributed so much to the corruption of the original idea of Socialism as the belief that Russia is a Socialist country and that every act of its rulers must be excused*" (qtd. in Bloom14). So Orwell is not an anti-socialist writer, but he sees that believing that the Soviet Union is a socialist country is a corruption of the idea of Socialism.

Orwell has been in touch with the working class and he has been aware of the conditions they have suffered from. He sees that the proletarians do not realize their true power, as they are abused by their employers the same way the animals are oppressed by their owners. Orwell's idea of using animal characters came to him when he saw a little boy driving a huge horse once. At that moment, George could make the link between the animals and the working class and the way in which both are oppressed and abused.

Even before Orwell has finished writing *Animal Farm*, he has predicted to face trouble in publishing it, for its "*anti-Stalinist message*" (Letemendia 130). However, he insisted not to make any modifications in his work. His book has been accepted and it had a very successful release. In Fact, it is a work of which Orwell is best known for, in addition to *1984*.

## General Conclusion

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In the final chapter, we have tackled *Animal Farm* as an allegorical work. That is to say, the novel implies two forms of allegory, which are the fable and satire. We have given a brief explanation of both terms. In the same chapter, we answered the remaining research questions; in addition to making a comparison between some events and figures from the Russian history and the novel.

In this research, we have investigated whether the writer intends to hide his personal political opinion through injecting it in a fable. However, after consulting a few essays by Orwell, it has been found that he has openly announced his work as an allegory of the Soviet Union and Stalin's barbaric government.

The device of allegory allows writers to put forward their moral and political points of view. A careful study of an allegorical piece of writing can give us an insight into its writer's mind, how he views the world, and how he wishes it to be.

*Animal Farm* is written in a plain style and simple language. It can be easily understood by almost all categories of readers. Orwell himself entitles his work as a "fairy story", as it can be understood also by young readers as well. Through our research, it has been found that George Orwell has intended the work to be written in simple language, and that is to make easily translated to other languages from across the globe. The work could therefore reach a bigger numbers of readers. In the mid twentieth century, the work mostly concerned the Russians and the proletariat. It has changed the way the people see their governments, by giving them a sense of doubt and consciousness.

Educated people are conscious people, and conscious people are hard to manipulate. The importance of education is another message that Orwell wants to transmit through *Animal Farm*. He has illustrated how illiterate animals were manipulated and lived in ignorance. Although the commandments were written on the big barn wall, most of them could hardly notice that they were being edited and corrupted in front of them.

## General Conclusion

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George Orwell could have expressed his criticism of the Soviet Russia in an essay. However, he preferred to write about it in a beast fable. He did not criticize the leaders by their names, this fact makes his allegorical story elastically applicable to many governments in the world. Although the “*Soviet myth*” is over, *Animal Farm* is still a powerful work that is worth reading. The story does not only apply to the Russian government, Hazel K. Davis confirms that the story could also represent the latest revolutions against dictators around the world. (2)

Orwell did not want Britain to live in the darkness of totalitarianism. Through writing political works, he felt that he was serving that purpose; by raising consciousness through exposing the corrupt governments.

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### **Appendix C figures:**

Figure 1:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Animalism\\_flag.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Animalism_flag.svg)

Figure 2:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag\\_of\\_the\\_Soviet\\_Union#/media/File:Flag\\_of\\_the\\_Soviet\\_Union.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_the_Soviet_Union#/media/File:Flag_of_the_Soviet_Union.svg)

# Appendices



**Appendix A:** George Orwell (1903-1950)

Born in India as Eric Arthur Blair, and raised in the UK, Sometimes called the conscience of a generation. George Orwell is his pen name. He was an English novelist, essayist, and critic; he was famous for the genre of dystopian literature and best known for his novels *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). Both books were published toward the end of the writer's life. As a child, Orwell was a loner; due to his father's absence. He used to spend time reading, writing poems, creating stories and holding conversations with imaginary friends. In his youth Orwell thought of abandoning writing. However, he settled later and came back to write great works. During his life, the writer struggled against poverty and poor health. Orwell had a passion for gardening, keeping animals, fishing and carpentry. He married Eileen Maud O'Shaughnessy on 9th June, 1936. She died in 1945 of heart failure during hysterectomy. Blair married Sonia Mary Brownell in 1949. A year later, Blair died at 46 of tuberculosis in a London hospital. Orwell's ideas and thoughts have lived on through his works forever and still get the attention they deserve today.

**Appendix B:**



**Figure 1:** The Flag of Animalism in Orwell's *Animal Farm*.



**Figure 2:** The Flag of the Soviet Union.

## **Appendix C:**

### THE SEVEN COMMANDMENTS OF ANIMALISM:

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 bed
5. No animal shall drink alcohol
6. No animal shall kill any other animal
7. All animals are equal

(Orwell 28-29)

**Abstract:** The power of allegory lies in its flexibility. This device can simplify what is complex and present it in a simple comprehensible way. It has been used by writers and poets since antiquity and it is still being implied by modern writers. George Orwell's *Animal farm* (1945) is a political allegory; it symbolizes the Bolshevik revolution that has occurred in Russia in 1917. The Bolsheviks were communists who rebelled to overthrow the Russian emperor Czar Nicholas II. The revolution ended with success, however, the power-hungry leaders lead to the corruption of Russia, and it became worse than it has ever been in Czar's days. Russia is represented by the farm in the novel, while the abusive leaders are symbolized by the pigs. Allegory has the power of both a metaphor and a narrative. It is implied by political writers either to openly satirize a situation or to add a mysterious touch to their works; by embodying their political opinion inconspicuously in an allegorical works.

Key words: Allegory, *Animal Farm*, George Orwell.

**ملخص المذكرة:** تكمن قوة المجاز الرمزي في مرونته. يمكن لهته الأداة الأدبية تبسيط ما هو معقد وعرضه بطريقة بسيطة مفهومة. استخدمها الكتاب والشعراء منذ العصور القديمة، ولا يزال يتم توظيفها من قبل الكتاب المعاصرين. مزرعة الحيوان (1945) للكاتب جورج أورويل عبارة عن مجاز رمزي، يلمح من خلاله الكاتب إلى الاتحاد السوفياتي والثورة التي قام بها البلاشفة الشيوعيون في عام 1917. تريد الحيوانات في الرواية القيام بثورة للتخلص من مالكيها وبالتالي تحرير أنفسهم وتسيير المزرعة بأنفسهم. لكن يحدث أن يعم الفساد بالمزرعة لاحقاً بسبب جشع وطمع الخنازير، وانتهاكهم القوانين المتفق عليها من طرف الحيوانات. الفساد في المزرعة يجسد الفساد السياسي الذي حل بروسيا بعد الثورة البلاشفية التي كان هدفها التخلص من الإمبراطور نيكولاس الثاني. عادة ما يلجأ الكتاب السياسيون لتوظيف أداة المجاز الرمزي بطريقة هجائية لهدف الانتقاد والسخرية، كما يمكن أن يكون الهدف من استعمال هذه الأداة هو إخفاء آرائهم السياسية وإضافة لمسة من الغموض في أعمالهم الأدبية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المجاز الرمزي، *مزرعة الحيوان*، جورج أورويل.

**Résumé:** *La Ferme des Animaux* est une allégorie qui raconte la prise du pouvoir par les animaux dans la Ferme du Manoir de M. Jones. Ils se révoltent pour chasser son propriétaire, M. Jones, et pour qu'ils dirigent eux-mêmes ce qu'ils appellent « la Ferme des Animaux ». Peu après la prise de pouvoir, les premiers signes de corruption apparaissent dans la ferme à cause de la cupidité des cochons et la violation des principes d'égalités entre les animaux au fur et à mesure. L'histoire est, en réalité, une allégorie à travers laquelle l'auteur fait allusion à la révolution Bolchévique de 1917. L'allégorie est une technique littéraire par laquelle écrivains et poètes transmettent leurs messages. Dans le premier chapitre, nous allons présenter l'allégorie dans son cadre littéraire générale. Dans le deuxième chapitre, nous entamons la vie littéraire de George Orwell, tout en passant par quelques expériences personnelles, qui ont marqué et façonné ses orientations politiques, et qui ont influencé ses écrits, dont *La Ferme des Animaux* fera l'objet de cette étude. Le dernier chapitre fait l'analogie entre les événements dans *La Ferme des Animaux* et leur signification allégorique par rapport à l'Union Soviétique de l'époque.

**Mots clés :** Allégorie, *La Ferme des Animaux*, George Orwell.