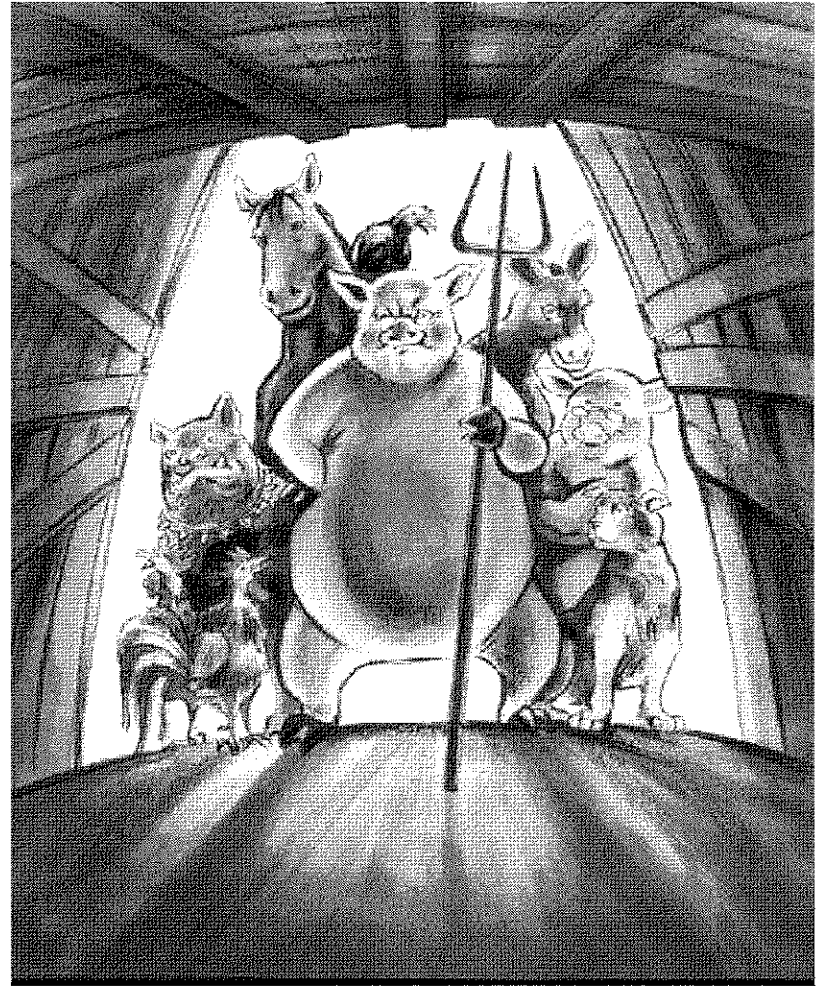


# Animal Farm

*By George Orwell*

**Allegory - Satire - Fable**



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

# George Orwell

## British Author & Journalist



- 1903-1950
- Born in India
  - At that time India was a part of the British Empire, and Blair's father, Richard, held a post as an agent in the Opium Department of the Indian Civil Service.
  - The Blair family was not very wealthy - Orwell later described them ironically as "lower-upper-middle class". They owned no property, had no extensive investments; they were like many middle-class English families of the time, totally dependent on the British Empire for their livelihood and prospects.
- Noted as a novelist and critic, as well as a political and cultural commentator
- One of the most widely admired English-language essayists of the 20th century
- Best known for two novels critical of totalitarianism in general, and Stalinism in particular:
  - *Animal Farm*
  - *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

*"Liberty is telling people what they do not want to hear."*

# George Orwell and His Beliefs

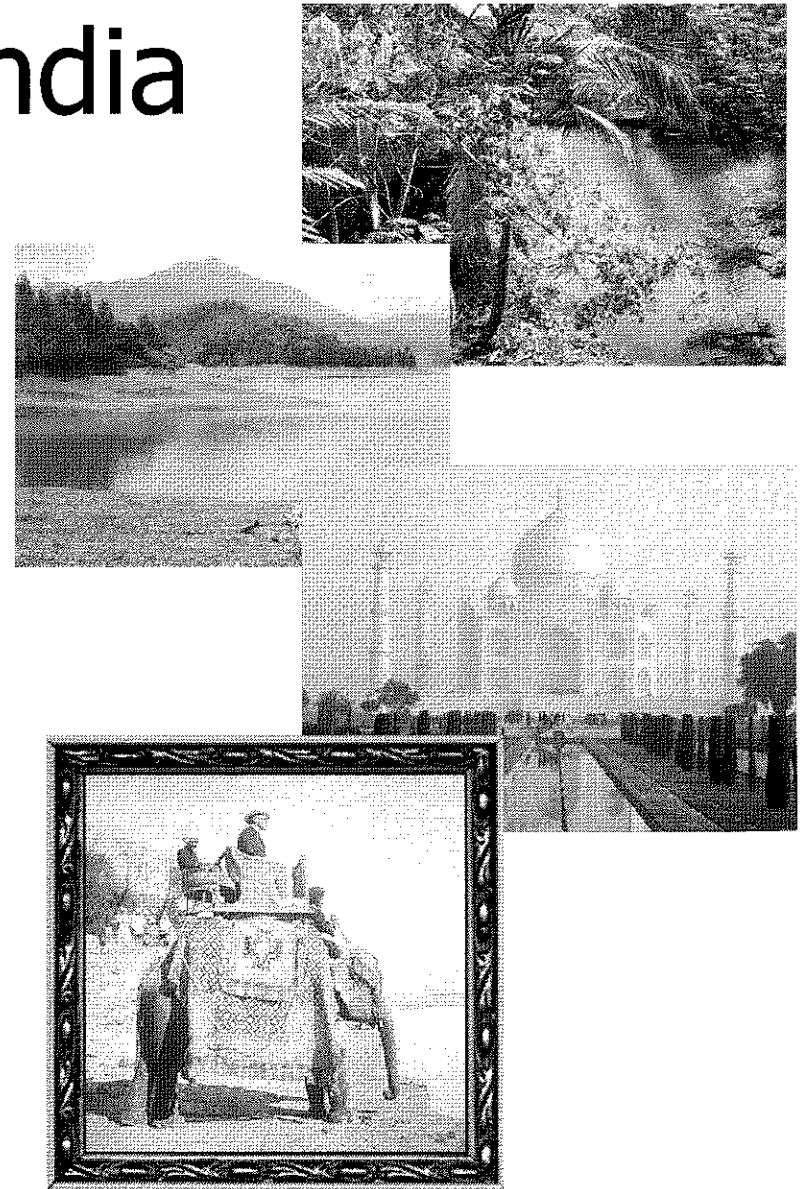
- Orwell was a person who had a reputation for standing apart and even making a virtue of his detachment.
- This “outsider” position often led him to oppose the crowd.
- Orwell’s beliefs about politics were affected by his experiences fighting in the Spanish Civil War.
- He viewed socialists, communists, and fascists as repressive and self-serving.
- He was skeptical of governments and their willingness to forsake ideas in favor of power.



**Interesting Fact:**  
**George Orwell’s real name was Eric Blair.**

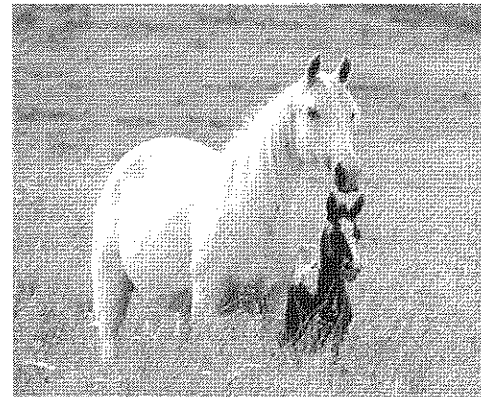
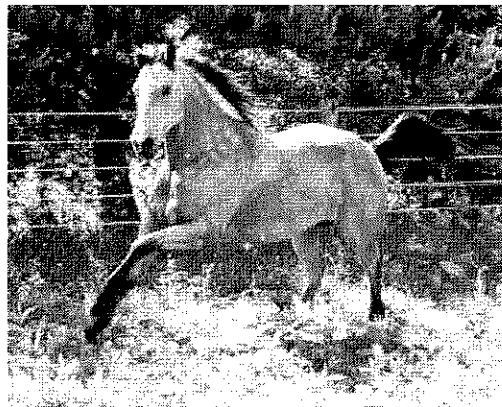
# George Orwell in India

- He was born in India and spent his early years there since his father held a post there.
  - He was a lonely boy who liked to make up stories and talk with imaginary companions.
- As an adult, he worked for the Imperial Police in British occupied India.



# Why Animals?

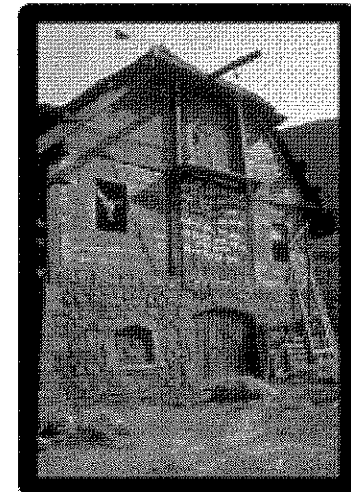
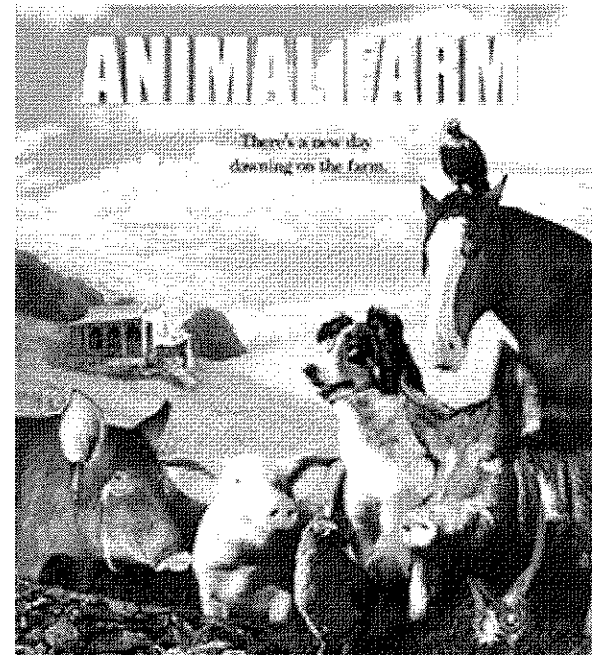
- In explaining how he came to write *Animal Farm*, Orwell says he once saw a little boy whipping a horse and later he wrote,
  - "It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the [worker]."



# What is Animal Farm?

- A masterpiece of political satire, *Animal Farm* is a tale of oppressed individuals who long for freedom but ultimately are corrupted by assuming the very power that had originally oppressed them.
- The story traces the deplorable conditions of mistreated animals who can speak and who exhibit many human characteristics. After extreme negligence by their owner, the animals revolt and expel Mr. Jones and his wife from the farm.
- The tale of the society the animals form into a totalitarian regime is generally viewed as Orwell's critique of the communist system in the former Soviet Union.

**Interesting Fact: Orwell initially struggled to find a publisher for *Animal Farm*.**



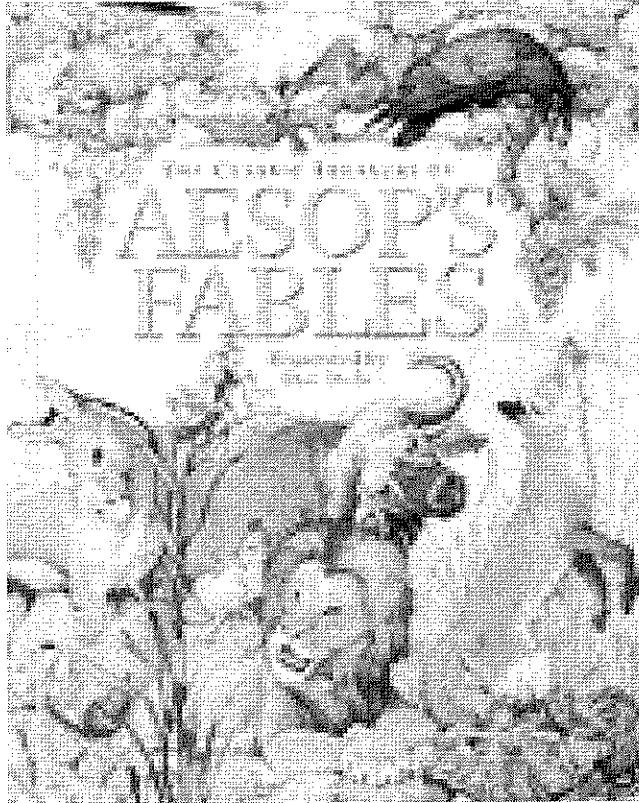
# Satire

- A form of literature that uses ridicule to make specific events and people look foolish or stupid. Satire always has a bite – it seeks out our weaknesses and wrong doings and forces us to see our behavior in new eyes. Thus, the novel tells a story that people of all ages can understand, but it also tells us a second story— that of the real-life revolution.



Soviet Coat of Arms

# The Fable



- Brief and humorous stories in which animals speak and act like humans. The purpose of a fable is to expose some human failing. For example, a fox character might embody the human characteristics of cunning and cleverness.
- Aesop's animal fables were ostensibly about animals, but they were really instructional tales about human emotions and human behavior.

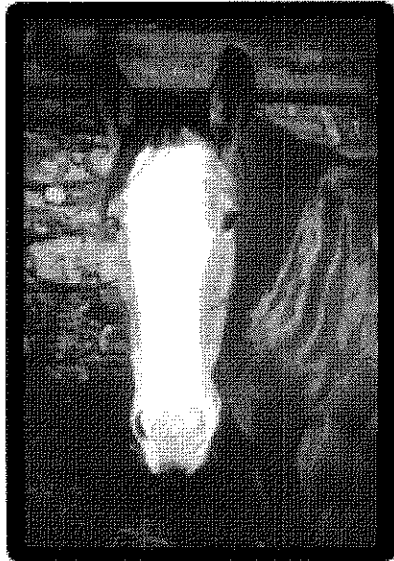


# Allegory

- A story that can be read on two different levels. Each character or event in an allegory stands for something else, and the writer uses these characters and events to convey some moral message



# Allegory (cont'd)



Boxer

- ***Animal Farm*** is strongly allegorical, but it presents a very nice balance between levels of meaning. On the first level, the story about the animals is very moving. You can be upset when Boxer is taken away by the horse slaughterer without being too aware of what he stands for. But at the same time, each of the animals does serve as a symbol. The story's second level involves the careful critique Orwell constructed to comment on Soviet Russia.

# Allegory (cont'd)

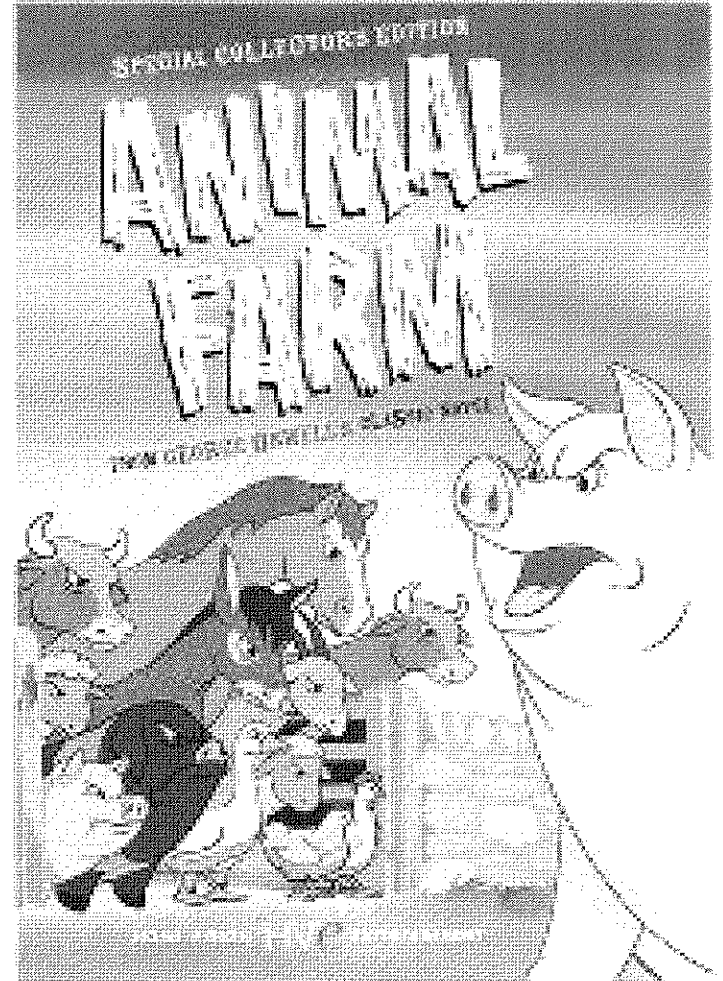
- Yet there is no reason that allegory must be limited to two levels. It is possible to argue that ***Animal Farm*** also has a third and more general level of meaning. For instance, the pigs need not only represent specific tyrannical soviet leaders. They could also be symbols for tyranny more broadly: their qualities are therefore not simply the historical characteristics of a set of actual men but are the qualities of all leaders who rely on repression and manipulation.



Squealer, Snowball, & Napoleon

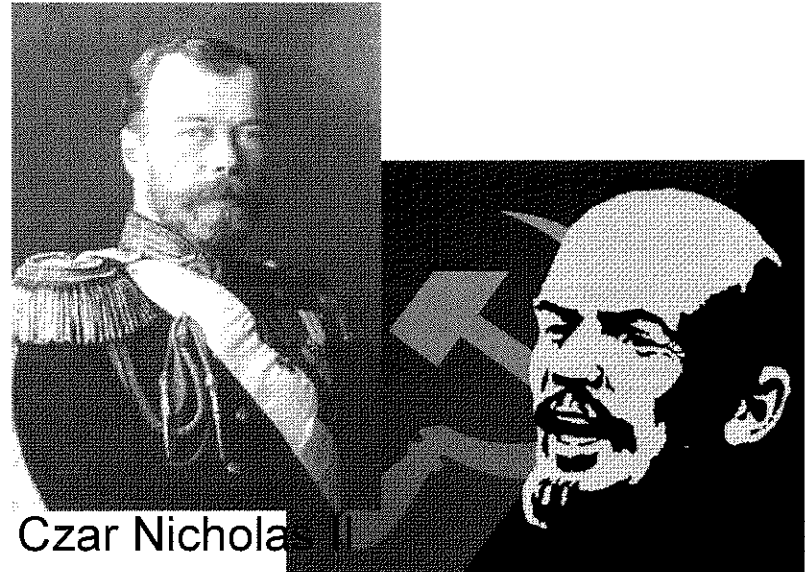
# Irony

- Orwell uses dramatic irony to create a particularly subtle satire. **Dramatic Irony** is when we perceive a contrast between what is stated on the page and what is really meant. The dramatic irony of ***Animal Farm*** achieves this aim indirectly. We see the hypocrisy that the animals don't and therefore understand in this backward fashion that the book is deeply critical of the pigs.



# When History and Literature Merge

- Critics often consider *Animal Farm* to be an allegory of the Russian Revolution. In the early 1900s, Russia's Czar Nicholas II faced an increasingly discontented populace. Freed from feudal serfdom in 1861, many Russian peasants were struggling to survive under an oppressive government. By 1917, amidst the tremendous suffering of World War I, a revolution began. In two major battles, the Czar's government was overthrown and replaced by the Bolshevik leadership of Vladimir Lenin. When Lenin died in 1924, his former colleagues Leon Trotsky, hero of the early Revolution, and Joseph Stalin, head of the Communist Party, struggled for power. Stalin won the battle, and he deported Trotsky into permanent exile.



Czar Nicholas II

Vladimir Lenin



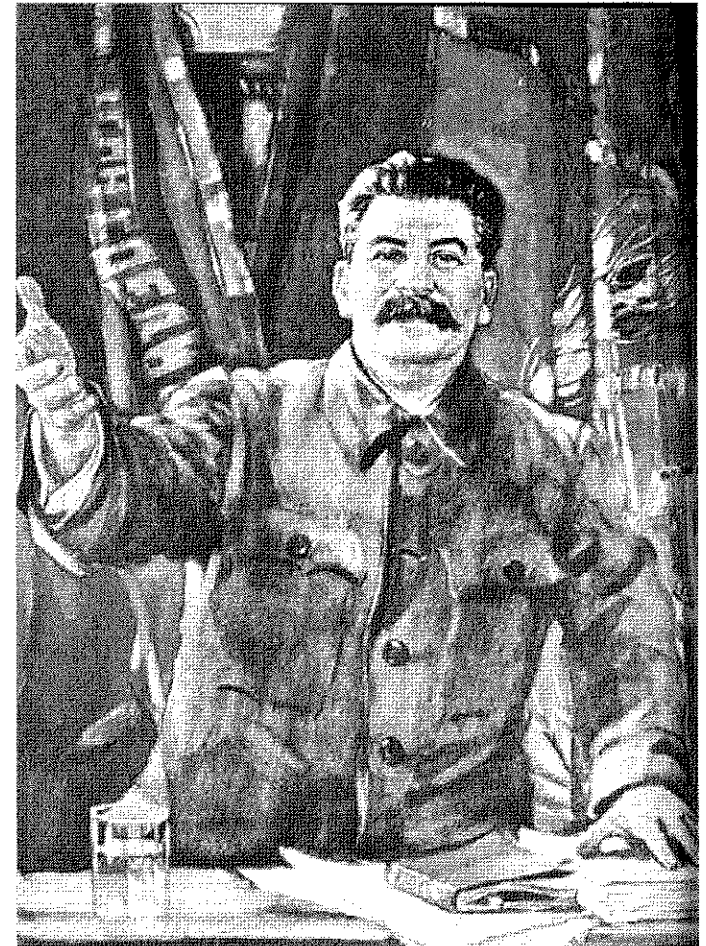
Joseph Stalin



Leon Trotsky

# Joseph Stalin

- Once in power, Stalin began, with despotic urgency and exalted nationalism, to move the Soviet Union into the modern industrial age. His government seized land in order to create collective farms. Stalin's Five Year Plan was an attempt to modernize Soviet industry. Many peasants refused to give up their land, so to counter resistance Stalin used vicious military tactics. Rigged trials led to executions of an estimated 20 million government officials and ordinary citizens. The government controlled the flow and content of information to the people, and all but outlawed churches.



Joseph Stalin

# Napoleon = Joseph Stalin

## ■ Napoleon

- Boar who leads the rebellion against Farmer Jones
- After the rebellion's success, he systematically begins to control all aspects of the farm until he is an undisputed tyrant.



## ■ Joseph Stain

- The communist dictator of the Soviet Union from 1922-1953 who killed all who opposed him.
- He loved power and used the KGB (secret police) to enforce his ruthless, corrupt antics.



# Farmer Jones = Czar Nicholas II

## ■ Farmer Jones

- The irresponsible owner of the farm
- Lets his animals starve and beats them with a whip
- Sometimes shows random kindness



## ■ Czar Nicholas II

- Weak Russian leader during the early 1900s
- Often cruel and brutal to his subjects
- Displays isolated kindness





# Snowball = Leon Trotsky

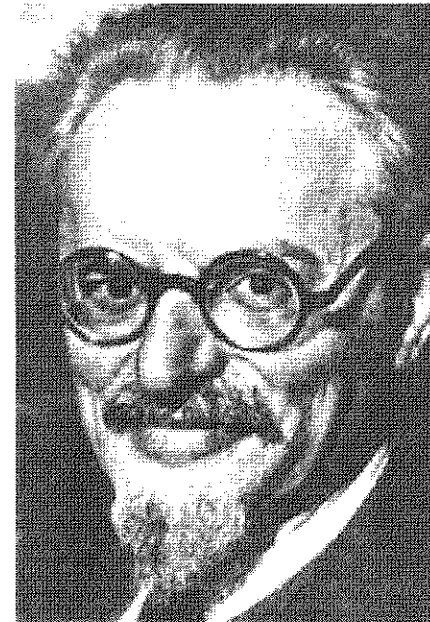
## ■ Snowball

- Boar who becomes one of the rebellion's most valuable leaders.
- After drawing complicated plans for the construction of a windmill, he is chased off of the farm forever by Napoleon's dogs and thereafter used as a scapegoat for the animals' troubles.



## ■ Leon Trotsky

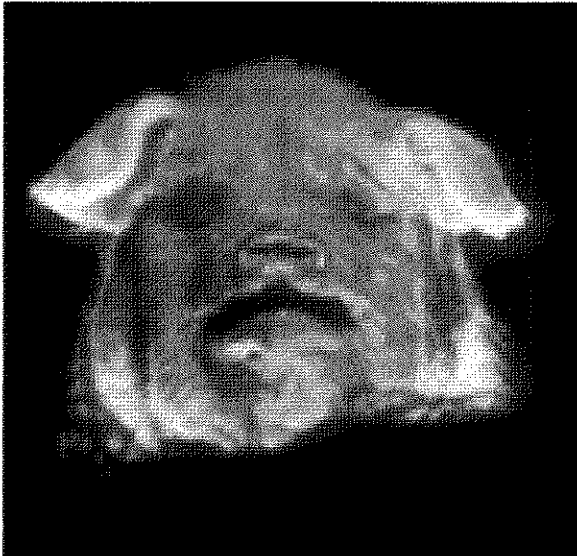
- A pure communist leader who was influenced by the teachings of Karl Marx.
- He wanted to improve life for people in Russia, but was driven away by Lenin's KGB.



# Characters

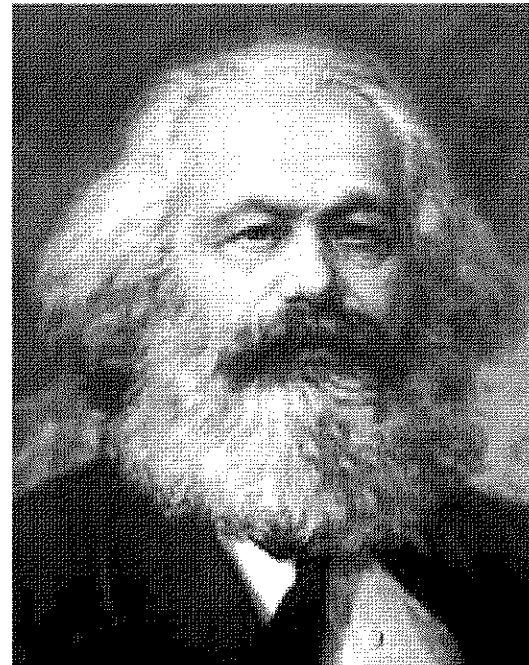
## ■ Old Major

- An old boar whose speech about the evils perpetrated by humans rouses the animals into rebelling.
- His philosophy concerning the tyranny of Man is named Animalism.
- He teaches the animals the song "Beasts of England"
- Dies before revolution



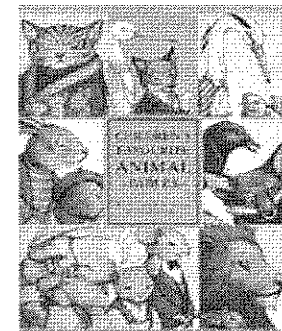
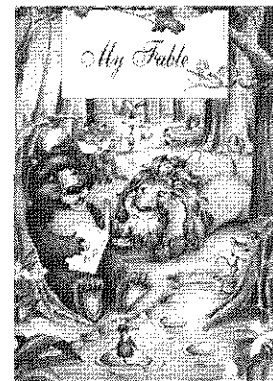
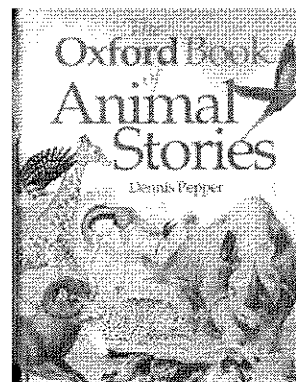
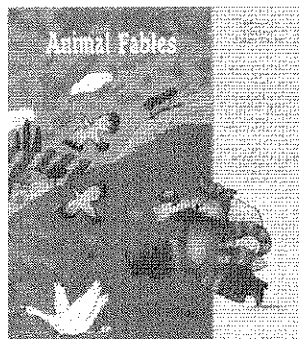
## ■ Karl Marx

- The inventor of communism
- Wants to unite the working class to overthrow the government.
- Dies before the Russian Revolution



# Characterization in Fables

- We already know that a **fable** is a narration intended to enforce a useful truth. Fables have two important characteristics. First, they teach a moral or lesson. In *Animal Farm*, the moral involves Orwell's views about Soviet politics. Second, the characters are most frequently animals. These animal characters often function as a satiric device to point out the follies of humankind. Though Old Major, Snowball, and Napoleon may represent Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky, and Joseph Stalin, many of the story characters are much more general. Some animals are grouped together as a single character—"the sheep," "the hens," and "the dogs." Orwell also capitalizes on the traits generally associated with particular animals, such as sheep as followers and dogs as loyal.



# Squealer & Boxer

## ■ Squealer

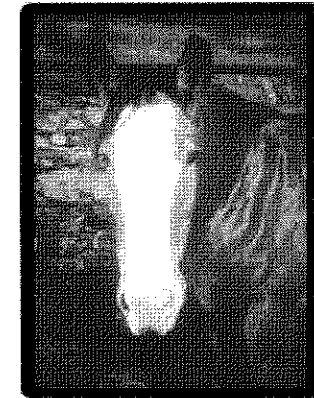
- A big mouth pig who becomes Napoleon's mouthpiece. Throughout the novel, he displays his ability to manipulate the animals' thoughts through the use of hollow, yet convincing rhetoric.
- Represents the propaganda department that worked to support Stalin's image; the members of the department would use lies to convince the people to follow Stalin.



Squealer

## ■ Boxer

- A dedicated but dimwitted horse who aids in the building of the windmill but is sold to a glue-boiler after collapsing from exhaustion.
- Represents the dedicated, but tricked communist supporters of Stalin. Many stayed loyal even after it was obvious Stalin was a tyrant. Eventually they were betrayed, ignored, and even killed by him.

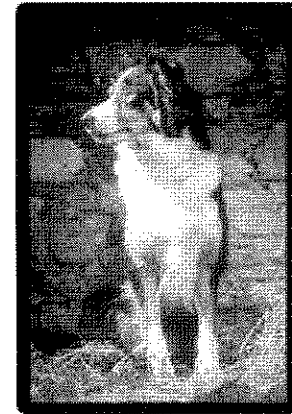


Boxer

# Jessie & Moses

- **Jessie**

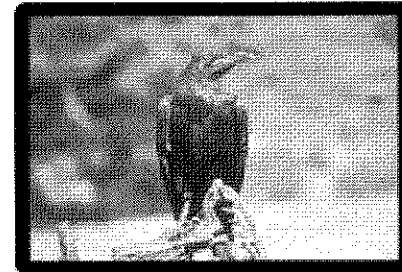
- The farm's sheepdog, she keeps tabs on the pigs and is among the first to suspect that something is wrong at Animal Farm.



Jessie

- **Moses**

- A tame raven and sometimes-pet of Jones who tells the animals stories about a paradise called Sugarcandy Mountain.
- Moses represents religion. Stalin used religious principles to influence people to work and to avoid revolt.



Moses

# More Characters

## **Pilkington**

Jones' neighbor, he finds a way to profit from Animal Farm by forming an alliance with the pigs.

## **Muriel**

A goat who believes in the rebellion, she watches as Animal Farm slips away from its founding principles.

## **Mollie**

A vain horse who resists the animal rebellion because she doesn't want to give up the petting and treats she receives from humans. Mollie represents vain, selfish people in Russia and throughout the world who ignored the revolution and sought residence in more inviting countries.

## **Benjamin**

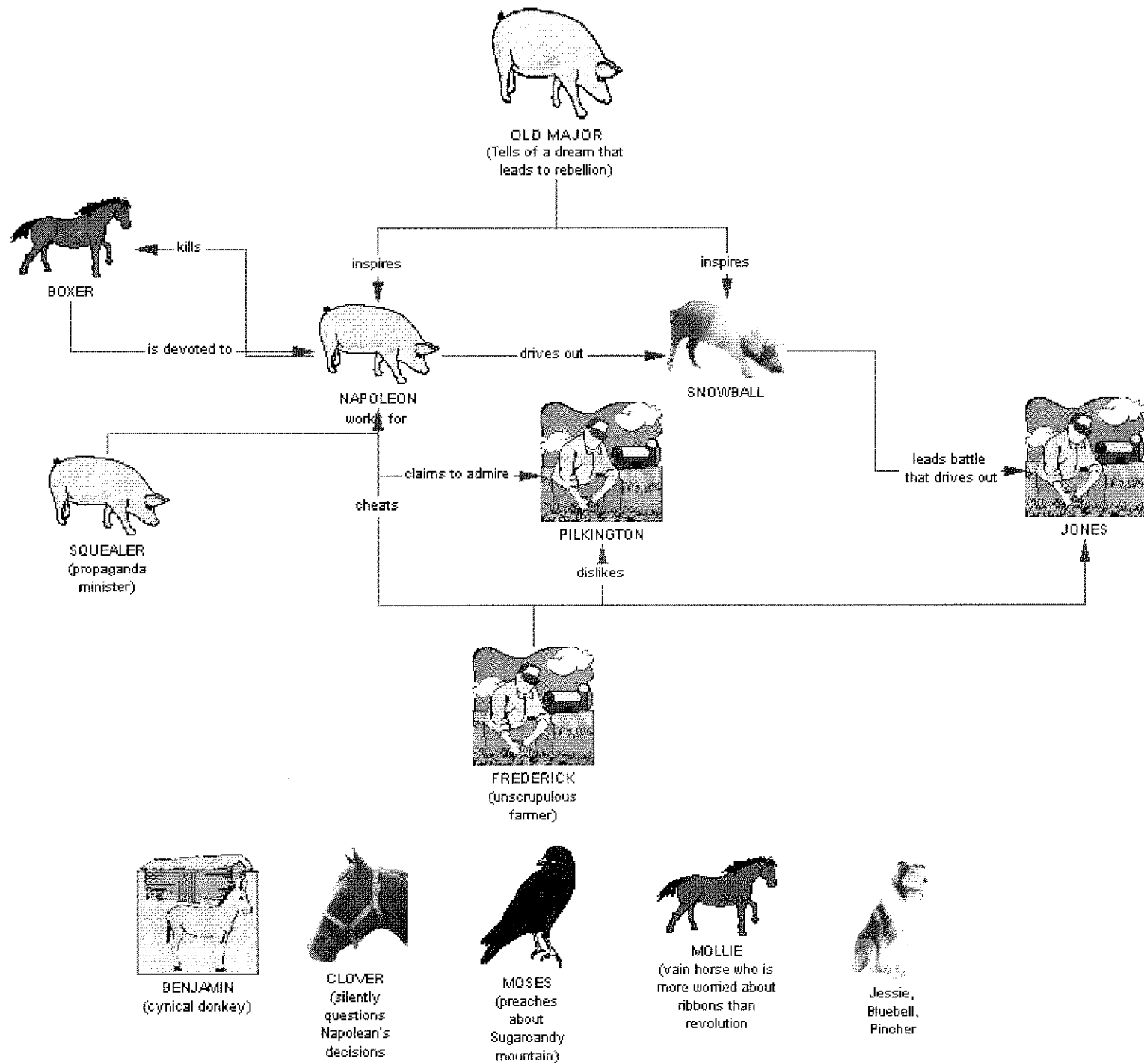
The most cynical of all the animals, the farm's donkey doubts the leadership of the pigs but is faithfully devoted to Boxer. Benjamin represents all the skeptical people in Russia and elsewhere who weren't sure revolution would change anything.

## **The Sheep**

Not tremendously clever, the sheep remind themselves of the principles of animalism by chanting "four legs good, two legs bad."

## **The Dogs**

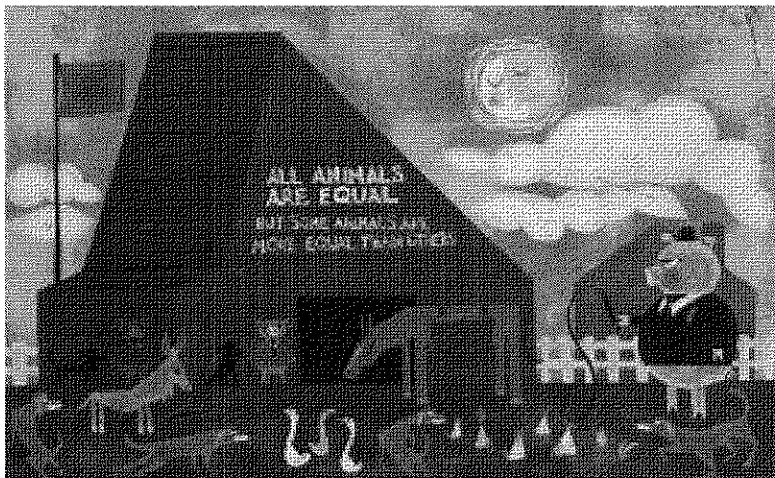
Napoleon's private army that used fear to force the animals to work; they killed any opponent of Napoleon. The dogs represent Stalin's loyal KGB (secret police). The KGB were not really police, but mercenaries used to force support for Stalin.



# Animalism = Communism

## ■ Animalism

- Taught by Old Major
- No rich, but no poor
- Better life for workers
- All animals are equal
- Everyone owns the farm



## ■ Communism

- Invented by Karl Marx
- All people are equal
- Government owns everything
- People own the government





# Animal Farm Revolution = Russian Revolution

- Animal Farm Revolution
  - Was supposed to make life better for all, but . . .
    - Life was worse at the end.
    - The leaders became the same as, or worse than the other farmers (humans) they rebelled against.
- Russian Revolution
  - Was supposed to fix the problems created by the Czar, but . . .
    - Life was even worse after the revolution.
    - Stalin made the Czar look like a nice guy.

