



# George Orwell: A Novelist with a Political Perspective on Society

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**Abstract**— *George Orwell is considered the preeminent satirist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike Jonathan Swift, Orwell employs a humor devoid of invective or burlesque elements. He maintains an excellent balance between sarcasm and comedy. His sarcasm demonstrates that he was a revolutionary intent on eradicating societal shortcomings. He targeted the root causes of the societal and political issues. He was tormented by the societal class disparity, subjugation, and destitution. While his writings are distinguished by an autobiographical element, his satirical style remains entirely impartial and analytical. Similar to other satirists, he did not want to adopt a propagandistic approach. He vehemently fought the totalitarian regimes of Stalinist Russia and fascism in Spain. He believed that politics has a crucial role in transforming societal norms. While many theorists have proposed diverse ideologies, only a few have significantly advanced societal development.*



**Keywords**— *Political, Progress, Satire, Society*

George Orwell is a preeminent novelist of the modern age. His writings convey a potent criticism of political and societal hypocrisies. He distinguishes himself as a compelling social critic of contemporary society. Like G. B. Shaw, Orwell used to elucidate societal flaws, ensuring that the comedic elements never obscured the gravity of his communication. George Orwell was totally engaged with the political challenges of his time. The aim of his work was to illuminate political motives through the potent medium of fiction. *Animal Farm* is an incisive parody of totalitarianism and fascism. It illustrates the absurdities and shortcomings of human political conduct and institutions. Using the medium of animal fable, Orwell explores how societal structures often degenerate into fascism and totalitarianism, despite their socialist origins.

Like Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, *Animal Farm* utilizes wit and satire to expose societal foibles, offering a biting critique of 20th-century political corruption. It perpetuates the sarcastic methodology of Dryden, whereas Pope and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is particularly distinguished for its satirical component. Orwell seems to

be inspired by Swift. *Animal Farm* is one of the most potent political satires in English literature. The essence of the satire was, "In each great revolutionary struggle, the masses are led on by vague dreams of human brotherhood, and then, when the new ruling class is well established in power, they are thrust back into servitude. This is practically the whole of political history, as Burnham sees it" (Orwell 161). In the history of English literature, Orwell is one of the greatest political satirists like Swift or Goldsmith. A deep study of his novels shows that his literary qualities are expressed through political satire. *Animal Farm* is the most potent political satire written by Orwell. He authored this narrative, *Animal*, to illustrate the malevolence of Soviet governmental practices. Similarly, *Nineteen Eighty Four* is a satire on modern society. In this book, he describes the proletariat as a collective body, kept in a state of ignorance. He envisioned that the members of political parties would transform into unthinking automatons, equipped with a button-activated intellect. The societal emotional landscape would be irrevocably devastated. This work is an excellent parody of contemporary culture.

Satire is a criticism of society. A satire is the best critic of society. George Orwell's most impactful satire, *Animal Farm*, exemplifies his ability to weave wit and sharp political commentary into a narrative that rivals the works of Jonathan Swift. He used the fairy tale genre to highlight the deficiencies in Stalin's programs. Similar to John Dryden, who portrays animals engaging in political discourse, George Orwell critiques the whole political system dominated by dictatorial and tyrannical powers.

As a patriot, he cherished his nation along with its rituals and traditions, however he did not hesitate to denounce those practices and traditions that caused the suffering of the populace. His deep involvement in contemporary politics produced a narrative style that fuses revolutionary idealism with a grim, pragmatic realism. Similar to other literary personalities, he also contended that materialism impeded the attainment of tranquility. Consequently, he emphasized the spiritual impulses. His works are the most incisive critique of the social and political issues of his time. These works underscore the principal issues of the contemporary period.

Orwell saw that financial resources are the pressing need of the average individual. He saw that the affluent were few in number, whilst the impoverished were many. Consequently, if the financial issues faced by the average individual are not adequately addressed, he may fall prey to exploitation by the affluent. Economic injustice is a significant factor contributing to the suffering of ordinary people. The central theme of the novel *A Clergyman's Daughter* deals with the injustice and inequality in human society. The Clergyman is harassed by tradesman's debts. When Dorothy, the protagonist, finds herself penniless in London, she loses her memory.

The protagonist of Orwell's third novel, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, Gordon Comstock, is a young man with literary inclinations. Because of his literary interests he gives up an opportunity in an advertising company and takes up a job as a book shop assistant at two pounds a week. He adopts this routine to afford himself sufficient time for his literary pursuits. Despite getting the job at the bookshop, his mind remains clouded by the constant struggle of poverty. He asserts that financial deprivation engenders several hardships in human existence. He becomes enamored with a girl named Rosemary, who rejects his marriage proposal due to his financial destitution. Subsequently, she consents to marry him.

In *Coming Up for Air*, George Orwell Bowling perceives himself as engaged in a conflict with money. He classifies society into only two classes: the rich and the poor. Consequently, he concludes that the poor are inevitably exploited by the rich. He is bound to conclude

that the poor are exploited at the hands of the rich. He believes that the distinction between the rich and the poor vanishes when one regards the nation from the outside. Orwell's fifth novel, *Animal Farm*, which garnered significant acclaim, fundamentally addresses the exploitation of the impoverished by the affluent. Once Napoleon consolidates power and accumulates wealth, he systematically reduces the rations of the other animals to further increase his riches. Orwell's last work, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, presents the author's perspective on the plight of the impoverished. Winston Smith, the protagonist of the novel, works for the Ministry of Truth and maintains a private diary to record his innermost thoughts regarding social injustice.

As a keen observer of society, the novelist conveys a message of democratic values. He believes that socialism is the solution to several societal ills. The issue of inequality and injustice is addressed by socialism. He believed that all the systems were useless and full of hopelessness. He thought that socialism should be separated from utopianism, because the people who confused socialism and utopianism. He said that socialism is grounded in reality, but utopianism is rooted in fantasy. Utopians may assert the possibility of creating a flawless society, while a socialist would refrain from making such a claim. He wishes to eliminate such items. He would like to remove the gap between the rich and the poor. He seeks to prove that this gap causes much suffering to the poor.

Orwell was an anti-communist who opposed totalitarianism—a system where society is ruled by a dictator or a small group. All human liberties and rights are stripped away. Fascism, communism, and extreme socialism exemplify totalitarianism. Consequently, the totalitarian state is not accountable for justice to society. Orwell despised the society governed by authoritarianism. He asserts that totalitarian-minded scientists and political figures are systematically undermining the tranquility of the past and the related socio-ethical principles. Science has irrevocably transformed the landscape of human civilization. Orwell was concerned with the malignancies of imperialism, destitution, and social inequity. His most acclaimed work, *Animal Farm*, illustrates the malevolence of totalitarianism, as he saw the contemporary world transitioning towards an era of dictatorial tyranny. Knowledge is a potent tool as it enables individuals to develop their own beliefs and see topics from many viewpoints; nevertheless, in the absence of education, one is susceptible to manipulation. *Animal Farm* presents many instances when the uninformed animals were readily used by Napoleon, Squealer, or the humans. An instance occurred when Benjamin, the donkey attempted to persuade

the horses driving the knacker's truck, which had Boxer, to halt, and he exclaimed:

“Comrades, comrades! they shouted. “Don't take your own brother to his death!” But the stupid brutes, too ignorant to realise what was happening, merely set back their ears and quickened their pace. Boxer's face did not reappear at the window. Too late, someone thought of racing ahead and shutting the five-barred gate; but in another moment the van was through it and rapidly disappearing down the road. Boxer was never seen again” (Orwell 123).

The horses have likely been brainwashed to see their actions as having a noble goal, despite their ignorance of the specifics; also, the horses, like the majority of the animals on Animal Farm, are illiterate and readily manipulated by their 'leaders'. The horses do not seem to comprehend why the other animals are frantic; however, they appear indifferent because they lack personal opinions. Since their sole purpose is to please their owner, they blindly follow orders without question.

The political and historical context has been analyzed to validate the relationship between the story and reality throughout the novel's composition. Orwell has anthropomorphized the animals in the allegorical tradition to symbolize actual historical individuals. *Animal Farm* is a significant satire in which Orwell used irony to subvert the principles of dictatorship, particularly Stalinism. Although he agreed with several Marxist principles, Orwell rejected the communist interpretation of socialism, since he detected significant parallels between the communist regime and the czarist rule of historical Russia. Orwell views communism as inherently hypocritical. When the elite class has significant resources such as power, wealth, economic influence, and propaganda in comparison to the general populace, they often utilise these assets to achieve dominion and oppress the lower classes. Orwell has elucidated the connection between authoritarianism and dystopian society. In *Animal Farm*, Orwell illustrates how corrupt leaders with absolute power believe they are immune to accountability. Through this allegorical narrative, he depicts a realistic portrayal of human behaviour towards others upon assuming power. Orwell concludes that revolutionaries who reject oppression and corruption often transform into megalomaniac rulers and ruthless dictators once they possess absolute power. This novel illustrates the formation of Joseph Stalin's totalitarian rule and the ascent and collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union. Orwell's critique of authoritarianism and communism extends beyond Stalin; it may be seen as a global admonition. It constitutes a comprehensive criticism of totalitarianism in Nazi Germany under Hitler, fascist Italy under Mussolini, Spain under

Franco, China under Mao, and capitalism in America, England, and the Soviet Union.

However, Orwell maintains an optimistic perspective towards societal advancement. He believed that intellectuals could defend moral values and consciousness of the common people from the invasion of totalitarianism. Therefore intellectuals should realize their role in this connection. However, the novels of Orwell are the best warning against the dangers and evils of totalitarian activities. *Animal Farm* is a subject of reading and analysis due to its enduring themes and pertinence to contemporary issues. It has been transformed into films, theatrical productions, and many other media, and it persistently motivates new generations of readers to engage in critical analysis of politics and power.

*Animal Farm* is an exceptional political satire that has endured through the ages. It has been adapted into films, plays, and other media, and it continues to inspire new generations of readers to think critically about politics and power. By using animals as symbols for humanity and utilising satire and parody, George Orwell has crafted a significant political and social commentary that will remain relevant and inspirational for years ahead.

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