

Satire Satire is loosely defined as art that ridicules a specific topic in order to provoke readers into changing their opinion of it. By attacking what they see as human folly, satirists usually imply their own opinions on how the thing being attacked can be remedied. Boxer is likened to the kind of blindly devoted citizen whose reliance on slogans ("Napoleon is always right") prevents him from examining in more detail his own situation: Although Boxer is a sympathetic character, his ignorance is almost infuriating, and Orwell suggests that this unquestioning ignorance allows rulers like Napoleon to grow stronger. Even Benjamin, the donkey, contributes to Napoleon's rise, because his only stand on what is occurring is a cynical dismissal of the facts: Although he is correct in stating that "Life would go on as it had always gone on -- that is, badly," he, too, does nothing to stop the pigs' ascension or even raise the other animals' awareness of what is happening. As their lives worsen, however, the animals begin to believe him, because "Their lives now, they reasoned, were hungry and laborious; Was it not right and just that a better world should exist somewhere else?" Here, Orwell mocks the futile dreaming of a better place that clearly does not exist. The pigs allow Moses to stay on the farm -- and even encourage his presence by rewarding him with beer -- because they know that his stories of Sugarcandy Mountain will keep the animals docile: As long as there is some better world somewhere -- even after death -- the animals will trudge through this one. Thus Orwell implies that religious devotion -- viewed by many as a noble character trait -- can actually distort the ways in which one thinks of his or her life on earth. False Allegiance A final noteworthy (and again, satiric) theme is the way in which people proclaim their allegiance to each other, only to betray their true intentions at a later time. Directly related to the idea that the rulers of the rebellion (the pigs) eventually betray the ideals for which they presumably fought, this theme is dramatized in a number of relationships involving the novel's human characters. Pilkington and Jones; Frederick, for example, only listen to Jones in the Red Lion because they secretly hope to gain something from their neighbor's misery. Similarly, Frederick's buying the firewood from Napoleon seems to form an alliance that is shattered when the pig learns of Frederick's forged banknotes. The novel's final scene demonstrates that, despite all the friendly talk and flattery that passes between Pilkington and Napoleon, each is still trying to cheat the other (as seen when both play the ace of spades simultaneously). Of course, only one of the two is technically cheating, but Orwell does not indicate which one because such a fact is unimportant: The "friendly" game of cards is a facade that hides each ruler's desire to destroy the other. Like *Gulliver's Travels*, *Animal Farm* is a satirical novel in which Orwell, like Swift, attacks what he saw as some of the prominent follies of his time.