

# Leo tolstoy

Literature



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How Much Land Does a Man Require How Much Land Does a Man Require is a 19th century short story by Leo Tolstoy that focuses around a man's lust for land and how in his quest to fulfill this he loses everything that really matters. Many people consider this to be one of the finest pieces of literature ever written. One of the most impressive things about this story is how the critical themes discussed within can be applied to modern day society.

For example, the main theme of the book is greed. The story revolves around a peasant named Pahom who feels that he does not own enough land, even going so far as to suggest he should not fear the Devil himself if he had more. The story covers his quest to own more land, first buying some in the village and then attempting to complete a challenge set by the Bashkirs. It is this challenge that finally leaves him dead, and he ends up buried in a six feet grave. There is an irony in the fact that he ends up owning only six feet of land due to his quest to earn more, but one of the most interesting things about this aspect of How Much Land Does a Man Require is how applicable the situation is to modern day life. Society in the 21st century revolves around owning as many material possessions as possible; it is a Capitalist culture. Pahom here can be used to represent everyone who is on a quest to own more than they already do, something that we can see in everyone. The inclusion of the Devil in the story is used to represent this greed, and can be likened to many modern day equivalents.

As previously mentioned, another central theme in the book is the use of irony. It perhaps seems unfair that in his quest for more land, Pahom ends up owning very little in the form of a grave. Again, this is still applicable to modern life, because eventually everyone will face death and own nothing, with perhaps some material wealth being passed onto family members. A <https://assignbuster.com/leo-tolstoy/>

desire to own or earn as much as possible can only benefit the protagonist whilst he is alive, and this is as true now as it was in the 19th century; we cannot take it with us. The morals within this story can be used to benefit modern society because there are many truisms here that will never change, and it is worth noting that perhaps the desire for material wealth is not the most worthy of desires.

A final central theme in *How Much Land Does a Man Require* is the difference between city and country life, which again seems to revolve around greed.

The book starts with two sisters who cannot come to an agreement about which lifestyle is better; town or country. The elder sister enjoys the luxury of town life whilst the younger is happy living in the beauty and serenity of the country. In this case, the elder sister represents greed because she could not imagine living like a peasant in such a way. The difference between city and country life is still evident today, although some people live very comfortable lives in the country. Again, the main moral here is that wealth does not necessarily bring happiness, and the lust for land could be a downfall.

In conclusion, there are many morals within *How Much Land Does a Man Require*, many of which are still applicable today. Greed is the central theme of the story and this is more applicable than ever in our modern Capitalist society, because the desire for material goods is more than ever. Reading these morals could benefit society because it shows that everyone ends up in the same place, whether rich or poor and perhaps the best thing to do would be to enjoy what life has to offer without always searching for more.

#### References

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