Animal Farm is written in the past tense.

ABOUT THE TITLE
Animal Farm takes its name from the book's setting, Manor Farm, which the rebellious animals rename Animal Farm when they seize control.

The Russian Revolution and Its Aftermath

On its surface, Animal Farm seems to be a simple tale about talking animals on a farm—a children's story, some might think. But this surface is the allegory, or story with a hidden political meaning, of the Russian Revolution of 1917, the civil war that followed (1918–20), and the later rise of Stalin's dictatorship in the Soviet Union. The novel draws clear parallels between Josef Stalin and the pig Napoleon. To serve his own ends, Napoleon distorts Old Major's idealized dream of equality and brotherhood for all animals as he rules the farm. In the same way, Stalin distorted the ideals of Marxist communism to feed his own desire for power and control in the Soviet Union. While Marxist communism gave workers control of production, Stalin's version gave the state control of production, paving the way for totalitarian rule. Stalin was an active participant in the Revolution of 1917, which overthrew Russia's Tsar Nicolas II. Stalin remained a high-ranking member of the government under Vladimir Lenin, the first head of the Soviet Union after the revolution. Then Stalin led the Communist Party in the Soviet Union from 1922 until his death in 1953. In the same way in which Napoleon finds himself in conflict with the intellectual Snowball, Stalin battled Leon Trotsky, who had essentially served as Lenin's second-in-command, for the direction of the party and the Soviet Union after Lenin's death in 1924. After
driving Trotsky into exile in 1929, Stalin took full control of the party and the country.

Once Stalin took control of the Soviet Union, he focused on eliminating any perceived threats to his power, culminating in the Great Purge of the late 1930s during which he had millions of people, including his political opponents, imprisoned or killed. In 1939 he entered into an alliance with Hitler (which ended in 1941 when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union). In the meantime Stalin and his close supporters remained comfortable while the people of the Soviet Union suffered deprivation and hardship, both during wartime and after. The government used propaganda to inspire loyalty in the populace, and as in the world of Animal Farm, where propaganda failed, fear and intimidation succeeded.

Adult Satire

Animal Farm was Orwell's first novel to enjoy wide commercial success. However, when it was first published booksellers placed it in the children's section of their stores because they did not realize it was adult satire, or a work that makes use of literary techniques, such as humor, irony, or hyperbole, to criticize a figure, event, or issue. Orwell himself traveled from store to store convincing them to shelve it with adult books, where it remains categorized.

The novel continues to have contemporary relevance. While the specific content of the novel addresses Soviet Russia, it also serves as a broader cautionary tale by showing how a corrupt and selfish leader who uses fear and ignorance to gain control can lead to a totalitarian government. In this way the novel warns against complacency in the populace. Orwell wrote the following response to a query from fellow political writer Dwight Macdonald: "Of course I intended it primarily as a satire on the Russian revolution. But I did mean it to have a wider application in so much that I meant that that kind of revolution (violent conspiratorial revolution, led by unconsciously power-hungry people) can only lead to a change of masters. I meant the moral to be that revolutions only effect a radical improvement when the masses are alert and know how to chuck out their leaders as soon as the latter have done their job." In this respect Animal Farm continues to have relevance for citizens who live under all forms of government.

Author Biography

George Orwell is the pen name of Eric Arthur Blair, who was born on June 25, 1903, to British parents in India. His mother separated from her husband, a poorly paid civil servant, shortly after their son was born. Blair's mother took him and his sister, Marjorie, back to England, where Blair was educated. In 1911 he began boarding school in Sussex, attending on scholarship. In 1917 Blair went to Eton, one of Britain's premier secondary boarding schools, also on scholarship. His poverty relative to the other students in these environments introduced him to the class divisions that would inform his politics and his writing.

After Eton, Blair opted to serve in Burma (now Myanmar) with the Indian Imperial Police instead of attending university. His experiences in Burma inspired his lifelong opposition to imperialism, later reflected in his novel Burmese Days (1934). In 1928 Blair resigned from his post and returned to England. He lived among the lower classes in London's East End upon his return, giving rise to his first book, Down and Out in Paris and London (1933). The conditions described in this book, which straddles the line between fact and fiction, are so bleak that Blair adopted the pen name George Orwell to distance himself and his family from them.

Orwell's experiences with the working classes led him to embrace the concept of economic equality for all, and in the 1930s he dabbled in socialism, which in turn led him to travel to Spain in December 1936 to fight in the Spanish Civil War (1936–39). He joined the forces of the Republican government, backed by the United States and the Soviet Union, in opposition to Francisco Franco's Fascist regime. After Orwell was wounded in battle by a sniper, the communist forces in Spain, supported by Josef Stalin, accused him of betraying the anti-Fascist cause, and Orwell and his wife had to flee the country. This experience left him with an ongoing aversion to Stalin's brand of communism.

Orwell spent part of World War II as a correspondent for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which further fed his distaste for totalitarian regimes. His experiences in Spain and as a BBC reporter created the political leanings that shaped his two best known works: Animal Farm (1945) and 1984 (1949). Both texts offer scathing criticism of the ways the socialist and communist ideals of equality had been warped by totalitarian regimes. Orwell died on January 21, 1950, in London, England.
Characters

Napoleon

Not a very strong public speaker, the pig Napoleon rules the farm through strong-arm tactics and cunning. He makes the farm prosperous but keeps most of the wealth for himself, working the other animals with a level of efficiency that borders on the brutal. He is ruthless toward his enemies, ordering the executions of those who dare to cross him. Napoleon represents Soviet leader Joseph Stalin.

Snowball

Snowball is a pig on an equal footing with Napoleon after the rebellion, and his intelligence and planning ability become assets to the farm. His use of military strategy wins the Battle of the Cowshed, and he originates the plans for the windmill. His popularity and his ability threaten Napoleon's ambitions, so Napoleon exiles him from the farm and makes him a scapegoat when things go wrong. Thus his achievements are erased, and history is rewritten to vilify him. Snowball represents the banished Russian leader Leon Trotsky.

Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones's neglect and mistreatment of his animals spark them to rebel against him. After the animals take over the farm, the threat of his return is used to keep the animals from protesting and allows the pigs to get their way. Mr. Jones represents Tsar Nicholas II.

Squealer

Squealer the pig acts as Napoleon's mouthpiece, persuading the animals that the pigs are working in everyone's best interests. He presents information, such as false statistics, that misleads the animals into believing what he says is true. He is a master of propaganda, modeled after the Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels, and his energetic speaking style makes him an appealing orator.

Boxer

Boxer the horse believes every problem can be solved with hard work and persistence. His strength and work ethic make the building of the windmills possible, and he is a mighty asset in battle. All the animals look up to him because his belief in Animalism is pure and his intentions are good. However, his lack of intelligence and his naiveté cause him to follow the pigs blindly, and they "reward" his hard work by selling him to a slaughterer when his health fails. Boxer represents the proletariat, or working-class people.

Old Major

The old boar who originates the principles of Animalism and encourages the rebellion, Old Major, is revered by the animals. He dies shortly after presenting his vision to the animals, so he does not live to see how his fellow pigs corrupt his ideals over time. Old Major is often interpreted to represent Karl Marx or Vladimir Lenin.

Benjamin

Possibly the most intelligent animal on the farm, the donkey Benjamin is prevented from becoming useful to the rebellion by his cynicism and belief that nothing ever really changes. He might have the capacity to educate the animals about the pigs' intentions, but his silence allows the pigs to take over unimpeded.
Character Map

Napoleon
Totalitarian ruler of Animal Farm; pig

Squealer
Masterful manipulator of language; pig

Mr. Jones
Ousted farm owner; human

Snowball
Intellectual leader, later banished; pig

Boxer
Idealist and hardest worker; horse

Old Major
Wise revolutionary; pig

- Main Character
- Other Major Character
- Minor Character
Full Character List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Napoleon</td>
<td>Napoleon is the totalitarian pig leader of Animal Farm who exploits the other animals to maintain his own power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowball</td>
<td>Snowball is an early pig leader of Animal Farm whose conflicts with Napoleon lead to his dishonor and exile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Jones</td>
<td>Mr. Jones is the drunken, neglectful proprietor of Manor Farm, overthrown by his animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squealer</td>
<td>Squealer is Napoleon's second pig in command, who spins stories and propaganda to keep the animals in line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxer</td>
<td>Boxer is the hardworking horse whose devotion to Animal Farm earns him the respect of all the animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Major</td>
<td>Old Major is the boar whose vision for a world where animals are free inspires the rebellion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin</td>
<td>Benjamin is a cynical donkey who is at least as clever as the pigs but refuses to get involved with the rebellion, even when he sees things going wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluebell</td>
<td>Jessie and Bluebell are Mr. Jones's dogs who give birth to the puppies who grow up to be Napoleon's enforcers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clover</td>
<td>Clover is a working horse who is Boxer's companion and is as devoted to the cause of Animalism as he is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs</td>
<td>Dogs are the animals most closely aligned with the pigs, who serve as the pigs' guards and enforcers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hens</td>
<td>Hens are egg producers for the farm who, at one point, attempt a rebellion, with disastrous results.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Jessie and Bluebell are Mr. Jones's dogs who give birth to the puppies who grow up to be Napoleon's enforcers.

Mollie is Mr. Jones's mare who values her own appearance and the favor of humans over the principles of the farm.

Moses is a trained raven who tells the animals stories of a heavenly afterworld called Sugarcandy Mountain.

Frederick is the owner of a neighboring farm who becomes Napoleon's enemy when he cheats the pigs and attacks the farm.

Pilkington is the owner of a neighboring farm who eventually becomes Napoleon's ally.

Mr. Whymper is a lawyer retained by the pigs to conduct their business transactions with other humans.

Muriel is a goat who, aside from Benjamin and the pigs, is the only animal on the farm who is fully literate.

Sheep are useful spreaders of propaganda that can be relied upon to stop debates or potential protests with their chanting.

Plot Summary

*Animal Farm* presents the history of a small farm in England. After a lifetime of oppression at the hands of their human masters, the animals of Manor Farm hear from one of their oldest denizens, a boar known as Old Major. He shares his vision for a future in which all animals are free and control their own destinies, working to provide for themselves, not for the humans who have enslaved them. He urges the animals to prepare for the day when the rebellion will come and they can make his vision a reality. Three days later Old Major dies, but his dream lives on among the animals, especially the other pigs who follow his instructions and prepare for rebellion. Two pigs, Snowball and Napoleon, take the lead in preparing a formalized version of Old Major's teachings they call Animalism.
The rebellion takes place much sooner than the animals originally plan. Three months after Old Major dies, Mr. Jones, Manor Farm’s owner, gets drunk and forgets to feed the animals. Accordingly they riot. They expel Jones from the farm and dispose of his tools, which they see as instruments of oppression. They resolve to bring in the year’s harvests themselves and inscribe Seven Commandments of Animalism on the wall of the barn to provide guidance as they forge ahead, learning to govern themselves. Some months after the rebellion, Mr. Jones and his men return to the farm and attempt to reclaim the property, but under Snowball’s leadership the animals repel the attack, and Jones disappears for good.

After this clash with Mr. Jones, known as the Battle of the Cowshed, Snowball and Napoleon come into conflict, disagreeing over nearly every facet of life on the farm. Their conflict peaks when Snowball proposes construction of a windmill, which Napoleon claims to oppose. When the animals gather to vote on the windmill project, Napoleon unleashes nine dogs he has trained in secret, and Snowball flees the farm. A few weeks later Napoleon announces they will build the windmill, explaining that his opposition to the project was just a ruse to get rid of Snowball’s negative influence on the farm.

As the windmill project progresses, all the animals except the pigs work grueling hours of physical labor, none as hard as Boxer the horse. Food runs short but the animals persevere, driven by the pride of working for themselves. To make up for the food shortages and obtain other farm supplies, Napoleon announces plans to begin trade with other farms. The animals are skeptical about this plan but follow his lead.

In November of the second year after the rebellion, the almost-finished windmill collapses during a spell of bad weather. Napoleon and the pigs blame Snowball for sabotaging the project, though no hard evidence exists for his involvement. This event sets a precedent that allows the animals to blame Snowball’s scheming for every misfortune that befalls the farm. The animals spend the winter working to rebuild the windmill, and some hens stage a protest when Napoleon expands orders for eggs to trade with other farms. Food continues to run in short supply for the animals. A few months later the hens, along with a number of other animals who confess to colluding with Snowball, are publicly executed as traitors. The other animals become frightened and alarmed, even though they accept the pigs’ justification that those executed were traitors to the farm and to Animalism.

Work on the farm and the new windmill continues at a rapid pace. After a long period of negotiation with neighboring farmers, Frederick and Pilkington, Napoleon sells a pile of timber to Frederick despite the animals’ reservations about this farmer. Frederick pays for the timber with counterfeit money and launches an attack on their farm. The windmill is destroyed in the battle, but the animals are able to fend off Frederick and his men, so the pigs declare a victory for Animal Farm. Although their spirits are crushed, they recommence rebuilding the windmill.

As the year wears on, the animals continue to work hard for little food as the pigs enjoy luxuries in the farmhouse. The animals never question this arrangement. Boxer the horse, highly respected for his work ethic, collapses while working on the windmill, and the pigs claim to make arrangements to send him to a local veterinary hospital. The “ambulance” that arrives actually bears the logo of the local horse slaughterer, and the animals create an uproar once they realize what is happening. Taken away from the farm, Boxer dies, but the pigs maintain their story that he was sent to a hospital, claiming the van was a recent acquisition for the hospital that had not yet been repainted. Taken in by this explanation, most of the animals settle back into their lives of hard work and little food.

Some years after Boxer’s death, the farm and the pigs have become very prosperous, but the animals’ lives remain much the same, filled with hard labor and few rewards. Their sole consolation is the memory of the rebellion and the knowledge that they serve themselves, not humans. They lose this last consolation when the pigs begin to wear clothes, walk on two legs, and regularly do business with humans. The pigs change the name of Animal Farm back to Manor Farm and deny that the rebellion ever took place. When the animals peek into the windows during a dinner party the pigs host for some neighboring human farmers, the animals are unable to tell the difference between pigs and men. The animals finally see that their rebellion has changed nothing.
**Plot Summary**

**Introduction**

1. Old Major introduces ideas about animal rebellion.

**Rising Action**

2. Animals rebel against Mr. Jones and take over the farm.
3. Battle of the Cowshed occurs; Mr. Jones tries to take farm.
4. Snowball and Napoleon compete for leadership of the farm.
5. Napoleon expels Snowball and takes total control.
6. Animals defend farm against Frederick's attack.

**Climax**

7. Boxer is sent away to slaughter as the animals protest.

**Falling Action**

8. Pigs walk on two legs and begin wearing clothes.

**Resolution**

9. At party, animals unable to tell the humans and pigs apart.
**Timeline of Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Animals hear Old Major's dream of a world where all animals are free from human oppression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Animals rebel against Mr. Jones and establish their own rule, renaming the farm Animal Farm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Spring</td>
<td>Conflict between Snowball and Napoleon peaks over windmill; Napoleon forces Snowball to flee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Mr. Jones and his men attempt to reclaim the farm but are defeated at the Battle of the Cowshed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Summer</td>
<td>Napoleon announces plans to begin trade with other farms, and the pigs populate the farmhouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>The windmill, near completion, collapses, and Snowball is blamed for sabotage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Spring</td>
<td>Napoleon executes animals who confess to working with Snowball to sabotage the farm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>Frederick double-crosses Napoleon on a timber sale and attacks the farm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Boxer the horse collapses while working, and the pigs sell him to the local knacker for slaughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Years Later</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pigs fully assume the role humans once held on the farm, wearing clothes and walking on two legs.
Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1

Summary

After Mr. Jones, the drunken owner of Manor Farm, goes to bed for the night, the animals gather in the large barn to hear a message from Old Major the boar. They gather around his bed on a raised platform at the front of the barn, with dogs and pigs at the front, sheep and cows behind them, followed by the horses. Muriel the goat and Benjamin the donkey are at the back. The hens occupy the windowsills, and the pigeons sit in the rafters. Mollie, a mare who pulls Mr. Jones's carriage, arrives late but takes a place at the front. The only animal absent from the meeting is Moses, Jones's pet raven.

Old Major begins his speech saying his own death is coming soon and explains how his age gives him a special understanding of the nature of life. He says the lives of the animals are filled with misery and exploitation. Animals work for little food and are killed when they are no longer useful. The products of their labor, even their own offspring, are taken away from them. Old Major believes Man is the cause of this bleak existence because Man consumes without producing anything. Old Major encourages the animals to band together and prepare for a rebellion to overthrow Mankind.

When rats come into the barn during the meeting, some of the dogs attack them. At this point the animals hold a vote and determine that rats and other wild creatures are their comrades as well. After this decision Old Major describes a dream he had of a world in which animals are free, which brings him back to a song from his childhood, "Beasts of England." A key verse includes the lines, "Soon or late the day is coming,/Tyrant man shall be o'erthrown,/And the fruitful fields of England/Shall be trod by beasts alone." He teaches the animals this song, and they sing together until they awaken Mr. Jones, who drunkenly responds by firing his rifle into the night. This commotion ends the meeting.

Analysis

Mr. Jones is introduced as a drunkard, which prevents him from properly closing the small doors, or pop holes, of the henhouse on the night of Old Major's meeting. Mr. Jones's drinking habits also prevent him from properly caring for his animals. Although on this night the open doors in the henhouse give the hens a means to attend the meeting in the barn, the open doors could have just as easily allowed a predator access to the sleeping birds.

The order in which the animals sit at the meeting significantly foreshadows the hierarchy that will emerge on the farm after the animals take over. The dogs are already close to the pigs, and both species take places of privilege at the front of the crowd. Even though Mollie is late to the meeting, she takes a place near the front, which speaks to her own, ultimately misguided, sense of entitlement. The horses Boxer and Clover sit near the middle of the crowd, which indicates they are team players. Benjamin the donkey is arguably the smartest animal in the room, but he remains near the back because he does not want to be involved in the meeting or the revolution.

Old Major's speech indicates all the ways the animals could benefit if they get away from Man's control. His urgings for unity among the animals reflect his idealized vision of how he thinks the world should be, and he assumes the animals will be able to preserve equality and unity; he believes none of them will step into the void of power left behind when Man is overthrown or use the new structure to benefit only themselves. In the allegorical parallels with the Communist Revolution in Russia, Old Major is commonly seen as an analogue to Karl Marx or Vladimir Lenin, both of whom set forth an idealized world in which all workers were equal, equally owning the means of production and equally enjoying the fruits of their own labor. Both communist ideals and Old Major's dream disregard the seductive nature of power and the willingness of some humans, or animals, to exploit a system that could give them advantages.

Chapter 2
Summary

Old Major dies three days after the meeting takes place, passing peacefully in his sleep. The animals bury him in the farm's orchard. In the three months that follow, the most intelligent of the animals begin meeting regularly, organizing for the rebellion, even though they don't know when the rebellion will begin. As the pigs take the lead in these early preparations, among them two leaders emerge: Napoleon and Snowball. A third pig, Squealer, becomes well known for his powers of speech and persuasion. These three pigs work together to formalize Old Major's ideas into a system of ideas they call Animalism. This philosophy helps convince the animals to consider a rebellion. Some wonder why they should work for a rebellion that might not happen in their lifetimes, especially when Moses the raven promises them they will go to a land of plenty called Sugarcandy Mountain when they die. Boxer and Clover prove helpful in winning the animals over to the cause because the animals believe the horses are so trustworthy. As it turns out, the rebellion does come within the animals' lifetimes. Having lost a lawsuit, Mr. Jones continues to neglect the farm and drink too much. One Saturday in June, Jones gets inebriated in the village; neither he nor his workers return to feed the animals. The cows break into the store shed, and the animals help themselves to the grain inside. When Mr. Jones and his men return and try to stop the animals, the animals fight back. Mr. Jones, his family, and his men flee the farm. The animals, seeing what they have accomplished and realizing that they are now free, destroy the farmer's tools and the symbols of their bondage, such as bits, nose rings, and halters. Touring the farmhouse, they see the luxuries inside, such as featherbeds and carpets. On the barn wall they write the basic tenets of Animalism as Seven Commandments:

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

They change the farm's name to Animal Farm and resolve to bring in the harvest themselves, faster and better than Jones ever did. Just before the animals move out to the hayfield to harvest, the cows need milking, so the pigs do the job. When the animals wonder what will be done with the buckets of milk, Napoleon tells them not to worry. When the animals return from the hayfield, they notice that the buckets have disappeared.

Analysis

Old Major’s death contrasts sharply with the violent and brutal deaths at the hands of Men, which he describes at the meeting. This ending allows him the dignity that befits the founder of Animalism. Because the rebellion originated with Old Major, and because the pigs are the only animals besides Benjamin who can read and write fluently, it makes sense that they take the lead in organizing the rebellion and running the farm afterward.

Moses and his tales of Sugarcandy Mountain parallel a religion. Moses’s name makes this connection clear, as he shares his name with the Biblical prophet who led the Hebrews out of servitude in Egypt and presented them with the Ten Commandments. In Animal Farm, these are replaced with the Seven Commandments of Animalism. Sugarcandy Mountain seems like a heaven, a place of leisure and plentiful food, the animals’ reward in the next life for hard work and suffering in this one. Communism rejects such religious ideals because these beliefs provide the workers with a reason to endure suffering rather than the motivation to overthrow their oppressors so they can improve their lot in this life. Karl Marx called religion the "opium of the masses," meaning that it dulls people's thinking so they remain content with their lot. Obviously, such thinking runs counter to the process of rebellion, so Moses’s speeches are not helpful to the animals’ ultimate goals.

In the parallel to the Russian Revolution of 1917 presented in Animal Farm, Mr. Jones, his family, and his men represent Tsar Nicholas II and his family. However, in the more generalized critique of communism the novel presents, Jones and his men represent the entire ruling class that not only neglects the needs of the poor, but makes its fortunes on the labor of the working classes. In the same way that all revolutions are won and lost, the farmers underestimate the physical strength and numbers of the animals, so the farmers lose in direct confrontation.

Likewise, the renaming of Manor Farm to Animal Farm mirrors the decision of the Russian communist government to rename the country following the revolution and ensuing civil war.
Russia became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) or Soviet Union from 1922 to 1991.

The Seven Commandments form the cornerstone of the animals' new way of life, so it is important for them to have these close at hand. Even though most of the animals cannot read, having the commandments posted for all to see instills a sense of pride in the animals and creates a sense of legitimacy for the new regime.

Chapter 3

Summary

The animals work hard to harvest the hay, and the yield proves to be the largest in the farm's history. They also complete it two days earlier than Jones and his crew ever did. The pigs do not participate in the actual labor but supervise the workers and modify the necessary tools so the animals can use them. Boxer, whose physical strength is a great asset, and Clover are the most productive. All of the other animals do their parts as well, down to the ducks and hens who pick up stray bits of hay to prevent any waste.

The summer after the revolution is a satisfying time for all the animals because they can enjoy the fruits of their own labor—most of them, anyway. After the harvest, the animals finally discover the milk is going into the pigs' mash, and when the apples begin to ripen, the pigs claim those as well. Squealer argues that the pigs do not enjoy milk and apples but need the extra sustenance to carry them through all the brain work of managing the farm to ensure that Mr. Jones does not return. Otherwise, rations are provided to the animals according to their needs, and everyone does his share of work, except for Mollie and the cat. Often neglectful of their duties, they somehow always have convenient excuses. Motivated by the cause of Animalism, Boxer seems to work harder than ever. Benjamin continues to work as he always has—no more, no less—but offers no opinions about the rebellion or its aftermath.

Sunday mornings are reserved for a ceremony that involves saluting the farm's flag (a hoof and horn on a green field), followed by a meeting in the barn. Here the pigs put forth plans for the coming week's work and present resolutions on which the animals can vote. Napoleon and Snowball debate during the meetings because they disagree a lot. The meetings end with the animals singing "Beasts of England," and then the animals use Sunday afternoons for rest and relaxation.

The pigs attempt to teach the other animals to read and write, but few of the animals learn the alphabet beyond several letters. Instead, since most of the animals cannot read or memorize the commandments, Snowball shortens them to a single slogan: "Four legs good, two legs bad." The sheep become fond of chanting this slogan, doing so for hours on end. Napoleon takes nine puppies from Jessie and Bluebell into his own care with the promise to take full responsibility for their education.

Analysis

The scope of the pigs' influence and control over the farm becomes evident as the animals settle into a routine. The pigs' supervision of the harvest, giving orders from behind the horses, seems eerily similar to the position humans once occupied on the farm. Their decision to keep the choice bits of produce from the farm, the apples and the milk, also reflects a sense of privilege. The excuse that they need the extra nutrients establishes inequality at the outset because it implies that mental labor is more important and difficult than physical labor. The animals grumble about this situation, which means they sense its unfairness, but Squealer silences them with the question that will become his trump card: Do you want Mr. Jones to come back? That is the last thing the animals want. In an instance of dramatic irony, this statement covers up the fact that some of the pigs' practices are exactly like Jones's, so in a sense he has already returned.

The primary obstacle to equality that all the animals face is their inability to read and write. This situation alone gives the pigs a tremendous advantage. They have a skill set the other animals don't have or understand, so the "brain work" argument seems legitimate to them; they don't know what "brain work" actually involves. The pigs make only a cursory effort to educate the animals. Rather than continue the reading and writing lessons, they quickly reduce the Seven Commandments to a single simplistic slogan. Not only does this lack of literacy allow the pigs to maintain their advantage, but the pigs set up a headquarters for themselves in the harness room so they can study books from the farmhouse, expanding their knowledge while the other animals' remains limited.
As is the case with many totalitarian regimes, the leaders do not expend their energies trying to fully educate the populace, because it is in their best interests to keep the populace relatively ignorant. Uneducated citizens lack the ability to think critically about what their leaders tell them. Even in current slang, the term sheep describes mindless followers, so it makes sense that the sheep become the animals on the farm who most enjoy chanting the new slogan, "Four legs good, two legs bad," without really considering what it means. Similarly, pigs are gluttons who take more than they deserve or should have.

With these facts in mind, Benjamin may be the most troubling character of all. He reads and writes as well as any of the pigs, and he observes the events on the farm with a critical eye. He appears to understand what is happening, that the pigs are taking advantage of the situation. At the same time, he is given over to cynicism and the belief that nothing will ever really change, so he does not bother to get involved. In this way, he is similar to many educated citizens, under any form of government, who decline to participate or assume leadership because either it is too much trouble or they feel defeated by the system.

Chapter 4

Summary

Snowball and Napoleon work through the summer to spread word of the rebellion, sending out pigeons and teaching "Beasts of England" to animals on neighboring farms. Meanwhile, Mr. Jones tells his side of the story at the village pub. The other farmers, especially Mr. Frederick and Mr. Pilkington, ignore Jones's problems and are more interested in how they might take advantage of the situation. They also worry about potential rebellions on their own farms. To deter their own animals from revolting, they tell stories of fighting, starvation, and even cannibalism and torture at Animal Farm. However, the other animals in the county don’t believe the humans’ version of events, and small acts of rebellion take place all around. "Beasts of England" becomes popular among the animals throughout the countryside despite threats of punishment.

In October Mr. Jones and his men, along with a handful of others from neighboring farms, attempt to retake Animal Farm. In the ensuing battle, Snowball takes the lead. Deriving strategies based on his readings of Julius Caesar, he directs the defense and counterattack. He launches two waves at the intruders and then instructs the animals to retreat, luring the men deep into the farm as a trap. During the battle, Snowball is injured by some pellets from Jones's gun, and a sheep is killed. Boxer knocks a farm boy unconscious with a hoof. Thinking the boy is dead, the horse is racked by guilt. All the animals take part in the battle except for Mollie, who hides in her stall after the first gunshots.

The animals celebrate their victory by singing “Beasts of England” and raising their flag. They bury the dead sheep and award him the newly created honor, Animal Hero, Second Class. Boxer and Snowball receive Animal Hero, First Class for their bravery in the event, now called the Battle of the Cowshed. The animals display Jones’s rifle, which he dropped during the men's retreat, as a trophy by the flagstaff. They agree to fire it on the anniversaries of the battle and their rebellion.

Analysis

The pigs' attempts to spread the message of their rebellion to other farms mirrors the effort of the Soviet Union to spread communist ideals around the world in the early 20th century. Other countries, including the United States, made their own special efforts to contain these messages and counter the spread of communism in Asia, Africa, and South America. The same was true in England throughout the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Even after World War II and Animal Farm's publication (1945), this struggle and the Cold War became defining features of 20th-century history. Many of the scenarios politicians presented to counter the growth of communism touched upon the same topics the farmers presented: famine, shortages of goods, torture. While the farmers' predictions have not come true at this point in the novel, many of them will by the end.

As of right now, however, the animals still believe their farm is superior to any run by humans. They are willing to fight to preserve their way of life. Snowball's leadership in the Battle of the Cowshed is notable because he is the only pig whose actions are specifically identified in the narrative. Without Snowball's strategies, the animals might not have defeated the human intruders. Whatever actions the other pigs take during
the battle, including Napoleon's, are not notable enough to warrant specific mention, although the pigs do appear to be active in the battle rather than supervisory.

Furthermore, Snowball's ideals about Animalism are decidedly pure. When Boxer experiences his crisis of conscience, thinking he has killed the boy, Snowball scolds him for feeling guilty, saying the only good human is a dead one. This exchange raises an additional conflict of ideals. Boxer's commitment to Animalism is as total as any animal's on the farm, yet he is strongly opposed to taking life, even human life. The exchange raises the question of whether violence is ever acceptable, even for a justifiable end.

Mollie's notable absence from battle once again underscores how she is really not as drawn to Animalism as the others. In many ways she has reason to resist. Her life under Mr. Jones was relatively good. She had a place of honor as his public horse; she was decorated with ribbons and rewarded with sugar cubes. If Jones and his family are the ruling class, Mollie represents the upper class, not herself a ruler but still one who benefits directly from the rulers. She is reluctant to lower her living standards for the ideals of Animalism. Like many members of the human upper classes who faced the upheavals of communist revolution in their countries, Mollie is not greedy or power-hungry, but she's had a good life under the old system. Not cut out for hard physical labor, she has no reason to desire change or to risk herself to preserve the new order.

Chapter 5

Summary

Mollie repeatedly shirks her duties. One day Clover spots her talking to one of Pilkington's men near the farm's fence. Clover also believes Mollie allowed the man to pet her. Searching Mollie's stall, Clover finds a stash of sugar cubes and ribbons. Three days later Mollie disappears from the farm. The pigeons report seeing her wearing a ribbon and attached to a cart near a local pub. The pub's owner is said to have been stroking her nose and feeding her sugar.

On the farm the animals have given the pigs authority to make all decisions, although these determinations still have to be approved by a majority vote. Conflict between Snowball and Napoleon escalates as Snowball introduces more plans for the farm's improvement and forms a number of committees to implement these suggestions. Snowball's power comes from the popularity of his speeches during meetings, but Napoleon has more success raising support among the animals on a day-to-day basis.

The conflict between the two pigs comes to a head when Snowball introduces his plan to build a windmill on the farm. The windmill could help the animals with their labor by running machinery and providing electricity for the farm. Snowball sketches out complete designs and publicly proposes his plan. In spite of the apparent benefits, many of the animals are put off by the intense labor the project will require. The conflict leads to a vote between Snowball's plan to build a windmill and Napoleon's proposal to continue in their present manner. The two pigs also clash over the best way to defend the farm, with Snowball favoring a continued propaganda campaign and Napoleon supporting the expanded use of weapons.

Before the vote Snowball makes a detailed speech in favor of the windmill, outlining its many benefits. Napoleon is less persuasive with words. Instead, he unleashes nine dogs—the puppies he took from Jessie and Bluebell to raise and educate—and these dogs chase Snowball away from the farm. At the next meeting Squealer explains how getting rid of Snowball was done for the animals' own good because Snowball was a bad influence. He caps off his speech by asking if the animals want Jones back. Three weeks after Snowball's expulsion, Napoleon announces the windmill project will proceed.

Analysis

Mollie's disappearance reflects a phenomenon disturbingly common in Soviet Russia and other totalitarian regimes. Clearly she is not falling into line with the party's ideas, which breeds suspicion about her intentions and activities. After Clover investigates her comrade and, presumably, reports her findings to the pigs, Mollie disappears. The animals never mention her again. Often during the years of Soviet rule, neighbors informed on neighbors for breaking with party protocol, and those neighbors disappeared, often into the gulag, the secret prison system. Similar scenarios played out under other totalitarian regimes as well, including Nazi Germany. It is possible that Mollie really did go live with the pub owner, but it is not impossible—especially considering
Napoleon's show of force toward Snowball later in the chapter—that she met a much worse fate.

The power shift in the pigs' favor that has been building since the rebellion is now complete. The animals have already given the pigs the authority to make decisions, and the voting process seems to be nominal since many of the animals do not really understand the voting process anyway. Now that Napoleon has revealed his secret weapon, the nine dogs he has trained to attack, he can rule by force if necessary. Since the Battle of the Cowshed, Snowball is clearly the cleverer, or at least the more studious, of the two. That difference is even clearer in his proposal to build the windmill. Napoleon cannot hope to compete with Snowball's intellectual capabilities, so he uses force instead. The difference in their approaches appears in their ideas about the farm's defense as well, where Snowball favors the use of words to persuade others to the farm's cause while Napoleon favors defending the farm with force.

With Snowball out of the picture, Napoleon is free to claim Snowball's ideas for himself. When Napoleon announces the windmill project will go forward, he reveals what his real problem with Snowball was. Snowball's ideas are better than his own, so Napoleon saw him as a threat. This meeting also signals the end of voting on the farm, as the windmill goes forward without an actual vote from the animals. Without bringing the project back to the animals for ratification, Napoleon simply issues a decree. This fiat is how decisions will be made on the farm from now on, yet none of the animals seem to notice, or they are too intimidated by the dogs to protest.

The conflict between Napoleon and Snowball closely correlates with the conflict that emerged in the Soviet Union after the death of Vladimir Lenin in 1924. Josef Stalin and Leon Trotsky were both ranking members of the Communist Party and the Soviet government under Lenin. Stalin was well known as a strong man. Trotsky, with an intellectual reputation, was a popular leader in the party. After Lenin died Trotsky openly opposed Stalin, which ultimately led to Trotsky's 1929 exile. In 1940 one of Stalin's men assassinated Trotsky in Mexico. Just as Snowball's removal from the farm solidifies Napoleon's control, Trotsky's departure from the Soviet Union ensured Stalin's control of the country by removing his most serious opposition.

Benjamin stays out of the voting and the debate about the windmill because he believes neither Snowball nor Napoleon will ultimately improve the animals' lives. His skepticism about the revolution is born from his idea that the revolution will not substantially change their lives in the long run. Here his cynicism deepens to show that even when presented with two different choices on an equal footing, he refuses to engage with the choice because he believes the alternatives are essentially no different. His thinking lives up to the donkey's reputation as a stubborn animal: in refusing to acknowledge the possibility of a better option, he ensures there will not be a better option.

Chapter 6

Summary

In their first year under Napoleon's rule, the animals work 60-hour weeks; however, they are consoled by the belief that they are still working for their own benefit, even when Napoleon announces "voluntary" working time on Sunday afternoons. Despite the long hours, the harvest is less successful than the previous year, and the animals miss planting some supplementary root crops that would have fed them through the winter. The reduced yield results from the windmill construction project, which presents many unforeseen problems. For example, even though the farm has a large store of sand and cement, the animals lack the ability to use tools for building. While the farm also has a quarry with plenty of stone, the only way the animals can break the large stones into pieces suitable for construction is to drag each boulder to the top of the quarry, drop it back to the bottom, and hope it breaks.

Boxer makes the entire windmill project possible by working tirelessly to drag stones from the quarry, even getting up early and staying late in addition to his other duties. His belief in the project, in Animalism, and in Comrade Napoleon is unshakable.

At the same time, the animals discover they need other items the farm cannot produce, such as fuel oil, nails, horseshoes, and machinery for the windmill. These needs force the farm to engage in trade with humans so the animals can earn money to buy the necessary items. At a meeting, four young pigs question this plan, but they are quickly silenced by growling from Napoleon's dogs and chanting by the sheep. Napoleon announces that he will make the sacrifice of dealing with the
human lawyer, Mr. Whymper, who will handle the trade affairs. While this arrangement makes them nervous, the animals also find they enjoy watching one of their own give orders to a human.

The pigs move into the farmhouse. Muriel and Clover question whether this act is permitted by the Seven Commandments because they seem to recall the commandment prohibiting animals sleeping in beds. Squealer points out that the full commandment only prohibits animals from sleeping in beds with sheets, since all animals have beds but a sheet is a human invention. This explanation seems to settle the matter.

By November the windmill is finally near completion, but the animals must pause construction because the weather is too damp and windy to mix concrete and set stones into place. One night the animals awaken to a loud cracking sound, which turns out to be the windmill collapsing. Napoleon blames the failure on Snowball, saying he must have sneaked into the farm and sabotaged the project. As proof, he sniffs some footprints, declaring them to be Snowball’s. He then offers the honor of Animal Hero, Second Class to any animal who finds and kills Snowball. He additionally offers a bushel of apples to any animal who brings Snowball in alive. He then announces they will begin rebuilding the windmill immediately.

Even if questioning Napoleon did cross the animals’ minds, they have little recourse at this point. Napoleon tolerates no challenges to his edicts and decisions. When the four young pigs hesitate over the trade issue, Napoleon threatens them with his dogs and allows the sheep to drown out their questions. The threat of force and the use of propaganda, such as slogans, are common strategies totalitarian leaders use to maintain power. This incident shows that even other pigs are not immune to Napoleon’s tactics. At the same time, Napoleon needs to pacify the animals, so he deploys Squealer to explain that the Seven Commandments do not prohibit trade. Unlike the earlier interpretation of the commandment regarding sleeping in a bed, Squealer is technically telling the truth here. The Seven Commandments do not explicitly prohibit trade. However, they do say that creatures who walk on two legs are the animals’ enemies, so not doing business with them is certainly implied.

In the context of history, the pigs’ decision to do business with humans on other farms parallels the Soviet decision to form alliances with European nations and the United States prior to World War II. At different times during the 1930s, Stalin considered allying himself with both Germany and the United Kingdom. The uncertainty of where Stalin would place his country’s considerable military might caused unrest on all sides.

Given the weather conditions, it is more likely the windmill collapsed due to design flaws and forces of nature than sabotage. At the same time, Napoleon does not want the animals to question the feasibility of the design, the quality of the construction, or especially his own decision to proceed, so he must find another source on which to fix the blame. Snowball is the obvious scapegoat here, the one to blame when anything goes wrong, whether or not he is actually responsible. With a clear, common, identifiable enemy trying to stop the windmill, not nature itself, Napoleon knows the animals are more likely to buy into rebuilding it. They can believe they are defying a threat, not engaging in a futile task.

Analysis

The so-called voluntary Sunday workday is actually mandatory. Animals who do not participate in the Sunday work time have their rations cut in half. This reduction is so substantial that the apparent choice is not a real choice at all. However, the illusion keeps the animals happy. The animals are also content because they believe they have at least the same amount of food as they had before the rebellion, and they do not have to support five humans as well. This consolation distracts them from the fact that they are supporting many more than five pigs who have now moved into the farmhouse to live like humans. Squealer takes advantage of the animals’ poor memories and complacency when he covers up the first change of the Seven Commandments with his explanation about animals not being allowed to use bedsheets. They other animals still trust the pigs because they believe “four legs good,” meaning no animal would ever lie to them. Their belief in Animalism means the prospect of deception does not even cross their minds.

Chapter 7

Summary

Work continues on the windmill through the bitter winter.
because the animals want to prove themselves to the humans who doubt them. These same humans say the windmill collapsed because the walls were too thin, but the animals continue to believe Snowball is responsible. However, they also decide to rebuild the windmill with thicker walls, which means they need more stone. Collecting the stone in winter weather is slow and difficult, impeding their progress. Only Boxer and Clover, with their unshakable work ethic, keep up the animals’ spirits.

Other problems abound. In January an improperly planted potato crop fails, leaving the farm with a severe food shortage. Despite near-starvation, Napoleon and the animals work frantically to conceal the shortage from the outside world. Rumors of famine are already circulating among the humans, so confirming these rumors would put the farm in danger. The animals are instructed to talk about increased rations when Mr. Whymper is around. Still, Napoleon makes arrangements to sell more of the hens’ eggs so the farm can buy grain to make up for the shortfall in their stores.

Wanting their eggs to become chicks, the hens rebel, laying their eggs in the henhouse rafters so they fall to the floor and break. Napoleon responds by withholding the hens’ rations, but their resistance still lasts for five days. Nine hens die of starvation, but Napoleon makes sure the other animals are told they died of disease.

Although Snowball has not been sighted directly, rumors swirl that he is hiding on either Pilkington’s or Frederick’s farm, depending on which farmer Napoleon is leaning toward doing business with—or not—at any given time. Later the pigs claim Snowball has been returning to the farm at night to cause mischief—stealing corn, upsetting milk pails, eating bark off fruit trees. All the bad things that happen are blamed on Snowball, even if the true causes become apparent later. Eventually Squealer announces Snowball has sold himself to Frederick and says Snowball was always in league with the humans, even fighting for Jones at the Battle of the Cowshed.

Later, Napoleon uses the threat of Snowball to eliminate some of his enemies. During a meeting, he sends his dogs after the four pigs who question his trade plans, the hens that have rebelled over the eggs, and a few other animals who confess to working with Snowball. All of these animals are executed immediately. This violence stuns the other animals, especially Clover. After the executions, she and the other animals gather on the knoll where the windmill stood. In an attempt to comfort themselves, the animals try to sing “Beasts of England,” but Squealer tells them the song is now banned, replaced with a new song swearing allegiance to Animal Farm.

Analysis

The animals all agree that the outsiders can’t know what is really going on with the farm’s food supply because that would leave them open to another attempt from the humans to take over the farm. They cooperate with the plan to keep the humans from finding out the truth.

Snowball becomes a useful scapegoat for the pigs to cover their own mismanagement of the farm. Blaming Snowball is so useful for deterring questions about the windmill collapse, they blame him for everything that goes wrong on the farm. However, when a misplaced key that Snowball has allegedly thrown down a well turns up under a sack of meal, it becomes obvious that Snowball’s involvement is just a fiction. He is likely not coming to the farm at all, but the animals seem to ignore this fact. Many of Snowball’s alleged crimes are food-related: missing corn, upset milk pails, broken eggs. The cows even claim Snowball comes to their stalls and milks them at night. Blaming Snowball can be a way for the animals to cover up some of their own shortcomings, such as reduced milk production. It is also possible the pigs use Snowball to cover for their own activities. If a pig is seen eating bark from a tree or taking corn or milking a cow at night, it makes sense to claim the malefactor is Snowball instead of creating suspicion among themselves.

The pigs are so committed to the Snowball ruse, they rewrite their history of the Battle of the Cowshed. Snowball has been called the hero of that battle, and his strategies made victory possible. Yet Squealer convinces the animals that Snowball was working for Mr. Jones the whole time, serving as Jones’s guide through the battle. This story further discredits Snowball, illustrating the animals’ willingness to believe anything the pigs tell them. They don’t remember their own history or even take the time or trouble to try to recall what really happened, so they are open to whatever story the pigs feed them.

As the executions prove, scapegoating Snowball is also a good way for Napoleon to keep the other animals in line through intimidation. Some of the animals confess to being in league with Snowball, perhaps in a futile effort to save themselves, or perhaps because they have been brainwashed sufficiently to
believe Snowball truly made them lay eggs in the rafters or urinate in the drinking water supply. However, the stunned reaction the animals have to the executions shows they did not expect such carnage. The killings parallel Stalin's Great Purge during the 1930s, in which hundreds of thousands of government opponents or perceived opponents were executed or imprisoned. The most disturbing part of the animals' reaction to the executions is that despite their despair over these events, they are still convinced they are better off now than they were with Mr. Jones, revealing how brainwashed or fearful, or both, the animals have become.

Chapter 8

Summary

After the executions, the animals question (away from the pigs and dogs) whether these events fall in line with the Seven Commandments; they think they remember one of the commandments stating that no animal shall kill another animal. After some investigation, Muriel the goat reads the commandment on the wall aloud, and they discover it actually reads, "No animal shall kill another animal without cause." The animals decide these two words justify the executions of the apparent traitors since their actions gave Napoleon cause.

The general conditions for the animals continue to be harsh, as the workload of rebuilding the windmill and regular farm duties requires additional effort. Although the animals believe they are getting no more food than they did under Mr. Jones, Squealer presents weekly numbers that seem to prove they are actually getting more food and are better off. At this point Squealer is doing most of Napoleon's public speaking. Napoleon has isolated himself in the farmhouse, away from even the other pigs, and rarely appears in public. When three hens confess to plotting to assassinate Napoleon in summer, he becomes even more isolated, adds more guard dogs, and gets a food taster. The hens are executed. The pigs circulate poems and songs praising Napoleon as the savior and protector of all the animals.

Napoleon's negotiations with the other farms become more complicated as he plans to sell a pile of timber to either Pilkington or Frederick. Frederick wants the timber but won't meet Napoleon's price, so Napoleon announces plans to sell to Pilkington and spreads rumors about Frederick's plans to attack the farm. Other rumors circulate about Frederick's cruelty to his animals, which makes the animals want to attack his farm and overthrow him, but Squealer advises them against "rash action."

More misfortunes, including the appearance of weeds in the wheat crop, continue to be blamed on Snowball, still said to be hiding on Frederick's farm. A gander who says he knew that Snowball mixed weed seeds in with the wheat confesses and commits suicide. The pigs revise the story of the Battle of the Cowshed again, this time to reveal Snowball's active cowardice.

After all of these rumors and stories, the animals are shocked to learn that Napoleon has sold the timber to Frederick and has been negotiating with Frederick in secret all along. He spread the stories about selling to Pilkington only to get Frederick to meet his price. The rumors about Frederick's farm likely came from Snowball, who apparently is actually hiding on Pilkington's farm. Once they hear the whole story, the animals are proud of Napoleon's negotiating prowess and also impressed that he is savvy enough to demand cash payment instead of a check.

With the windmill finished and the timber sold, the machinery for the windmill can be purchased, and all their dreams can come true. However, three days after the sale Mr. Whymper tells Napoleon that Frederick's money is counterfeit and he has cheated them all. Napoleon pronounces a death sentence on Frederick and prepares for an attack the next morning. The animals are outmatched, and the men have guns. The battle culminates when Frederick and his men blow up the finished windmill. The animals, who have retreated, are outraged by this act and counterattack vigorously, suffering casualties but driving the humans from the farm. The pigs declare a victory and hold a ceremony celebrating what they call the Battle of the Windmill.

The animals, however, are crushed by the loss of the windmill and don't understand why the pigs want to celebrate. Squealer convinces them the battle is a triumph because the animals held on to the farm, but they are not fully convinced until Napoleon speaks to them. The fallen animals are given a funeral, and the rest of the animals receive extra rations.

A few days after the battle, the pigs discover whisky in the farmhouse and drink it. The morning after, the pigs announce
Comrade Napoleon is dying, but he seems to feel better by evening. That night the animals hear a noise in the barn and find Squealer unconscious on the ground next to a ladder and a paint can. One of the Seven Commandments now reads, "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess."

Analysis

The animals fail to remember their own history, and the pigs take advantage of this fact. Squealer’s weekly presentations of numbers regarding the food supply do not reflect the truth. Numbers can be manipulated to prove different results, so having the capacity to question the sources and methods of creating statistics is important. Of course the animals don’t have this capacity. The changes to the commandments and the faulty statistics illustrate how blind trust, a lack of education and attention to detail, and apathetic participation in government all combined can result in ongoing exploitation and the abuse of power. The animals do not have much recourse toward the pigs at this point, anyway. After they discover Squealer in the barn, they may guess what the pigs have been up to with the commandments, but with the dogs at the pigs’ beck and call, the animals are too intimidated to do anything.

As if to add insult to (literal) injury, the pigs declare the Battle of the Windmill a victory worth celebrating in spite of the losses the animals have suffered. This characterization negates the months of hard labor and deprivation the animals have endured to build and then rebuild the windmill. Boxer, the most steady of them all, has even suffered a serious injury in the battle. Now the animals know they will have to construct the windmill again. When Squealer’s arguments don’t work to convince the animals of the victory, Napoleon buys them off with meager treats: an apple for each animal, an ounce of corn for each bird, and three biscuits for each dog. These are small rewards for such a heavy loss. As for the pigs, they celebrate by drinking themselves sick, breaking another of the Seven Commandments; then they revise it behind the animals’ backs to fit their own behavior. No matter how egregious and obvious the pigs’ hypocrisy becomes, the animals do not react. Here Orwell underscores just how dangerous a combination passive citizens and unscrupulous dictators can be.

The negotiations with Frederick and Pilkington illustrate the strength of propaganda in manipulating public opinion. When Napoleon leans toward doing business with Frederick, he puts out negative publicity about Pilkington. When he inclines toward Pilkington, he maligns Frederick, playing each side off against the other to get his way. Furthermore, saying each man’s farm is harboring Snowball creates only more hostility among the animals. The changing stories about Snowball’s location reveal that no one knows where Snowball is, or the pigs have killed Snowball already and are using him as a kind of bogeyman for their own purposes. Given the shady way Napoleon deals with both farmers, it should not come as a shock that Frederick betrays him and Pilkington refuses to come to his aid during the Battle of the Windmill. The two farmers have been opposed to Animal Farm from the beginning, anyway. If the pigs had adhered to their own purported belief system—“Four legs good, two legs bad”—they might have avoided the trouble. The entire episode illustrates how Napoleon is really more interested in his own advantage than he is in animal power.

Napoleon’s dealings with Pilkington and Frederick parallel Stalin’s negotiations with Adolf Hitler in the 1930s and then Winston Churchill, Britain’s prime minister, in the 1940s. Stalin entered an alliance with Hitler in 1939 just as Napoleon entered an agreement with Frederick. Hitler nullified his pact with Stalin when he invaded the Soviet Union in 1941 just as Frederick betrayed the terms of his deal with Animal Farm. The Soviet army suffered massive casualties repelling the German advance just as the animals suffered heavy losses in the Battle of the Windmill. Both the Soviets and the animals were ultimately successful in keeping what they had.

During the 1940s, Russia and Britain were official allies in World War II, but Stalin and Churchill kept secrets from each other. Stalin did not let the extent of his vindictive purges, such as his extensive killings of kulaks (members of the rich Russian peasant class) be known. Churchill, on his side, did not tell Stalin that he and Roosevelt had decided not to open a second front against Hitler in France in 1942, which they earlier had led Stalin to believe and which would have helped Russia defend itself better.

Chapter 9

Summary

The hoof Boxer split during the Battle of the Windmill takes a long time to heal, but he refuses to take any time off work. The
animals have already started rebuilding the windmill, and Boxer knows he is essential to the project. He refuses to let the other animals see his pain and wants to see the windmill well underway before he retires, even though Clover and Benjamin caution him not to overexert himself. The original plans for Animal Farm allow horses to retire at 12 years with a pension of corn and hay, and Boxer’s 12th birthday is coming up this year.

Conditions on the farm remain harsh, as the animals continue to undertake both farm and windmill-building duties through the winter. In addition the four sows litter a total of 35 piglets—all Napoleon’s—so there are many more mouths to feed. These pigs need to be educated, so work also begins on a schoolhouse in the farmhouse garden. The expenses of the school and of machinery for the windmill, in addition to the other farm necessities, demand increased production of goods for sale and trade. Rations are reduced—or to use Squealer’s word, “readjusted”—for everyone except pigs and dogs, but it doesn’t seem to matter because he produces reams of figures to prove the animals are getting more food and working shorter hours than before. He also has numbers to prove that their drinking water is better, they’re living longer, more of their offspring are surviving infancy, and they have more straw and fewer fleas in their stalls. The animals believe him because their memory of what life was like with Mr. Jones in charge has simply faded, and despite the cold, hunger, and long hours, they are free animals, not slaves to a human. That freedom alone makes everything seem better. The animals also enjoy the many songs, speeches, and processions that are now part of farm life. In late summer the farm is declared a republic, and an election is held for president, although Napoleon is the only candidate.

In the meantime the pigs live comfortably. They use barley to brew beer, and Napoleon keeps sugar on his table. They appear to be gaining weight. They also keep candles and lamps in the house, although to save oil, lanterns are no longer allowed in the stalls. Also, the pigs are allowed to wear green ribbons on their tails on Sundays. Other changes are apparent in the social order of the farm. The new piglets are not allowed to mingle with the other animals, and the other animals must yield to pigs when they meet on a path.

The pigs also offer one more revision to Snowball’s history, claiming that he actually led the human forces into battle. Napoleon, not Mr. Jones’s gun, inflicted the wounds on Snowball’s back. Many of the animals claim to have witnessed these events firsthand. When Moses returns with his stories of Sugarcandy Mountain, the pigs officially declare his stories lie, but they also provide the bird with a daily ration of beer.

In late summer, near his time of retirement, Boxer collapses near the windmill site. A lung has given way, and the animals rush to the pigs for help. Squealer comes to the site after 15 minutes with word that Napoleon is making arrangements to send Boxer to a veterinary hospital in the village. Clover and Benjamin escort Boxer to his stall and stay with him while they aren’t working, comforting him and keeping flies away. Two days later, while they are in the fields, a van comes to take Boxer away. The animals rush to see him off, but only Benjamin can read the writing on the side of the van. He sees that it belongs to the local horse slaughterer. Benjamin yells out the truth to the other animals, and Clover shouts a warning to Boxer. Boxer tries to kick his way out of the van, but he is too weak to do so.

Three days later, the pigs announce that Boxer died in the hospital. Squealer claims to have been with Boxer at the very end and that Boxer’s last words were "Long live Comrade Napoleon! Napoleon is always right!" Squealer also refutes the story that Boxer left in the horse slaughterer’s van, claiming the veterinarian just bought the van from the local knacker and had not yet repainted it. The animals are relieved to hear this story and happy to hear that Napoleon paid for Boxer’s medical expenses. Later, Napoleon announces that it is not possible to bring Boxer’s remains back to the farm for burial, but he will send a wreath of laurels down to Boxer’s grave in the village.

A few days later, a van delivers a large crate to the farmhouse, which the animals learn is full of whisky, and the pigs hold a memorial banquet in Boxer’s honor, with just themselves in attendance. There is much noise in the house that night.

Analysis

Squealer’s arguments have ceased to even make much sense. He claims that completely identical rations would be “contrary to the principles of Animalism,” a statement that negates the most basic principle of Animalism: equality. He has expanded the type and amount of statistics he offers the animals, showing them how all aspects of their lives are better now than they were with Mr. Jones. The animals believe these claims because they lack the knowledge to refute them and also because they need to believe these claims. Otherwise, their rebellion and the suffering they have experienced would be for
nothing.

In contrast, the pigs no longer do much at all to justify or cover up the fact that they live far more comfortably than the other animals. The animals do not seem to notice, or do not choose to observe, that many of the luxuries the pigs enjoy, such as oil lamps in the house, come at the animals' expense. Napoleon is committed to building a schoolhouse for the young pigs so they can be educated, whereas no such plans are being made for the other animals, and educating the young pigs alone will ensure only pigs will remain in power for generations to come. Additionally, the growing numbers of pigs actually mean the animals may be worse off than they were under Mr. Jones. The exact number of Jones's men is never specified, but his family definitely had fewer than 35 members, which is now the number of piglets in the farmhouse, let alone the adult pigs. The animals are clearly providing for a much larger number of pigs than they had of humans.

To make up for the deprivation the animals must endure, the pigs have arranged plenty of distractions in the form of demonstrations, parades, songs, and speeches. Napoleon's election creates the appearance that the animals have a say in the way the farm runs, but it is only an illusion because Napoleon is the sole candidate. Only a few of the animals seem to recognize these events and demonstrations waste hours they could be working on any of the many projects the pigs have put forth.

In a similar vein, the pigs have allowed Moses to return to the farm although he was never officially expelled. The pigs publicly scorn Moses, but they also essentially pay him a daily salary of beer to soothe the animals with his stories of Sugarcandy Mountain. The animals enjoyed the stories in Mr. Jones's days because they were a distraction from the harshness of their lives, and it is the same now that their lives are even harsher under the pigs.

Over the years since the revolution, the pigs have betrayed nearly all of the ideals Old Major put forth in his speech. They have modified the Seven Commandments, sold the hens' eggs that were meant to become chicks, and with Boxer, committed another evil previously attributed to humans alone: sending an animal off to slaughter once he has outlived his usefulness—not just any animal, either, but the most loyal and devoted follower of Animalism. The lie Squealer tells about the knacker's van is almost laughably transparent, but the animals believe it because they still trust the pigs and because the lie is far more comfortable than the truth. As with the weekly numbers, to reject Squealer's lie would mean accepting that they now live under the control of pigs who would sell even their most loyal worker to slaughter. The animals need to believe they have suffered for something, that their lives since the rebellion are better, and that the rebellion had real meaning. Living conditions in communist countries, including the Soviet Union, have historically featured extreme deprivation for the masses while the leaders lived in luxury. Like the animals, the common people cling to the ideals of their revolution because they either fear the punishment that comes with protest or they can't face that the leaders they have trusted would exploit them so completely.

Chapter 10

Summary

After many years, most of the animals who fought in the rebellion have died, except Clover, Benjamin, Moses, and some pigs. The animals now on the farm have known life under only the pigs' rule, and the ideals of the rebellion are abstract notions to them. Although the farm is larger now with more animals, and the farm appears prosperous, the living conditions for everyone other than the pigs remain as dismal as ever. Squealer continues to present numbers to tell the animals how good they have it, but their primary comfort and pride lies in the fact that they are part of the only farm in the country owned and operated by animals.

During the summer, Squealer takes the sheep away to teach them a new saying, which is revealed on the day the pigs also reveal a new trick to the animals. The pigs walk on their hind legs. The animals are terrified and amazed by this development, but before they can respond, the sheep unveil the new chant, "Four legs good, two legs better!" Napoleon also begins carrying a whip in his trotter.

Around the same time, the Seven Commandments disappear from the wall of the barn, replaced by a single commandment: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." The pigs order a radio and magazine subscriptions, and they start wearing Mr. Jones's clothes.

About a week after the pigs start walking on two legs, they host a dinner party for the local farmers. The animals watch
the dinner party through a window while Mr. Pilkington makes a toast praising the methods and efficiency of the farm. Napoleon thanks Pilkington and takes the opportunity to dispel any rumors still circulating about the farm, including that the animals call each other "comrade" or salute a boar's skull on Sunday mornings. He also announces the farm will now be known by its original name, Manor Farm. At this, the disheartened animals move away from the window toward their stalls. The noise of raised voices draws them back to the house where they see the pigs and men fighting, but now they cannot tell which is which.

Analysis

The pigs’ transformation of the farm becomes more complete as time passes. Now only a few animals remember the rebellion firsthand, let alone life before the rebellion, so the pigs are free to abandon Animalism’s last lingering principles. They begin to live fully the same way as humans, walking on two legs, wearing clothes, and consort with true humans socially. Erasing the last bits of the rebellion's history, they bury Old Major's skull, get rid of the flag, and paint over the Seven Commandments. It's as if the rebellion never took place.

These events remove the last bit of comfort and illusion from the animals' lives. They have clung to the knowledge that as bad as things may seem, they do not work for humans, only for themselves. The final scene, in which they can no longer tell the difference between pigs and men, finally erases that illusion for the animals. They do work for humans, essentially. They held a rebellion to overthrow a set of unjust and greedy rulers, and ultimately end up with just another group of unjust and greedy rulers. Benjamin's claim at the beginning of the story, that nothing much will ever change for the animals, proves true—although it is easy to wonder if this is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

From the historical perspective, this sequence of events is not uncommon. The Russian Revolution was simply an early 20th-century example that struck Orwell hard because it was initially so full of promise yet turned out so be so disappointing. The communists overthrew the ruling class because its members exploited the workers, but then Stalin and his followers simply exploited the workers themselves, eliminating anyone who disagreed with them and living in comfort. Orwell's message is clear. As England's Lord Acton famously said, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." The true enemy of the people is not one socioeconomic class or another, but totalitarianism. So many revolutions have followed a similar pattern: a rebellion takes place to overthrow a government only to be replaced by leadership ultimately as bad or worse.

“" Quotes

“No animal in England knows the meaning of happiness or leisure after he is a year old. No animal in England is free. The life of and animal is misery and slavery: that is the plain truth."

— Old Major, Chapter 1

At the start of his speech, Old Major describes the lives the animals of England, and indeed the world, face. Their existence is bleak and devoid of joy. This is the life that he dreams the animals will escape. While this view appears at the beginning of the novel, it remains an equally true description of the animals' lives at the end.

"Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend. And remember also that in fighting against Man, we must not come to resemble him."

— Old Major, Chapter 1

In the animals’ quest to overcome human rule, Old Major issues a caution against becoming friendly with humans or, worse, becoming like them. Like many of his other statements, this is a caution the pigs will not heed; they become more and more like
the humans as they gain more power over the farm.

"Weak or strong, clever or simple, we are all brothers. No animal must ever kill any other animal. All animals are equal."

— Old Major, Chapter 1

This statement distills Old Major’s philosophy to its purest essence. Animals must think of themselves as brothers and sisters and relate to one another in unity and equality if the revolution is to succeed.

"Donkeys live a long time. None of you has ever seen a dead donkey."

— Benjamin, Chapter 3

Benjamin explains his reluctance to take an active role in the rebellion or anything else because, in his opinion, very little truly changes in the long term.

"Four legs good, two legs bad."

— Snowball, Chapter 3

Snowball distills the essence of Animalism and the Seven Commandments into this single, simplistic statement to enable the animals to take in these complex ideas more easily. Eventually the slogan is chanted so frequently that it loses all meaning.

"I have no wish to take life, not even human life."

— Boxer, Chapter 4

When Boxer believes he has accidentally killed a farm hand during battle, he is deeply sorry, revealing his gentle and kind nature. Even though he believes humans are the enemy, and even accepts that violence may be necessary to defend the farm, he draws the line at killing. Squealer tells the animals that Napoleon would like to let them make their own decisions but sometimes they make wrong decisions.

"Comrades ... do you know who is responsible for this? Do you know the enemy who has come in the night and overthrown our windmill? SNOWBALL!"

— Napoleon, Chapter 6

After the windmill collapses, Napoleon blames the exiled Snowball for the disaster. This strategy unites the animals against a common enemy and deflects scrutiny from the pigs’ own flawed plans and leadership.

"I do not understand it. I would not have believed that such things could happen on our farm. It must be due to some fault in ourselves. The solution, as I see it, is to work harder."

— Boxer, Chapter 7

After Napoleon carries out public executions of animals deemed traitors to the farm, Boxer attempts to understand what has happened. It is impossible for him to make sense of how far the farm has strayed from the original ideals of the rebellion. Boxer is so devoted to his leaders and the ideals he believes they represent that he is willing to blame himself for these events, even though his work ethic has nothing to do with the executions. This sentiment echoes his own interior
motto from Chapter 5: I will work harder.

“If you have your lower animals to contend with ... we have our lower classes!”

— Mr. Pilkington, Chapter 10

When Pilkington makes this joke at the dinner party with the pigs, it becomes obvious that the farm is a representation of how the upper classes exploit the lower classes in human society, and it underlines Orwell's feeling that inequality is rampant in every type of political and economic system.

“The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.”

— Narrator, Chapter 10

The chilling final line of the novel shows the animals realizing that the pigs have become so much like the humans they were trying to defeat that there is no difference between them anymore. The rebellion has changed nothing. Furthermore, Orwell shows humans as gluttonous pigs, no better than the worst of the animals. It is a bleak view of humanity.

**Symbols**

**Names**

Many of the animals’ names are highly symbolic, suggestive of their characters or roles. The historical Napoleon was the all-powerful emperor of France. A major, as in Old Major, is a high military rank held by an army officer. Jones is one of the most common names in English, showing that the farmer represents virtually any human. A snowball, associated with winter fun, has connotations of harmlessness and fragility. A boxer is a powerful fighter. A squealer has negative associations with snitches who tell or “squeal” on people; it is also someone who makes a terrible noise of pain. Finally, Moses is the Biblical prophet who receives the Ten Commandments from God.

**Milk and Apples**

The milk and apples the pigs claim for themselves shortly after the rebellion represent riches and wealth, to which the pigs feel a special sense of entitlement. The claim on these extra foodstuffs is the first of many special privileges the pigs will claim at the other animals' expense.

**Windmill**

When Snowball introduces the plan for the windmill, it represents the hope of a better standard of living for all animals, who will benefit from the electricity the windmill will generate. As time rolls on and the windmill gets destroyed and rebuilt, it comes to represent the constant hard labor the animals do for very little benefit. Its destruction is the loss of their hope.

**Old Major's Skull**

After Napoleon assumes total control of the farm, he exhumes Old Major’s skull and puts it on display for the animals to salute each week. This represents an attempt to acknowledge both the past and the roots of Animalism, giving the pigs' regime authenticity. When the ideals of the rebellion no longer serve the pigs' purposes, the skull is reburied, and the ritual of saluting it is denounced as strange, representing the pigs'
abandonment of core principles and history.

**Jones's Rifle**

Left behind as Mr. Jones and his men retreat from the Battle of the Cowshed, the rifle is a symbol of the animals' victory over their human masters and is fired in celebration of the anniversaries of their greatest victories, the rebellion and the Battles of the Cowshed and the Windmill.

**Themes**

**Corruption**

The pigs who take over leadership of Animal Farm after the rebellion depart from the ideals of Animalism, serving their own interests. The inequalities begin on a small scale—a pail of milk here, a bushel of apples there. As the pigs gain more wealth and power over time, they change the rules of Animalism to suit their own desires and to maintain their control of the farm, eventually turning it into a totalitarian society.

**Exploitation**

Understanding that literacy offers power, the pigs make sure that none of the animals except their own young learn how to read. As the pigs take advantage of their position, using their superior education and, later, the physical threat of the dogs, the overworked and uneducated other animals find themselves working harder for fewer and fewer benefits. Their efforts benefit the pigs more than themselves.

**Deception**

To maintain their position of power over the other animals, Napoleon and the other pigs create elaborate lies to cover their actions. Squealer uses propaganda to convince the animals they are doing well when, in fact, their lives get worse as the months and years pass. The pigs secretly change the Seven Commandments and other resolutions from the rebellion, convincing the animals that their own memories are faulty. Using Snowball as a scapegoat for everything that goes wrong hides the fact that others are really responsible.

**Idealism**

The animals embrace the ideals of Animalism and the equality and sharing this political philosophy promises them. They believe in the best intentions of one another, even as the practice of Animalism moves away from its noble concept of free, equal animals working together and sharing the plentiful fruits of their labor. Throughout the story the animals remind themselves of the beliefs that guided their revolution by singing “Beasts of England,” which describes their ideal world.

**Apathy**

Two kinds of apathy exist on the farm; both enable the pigs to assume absolute power. The apathy shown by characters such as Benjamin the donkey stems from an inability to see and understand what is happening disabled by a belief that action of any kind will not create change and is, therefore, not worthwhile. Most of the animals fall victim to a second kind of apathy, born of unquestioning trust in the pigs' leadership, which leads to a lack of critical thought that makes them susceptible to manipulation and deception.
Motifs

Songs and Chants

The songs and chants the animals sing throughout *Animal Farm* function as propaganda, or "biased information used to promote a particular cause": Major's "Beasts of England," Minimus's ode to Napoleon and his revised anthem, and the sheep's chants. By having the animals chant the same words in unison, the pigs maintain social control by stripping the animals of their individuality and keeping them focused on the political agenda.

Religion and Ritual

As the pigs work to consolidate power, they institute rituals such as awards, parades, and songs for the purpose of creating loyalty to the state. As the rituals grow in number, the working animals become more and more vulnerable and reliant on the state to define their cultural values.

Suggested Reading


