Summary

*Animal Farm* begins on Manor Farm in England. After Mr. Jones, the neglectful owner of the farm, has drunkenly shut the animals away and gone to sleep, the animals all assemble in the barn to hear a respected boar named Old Major speak. Old Major proceeds to share his dream of a world without men, one ruled by animals. He points out that all of the suffering endured by the animals is the result of man. Mr. Jones forces the animals to work too hard and then steals the products of their labor. Furthermore, the animals all know that Mr. Jones does not value their lives and will mercilessly slaughter each and every one of them once they have outlived their usefulness. Old Major tells the animals that their lives would be much better if they could overthrow man and find freedom. He cautions them, however, that if they should ever overthrow their human masters, they must take precautions against acting like humans themselves and should remember to treat all animals as equals.

Three days later, Old Major dies and the animals begin to prepare for the rebellion. The preparations are led by the pigs, who are the cleverest animals on the farm. Two pigs in particular—Snowball and Napoleon—take on leadership roles and are aided by Squealer, an extremely persuasive pig. The pigs turn Old Major’s speech into a philosophy, which they call “Animalism.” They then hold weekly meetings to teach the rest of the animals about Animalism, though they find the animals are easily distracted by Moses, a raven who likes to tell the animals about a place called Sugarcandy Mountain where animals go when they die. The rebellion comes sooner than expected when Mr. Jones forgets to feed the animals and then attacks them when he sees them helping themselves. Incensed, the animals drive Mr. Jones and his men off the farm and take over, changing the name to Animal Farm. The pigs paint the principles of Animalism on the barn wall. There are seven commandments in total, and each one comes from Old Major’s speech to the animals.

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.
The animals are eager to prove themselves a success and complete the harvest more quickly and efficiently than their former human master could ever have done. Most of the animals believe strongly in Animalism and work very hard to do their part for the farm. However, there are troubling indicators that not all the animals are being treated equally. The pigs, being the cleverest of the animals, quickly become the permanent leaders of the farm. Despite the fact that they supervise the farm work instead of performing any labor themselves, the pigs begin claiming extra rations in the form of milk and apples. This seemingly unequal treatment is easily explained away by Squealer, who warns the animals that Mr. Jones might return if the pigs are not given what they need to run the farm successfully. Soon after, Mr. Jones really does return in an effort to recapture the farm. Snowball has been studying military tactics and successfully commands the animals to victory in what the animals later call the “Battle of Cowshed.”

As time goes by, the pigs remain in a leadership position, though the other animals still vote to approve or reject the resolutions submitted by the pigs during weekly Sunday meetings. A power struggle begins to emerge between Snowball and Napoleon, who disagree on nearly everything. While Snowball is an enthusiastic and persuasive orator, Napoleon is better at gaining support behind the scenes. Snowball tries to engage the animals by organizing them into committees and teaching them to read, while Napoleon focuses on the education of the youth, taking nine newborn puppies up to a loft to be personally educated by himself. Snowball and Napoleon’s greatest disagreement is over Snowball’s plan for a windmill. Snowball argues that the windmill would generate electricity that could then be used to heat the animals’ stalls and make their workload lighter. Napoleon argues that the animals will starve if they neglect their farming to focus on a windmill. Though the farm is initially divided, by the time the animals are preparing to cast their final votes, it is clear that Snowball’s passionate speech in favor of the windmill has won them over. Just before the vote, however, Napoleon gives a signal and nine ferocious dogs (the now grown-up puppies) attack Snowball and chase him off the farm. Napoleon addresses the shocked animals and announces that the Sunday meetings are abolished. Farm policy will now be decided by a committee of pigs, over whom he will preside. In an about-face, Napoleon soon announces that they will begin construction on the windmill. Squealer tells the animals that it was originally Napoleon’s idea—Snowball, he says, stole it.

After Napoleon takes power, the quality of life on the farm begins to deteriorate. Building the windmill is grueling work, and the animals are given fewer and fewer rations. When Napoleon announces that he will begin conducting business with the neighboring human farms, the animals are uneasy, but they are convinced by Squealer that there was never an actual rule against trade. The pigs move in to the farmhouse and justify their actions by rewriting the commandment against sleeping in a bed with sheets, though they convince the rest of the farm that it always said that. The pigs lead a smear campaign against Snowball, who they claim was a criminal working to secretly undermine the farm. Bad events on the farm are routinely attributed to Snowball’s machinations, and when the half-constructed windmill is destroyed in a windstorm, Napoleon is quick to blame the absent pig.

The animals begin the difficult work of rebuilding the windmill, though they are now nearly starving. The hens begin a small rebellion when Napoleon tries to sell their eggs, but they are soon defeated. In the spring, Napoleon calls a meeting in which multiple animals come forward and publicly confess to various crimes. They are immediately executed by Napoleon’s dogs. Disturbed and frightened, the animals look for the commandment against killing animals but find that it now reads “No animal shall kill any other animals without cause.” Meanwhile, Napoleon takes great pains to conceal the failure of the farm from the neighboring humans and begins negotiating a deal to sell some timber to either Mr. Frederick or Mr. Pilkington. After using Mr. Pilkington to drive up the price, Napoleon sells to Mr. Frederick. He is outraged, however, to discover that Mr. Frederick paid him with fake banknotes. The next morning, Mr. Frederick and his men attack the farm and blow up the windmill. Soon after, the pigs discover a case of whiskey in the farmhouse, and the commandment “No animal shall drink alcohol” is secretly changed to “No animal shall drink alcohol to excess.”
As the animals work to rebuild the windmill for the third time, no animal works harder than Boxer, a loyal horse. Though Boxer is nearing retirement age, he does not slow down, wanting to contribute what he can before he retires. Meanwhile, the preferential treatment the pigs grant themselves only grows more obvious. Piglets are discouraged from playing with other young animals, and it is decreed that any animals meeting a pig on a path must step aside. Though the animals remain tired and hungry, Squealer continually announces that the farm is more productive and successful than ever. As the animals no longer clearly remember what life was like under Mr. Jones, they have no way of disputing the pigs’ claims that things are now better. One day, Boxer collapses while working on the windmill. The pigs tell the animals that they are sending Boxer to an animal hospital, but Benjamin, a donkey, sees that the van taking Boxer away is labeled “Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler.” Horrified, the animals rush after the van but are unable to free Boxer. Three days later, the pigs announce that Boxer died at the hospital. They shut down the “rumors” about the van by explaining that the veterinarian had recently purchased it and not yet repainted the outside.

As the years pass, many of the animals on the farm grow old and die; there are only a few left who remember the days before the rebellion. Though the animals’ lives are hard, they still take pride in being an animal-run farm. One day, however, the animals are shocked to see that the pigs have learned to walk on two legs. When they return to the barn, a couple of the older animals notice that the wall where the commandments once were now just reads “ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS.” As the weeks pass, the pigs continue to walk on two legs and even begin wearing human clothes that they find in the farmhouse. A week later, Napoleon invites several humans, including Mr. Pilkington, to visit the farm. The men tour the farm and commend Napoleon for making the animals work so hard for so little food. Later that night, the animals watch through a farmhouse window as the pigs play cards with the men. Napoleon gets up and announces that Animal Farm will be reverting to its “correct and original” name, Manor Farm. As the animals look through the window, they suddenly realize that they can no longer tell the difference between the men and the pigs.

**Chapter Summaries: Chapter I Summary and Analysis**

**Summary**

*Animal Farm* opens as Mr. Jones, the owner of Manor Farm, drunkenly locks the animals away and goes to bed. As soon as Mr. Jones leaves, all the animals hurry to the big barn. Word has spread that Old Major, a well-regarded prize white boar, has had a strange dream and wishes to communicate it to the rest of the farm animals. Once all the animals have gathered in the barn, Old Major sits on a platform and begins to discuss the suffering they endure on the farm. He points out that the animals are forced to slave away all day long for only meager rations of food. The horses are deprived of their foals, the chickens are deprived of their eggs, and the cows are deprived of their milk. All the products of the animals’ labor are stolen, Old Major claims, by man. As if this is not bad enough, as soon as the animals outlive their usefulness, they will be brutally slaughtered. Declaring that “all animals are comrades” and “all men are enemies,” Old Major tells the animals that one day, there must be a rebellion against human cruelty. When the animals manage to finally overthrow man, they will find freedom and riches. Inspired, the animals take a vote and decide that all animals, even wild ones outside the farm, are comrades. Old Major cautions the animals that even if they should successfully overthrow their human owners, they must take care to never become like humans themselves. Specifically, they must never live in a house, sleep in a bed, wear clothes, drink, smoke, touch money, or trade. Finally, Old Major reveals that his strange dream was of a future where man has disappeared, and he says this dream made him recall a song from his childhood titled “Beasts of England.” He teaches this song to the animals, and they all enthusiastically begin singing along. They only stop singing when Mr. Jones hears the commotion and fires a warning shot toward the barn.
**Analysis**

On a superficial level, *Animal Farm* is a story about talking farm animals who dream of a better life. However, *Animal Farm*—which Orwell called “a fairy story”—has a secondary and more symbolic meaning. The story is both a political and a moral allegory that draws inspiration from real historical events, namely the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent era of Stalinism. The animals in the story are anthropomorphic, meaning that they exhibit human characteristics, such as the ability to talk and think like a person. Several of the animals represent real historical figures associated with the Russian Revolution. For example, the philosophical Old Major represents both Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, two men who touted the theory of communism as the means by which the economically oppressed working classes would eventually rise up to create an egalitarian society. Most of the animals on the farm are analogous to the poor, uneducated Russian peasant class, whose interests the leaders of the Russian Revolution claimed to represent.

By presenting his message indirectly through the medium of a fable, Orwell is able to give his ideas a broader and more universal application. Though the story of the animals on Manor Farm parallels real events in twentieth-century Russia, Orwell’s political critique extends far beyond that particular country. Written near the end of World War II, *Animal Farm* is intended to be a critique of the totalitarian regimes that Orwell saw coming to power all over the world—in Germany, Italy, and Spain, as well as in Russia. By making the main characters of the story nonhuman, Orwell creates a necessary distance that serves to highlight the absurdity and hypocrisy of the real human behaviors exhibited by the animals.

In this initial chapter, the animals are given hope by the teachings of Old Major. He promises them not only liberation from their meaningless and difficult work but riches and prosperity as well. These promises, combined with the declaration that man is the enemy of all animals, foreshadow an inevitable physical confrontation between Mr. Jones and his disgruntled farm animals. Though the animal-run world in Old Major’s dream sounds like paradise, several points in this chapter suggest that this perfect system may not be easy to achieve. Beyond the obvious power difference between Mr. Jones and the animals, there appear to be hierarchies among the animals on Manor Farm as well. Old Major, a boar, is one of the most respected animals on the farm, and it is worth noting that the pigs sit in the very front of the audience, while the sheep, cows, and horses sit behind them. The pigs also appear to be the most intelligent of the animals on the farm; they are able to learn the words to “Beasts of England” almost immediately. These small details might make a reader wonder whether the cleverest animals will ever truly consider the least intelligent animals their equals. Additionally, Old Major’s speech is interrupted when the dogs attack a few rats that come from outside to listen. This prompts a group decision in which the animals (with the exception of the dogs) vote that outside animals, such as rats and rabbits, should also be considered “comrades” and thus may not be killed. This shows us that in uniting against the humans, some of the animals are also rebelling against their own deeply ingrained natures—a fact that may prove problematic later on. As the chapter ends, we wonder whether the animals will band together and achieve their dream of freedom, or whether the animals’ dream is itself a “fairy story” that is too good to be true.

**Chapter Summaries: Chapter II Summary and Analysis**

**Summary**

Three days after his speech, Old Major dies in his sleep. For the next few months, the pigs make preparations for the rebellion. These efforts are led by the two most eminent pigs: Snowball and Napoleon. Snowball is considered vivacious and inventive, while Napoleon is quieter but has a reputation for getting his way. A third pig named Squealer assists Snowball and Napoleon. Squealer is very persuasive, and the other animals like to say that he can “turn black into white.” The pigs distill Old Major’s teachings into a theory that they call “Animalism.” Every week, the pigs hold several meetings in which they try to teach Animalism to the rest of
the farm. At first, many of the animals are apathetic or struggle against an ingrained sense of loyalty to Mr. Jones. The pigs’ task is made even harder by Moses, a raven who tells the animals about a paradise called Sugarcandy Mountain, where they will go when they die. Though the animals dislike Moses because he does no labor, the pigs still have to work hard to persuade several of them that Sugarcandy Mountain is not real. The two cart horses, Boxer and Clover, have difficulty thinking for themselves but easily absorb the teachings of the pigs and help relate them simplistically to the other animals. Meanwhile, Mollie, a white mare, shows some resistance to Animalism, asking whether she will get to wear ribbons and eat sugar cubes when Mr. Jones is gone.

The rebellion comes sooner than any of the animals expected as Mr. Jones begins drinking even more and neglecting his duties on the farm. One day, the animals break into the store shed to help themselves because Mr. Jones has forgotten to feed them for a whole day. When Mr. Jones realizes what they have done, he assembles his men and they close in on the animals with whips. Enraged by this injustice, the animals all at once begin to attack, forcing Mr. Jones and the men to flee the farm. Mrs. Jones spies the commotion from the farmhouse and slips away quietly. Locking the gate after the men, the animals run excitedly through the farm. They immediately begin to dismantle man’s tools of oppression, making a burn pile of whips, bridles, reins, halters, and decorative ribbons. When the animals wake the next morning, they decide to enter the farmhouse. After touring it, they unanimously vote that it should be preserved as a museum and that no animal should be allowed to live there. The pigs, revealing that they have taught themselves to read and write, repaint the “MANOR FARM” sign to read “ANIMAL FARM.” The pigs explain that they have reduced Animalism to seven basic 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.

The pigs paint these commandments in large letters upon the barn wall, and the cleverest animals quickly learn them by heart. The pigs milk the cows, and the animals ask what will be done with the milk. They hopefully point out that Mr. Jones used to occasionally mix the milk into their mash. Napoleon tells them not to worry about the milk and instructs them to follow Snowball into the field to finish the harvest, saying that he will join them soon. When the animals return from the fields, the milk is gone.

Analysis

Orwell’s allegory for the Russian Revolution is expanded in this chapter. Manor Farm represents Russia under the rule of Tsar Nicholas II (Mr. Jones), and the animals’ rebellion parallels the revolution that finally overthrew the monarchy and led to the creation of the Soviet Union (Animal Farm). Boxer and Clover exemplify the Russian peasantry who believed in the ideals of the revolution and its leaders unconditionally. Mollie, the spoiled mare, represents the members of the Russian bourgeoisie (the materialistic middle and upper classes) whose only allegiance was to those who would ensure their comfortable lifestyle. Moses, a raven, represents the Russian Orthodox Church. The bread that Mr. Jones gives Moses represents the bribes that were often given to the church by the royal family. At the time of the revolution, Communist leaders felt that the Church’s promises of heaven undermined the revolutionary energy of the peasantry, which explains why the pigs work so hard to dispel Moses’s talk of Sugarcandy Mountain. Animalism represents the theory of communism, which emphasizes equality, especially in economic terms. Two revolutionary leaders, Napoleon and Snowball, have emerged from among the pigs, paralleling two real-life leaders of the
Communist Party, Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky. As the novel progresses, we will see that Squealer, the extremely persuasive pig, comes to represent the propaganda arm of Stalin’s government.

Just as in the Russian Revolution, the power on Animal Farm is quickly consolidated among a small, intelligent ruling class. Despite the commandment that “all animals are equal,” we can already clearly see that the pigs, being the cleverest animals on the farm, are acting as the leaders rather than the equals of the other animals. The pigs further their advantage over the others by learning to read and write in secret and then deciding upon the “commandments” of Animalism without consulting with the rest of the farm. Though the pigs appear to be acting in the best interest of the animals, the disappearance of the milk while the rest of the animals are out working in the field demonstrates the pigs’ susceptibility to corruption and greed. Notably, Napoleon makes Snowball lead the animals to the field before (presumably) drinking the milk himself. This manipulation foreshadows future conflict and power struggles between the idealistic and trusting Snowball and the scheming and manipulative Napoleon.

Chapter Summaries: Chapter III Summary and Analysis

Summary

The animals work hard to complete the harvest. The pigs direct the work of the other animals instead of doing any work themselves, and when it is finished, it is the largest harvest the farm has ever seen. For the rest of the summer, the animals continue to work. Boxer undoubtedly works the hardest, even adopting “I will work harder!” as his personal motto. The animals take great pride in their ability to provide for themselves, and the subsequent increase in efficiency and the absence of the humans allow for more food and leisure time. The animals do not work on Sundays. Instead, they ritually hoist a flag that Snowball created and then meet to submit resolutions, which are debated and voted upon. While the animals understand how to vote, only the pigs are smart enough to think of resolutions to submit. Through these debates, it soon becomes clear that Snowball and Napoleon are always in disagreement with one another.

The pigs use the harness room as a headquarters and study skills like carpentry and blacksmithing. Snowball takes great pains to organize the animals into committees and set up reading and writing classes. Though the committees are a failure, soon nearly every animal on the farm possesses some level of literacy. When it becomes apparent that the least intelligent animals cannot commit the seven commandments to heart, Snowball simplifies them even further into the maxim “Four legs good, two legs bad,” which is then inscribed above the commandments on the wall. Napoleon takes no interest in the committees, saying that the focus should be on the education of the young. When both Jessie and Bluebell give birth to litters of puppies, Napoleon takes the puppies away to a secluded loft. Soon, the other animals forget about the puppies entirely.

It is eventually revealed that the milk is being mixed into the pigs’ mash every day. Additionally, the pigs announce that all of the windfall apples shall be given to them, not split equally among the animals. When the animals begin to grumble, Squealer explains that the pigs are not acting out of selfishness and even claims that most of them don’t like the taste of milk and apples. He says that the pigs eat them anyway because they need the nutrients to nourish their minds and ensure the continued success of the farm. Squealer claims that if the pigs fall ill, Mr. Jones will surely come back. Convinced, the animals quickly agree that the milk and apples should be given to the pigs.

Analysis

Initially, it appears that the rebellion has been a great success. Now the masters of their own labor, the animals are energized to work harder and more efficiently. As a result, they produce a quick and bountiful harvest. Nearly all of the animals seem to have taken Old Major’s message to heart as they each contribute selflessly
to the best of their ability, refusing to take even one mouthful of hay away from the harvest. The exceptions are the pigs, who supervise the other animals rather than performing any labor themselves. Though Snowball attempts to teach the other animals to read and write, hardly any of them are able to become fully literate like the pigs. The lack of literacy among the animals means that their understanding of the principles of Animalism and, by extension, the rules that govern life on the farm relies totally on the pigs. It is notable that the simplified maxim “Four legs good, two legs bad” excludes many of the key tenets of Old Major’s philosophy, from the specific prohibitions against human behavior to broader underlying principles such as “all animals are equal.” The ready adoption of this oversimplified and nearly meaningless slogan by the sheep and other less intelligent animals will become significant later on in the narrative.

The power struggle between Snowball and Napoleon continues to intensify, mirroring the conflict between Trotsky and Stalin after the Russian Revolution. While Snowball believes in trying to educate and involve the adult animals in the running of the farm, Napoleon wants to focus on the next generation. Interestingly, in taking away the dogs’ puppies, Napoleon is committing the very same theft that Old Major accused Mr. Jones of during his speech: “And you, Clover, where are those four foals you bore, who should have been the support and pleasure of your old age?” Though Napoleon and Snowball disagree on nearly everything, they both think that the pigs should be the leaders of the farm and, like the rest of the pigs, agree that they should receive milk and apples. So though Snowball appears to care more about the animals on the farm than Napoleon does, both of them are seemingly already breaking the commandment that all animals are equal.

The incident with the milk and apples clearly demonstrates the pigs’ corruption. Though the pigs have been subtly exploiting the animals by making them work while the pigs “supervise,” the pigs’ decision to keep the milk and apples to themselves marks the first time that their motives arouse suspicion in the other animals. However, these objections are laid to rest by Squealer, who uses propaganda to manipulate and mislead the animals. Squealer’s claim that the pigs don’t want the milk and apples but need them for health reasons obviously rings false, but the farm animals do not question it. Similarly, the birds do not question Snowball’s explanation of the new, shorter maxim, though they do not understand it. Uneducated and trusting, the animals lack the initiative and, to some extent, the mental capacity to challenge the decisions of the pigs. We also see that their fear of returning to the old way of life under Mr. Jones makes the animals quick to accept any small unfairness. Throughout the novella, the animals’ willingness to accept the explanations of the pigs—which are usually delivered through the persuasive Squealer—will leave them vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation.

Chapter Summaries: Chapter IV Summary and Analysis

Summary

As the months pass, word of Animal Farm begins to spread throughout the county. Napoleon and Snowball encourage this by sending out pigeons to tell the story of the rebellion and teach “Beasts of England” to neighboring farms. The two farmers on either side of Animal Farm claim to sympathize with Mr. Jones, but each one secretly wonders if he can somehow use the situation to his advantage. Mr. Pilkington is the easygoing farmer who owns overgrown Foxwood Farm, while the tough and shrewd Mr. Frederick owns Pinchfield Farm. Though they despise one another and rarely see eye to eye, they are both very frightened by the thought that the rebellion might spread to their own farms. They deliberately try to spread the word that Animal Farm is plagued by infighting and starvation. After it becomes clear that the residents of Animal Farm are not starving, the men begin to spread rumors that Animal Farm is a hotbed of depraved behavior such as cannibalism and torture. These rumors are not very convincing, however, and word that Animal Farm is a success continues to spread, causing a wave of rebelliousness among farm animals in the county. Soon, animals everywhere are singing “Beasts of England,” much to the chagrin of their human masters.
That fall, Mr. Jones assembles men from Foxwood and Pinchfield and returns to reclaim Animal Farm. The animals have prepared for this, and Snowball, who has been studying the campaigns of Julius Caesar, leads the defense of the farm. The animals attack the approaching farmers in waves, with the birds and geese followed by the goats. Eventually, they lure the men into the yard, where the pigs, cows, and horses launch the main attack. Snowball is injured when he leaps for Mr. Jones, a sheep is killed, and a farmhand is stunned by Boxer’s hooves before the men flee the yard in terror. The animals celebrate their victory, though Boxer is very upset when he believes he has killed the young farmhand. Mollie is noticeably absent but is later found hiding in her stall, having fled when the gun went off. They hold a funeral for the sheep and decide to designate a military decoration—“Animal Hero, First Class”—which is awarded to Snowball and Boxer. The sheep is posthumously awarded “Animal Hero, Second Class.” The animals decide to call the battle the “Battle of Cowshed” and resolve to fire Mr. Jones’s gun twice every year: once on the anniversary of the battle and once on the anniversary of the rebellion.

Analysis

Snowball’s position as the commander of Animal Farm’s defenses parallels Trotsky’s critical military contributions as the commander of the Red Army during the Russian Civil War. In the aftermath of the Russian Revolution and the dissolution of the monarchy, Russia fell into civil war as various factions vied for power, the two largest factions being the Red Army (advocating Bolshevik socialism) and the White Army (a more diverse group that included adherents of capitalism, monarchy, and alternative socialism). Led by Trotsky, the Red Army defeated the White Army. The victorious Bolsheviks then went on to form the Communist Party. Trotsky’s military success elevated him to a position of power in which he regularly butted heads with Stalin. On Animal Farm, we see that Snowball receives much adulation for his role in the Battle of Cowshed, and looking to Trotsky and Stalin’s historical interactions, we can predict that Napoleon will not react well to Snowball’s growing power. The neighboring farmers, Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick, represent Great Britain and Germany respectively, both of which attempted to invade Russia soon after the revolution.

In this chapter, we see that “war” has shifted the focus of the farm away from work and Animalism. Mollie’s flight to the stables and Boxer’s tearful reaction when he mistakenly believes he has killed a farmhand demonstrate the degree to which some of the animals are unprepared for the violence that nearly always accompanies rebellion. Though Snowball urges Boxer to abandon his regret—“No sentimentality, comrade!”—Boxer admits that he does not wish to take life at all, even the life of the enemy. The decision to fire gunshots on the anniversaries of the rebellion and the Battle of Cowshed suggest that the farm is more focused on violent confrontations with the humans than the day-to-day success of the farm and, by extension, Animalism. Boxer’s soft heart and Mollie’s fearful nature foreshadow the future difficulties many of the animals will face as Animal Farm becomes a harsher and more militaristic place under the rule of the pigs.

Chapter Summaries: Chapter V Summary and Analysis

Summary

As life on the farm goes on, Mollie becomes more and more difficult. She frequently makes excuses as to why she cannot work, and one day Clover confronts Mollie, saying that she saw one of Mr. Pilkington’s men stroking Mollie’s nose over the hedge dividing Animal Farm and Foxwood. Mollie nervously denies any wrongdoing and gallops away, but Clover, suspecting that not all is right, goes to Mollie’s stall and finds hair ribbons and lump sugar stashed under the hay. A few days later, Mollie disappears from Animal Farm. The pigeons later report that they saw her pulling a small decorated cart for a man who appeared to own a pub. The pigeons observed that Mollie had ribbons in her hair and appeared quite content as the man fed her sugar cubes and stroked her nose. From that day on, Mollie is no longer spoken of at Animal Farm.
By midwinter, the ground on the farm is too hard for planting, so the animals occupy their time with frequent meetings in the barn to plan for the next season. The animals now all accept that the pigs are the only ones who can come up with farm policies, though their proposals must be ratified by a majority vote from all the animals. Snowball and Napoleon continue to disagree, and each develops his own loyal following. Snowball is the more effective orator and is better able to convince animals to side with him during his speeches, while Napoleon is better at garnering support behind the scenes. Napoleon influences the sheep, prompting them to burst into disruptive chants of “Four legs good, two legs bad” during the important moments of Snowball’s speeches. For weeks, Snowball has been developing plans for an electricity-generating windmill by teaching himself about mechanics and electricity from Mr. Jones’s old books. The animals find his elaborate plans very impressive, though they do not understand them. Napoleon opposes the windmill from the start, arguing that the animals must focus on food production instead. He even goes so far as to urinate on Snowball’s plans for the windmill. The animals end up fairly evenly divided on the issue. Snowball claims that the machines powered by the windmill’s electricity would reduce the farm’s workload and allow the animals to work only three days a week. He adds that the electricity could heat the animals’ stalls during the winter. Meanwhile, Napoleon claims that the windmill is a waste of time and that the animals will all starve to death before it is completed. The only animal who does not take a side is the cynical old donkey, Benjamin, who refuses to believe the promises of either Napoleon or Snowball, insisting that “life would go on as it had always gone on—that is, badly.”

Napoleon and Snowball also disagree over the future defense of the farm, though both agree that Mr. Jones is sure to return. Napoleon thinks the animals should gather firearms and learn to use them, while Snowball thinks they should send out more pigeons to try to spread the rebellion beyond their farm. As the two debate various issues, the animals tend to find themselves agreeing with whoever is currently speaking. When Snowball’s plans for the windmill are completed, it is finally put to a vote. Snowball gives an impassioned speech in favor of the windmill, while Napoleon delivers an unusually brief and indifferent argument against it. It is clear that the farm is going to vote in Snowball’s favor when, suddenly, Napoleon gives a “high-pitched whimper” and nine ferocious dogs rush into the barn. The dogs attack Snowball, who only just avoids them. The animals watch as the dogs chase Snowball from the yard until he escapes through a hole in the fence. When the dogs return, the animals realize that they are the former puppies that Napoleon took into the loft.

Napoleon gets on the podium and announces that there will be no more debates or meetings and that farm policy will now be decided by a committee of pigs, over which he will preside. The animals are uncomfortable with this change, but they don’t know how to articulate an argument against it and are intimidated by Napoleon’s menacing dogs. Afterward, Squealer goes around the farm to smooth over the changes by explaining that Napoleon is making a selfless sacrifice in taking on a difficult leadership position. Squealer also tells the animals that Snowball was a criminal whose bravery at the Battle of Cowshed was exaggerated. The animals are convinced, and Boxer adopts a new maxim—“Napoleon is always right”—in addition to “I will work harder.” A few weeks later, the animals are surprised when Napoleon announces that they will build the windmill after all, though he warns that such an effort will be difficult and might mean a reduction in rations. Squealer tells the animals that the windmill was originally Napoleon’s idea, but Snowball stole his plans and pretended that it was his idea. According to Squealer, Napoleon’s opposition to the windmill was merely a clever tactic to rid the farm of the corrupt Snowball.

**Analysis**

In this chapter, we witness the collapse of Animal Farm’s idealistic goals. As Snowball and Napoleon continue to disagree, the difference in their persuasive techniques becomes evident. While Snowball thoroughly researches his ideas and pursues ways to improve the quality of life for all the animals on the farm, Napoleon is more interested in consolidating power for himself. Snowball tries to gain support by making
passionate public appeals, while Napoleon gains support behind the scenes, foreshadowing his use of underhanded tactics. The windmill, representing innovation and technological advancement, is what finally brings the conflict between Snowball and Napoleon to a head. Industrialization was also a hot-button issue in Soviet Russia as many Communist leaders felt that the rural country needed to modernize in order to make the Communist system work effectively. Though Stalin was initially opposed to modernization, he—like Napoleon—did an about-face after taking power. Napoleon’s use of the dogs to chase away Snowball parallels the real conflict between Stalin and Trotsky. After the death of Vladimir Lenin left a power vacuum in Russian politics, Stalin had Trotsky expelled from the Communist Party and exiled from Russia before seizing power himself. Napoleon’s dogs represent Stalin’s real-life secret police force, which was used to eliminate political enemies and terrorize citizens into compliance with Stalin’s rule.

Mollie, who has clearly never been invested in the rebellion or Animalism, continues to struggle under the new system until she finally rejects Animal Farm altogether by escaping to another human owner. Mollie’s departure mirrors the widespread immigration of upper- and middle-class Russians to the United States and Europe following the Communist takeover. The pigeons report that Mollie seems to be enjoying the same cushy lifestyle that she was accustomed to before the rebellion, but it is worth noting that most of Russia’s wealthy population (including the nobility) were fleeing for their lives and had to leave most of their wealth and assets behind. Though the animals condemn Mollie’s selfishness, it becomes clear by the end of the chapter that her decision to leave Animal Farm was a good one. A notable contrast to Mollie is Benjamin, a donkey. Like Mollie, Benjamin does not buy into Animal Farm or Animalism; however, his extreme cynicism prevents him from taking any action as he is certain that no matter what, life will always be difficult. Though Benjamin’s stubbornness and cynicism initially seem unwarranted, by the end of the chapter, it is clear that it is the other animals, not Benjamin, who have been mistaken. As Napoleon begins to resemble Mr. Jones more and more, we will see that Benjamin’s insistence that things never change turns out to be quite prophetic.

Once again, we see the power of propaganda through the character of Squealer. Napoleon does not even bother to explain his coup or his reversal on the windmill, trusting Squealer, his mouthpiece, to justify his actions. Squealer completely manipulates the truth about Napoleon’s rise to power and manages to sell it to the other animals as an example of Napoleon’s extreme selflessness rather than what it really is—the ultimate expression of Napoleon’s selfishness. Squealer’s attempts to discredit Snowball reflect Stalin’s real-life smear campaign against the exiled Trotsky. Stalin even went so far as to have Trotsky’s military and political accomplishments written out of Soviet history books—an action Squealer echoes when he suggests Snowball’s bravery at the Battle of Cowshed was exaggerated. Ultimately, the animals are thoroughly confused by the pigs’ propaganda and are eventually manipulated into putting their total faith in Napoleon: “Napoleon is always right.” When Napoleon initially takes power, a couple of pigs attempt to express concern but are immediately silenced by the threat of the dogs, suggesting that while the animals’ decision to trust Napoleon is undoubtedly foolish, Napoleon’s monopoly on fear and violence has left them with few practical alternatives.

Chapter Summaries: Chapter VI Summary and Analysis

Summary

In the next year, the animals work hard to build the windmill. Under Napoleon’s direction, they work a sixty-hour week and soon come to work on Sundays as well. To build the windmill, the animals must laboriously drag boulders up a hill and push them over the ledge so that they shatter into more manageable pieces. The project could not be accomplished without Boxer, who begins to work on the windmill in his free time. The focus on the windmill means that some of the regular planting is not accomplished, and as the summer wears on, the animals begin to feel the shortages. Many products, such as iron for the horses’ shoes, dog biscuits, and machinery for the windmill cannot be produced on the farm. In response, Napoleon
announces that Animal Farm will begin to trade with the neighboring farms. For the first trade, he plans to sell their wheat crop and possibly some eggs. Napoleon says that the hens should welcome the chance to make a special contribution to the windmill. The animals are uneasy as they seem to remember a prohibition against using money and trade. Squealer comes around, however, and convinces the animals that no such resolution has ever been passed, and since the animals cannot find it in writing, they eventually agree that they must have imagined such a rule.

Every week, Mr. Whymper, the human intermediary between Animal Farm and the outside human world, comes to the farm. His presence makes the animals uncomfortable, but they enjoy watching him take orders from Napoleon. The humans outside the farm still hope that Animal Farm will be a failure, but they have finally stopped referring to it as Manor Farm. Having given up hope of reclaiming the farm, Mr. Jones moves to a different part of the county. There are constant rumors that Napoleon is about to enter into a business arrangement with either Mr. Frederick or Mr. Pilkington (but never both). Around this time, the pigs move in to the farmhouse to—as Squealer claims—have a quiet place to work. The animals are disturbed to hear that the pigs are sleeping in the beds. Clover returns to the wall with the Seven Commandments, remembering a rule against beds. When she asks Muriel, a goat, to help her read the commandments, Muriel tells her that the commandment says “No animals shall sleep in a bed with sheets.” As Squealer passes by, he explains that the commandment never outlawed simply sleeping in a bed and informs Clover that the pigs have removed all the sheets. When he mentions the danger of Mr. Jones returning if the pigs are not well rested, the animals quickly drop their complaints.

By autumn, the windmill is half finished. One night there is a terrible windstorm, and the next morning, the animals are devastated to see that the windmill is in ruins. Napoleon tells the animals that Snowball is responsible for the destruction of the windmill and offers a reward to any animal that captures him. Soon after Napoleon’s announcement, the tracks of a pig are found near the windmill. Napoleon deems this proof of Snowball’s involvement and announces that work must begin immediately on rebuilding the windmill.

**Analysis**

Despite the increasingly harsh conditions on the farm, the pigs’ effective propaganda leads the animals to believe that they are working for their own benefit: “They grudged no effort or sacrifice, well aware that everything that they did was for the benefit of themselves and those of their kind who would come after them, and not for a pack of idle, thieving human beings.” Though the animals no longer work for the benefit of humans, they fail to realize that the pigs are becoming increasingly similar to their former human masters. Napoleon’s exploitation of the animals’ labor continues as he forces them to work “voluntarily” on Sundays so they can receive rations. Napoleon and the pigs continue to break the commandments of the farm by engaging in trade, for which they enlist the help of Mr. Whymper. Mr. Whymper represents those in the West who ignored the abuses of Stalin’s regime in order to personally profit from trade with the Soviet Union.

When the pigs move in to the farmhouse, they disregard the collective decision that it should be set aside as a museum and also break another one of the commandments by sleeping in the beds. The animals on the farm have been so indoctrinated by the pigs that few question this change. Boxer easily dismisses the pigs’ wrongdoing by repeating his maxim “Napoleon is always right,” demonstrating the power of simplistic slogans to stifle critical thinking and disobedience. Clover is not so easily dissuaded, but when she investigates the commandments on the wall, we see that the pigs have not only figuratively rewritten history by suggesting that the restriction against trade never existed—they have literally rewritten history by making changes to the original commandments written on the wall. Squealer’s justification for the pigs’ sleeping in beds is technical rather than logical. He insists that the prohibition was never against beds specifically but only against sheets, which are a human invention. Of course, the pigs still use blankets and numerous other human inventions by living in the farmhouse, but this inconsistency goes unquestioned by the animals, once
again illustrating the advantage of the pigs’ intelligence. It should be noted that Squealer’s clever manipulation of language exemplifies the rhetorical trickery that Orwell criticized in his famous 1946 essay “Politics and the English Language.” In the essay, Orwell argues that vague and unclear prose is frequently used in political speech in order to deliberately hide the truth.

When the windmill is demolished, Napoleon quickly blames Snowball for the failure. We will soon learn that the windmill fell over because it was designed poorly, which explains why Napoleon—the sole creator of the windmill plans—must quickly create a scapegoat to cover up his failure. In villainizing Snowball, Napoleon not only avoids having to take responsibility for his inadequacy but also creates a malevolent outside force for the animals to fear and rally against. Now, Napoleon can invoke the threat posed by Snowball along with the possible return of Mr. Jones in order to frighten the animals into compliance.

Chapter Summaries: Chapter VII Summary and Analysis

Summary

The animals begin to rebuild the windmill and are convinced that the rumors spread by the humans—that the windmill fell over because its walls were too thin—are only created out of spite. Despite this, the animals now build walls twice as thick as the original eighteen-inch constructions. The work is very demanding, and morale among the animals is low. Though Squealer makes frequent speeches about the “dignity of labor,” the animals are more inspired by Boxer’s tireless contribution. When food runs short, there are periods when all the animals nearly starve. Desperate to conceal this dire situation from the outside world, Napoleon frequently invites Mr. Whymper to visit and instructs the sheep to talk about ration increases within earshot. He also orders that the almost-empty food bins be filled with sand. The sand is then concealed with what little food remains to make the bins appear full. Mr. Whymper falls for these tricks and continues to report to the outside world that Animal Farm is a success.

Napoleon now rarely comes out of the farmhouse and is escorted by his dogs when he does. Rather than addressing the animals himself, Napoleon issues nearly all his orders through Squealer. One day, Squealer announces that Napoleon has arranged to sell four hundred eggs a week, which will pay for enough food to keep the farm going until summer. The hens are outraged and call the seizure of their eggs murder. Several of the hens rebel, retreating to the rafters and laying their eggs there so that they smash upon the floor. In response, Napoleon stops their rations and forbids any animal from giving them food. After five days and the death of nine hens, the rest of the hens give in and return to their nesting boxes. Meanwhile, rumors spread on the farm that Snowball is hiding at one of the neighboring farms. Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick are both anxious to buy a stack of timber from Animal Farm, and Napoleon seems unable to decide who to sell it to.

In the spring, it is announced that Snowball has been visiting the farm at night and causing mischief. From then on, whenever something goes wrong on the farm, the animals believe Snowball is to blame. One day, Squealer announces that the pigs have recently found documents that prove Snowball was in league with Mr. Jones from the beginning and that he conspired to allow the animals to be defeated at the Battle of Cowshed. Confused, the animals point out that Snowball fought bravely and was even awarded “Animal Hero, First Class.” Squealer incredulously asks the animals whether they have forgotten how Snowball turned and fled as soon as the men entered the yard. Squealer claims that the animals were only saved when Napoleon bravely charged Mr. Jones and bit his leg. Hearing Squealer’s graphic description, the animals start to think that maybe that is what happened. Boxer, however, remains unconvinced that Snowball was bad from the beginning until Squealer explicitly tells him that Napoleon has declared it to be the truth.

Several days later, all of the animals are assembled in the yard. Napoleon appears wearing medals (having awarded himself “Animal Hero, First Class” and “Animal Hero, Second Class”), and at his command, his
dogs seize the four pigs who have attempted to question some of Napoleon’s policies. The dogs also attempt to attack Boxer, but he easily fends them off with his hooves. Napoleon orders the pigs to confess their crimes, and they admit that they have secretly been taking orders from Snowball and confirm that Snowball has been in league with Mr. Jones the whole time. As soon as the pigs finish confessing, the dogs rip their throats out, and Napoleon asks whether any other animals have confessions to make. The hens who led the egg rebellion, a goose, and three sheep all admit to having committed various crimes, most of them claiming to have been encouraged by Snowball. All who come forward are immediately killed, and when it is over, a pile of bodies lies at Napoleon’s feet. Afterward, the animals find a knoll and lie down together, traumatized by the apparent betrayals of their comrades as well as the violence of Napoleon. Boxer believes that these terrible events must be due to some failing on the part of the animals and resolves to work harder. Clover thinks to herself that this terror and slaughter was not what the animals risked their lives for during the rebellion. Despite this, she knows that Napoleon’s regime is still better than being under the rule of Mr. Jones, and she therefore resolves to work hard and accept Napoleon’s leadership. As a way to express her inarticulate feelings, she begins to mournfully sing “Beasts of England” and is soon joined by the rest of the animals. They are stopped, however, by Squealer, who informs them that singing “Beasts of England” is now forbidden; it is a song of rebellion, and since the last of the traitors have been executed, the rebellion is fully over. Minimus, a pig, comes up with a new song about Animal Farm to replace “Beasts of England,” but it never catches on like the original.

Analysis

In this chapter, Napoleon feels pressure from both inside and outside the farm to show that Animal Farm is a success, even as his poor management is causing the farm to fail. This mirrors the very real pressure Stalin felt to prove the legitimacy of the Soviet Union to the West, which remained strongly opposed to communism. Stalin’s first attempt to demonstrate the success of his Communist system was the institution of a “five-year plan” (of which there would be several more). The first five-year plan was a series of economic goals, many of which were aimed at rapid industrialization to counter the growing opposition from the heavily industrialized West. The rebellion of the hens echoes the real-life rebellions enacted by Soviet peasants who slaughtered their own farm animals—millions of animals in total—instead of giving them up to the collective farms created by the first five-year plan. The failures of Stalin’s agricultural plans eventually led to widespread famine and a death toll in the millions. Just as Napoleon takes great pains to make the farm appear profitable to outsiders, the Soviet Union used extensive propaganda to deny and suppress evidence proving the existence of famine. They were occasionally aided in their misinformation campaign by prominent Western journalists, most notably Walter Duranty, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on the Soviet Union in *The New York Times*. Duranty was later widely criticized for downplaying the extensive famine conditions and uncritically printing the false claims of the Soviet government. Western actors like Duranty who helped spread Soviet propaganda are represented in the novella by Mr. Whymper, who continues to report to the outside world that there is “no food shortage on Animal Farm.”

In this chapter, we also see Napoleon put on a brutal show of force when he has multiple traitorous animals slaughtered in front of the whole farm. Though it might seem odd that the animals come forward and confess to “crimes” that they have most likely not committed, this scene is meant to represent the infamous “Great Purge,” in which Stalin ordered widespread arrests within his own government and the Communist Party as well as increased police surveillance on the civilian population. Many of those arrested during the Great Purge were tortured or threatened into making false confessions before being executed or sent to brutal labor camps. Like the animals who confess to working with Snowball, a number of Stalin’s prisoners were forced to confess to Trotskyist plots and conspiracies in order to further Stalin’s smear campaign. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands—possibly even millions—of people died as a direct result of the Great Purge. Just as Stalin’s purge led to an era of widespread fear, paranoia, and political repression, the public executions of the animals leave the rest of the farm dazed and miserable.
Chapter Summaries: Chapter VIII Summary and Analysis

Summary

After the executions, some of the animals remember that there is a commandment against killing other animals. When they check the wall, however, they find that the commandment reads “No animal shall kill any other animal without cause.” The animals spend the next year rebuilding the windmill, and at times, it feels like they work longer hours than they ever did under Mr. Jones. Squealer frequently announces figures showing that production has increased dramatically. Since the animals can no longer clearly remember what life was like under Mr. Jones, they have no reason to dispute Squealer’s claims. Napoleon now gives all of his orders through the other pigs and only leaves the farmhouse with great ceremony. The animals, encouraged by the pigs, now refer to Napoleon with titles like “our Leader, Comrade Napoleon” and frequently attribute any good things that happen on the farm to him. Minimus composes a poem glorifying Napoleon entitled “Comrade Napoleon,” while Squealer paints a gigantic portrait of Napoleon on the barn wall.

Napoleon continues to negotiate with both Mr. Frederick and Mr. Pilkington for the sale of the timber. The animals much prefer Mr. Pilkington because it is rumored that Mr. Frederick is planning an attack on the farm. Meanwhile, Napoleon executes three hens who confess to planning to assassinate him, and he increases his personal security. Rumors spread that Napoleon will indeed sell the timber to Mr. Pilkington, as they have developed a friendlier relationship. The animals still distrust any human, but they are glad that they are not doing business with Mr. Frederick, who they have heard is sadistic and abusive toward his animals. Napoleon announces that he never had any intention of selling to Mr. Frederick and, respecting his forthcoming agreement with Mr. Pilkington, stops sending out pigeons with messages of rebellion to Foxwood Farm. Furthermore, the pigeons’ slogan of “Death to Humanity” is replaced by “Death to Frederick.” Meanwhile, the animals finally finish the windmill, which Napoleon announces will be named “Napoleon Mill.” The animals are utterly exhausted but also excited by the difference that the windmill will make in their lives.

The animals are then shocked to learn that Napoleon has actually sold the timber to Mr. Frederick. The pigeons are now told to avoid Pinchfield Farm, and their slogan is changed to “Death to Pilkington.” Napoleon tells the farm that the rumors about Mr. Frederick’s plan to attack and his cruelty are merely exaggerations and were probably spread by Snowball. Meanwhile, the pigs applaud Napoleon’s cunning in pretending to favor Mr. Pilkington to make Mr. Frederick drive up his price. Napoleon demands that Mr. Frederick pay him in five-pound notes, which he then displays on a china dish for the animals to view. A few days later, Mr. Whymper meets with Napoleon, and the animals hear a roar of rage. Word soon spreads that Mr. Frederick paid Napoleon in forgeries and took the timber for nothing. Enraged, Napoleon calls for Mr. Frederick’s death and warns the animals that they should expect an attack. The next morning, Mr. Frederick and his men come into the yard and use guns to force the animals to retreat to the farm buildings. Trapped, the animals watch helplessly as the men begin to drill a hole in the base of the windmill. It is Benjamin who first realizes that they intend to fill the hole with blasting powder. In a few moments, there is a tremendous explosion and the windmill is gone. Furious and no longer cognizant of the danger, the animals rush out and attack the men. The men are injured and driven away, but not before several animals are killed and nearly all of them injured. Squealer and the pigs try to convince the animals to celebrate their victory, but the animals see their dead comrades and the spot where the windmill once was and feel there is little to celebrate. After Napoleon gives a speech about the battle, the animals begin to come around and decide that the “Battle of the Windmill” was a victory after all.

A few days later, the pigs find some whiskey in Mr. Jones’s cellar, and raucous singing is heard from the farmhouse. The pigs look very ill the next day and announce that Napoleon is dying. Napoleon makes a final decree: “The drinking of alcohol was to be punished by death.” However, Napoleon soon recovers and begins studying brewing, creating a paddock for barley out of one originally intended for animals who are too old to...
work. Around this time, the animals are awakened by a crash in the night and find Squealer sprawled next to a broken ladder, a paint brush, and a can of white paint. The animals (with the exception of Benjamin) don’t know what to make of it, but later Muriel notices that the commandment that the animals thought said “No animal shall drink alcohol” now reads “No animal shall drink alcohol to excess.”

Analysis

Napoleon’s dealings with Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick allude to Stalin’s relationships with England and Germany—specifically with Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler—during World War II. Technically opposed to both capitalism and fascism, Stalin had difficulty deciding between the Allies and the Axis powers in the early days of the war. He met with both sides before finally choosing to sign the Non-Aggression Pact with Hitler. With the eastern front of Germany’s territory protected by the pact, Hitler was free to focus on the Allies fighting on the western front. When the western front began to turn in Hitler’s favor, however, he became more confident and broke his pact with Stalin by invading western Russia, mirroring Mr. Frederick’s double cross with the forged money. As in the Battle of the Windmill, Hitler’s forces were ultimately repelled, but the invasion cost millions of Russian lives and destroyed much of the infrastructure that had been built up along the western border. Orwell alludes to the heavy casualties sustained by the Soviet Union during this time by mentioning that “nearly everyone” on Animal Farm, including Napoleon, is wounded in the Battle of the Windmill. Following Hitler’s betrayal, the Soviet Union joined the Allies, as is represented by Napoleon’s attempt to repair the relationship with Mr. Pilkington and Foxwood Farm.

The pigs continue to rewrite history throughout this chapter. The pigs break two more commandments—the prohibition against killing any animals and the prohibition against drinking alcohol—and then rewrite them to excuse their increasingly human-like actions. Even when the animals catch Squealer in the act of rewriting the commandments, they still do not rebel. In the Soviet Union, many people (represented by Benjamin, the donkey) were aware that Stalin’s regime was corrupt, but the certainty that they would be shut down by Stalin’s brutal authoritarian regime dissuaded people from protesting. Another major factor that contributed to Stalin’s security was the cult of personality that he cultivated during the early 1930s. Soviet propaganda constantly praised and glorified Stalin, and his image was frequently reproduced for posters, murals, and statues. We see the pigs building Napoleon up in the same way by giving him new titles, painting his portrait on the wall, and even composing poems about him. In Minimus’s poem, “Comrade Napoleon,” Napoleon is portrayed as omniscient and all-powerful. The progression of anthems from “Beasts of England” to “Animal Farm!” to “Comrade Napoleon” illustrates how the pigs have attempted to turn the passion felt during the rebellion into unwavering loyalty to Napoleon. The pigs attempt to cement Napoleon’s status by portraying his leadership as synonymous with Animal Farm itself, meaning that to doubt Napoleon is to doubt the very idea of Animal Farm. For many Russians, Stalin became the embodiment of the revolution, and their belief in the legitimacy of the revolutionary cause led them to ignore Stalin’s flawed leadership. We see this same pattern at play when the animals catch Squealer with the can of paint. By this point, most of the animals have been so conditioned to believe in the greatness of Napoleon’s regime that even obvious evidence of its corruption does not faze them.

Chapter Summaries: Chapter IX Summary and Analysis

Summary

Though Boxer is injured from the Battle of the Windmill, he continues to push himself hard. Clover and Benjamin warn him to take it easy, but Boxer is determined that the windmill be well underway before his upcoming retirement. Though the animals seem to be working even harder and for less food, the pigs insist that rations have been readjusted rather than reduced. Squealer continues to announce how much the animals’ quality of life has improved since Mr. Jones ran the farm, and the animals are happy to believe it, especially
since they now don’t remember the farm under Mr. Jones at all. Several piglets are born on the farm, and Napoleon orders the construction of a school in the garden. In the meantime, he educates the piglets himself and discourages them from associating with the other young animals. A new rule is passed that says any animal meeting a pig on a path must step aside and let the pig pass first. Rations continue to decrease, though the pigs seem to be gaining weight. To offset the increasing hardship, the pigs hold weekly “Spontaneous Demonstrations” in honor of Napoleon, which briefly allows the animals to focus on something other than their empty stomachs.

In the spring, Animal Farm is declared a republic, and Napoleon is unanimously elected president. The pigs report that new evidence shows that Snowball openly fought on Mr. Jones’s side during the Battle of Cowshed. The wounds on Snowball’s back were inflicted by Napoleon, they say. During the summer, the pigs allow Moses to return to the farm. Though they personally believe that his stories about Sugarcandy Mountain are lies, they give him food and allow him to stay even though he is not working. Most of the animals, comforted by the idea that they will someday go to a better world, believe Moses’s tales about Sugarcandy Mountain. Meanwhile, Boxer continues to work as hard as ever on the windmill, though he is beginning to show signs of aging.

One day, the animals hear that Boxer has collapsed while working independently on the windmill. The animals run out to meet him, and he says that he believes it is a problem with his lung. Knowing that he will no longer be able to work, Boxer comforts himself by saying that he only had one month left until his retirement anyway. After a short while, Squealer appears and announces that Napoleon has arranged for Boxer to be treated by a veterinarian. For the next few days, Boxer remains in good spirits and looks forward to his retirement. During the middle of the day, a van comes to pick Boxer up, and Benjamin—uncharacteristically excited—calls all the animals to come running. Watching Boxer being driven away in the van, all the animals begin to call out goodbyes—until Benjamin angrily tells them that the van reads “Alfred Simmonds, Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler, Willingdon.” Horrified, the animals race after the van, yelling at Boxer to try to escape. They hear Boxer attempting to kick in the door of the van, but in his weakened state, he is not able to manage it. Boxer never returns.

Three days later, the pigs announce that Boxer died at the animal hospital and that Napoleon spared no expense for his care. Squealer even claims to have been present at Boxer’s deathbed himself. Squealer dispels the rumor that Boxer was sent to the knackers by telling the animals that the veterinarian had just purchased the van from the knacker and had not yet repainted it. The animals are glad to hear this, as it allows them to believe that their good friend died happy. The pigs hold a memorial banquet in honor of Boxer, and the animals hear the sounds of their celebrations late into the night. The next day, word spreads that the pigs had somehow acquired enough money to buy themselves a case of whiskey.

**Analysis**

As the animals’ memories of life under Mr. Jones grow faint, the pigs become bolder in their excesses. Convinced that the farm’s inhabitants are sufficiently indoctrinated, the pigs no longer work to protect the appearance of equality among the animals. They go so far as to decree that all animals must step to the side for passing pigs, and they discourage young pigs from associating with other animals. The pigs use a number of strategies to draw attention away from the increasingly poor quality of life on the farm. They hold the comically named “Spontaneous Demonstrations,” which are anything but spontaneous. Through the Spontaneous Demonstrations, Orwell illustrates how hollow and superficial the support for totalitarian leaders really is. Forced to celebrate their leader, the animals only enjoy the ceremony because it serves as a distraction from their hard lives. Soon after, Animal Farm is declared a republic, and Napoleon (the only candidate who runs) is elected as the president. Though the pigs’ claim that Animal Farm is a republic is laughably inaccurate, the decision to rebrand is quite common in authoritarian or otherwise non-democratic
regimes (e.g., the People’s Republic of China or the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea). As the Soviet Union continued to spread its influence after World War II, it was not uncommon for states controlled by the Soviets—such as the Hungarian People’s Republic—to be styled as “republics,” though the countries were, in reality, not democratic. Orwell’s decision to write about the renaming of Animal Farm serves as yet another warning about the dangers of conflating a people with a government. The pigs, like nearly all authoritarian regimes, know that one of the best ways to prevent rebellion is to portray their government as inextricably tied to and supported by the people.

In a move that is in keeping with the pigs’ constant revision of history, the pigs allow Moses—whom they once openly despised—to return to the farm and tell the animals about Sugarcandy Mountain. Moses’s return mirrors Stalin’s decision to revive the Russian Orthodox Church during Word War II, despite the strong stance the Soviet government had taken against religious institutions in the aftermath of the revolution. The pigs’ reversal with regard to Moses is important because it demonstrates the conditions under which religion—which many consider to be a force for good—is easily turned into a tool of oppression. The pigs understand that belief in a utopian afterlife will make it much easier for the animals to bear hardship during their mortal lives. Though the pigs once feared that Moses’s message would undermine the revolutionary spirit of the animals, they now count on it to drive the animals harder.

The most heartbreaking betrayal of this chapter is the murder of Boxer. Though Old Major warned Boxer that one day, when “those great muscles of yours lose their power, Jones will sell you to the knacker,” we see that it is actually the pigs who consign him to this terrible fate. While it is true that the pigs have already broken the commandment against killing other animals, Boxer’s death is particularly notable because he was killed for financial rather than political purposes. The executions of the other animals, though unjust, might be regarded as a necessary part of Napoleon’s seizure of power. In contrast, Boxer, the hardest-working and most loyal animal on the farm, is sold to the knacker for the price of a case of whiskey. Ironically, the very characteristics that made Boxer beloved—trust, determination, and selflessness—led to his downfall. Though Boxer had great passion for the revolutionary cause, he—like the other animals—failed to think critically about the sort of society he was fighting for and, as a result, quickly fell victim to the manipulation of the pigs.

Chapter Summaries: Chapter X Summary and Analysis

Summary

The years pass and many of the animals grow old and die. No one remembers the time before the revolution except Clover, Benjamin, the pigs, and Moses. Several animals have been added to the farm, though they are rather dumb and do not seem to understand the principles of Animalism. Over the years, the farm has grown larger and more prosperous, but the animals no longer dream of living in comfort or luxury. After the completion of the windmill, Napoleon makes it clear that the idyllic, electricity-powered life Snowball once spoke of is contrary to “the spirit of Animalism,” which promotes frugal living and hard work. Indeed, as time passes, Snowball is forgotten, as is Boxer. The pigs insist that they are working hard supervising the farm and, as proof, show the animals sheets of paper covered in writing. The papers are burned as soon as they are produced. No animals can remember whether life was better or worse under Mr. Jones, except Benjamin, who, as usual, cynically says that life is as bad as it has always been.

Despite their difficult lives, the animals still take pride in their farm and dream of a day when England will be ruled by animals. The animals derive comfort from the knowledge that if they are working hard, it is at least for their own benefit rather than for the enrichment of a tyrannical human. During the summer, Squealer takes a group of sheep aside for several days to teach them a new song. Soon after, the animals are shocked and terrified to see the pigs walking around on two legs, led by Napoleon, who carries a whip. Despite everything
they have endured, the animals are so disturbed that they are inclined to protest. Before the animals can utter a word of complaint, however, the sheep loudly bleat “Four legs good, two legs BETTER” until the moment for protest has passed. Returning to the barn, Benjamin and Clover realize that the wall with the Seven Commandments has been painted over and now simply reads: “ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS.” In the days that follow, the pigs walk on two legs, carry whips, take out magazine subscriptions, and even begin to wear Mr. Jones’s old clothes.

A week later, several human visitors—including Mr. Pilkington—come to visit the farm. Later, the animals sneak over to the farmhouse, curious as to what the pigs and humans are doing inside. They see all of them sitting together at the table, drinking and playing cards. Mr. Pilkington then stands up and makes a toast, saying that while Animal Farm had initially made the humans uneasy, they are pleased to see that it is run so efficiently. He commends the pigs for making the animals work so many hours on such little food and announces that the humans intend to introduce such a system on their own farms. He makes it clear that the pigs and humans have a lot in common, joking that while the pigs must contend with the “lower animals,” the humans must contend with the “lower classes.” After Mr. Pilkington’s speech, Napoleon gets up and says that it has never been true that Animal Farm intended to stir up rebellion among animals on neighboring farms and that he is glad their misunderstanding is at an end. He further announces that the animals are now forbidden from calling one another “comrade,” and the hoof and horn icons on the flag of Animal Farm have been removed. Finally, Napoleon announces that Animal Farm will officially be reverting to its original and “correct” name, Manor Farm.

As Clover and the other animals watch through the window, they begin to feel that something has altered in the faces of the pigs. Walking back to the barn, they are halted by an eruption of noise from the farmhouse. On rushing back to the window, the animals see that a big argument has broken out because Napoleon and Mr. Pilkington both played an ace of spades. As they watch the quarrel play out, the animals realize that they can no longer tell who is a human and who is a pig.

Analysis

In the final chapter, we see that Animal Farm—now renamed Manor Farm—has come full circle. By learning to walk on two legs and dressing in clothes, the pigs have now violated all of the original Seven Commandments and, in the process, have become indistinguishable (literally) from humans. The passage of time and the erosion of the animals’ memories have continued to work in the pigs’ favor as they are no longer bound by the expectations and rules of the rebellion. Orwell makes it clear that the animals, unable to historically contextualize their treatment, have no way of judging whether they are better or worse off. They have learned to manage their expectations under the pigs and have given up on ideas like a retirement age or windmill-generated energy to decrease their workload. However, we see that while the animals have given up on these smaller comforts, they have still not abandoned their faith in the rebellion and in Animal Farm as an idea. Though their lives are hard, they hold out hope that one day, Old Major’s dream of a true animal republic will be realized. This idealism only makes the final scene all the more brutal as the animals watch Napoleon completely deny the legitimacy of an animal revolution to his human peers: “They had been credited with attempting to stir up rebellion among the animals on neighboring farms. Nothing could be further from the truth! Their sole wish, now and in the past, was to live at peace and in normal business relations with their neighbors.”

Though Mr. Pilkington lavishes praise upon Napoleon while Napoleon extols the new friendship between the two farms, it is clear that they do not trust one another. This interaction is meant to represent the uneasy alliance between the West (Great Britain and the United States) and the Soviet Union during World War II. Through Mr. Pilkington’s comment that the lower animals are similar to the lower classes, Orwell extends his criticism beyond totalitarian regimes to show that the exploitation of the working class is a universal issue.
Mr. Pilkington’s joking comparison suggests that many countries really do view and treat the working classes like “animals.” The superficiality and tenuousness of the friendship between Napoleon and Mr. Pilkington is demonstrated when both of them simultaneously play the same card—meaning that one of them is cheating—immediately after declaring their mutual admiration. This betrayal is meant to signify the breakdown of relations between the Soviet Union and the West that occurred almost immediately after the end of World War II and eventually morphed into the Cold War.

The transformation of the Seven Commandments into the single maxim “All animals are equal but some are more equal than others” exemplifies one of the main ideas of the book, namely that in the hands of corrupt individuals, language can be a powerful tool of oppression. This phrase is nonsensical; the word “equal” attempts to mask the fact that the maxim is actually describing a system that is inherently unequal. This doublespeak confuses the animals and thus forestalls their protests. Throughout the novel, we have seen the pigs manipulate language to rewrite history, glorify their rule, sow fear, and silence criticism. We see the power of language one final time as the animals first see the pigs walking on two legs. Shocked into a rare moment of protest, the animals are about to challenge the pigs when they are immediately shut down, not by violence but by words, as the new slogan—“Four legs good, two legs BETTER!”—is incessantly repeated by the sheep. Though Animal Farm’s plot is inspired by events that have already come to pass, this novella is undoubtedly meant to be a warning to future generations. Ultimately, Animal Farm suggests that societies that opt for apathy rather than critical thinking and put their trust in powerful individuals rather than ideas will always be vulnerable to tyranny.

Themes: Themes and Meanings

The animals are presented as illustrative of the utopian dream of socialism pitted against the vices of capitalism represented by the humans in the story. Neither political ideology is presented in a favorable light, but whereas the evils of capitalism are taken for granted, it is the futility of the socialist ideal on which the work primarily focuses. Yet the means by which it levels this criticism at Communism—that is, in terms of a relatively simple and two-dimensional beast fable—does little to illuminate either the virtues or the vices of that complex ideology.

Animal Farm perhaps works best not as a specific allegory of the Russian Revolution but rather as a fable about the basic nature of human beings, both in isolation and in groups, which militates against any utopian ideal. What Orwell has seized upon is precisely those qualities of animals that humans share which make such an ideal impossible—qualities such as sloth, stupidity, fear, and greed. The central irony of the fable is that although the animals initially rebel against the humans because of behavior which humans usually call “beastly,” the animals themselves, as the work progresses, become more and more like humans—that is, more and more base and beastly.

What is most demoniacally human about the pigs is their use of language not only to manipulate the immediate behavior of the animals through propaganda, emotive language, and meaningless doubletalk but also to manipulate history, and thus challenge the nature of actuality itself. This manipulation, however, is only one primary means of the pigs’ control; another, equally important, is the threat of brute force as manifested by Napoleon’s pack of vicious trained dogs. In the final image of the allegory, the realization is that humans prove to be no better than animals, and animals prove to be no better than humans.

The great ideal of the windmill, itself a Quixotic gesture of idealism, cannot be achieved because the animals, like humans, are basically limited by their own natures, and because nature itself is blindly indifferent to the aspirations of man. Orwell’s own pessimistic view in the work seems to be echoed by the cynical donkey, Benjamin: “Things never had been, nor ever could be much better or worse—hunger, hardship, disappointment being ... the unalterable law of life.” The law of man is the law of the jungle after all; the
truth of “power corrupts” is the same as the truth of “the fittest shall survive.”

Themes

Language and Meaning
In Animal Farm, his allegory of the Soviet Revolution, Orwell examines the use of language and the subversion of the meaning of words by showing how the powerful manipulate words for their own benefit. As a journalist, Orwell knew the power of words to serve whichever side the writer backed. In the novel, Snowball is a quick talker who can always explain his way out of any situation. When the birds object to the maxim, "Four legs good, two legs bad," that the pig teaches the sheep, he explains that the bird's wing "is an organ of propulsion and not of manipulation. It should therefore be regarded as a leg." The birds do not really understand this explanation, but they accept it. Orwell particularly comments on the abuse of language with his character Squealer, "a brilliant talker," who acts as an unofficial head of propaganda for the pigs. Like Joseph Goebbels, who bore the title of Nazi party minister of propaganda and national enlightenment during World War II, Squealer "could turn black into white." This is also reminiscent of the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Pravda, which was often used to rewrite the past. (Ironically, its title means "Truth.") When a bad winter forces a reduction in food rations to the animals, Squealer calls it a "readjustment." In a totalitarian state, language can be used to change even the past. Squealer explains to the animals "that Snowball had never—as many of them had believed hitherto—received the order of 'Animal Hero, First Class'."

God and Religion
In the novel religion is represented by Moses, the tame raven. The clergy is presented as a privileged class tolerated by those in power because of their ability to placate the masses with promises of rewards in the after-life for suffering endured on Earth. Moses is afforded special treatment not available to the other animals. For example, he is the only animal not present at the meeting called by Old Major as the book opens. Later, the reader is told the other animals hate the raven because he does not do any work, in fact, the pigs give him a daily ration of beer. Like Lenin, who proclaimed religion was the opiate of the people, Orwell sees organized religion as another corruptible institution which serves to keep the masses tranquil. Moses preaches "the existence of a mysterious country called Sugarcandy Mountain, to which all animals went when they died;" in that distant land "it was Sunday seven days a week, clover was in season all the year round, and lump sugar and linseed cake grew on the hedges."

Human Rights
In Animal Farm, Orwell comments on those who corrupt the idea of human rights by showing how the animals deal with the issue of equality. In chapter one, Old Major interrupts his speech appealing to the animals for a Rebellion against the humans by asking for a vote on whether "wild creatures, such as rats and rabbits" should be included in the statement "All animals are comrades." Although at this point, the animals vote to accept the rats, later distinctions between different types of animals become so commonplace that the seventh commandment of Animalism is officially changed to read, "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others." A number of societies have historically "voted" that portions of their populations were not equal because of their faith, their skin color, or their ancestry.

Class Conflict
Orwell saw first-hand how being a member of a lower class singled him out for abuse at St. Cyprian's, a school which attracted most of its students from the British upper class. He had also seen how the British ruling class in Burma had abused the native population. In Animal Farm the animals begin by proclaiming the equality of all animals. The classless society soon becomes divided as preferential treatment is given to the pigs. First, they alone are allowed to consume the milk and the apples which Squealer claims they do not really want to take, but must to preserve their strength. Later, the other animals are told that they must "stand
aside" if they meet a pig coming down a path, and that all pigs had "the privilege of wearing green ribbons on
their tails on Sundays." By this time, not even an explanation from Squealer is necessary; the hierarchy in the
society is well-established. A pointed remark by Mr. Pilkington of Foxwood, who represents Great Britain in
Orwell's satire, puts the author's distaste for classes in perspective. When Mr. Pilkington and other farmers
meet with Napoleon in the novel's last scene, Pilkington chokes with amusement as he says to the pigs, "If
you have your lower animals to contend with, we have our lower classes." Orwell knew that with power came
the abuse of power and only a vigilant citizenry could prevent such abuses.

Politics
Orwell uses Animal Farm to express his deeply held political convictions. He stated in his 1946 essay, "Why I
Write," "every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly,
against totalitarianism and for Democratic socialism " Although the novel is written in direct response to his
bitter disappointment that the Russian Revolution, instead of establishing a people's republic, established an
essentially totalitarian state, its continued relevance is possible because his criticism stands against any and all
totalitarian regimes. The only protection the average citizen has against a similar tyranny developing in his
own country is his refusal to blindly follow the crowd (like the sheep), the repudiation of all spurious
explanations by propaganda sources (like Squealer), and diligent attention to all government activity, instead
of faithfully following those in power (like Boxer).

Truth and Falsehood
In the novel, the animals are often forced to examine the meaning of truth in their society. Again and again,
truth becomes simply what Snowball, and later Squealer, tells them. Any questions about past events that do
not seem to match the pigs' version of those events are either discounted or explained away. For example,
when some of the animals are executed after they confess to various crimes against Napoleon, some of those
left alive remember that the Sixth Commandment of Animalism was "No animal shall kill any other animal."
When Clover asks Muriel to read the commandment, however, it is discovered that it reads, "No animal shall
kill any other animal without cause." "Somehow or other," the narrator comments, "the last two words had
slipped out of the animals' memory." Similarly, when the pigs get into a case of whiskey and get drunk,
Muriel looks up at the barn wall where the Seven Commandments had been written and sees that the Fifth
Commandment reads, "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess." She thinks the animals must have forgotten
the last two words of this commandment as well. She comes to believe that the original event of the writing of
the commandments on the wall did not happen the way she and other animals remember it. With this theme
Orwell challenges the Soviet state's—and any totalitarian state's—method of controlling public opinion by
manipulating the truth and, in particular, rewriting history.

Additional Themes: Themes
Conceived and written as satire. Animal Farm is generally acknowledged as possessing much of Orwell's
humanistic aspirations and political conviction. The novel develops as an allegorical fable contrasting man
and beast in a literary metaphor of the human condition. Clearly analogous to the political events in Russia
dating roughly from 1917 to the Second World War, Animal Farm is primarily an attack on Stalinism yet
beyond that serves as a biting commentary on the anatomy of revolution.

Modeled on a relatively simple premise, the novel begins as the animals of Manor Farm unite against their
master, the farmer Jones, and overthrow his tyrannical rule. Understandably ecstatic over their sudden and
unexpected good fortune, the animals create a new order for the future based on equality and equity. However,
the paint is hardly dry on their barnyard manifesto when the identical elements initiating the revolt surface to
tarnish and eventually destroy the dream of emancipation. Orwell is undoubtedly passing judgment on the fate
of revolution, juxtaposing ideological promise with practical application and realistic demise of principle.
Of additional importance, however, Orwell is attempting to explore the parameters of intellectual responsibility, cultural heritage, and moral integrity. In essence, Orwell is not condemning the revolution but agonizing over its betrayal. Possessing superior knowledge, the pigs assume leadership of the farm and in so doing take the first step in replacing the tyranny of the past with a new and more terrifying threat for future existence. As demonstrated through Orwell's thematic concern involving the corruption of language, the pigs learn to control the means of communication and literally create their own truth to dispense to the inhabitants of the farm establishing perhaps the most pessimistic aspect of the novel. In the end, pigs are indistinguishable from humans and the ideals of the revolution seem distant or forgotten in the face of terror, manipulation, and despair.

**Characters**

**Napoleon**

In George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Napoleon is a boar who takes part in the revolt against Mr. Jones. Afterwards, he co-leads the farm animals with Snowball. Napoleon is aggressive, militaristic, and manipulative. Although he is not great at public speaking, he is able to get his own way. In the novel's allegory of the Russian Revolution, Napoleon represents Soviet politician Joseph Stalin. ([Read extended character analysis of Napoleon.](#))

**Snowball**

Snowball is a boar on Manor Farm who helps in the revolt against Mr. Jones and in leading the farm animals afterwards. He is vivacious, quick, and inventive. Although he possesses these qualities, Snowball has less "depth of character" than Napoleon. In the story's allegory of the Russian Revolution, Snowball represents Leon Trotsky, who was in power alongside Joseph Stalin after Vladimir Lenin passed away. Snowball helps to expand on Old Major’s teachings alongside Squealer and Napoleon. ([Read extended character analysis of Snowball.](#))

**Boxer**

In Orwell's allegory for the Russian Revolution, Boxer represents the Soviet Union's working class. Boxer is a large working horse. Boxer is not clever, but he is able to make up for this lack with a steady character and strong work ethic. His main mantra is “I will work harder.” He is considered one of the pigs’ most faithful followers. ([Read extended character analysis of Boxer.](#))

**Squealer**

In *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell, Squealer is a "porker," or one of the fatter pigs, living on the farm. He has twinkling eyes, is great at public speaking, and is popular with the other animals. Squealer is said to be very persuasive; he is able to "turn black into white," with his debate skills. In the story's allegory of the Russian Revolution, Squealer represents Vyacheslav Molotov, who was Joseph Stalin's loyal supporter and a chief figure in the Communist government. ([Read extended character analysis of Squealer.](#))
Old Major

Old Major is the oldest pig on the farm. He is also the prize pig of Mr. Jones’s and is greatly respected by the other animals at Manor Farm. In the novel's allegory of the Russian Revolution, Old Major likely represents the political economist Karl Marx, whose *Communist Manifesto* advocated for a revolution from the working class, and Vladimir Lenin, one of the main revolutionary leaders in the communist uprising. (Read extended character analysis of Old Major.)

Minor Characters

In addition to the main characters listed above, the following characters also feature in *Animal Farm* and have important roles in the allegory.

Benjamin

Benjamin the donkey is cynical and bitter. He doesn’t laugh and rarely speaks. However, he is close friends with Boxer. When the animals take over the farm, Benjamin doesn’t change in personality. He is still slow, cynical, and obstinate. Benjamin is also unwilling to give any opinion on the rebellion.

However, Benjamin shows himself to be very intelligent. For example, he can read and write just as well as the other pigs. Yet, he refuses to implement these skills, believing that there is “nothing worth reading.” Ever the cynic, Benjamin refuses to take sides when the animals begin to divide loyalties between Snowball and Napoleon. Benjamin doesn’t see how either of the pigs can make the farm run any better; he only says that “life would go on as it had always gone on—that is, badly.” Benjamin is also the only one who understands that Squealer actively alters the seven commandments when all the animals witness him by the barn wall with paint and a brush. However, Benjamin does nothing with this knowledge.

Benjamin represents the cynical and disillusioned intellectuals of the late 18th, early 19th century. He shows no passion for either side, landing on a position of indifference. His lack of action throughout the novel only adds to the problems on the farm and leads him to lose his close friend, Boxer, to Napoleon’s selfish leadership. When Boxer is taken away to be butchered and sold for glue-making, Benjamin finally shows emotion and takes action, but it is too late. After Boxer’s death, Benjamin spends more time with Clover, but he does not change very much. He only becomes more bitter and still refuses to work to improve things around him.

Clover

The horse Clover is described as stout, motherly, and middle-aged. Clover is a faithful follower of the pig’s doctrine. When taught to read and write, Clover memorizes the alphabet but is unable to write and struggles to read words. Clover represents the female working class of the Russian Revolution and is the counterpart to Boxer. Although she later on feels that something is wrong with Animal Farm’s leadership, she lacks any real ability to make meaningful changes. Despite her concerns, she remains ever faithful.

When Napoleon takes over and begins to act more like a human, Clover remembers the rules that were originally made by the pigs. She questions Napoleon’s actions and even checks the commandments with the help of the goat, Muriel. When Clover sees that the commandments support Napoleon’s actions, she still feels uneasy but is convinced by Squealer that all is right.

After the disturbing execution of many farm animals at the hands of Napoleon, Clover reflects upon the original dream of Animal Farm. She realizes the differences between the revolutionary dream and the
resulting reality and sees what has gone wrong. Yet Clover is ever faithful, with “no thought of disobedience or rebellion in her mind.” Clover still firmly believes that life for the animals is better without the humans, even under the dictatorship of Napoleon.

Near the end of the story, Clover asks Benjamin to read her the seven commandments. They find the commandments have been changed to just one rule: “some animals are more equal than others.” Clover then observes the pigs interacting with the humans in the farmhouse and finds that she cannot tell the difference between the two.

**Jessie and Bluebell**

Jessie and Bluebell are two dogs who birth the nine puppies that Napoleon teaches and trains as his personal enforcers.

**Minimus**

Minimus is another of the pigs who follows Napoleon. He has a gift for composing songs and poems. He writes a new anthem to replace *Beasts of England*.

**Mollie**

Mollie is a vain and silly mare who lives on Manor Farm. She cares only for sugar and ribbons, and when learning of the tenets of *Animalism*, she asks if there would still be access to sugar and bows. Mollie is likely representative of the bourgeoisie, or upper middle class, who did not struggle as much in the time of Tsarist leadership in Russia. She shows an unwillingness to participate in fighting against the humans and is mostly preoccupied with her own needs.

Mollie has little desire to work for the farm. She makes excuses to leave early and has difficulty getting up early to work. When taught to read and write, Mollie refuses to learn anything aside from her name, which she likes to write using twigs and flowers.

Mollie is found to be sympathetic to humans and ends up leaving Animal Farm after The Battle of the Cowshed. She is caught by Clover, who sees her being pet by a human. The animals soon discover Mollie’s stash of ribbons and sugar. Mollie disappears and is later reported to enjoy working for a human again. The animals mention Mollie again.

**Moses**

Moses is the tame raven that lives on the farm. He is owned by Mr. Jones and does no work. Yet, he is a good speaker, and weaves tales about a mystical place called “Sugarcandy Mountain” in which all animals will go to once they’ve died. Although Moses is unpopular with the animals, some believe his stories, and the pigs have to work hard to convince the other animals that “Sugarcandy Mountain” does not exist. When the animals revolt, Moses leaves with Mr. Jones's wife.

Moses returns later on and spreads the idea of “Sugarcandy Mountain” to the animals again. This time, however, the pigs do not discourage Moses, although they do not agree with him. Instead, they allow the animals to listen to Moses and hope for a good afterlife. This shows how the leaders of Animal Farm use the concept of “Sugarcandy Mountain”—similar to a religion—to keep the animals content with the hardships of their lives, as they believe there is a better life after death. Since the animals will have their paradise after death, there is no need for retirement on the farm.
Moses represents the influence of religion before and after the Russian Revolution. Although the Soviet Union was officially atheistic, with the advent of the second World War, Joseph Stalin allowed the Orthodox Christian Church to operate more openly in the country in order to support the war efforts.

Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones is the owner of Manor Farm and represents Tsar Nicholas II, who was driven out of power during the Russian Revolution of 1917. Like the Tsar, Mr. Jones is driven out of Manor Farm when his animals revolt and take over.

Prior to the animals' rebellion, Mr. Jones had been a good farmer, but became disheartened after losing money in a lawsuit. This misfortune can be compared to the loss of money and life that Russia faced after Tsar Nicholas II involved the country in the World War I. Mr. Jones begins to neglect the farm and the animals on it, and he spends his days sitting in the house drinking.

The animal rebellion begins after Mr. Jones forgets to feed his animals for several days. Similarly, one of the core problems with Tsar Nicholas II’s rule was over food shortages. The animals broke into the food storage, and when the men tried to stop them, the animals ran the men and Mr. Jones from the farm.

Mr. Pilkington

Mr. Pilkington owns Foxwood Farm, which is adjacent to Manor Farm. Pilkington is easygoing and does not keep his farm well. He also dislikes Mr. Frederick, the owner of Pinchfield Farm, who also lives adjacent to Manor Farm. Despite Pilkington’s acute dislike for Frederick, the two men are both nervous about the animal uprising at Manor Farm and the establishment of Animal Farm.

Pilkington represents the Western leaders of both the United States and the United Kingdom. He is pitted against Frederick, who represents Adolf Hitler, from the start. This reflects the US’s and the UK’s political relationship with Adolf Hitler’s Germany in the years leading up to WWII.

Pilkington keeps in good relations with Napoleon and Animal Farm, but is then betrayed by Napoleon when Napoleon accepts a deal with Frederick. However, when Napoleon realizes Frederick is not a friend to Animal Farm, Napoleon then asks Pilkington for help. Pilkington refuses and leaves Animal Farm to fend for itself against Frederick. This is representative of the US and the UK’s stance towards the Soviet Union in the years following WWI up to WWII.

Mr. Frederick

Mr. Frederick owns Pinchfield Farm near Manor Farm. He keeps his farm running tightly. He is tough and shrewd, and he “runs hard bargains” with others. He dislikes Mr. Pilkington, but he agrees that the animals at Manor Farm and the idea of an animal rebellion are frightening. The two men both ridicule or create rumors about Animal Farm to try to quell its popularity.

Frederick represents Adolf Hitler. He and his farm are disliked throughout most of the novel. There are rumors of his cruelty to animals, which reflect Hitler’s cruelty and acts of genocide. Further, Frederick is an enemy to Pilkington, who represents the leaders of the United States and the United Kingdom.

Near the end of the novel, Frederick makes a deal with Napoleon and buys Animal Farm’s timber. When Frederick gives Napoleon fake bank notes, Napoleon declares Frederick an enemy. Soon after, Frederick and his men blow up the animals’ windmill but are chased off when the animals attack.
Mr. Whymper

Mr. Whymper is an intermediary hired by Napoleon to help with exchanges between Animal Farm and the humans. He is described as a sly and smart man. He helps Napoleon bring Animal Farm back into trading and selling with the humans’ other farms. Mr. Whymper represents capitalist opportunists who served as business intermediaries between the Soviet Union and the West. Mr. Whymper negotiates with the other farms and creates an agreement between Pinchfield and Napoleon.

Muriel

Muriel is the white goat, whom Clover asks to read the seven commandments for her.

The Cat

The cat is an example of a freeloader in a working society. The cat never shows up for work, meetings, or any of the battles but joins the animals for all the meals. When asked where she has gone, the cat simply gives good excuses and purrs affectionately, convincing the other animals of the validity of her absence.

The Dogs

The dogs were born from Jessie and Bluebell. After being weaned, Napoleon takes the dogs into his care and trains them to his needs. It is observed that the dogs act toward Napoleon as dogs had acted toward Mr. Jones.

Napoleon uses the dogs to get rid of Snowball. After Snowball’s speech about the windmill, Napoleon calls the dogs, who then run Snowball off the farm and very nearly hurt him. The dogs become Napoleon’s military force, which scares and keeps the other farm animals under control.

The Sheep

The sheep are the least intelligent of the animals. They are unable to learn to read or write and cannot remember the seven commandments. The pigs instead teach the sheep, along with the hens and ducks, to memorize the expression “four legs good, two legs bad.” This is a gross oversimplification of the tenets of Animalism.

The sheep reflect the blindness of the masses and their inability to act for themselves. Simultaneously, the bleating of the sheep often stop any further discussion about problems at Animal Farm. This silencing shows how a public that blindly follows its government can quell discourse and rebellion.

Near the end, the sheep are taught to bleat “four legs good, two legs better,” instead of their original mantra. The pigs use the sheep’s incessant bleating and blind following to stop any complaints that the pigs are becoming more like humans.

Characters: Napoleon

Extended Napoleon Character Analysis

In George Orwell's Animal Farm, Napoleon is a boar who takes part in the revolt against Mr. Jones. Afterwards, he co-leads the farm animals with Snowball. Napoleon is aggressive, militaristic, and manipulative. Although he is not great at public speaking, he is able to get his own way. In the novel's allegory of the Russian Revolution, Napoleon represents Soviet politician Joseph Stalin.
Napoleon, along with Squealer and Snowball, expands upon Old Major’s teachings after his death. Although at first he works alongside Snowball, Napoleon begins to work against him. After the revolt of the animals, Napoleon, Snowball, and the other pigs begin to manage Manor Farm, which they rename “Animal Farm.” The renaming of the farm is akin to the Russian Empire's being renamed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or the Soviet Union.

Napoleon, Snowball, and Squealer teach themselves to read and write. With this skill, they create seven commandments. Napoleon and the other pigs establish that pigs will not partake in physical labor. Instead, they will be supervisors of physical labor while doing all the mental work to keep the farm running. This marks a clear division between the leaders in power and the workers without power.

Napoleon dislikes Snowball’s ideas of committees and adult animal education. He believes that it is more important to focus on teaching the young instead of the old. He takes the nine puppies that Jessie and Bluebell birth and begins a strenuous education for them in private. Napoleon also acquires his own following of animals, separate from Snowball, with furtive efforts. At The Battle of the Cowshed, Napoleon plays a minor role, as Snowball is the greater strategist. Yet, later on, Napoleon claims that he was the hero of the battle and declares himself a war hero.

When the animals are divided between Napoleon's and Snowball's views over the creation of a windmill, the pigs put it up for a vote. It is clear that Snowball’s ideas have swayed the animals. Napoleon then calls upon Jessie and Bluebell’s puppies, whom he has now trained into vicious dogs, to run Snowball off the farm. This forced exile represents Leon Trotsky’s exile from the Soviet Union and Joseph Stalin’s rise to power. Like Stalin, Napoleon begins to become a dictator. He uses Squealer as his main source of communication and propaganda.

Napoleon slowly begins to exhibit human attitudes and behaviors. For example, he sells hay, wheat, and the hen’s eggs. The animals can vaguely remember that they had all agreed to never sell, trade, or interact with the humans. Yet, they are all too scared of Napoleon and his dogs to question him.

As Napoleon continues to violate the seven commandments, he has Squealer change the writing to make it seem like the rules had been that way all along. Napoleon is also quick to blame others to save his power, in particular blaming Snowball for the destruction of the windmill and for many problems on the farm. To maintain control through fear, Napoleon executes several animals on the farm when they admit to being in league with Snowball or to committing crimes on the farm. He then abolishes the song Beasts of England, which had been a source of hope and pride for the animals. Napoleon replaces it with his own song.

In Napoleon's dealing with human farms, George Orwell uses the farms as an allegory for prominent countries and their leaders leading up to WWII. The neighboring farm of Foxwood is run by Mr. Pilkington, who represents leaders of the UK and the USA, while Pinchfield Farm is owned by Mr. Frederick, who represents Adolf Hitler, the leader of Nazi Germany.

Napoleon destroys Animal Farm’s good relationship with Foxwood Farm by accepting a trade deal with Pinchfield Farm. Pinchfield Farm then betrays Napoleon. Napoleon fears that Mr. Frederick will attack Animal Farm. When Napoleon tries to ask for help from Foxwood farm, they refuse. This distrust between all the farms and farmers reflects the distrust among Western and European countries in the mid to late 1930s. As Napoleon expected, Mr. Frederick destroys the animals’ windmill and engages in a battle with them. The animals manage to scare Mr. Frederick and his men away.

By the end of the book, Napoleon has become a dictatorial leader. He decides to send Boxer to a horse slaughterer and profits from the animals' labor. He and the other pigs have taken possession of Jones's house. They drink alcohol and sleep on beds, both of which are violations of the original seven commandments.
Napoleon brainwashes the other farm animals. They no longer can remember the idealistic beginning of Animal Farm. Napoleon convinces them to believe that “the truest happiness […] lay in working hard and living frugally.” Napoleon and the other pigs begin to walk on two legs. As much as this shocks the other animals and violates one of the commandments, Napoleon trains the sheep to support this new practice; they now say, “Four legs good, two legs better!” The other animals find they can’t argue.

Eventually, the barn wall has only one commandment: “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.” This heralds the rapid changes of the pigs, who begin to wear clothes, carry whips, smoke pipes, and fraternize with humans. Although they do not know it, the animals are back in the same situation as when Mr. Jones ran the farm. Napoleon takes away the animals’ flag, the skull of the Old Major, and changes the name from Animal Farm back to “Manor Farm.” In the end, the other animals can’t tell the difference between the pigs and the men.

**Characters: Snowball**

**Extended Snowball Character Analysis**

Snowball is a boar on Manor Farm who helps in the revolt against Mr. Jones and in leading the farm animals afterwards. He is vivacious, quick, and inventive. Although he possesses these qualities, Snowball has less “depth of character” than Napoleon. In the story's allegory of the Russian Revolution, Snowball represents Leon Trotsky, who was in power alongside Joseph Stalin after Vladimir Lenin passed away. Snowball helps to expand on Old Major’s teachings alongside Squealer and Napoleon. They write seven commandments, which Snowball paints on the barn.

Snowball finds green fabric for a flag and paints the symbol of a hoof and horn onto it—similar to the Soviet Union's hammer and sickle. Snowball says the flag represents the community of animals that will arise after all humans are overthrown. Snowball here shows enthusiasm for how the power of symbolism and ritual gives his followers a sense of comfort. Early on, voting and debates only take place among the pigs—and especially between Snowball and Napoleon. Snowball and Napoleon tend to disagree over everything. However, it is Snowball that works to continue the somewhat democratic meetings with the animals.

Snowball is responsible for instituting many committees. He creates committees for the hens and the cows and even tries to create a “re-education” committee to tame wild animals. While taming wild animals fails, Snowball’s idea of teaching all animals to read and write proves successful and popular. Yet, Snowball often shows a disconnect between himself and the other animals. His explanations are long winded, and many of the other animals have a hard time understanding him.

Despite his difficulties connecting, it is thanks to Snowball that the other animals are given an education. It is also Snowball who reads through Mr. Jones’s books to glean new ideas for the farm. When the humans attack the farm, Snowball leads a great tactical defense against the humans. He fights bravely in what becomes known as “The Battle of the Cowshed.”

The animals begin to create factions devoted to following Snowball or Napoleon. Snowball is able to inspire through great and rousing speeches, whereas Napoleon creates his own following in the background. Unlike Napoleon, Snowball is full of ideas to improve the farm. Napoleon and Snowball finally come to a head over the idea of building a windmill. Snowball believes that an electricity-generating windmill would improve the lives of the animals. However, Napoleon claims that creating the windmill would only cause the animals to starve. The animals on Snowball's side adopt the slogan, “Vote for Snowball and the Three-Day Week”; Napoleon's side adopts “Vote for Napoleon and the Full Manger.”
When the windmill comes to a vote, Snowball’s eloquent speech and fantastical ideas clearly sway the animals. Napoleon, who secretly has trained several dogs for himself, sets them on Snowball and runs him off the farm. This event represents Leon Trotsky’s forced exile from the Soviet Union. After Snowball is exiled, Napoleon begins to spread hateful rhetoric about him. Snowball is then painted as a criminal and scapegoat; he is made responsible for all the hardship and mishaps on the farm. The animals accept this rhetoric, even when blaming Snowball is illogical. Later, Snowball is even blamed for selling himself to the farmers and for being in league with Mr. Jones the entire time. Snowball and his idealistic visions for Animal Farm eventually fall out of the animals’ memories.

**Characters: Boxer**

**Extended Boxer Character Analysis**

In George Orwell’s allegory for the Russian Revolution, Boxer represents the Soviet Union's working class. Boxer is a large working horse. Boxer is not clever, but he is able to make up for this lack with a steady character and strong work ethic. His main mantra is “I will work harder.” He is considered one of the pigs’ most faithful followers.

When the humans are forced off the farm, Boxer becomes the hardest and most devoted worker out of all the animals, who admire his dedication. Despite his great muscles and physical prowess, Boxer is unable to learn more than four letters of the alphabet. This portrays Boxer as a worker with simple needs and faith. At The Battle of Cowshed, when the humans come to try to retake Manor Farm, Boxer is a great help. He is a fearful presence on the battlefield, and at one point he even kicks a man in the head, knocking him out. After the battle ends, Boxer expresses great sadness over hurting the man, believing that he has killed him. Snowball tries to convince Boxer that “war is war,” but Boxer says that he never meant to kill anyone, even a human. Here, Boxer is representative of the general innocence of the followers of Old Major’s Animalism. He follows and is devoted, but he wishes no harm to anyone. This shows Boxer’s innocent and caring side, which cannot follow in the impassioned and highly politicized path of the pigs.

Later, when Napoleon takes over the farm, Boxer continues to be loyal. He never ceases to work hard, even in the face of hunger and horrible weather. He adopts another mantra, “Napoleon is always right,” which many of the other animals on the farm agree with. Boxer is a source of hope for all the animals throughout most of the novel.

When Squealer announces to the animals that Snowball was in league with Mr. Jones and the humans all along, Boxer speaks up. He refuses to believe that Snowball would have been in league with the humans, because of his heroic actions during The Battle of the Cowshed. Boxer’s mind is only changed when Squealer says it is Napoleon’s direct knowledge that Snowball is a traitor. Boxer then reverts to his mantra “Napoleon is always right.” However, Boxer remains troubled, particularly when Napoleon executes several of the farm animals for their alleged involvement with Snowball. He cannot understand why the animals have come to this point but claims “it must be due to some fault within ourselves.” Boxer tries to solve this fault by working even harder for the farm. However, his labor cannot fix Napoleon’s dictatorial nature, and Boxer’s efforts are largely fruitless.

When the neighboring Pinchfield farm attacks, Boxer fights bravely against Mr. Frederick and his men but is injured. Because of his injuries, specifically his split hoof, Boxer becomes lame and is no longer able to work. Boxer looks forward to retirement, but is betrayed by Napoleon, who sends him to a butcher and glue-maker instead of a doctor. When Boxer is taken away, Benjamin is the only one to notice that the van says “Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler,” on the side. Benjamin, who has never been active or excited, rouses the animals in a panic. The animals chase after Boxer in fear, telling him to escape, but Boxer is unable to. Later, Squealer
convinces the animals that Boxer was taken to a doctor and died peacefully.

**Characters: Squealer**

**Extended Squealer Character Analysis**

In George Orwell's *Animal Farm* Squealer is a "porker," or one of the fatter pigs, living on the farm. He has twinkling eyes, is great at public speaking, and is popular with the other animals. Squealer is said to be very persuasive; he is able to “turn black into white” with his debate skills. In the story's allegory of the Russian Revolution, Squealer represents Vyacheslav Molotov, who was Joseph Stalin's loyal supporter and a chief figure in the Communist government.

Squealer helps to elaborate on Old Major’s teachings along with Snowball and Napoleon and enthusiastically reinforces the belief that pigs are brainworkers; the others, laborers. He is only too happy to serve as the pigs’ propagandist. He uses his speeches to convince the other animals to follow the pigs and later to follow just Napoleon. Squealer thus also represents Soviet propaganda itself, in particular the newspaper *Pravda*, which at the time of the Russian Revolution was used to spread Soviet doctrine.

Squealer convinces the animals that the pigs are the ones who need the milk and the apples the most. He uses an effective scare tactic, claiming that if the pigs were unable to eat the milk and apples, they would become ill, and if that were to happen, Mr. Jones would return. The return of Mr. Jones is much worse to the animals than the pigs having full access to the milk and apples, so the animals agree. This is representative of the pigs' slowly taking from the animals what is supposed to be owned by all. Squealer employs this rhetoric several times throughout the novel, repeatedly threatening Mr. Jones's return if the animals do not comply.

When Snowball is run off the farm, Squealer is tasked with explaining Napoleon’s new role as leader to all the animals. He instigates a greater dislike of Snowball by spreading hateful rumors about him. He becomes the spokesperson for Napoleon, who has slowly withdrawn from speaking directly with the other animals. It is soon only Squealer who tells the animals any news or ordinance. This shows how the animals—like the Soviets—are only exposed to a single, highly biased source of information. Squealer is even able to convince Boxer, who at first believed that Snowball was not a traitor in league with Mr. Jones, to agree with Napoleon’s views.

Throughout George Orwell's story, Squealer serves as Napoleon’s greatest helper and spreader of propaganda. He pacifies the animals by encouraging them to sing *Beasts of England*, revising the seven commandments, and training the sheep to repeat new phrases to serve Napoleon's purposes. He also joins with Napoleon and the other pigs in acting like a human. He begins to walk on two legs, carry whips, and wear clothes. Even though this causes distress among the animals, Squealer had trained the sheep to bleat "four legs good, two legs better!" Finally, Squealer is the pig who writes the final formulation of the seven commandments of *Animalism*: “some animals are more equal than others.”

**Characters: Old Major**

**Extended Old Major Character Analysis**

Old Major is the oldest pig on the farm. He is also the prize pig of Mr. Jones’s and is greatly respected by the other animals at Manor Farm. In the novel's allegory of the Russian Revolution, Old Major likely represents the political economist Karl Marx, whose *Communist Manifesto* advocated for a revolution from the working class, and Vladimir Lenin, one of the main revolutionary leaders in the communist uprising.
Old Major has a strange dream and expresses the dream to the farm animals in a large gathering. There he says that the humans, such as Mr. Jones, are evil and gluttonous. He says that humans use the farm animals for their products and return no benefits to them. He claims that "Man is the only creature that consumes without producing." Old Major calls the animals to join together in saying, “All men are enemies. All animals are comrades.” In doing so he asks the animals to rebel against the tyranny of the human race so that the animals may make their labor their own. Old Major’s complaint allegorically points to the faults of Tsarist rule in the Russian Empire and the working classes’ wish for more control. After his speech, he leads the animals in a song called Beasts of England, causing an uproar, which wakes Mr. Jones. After Mr. Jones shoots into the darkness, the animals scatter and go to sleep. However, Old Major has sown the seeds of rebellion in the animals, launching the process of revolt.

While Old Major represents Karl Marx and his economic and political ideas—such as the equal sharing of labor and resources—Old Major also represents Vladimir Lenin, a Russian revolutionary leader who led the overthrow of Tsarist rule in Russia. Like Old Major, Lenin incited rebellion but died not long after establishing the Soviet Union and was unable to oversee the process of recreating society under Communist ideals. Before his death, Lenin expressed concern over the two very different men who would assume power: Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin, who are represented by Snowball and Napoleon, respectively.

Old Major places no animal above another. The other pigs take Old Major’s ideology and name it Animalism, which can be compared to socialism and communism. The pigs also write the tenets of Animalism onto the barn wall, putting Old Major’s ideas into writing, essentially codifying them into law. Last, the pigs rename the farm “Animal Farm,” which allegorically points to the renaming of the Russian Empire as the Soviet Union.

Old Major serves as a catalyst and influencer, but his role within the novel is brief. While his death does lead to the animals' revolution, it also creates a power struggle between Napoleon and Snowball. Although Old Major had an ideal dream for the animals, this dream becomes distorted by the struggles for power between the pigs. In the end, his dream is ruined by the farm’s return to the same dictatorial leadership that Mr. Jones held over it. George Orwell eschews a cynical comparison between the political turmoil in Soviet Russia and the failings of Animal Farm, showing that even an ideal dream such as Old Major’s can be destroyed by the corrupting nature of power.

Critical Essays: Sample Essay Outlines

Sample Analytical Paper Topics
The following paper topics are designed to test your understanding of the novel as a whole and to analyze important themes and literary devices. Following each question is a sample outline to help get you started.

Topic #1
“Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” This statement by Lord Acton, sent in a letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton on April 5, 1887, provides the basis for understanding the effects of power on the heads of state, and it furnishes insight into one of the main themes in the novel Animal Farm. Write a paper that shows how power affects the characters, the events and the outcome of the book.

Outline
I. Thesis Statement: Animal Farm is a historical novel, set in England but dealing with the events leading up to and after the Russian Revolution of 1917. It illustrates the idea expressed by Lord Acton that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. This abuse of power can be demonstrated by studying Napoleon’s actions in the book.
II. Power on Animal Farm before the Rebellion
A. Man has absolute power, taking without producing
B. Jones operates the Manor Farm with no regard for his animals
   1. Animals aren’t fed
   2. Animals are slaughtered
   3. No animal lives its life to a natural end
   4. Animal families are broken up by the sale of the young

III. The Meeting
A. Old Major holds the key to power: eliminate man
B. The pigs are the leaders even before the Rebellion
   1. They are more clever than the others
   2. They are assertive, sitting in the front at the meeting
   3. They teach themselves to read
   4. They are the organizers forming various animal committees.

IV. The Rebellion
A. Elimination of man creates a “power vacuum”
B. Napoleon, Snowball and Squealer become the new leaders that fill the vacuum
C. Pigs get special privileges—milk and apples

V. The Harvest
A. Pigs are the supervisors
B. They make the work schedules
C. They move into the harness room
D. Special privileges for the pigs are said to be necessary to keep Jones away

VI. The Windmill
A. Napoleon and Snowball vie for control of the farm
B. Napoleon eliminates the competition
   1. He uses the dogs to expel Snowball
   2. Squealer discredits Snowball
C. Napoleon assumes the power to run Animal Farm

VII. Changes on Animal Farm
A. Trade with the humans
   1. The arrival of Mr. Whymper
   2. The sale of a stack of hay
   3. The sale of part of the wheat crop
   4. Contract to sell eggs
B. Pigs move into farmhouse
C. Change in the Fourth Commandment concerning beds by the addition of the phrase “with sheets.”
D. An end to voting at the Sunday meetings
E. The pigs become responsible for making all the work decisions

VIII. Force Equals Power
A. Mutiny of the Hens who object to the sale of their eggs
   1. Starved out by Napoleon
   2. Ended by unleashing the dogs
B. The “Great Purge”
   1. Animal leaders opposed to Napoleon’s policies are killed by the dogs
2. Boxer comes under attack for questioning Napoleon’s condemnation of Snowball

IX. More Changes
A. Changes in the Sixth Commandment allow Napoleon to kill other animals by adding the words “without cause.”
B. Fifth Commandment allows the pigs to drink by the addition of the phrase “to excess” to the original Commandment

X. Napoleon Sells Boxer to the Knacker

XI. Return to “The Manor Farm”
A. Pigs are in complete control
B. They are the new aristocracy
   1. They do no physical labor
   2. Pigs carry whips
   3. School is built for the baby pigs
C. Animals can’t tell the difference between man and pig

Topic #2
Animal Farm presents a classic blueprint for an individual’s rise to power. It presents a step by step recipe for dictatorship and control. Write a paper that outlines the methods used by Napoleon and the pigs of their takeover of Animal Farm.

Outline
I. Thesis Statement: Animal Farm presents a recipe for dictatorship and control. The steps taken by Napoleon have been used by dictators from Julius Caesar to Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin to achieve their ambitions.

II. Organization
A. Develop a core of devout followers willing to die for the cause
B. Develop a belief system—Animalism
C. Identify a common enemy—man

III. Education
A. The pigs teach themselves to read and write
B. The other animals are kept ignorant

IV. Blind Obedience
A. The sheep—“Four legs good, two legs bad.”
B. The dogs—They are devoted to Napoleon
C. Boxer—“Napoleon is always right.”

V. Propaganda
A. Slanted and false information—Squealer’s ability to convince the animals—turn black into white
B. Rewriting history
C. Campaign against Snowball
D. Changing the rules
E. Changing the Seven Commandments

VI. Fear
A. The fear of Jones’s return
B. Fear of the dogs
VII. Eliminate the Competition  
A. Running Snowball off the farm  
B. Eliminating the troublemakers  
1. Killing the hen leaders of the mutiny  
2. Killing the pigs who protest the end of the meetings  

VIII. Scapegoating—Identify the cause of all the problems  
A. Man—Frederick and Pilkington  
B. Snowball—Jones’s agent  

IX. Force—Use of the dogs  

Topic #3  
Animal Farm is a study of a dream betrayed. It begins with hope and it ends with despair. And although some things seem to change, the important things remain the same. Life for the animals only gets worse. Write a report that shows how and why this statement is true.  

Outline  
I. Thesis Statement: Animal Farm is the study of a dream betrayed. It begins with hope for the animals and ends with their miserable lives getting even worse.  

II. Old Major’s Dream  
A. Man is the enemy  
B. Eliminate man and life will be better  
C. Work for the Rebellion  
D. Avoid becoming like man when the Rebellion is achieved  

III. The Rules for Utopia  
A. Animalism  
B. Equality  
C. The unalterable Seven Commandments  

IV. Cracks in the Dream  
A. Preferential treatment for the pigs  
B. Napoleon and Snowball struggle for power  
C. Division of labor  
1. The workers—Boxer and the others  
2. The supervisors—the pigs  

V. Abuses of Power  
A. The expulsion of Snowball  
B. Unleashing the dogs  
C. Creating fear  
D. Using force  

VI. Changes in the Rules  
A. Altering the unalterable Commandments  
B. Rewriting history for Napoleon’s personal glory  
C. Destroying Snowball’s contributions
VII. Selling out the Dream
A. Engaging in trade
B. Selling the eggs and murdering the chickens
C. Selling out Boxer for money to buy whiskey

VIII. The Pig-Men
A. Walking on two legs
B. Turning into men

Critical Essays: Suggested Essay Topics

Chapter I
1. Major cautions the animals not to resemble man. Yet by creating animals who speak and reason, Orwell has endowed them with two characteristics which are thought to separate people from humans. Why do you think he does this? Does the ability to speak or to reason lead to any of the vices that Major attributes to humans?

2. Research the life and work of Karl Marx. What were the fundamentals of his *Communist Manifesto* and how do they compare to the ideas expressed by Old Major in Animal Farm.

Chapter II
1. Research the life of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. What role did he play in the Russian Revolution of 1917 and what was his role in the government after the Revolution?

2. Research the life of Josef Stalin. What part did he play during the Revolution? What was his role in the Soviet government through World War II?

3. Research the life of Leon Trotsky. What was his role during the Revolution and after in the Soviet Union? What was his relationship to Lenin and Stalin?

Chapter III
1. Compare the different attitudes of Napoleon and Snowball in Chapter III of the novel. What do they reveal about each of the characters? How do the other animals respond to each of them?

2. Animal Farm is based on actual events which occurred in Russia, each animal or group of animals represents either historical figures or groups of people. By Chapter III, differences in personality and intelligence are established among the animals. How does this relate to Orwell’s portrayal of people? Do you think he is suggesting that certain kinds of people are more intelligent or capable than others?

Chapter IV
1. Research the Russian Civil War of 1918-1920. What part did the Allied Forces (Great Britain, France, the United States) and Japan play in this war? How did the foreign invasion of Russia affect the outcome of the war and the Communist Party’s rise to power?

2. In Chapter IV we learn that news of the animals’ rebellion has spread to neighboring farms, the inhabitants of which are “normal” human characters. They are not surprised by the fact that the animals can talk and reason. Does this make the novel seem more realistic or more fantastical? Does this make it more or less powerful as a political allegory?

Chapter V
1. Trace the events leading to Napoleon’s seizing complete control of the farm, and discuss the different
tactics that he uses to succeed.

2. Mollie chooses to live a life of comfortable slavery rather than make the sacrifices necessary in a communal society. Is this a wise choice? What is the significance of her leaving, both in the world of the novel, and considering that the novel is a political allegory based on actual events?

Chapter VI
1. It has become evident in this chapter that all of the animals are not equal, and life on the farm is settling into familiar hierarchies and oppressions. What do you think this says about Orwell’s beliefs about human nature? Could this happen in our society?

2. In Chapter VI Squealer plays a most important role in Napoleon’s push to become the dictator of Animal Farm. What does Squealer do to enable Napoleon to achieve this goal? What was the significance of propaganda, the management of information and the alteration of history, in Stalin’s rise to power?

Chapter VII
1. The murders and purges which occur in Chapter VII are brutal and terrifying, yet the animals are quick to forget about them and to accept explanations. Explain how the pigs can make words appear more real than the actual murders. How does this have frightening applications in reality, both historically and today?

2. Clover seems to be the only animal to suspect that things on Animal Farm aren’t the way they had planned. Why doesn’t she communicate her suspicions to the others? Why doesn’t she consider a rebellion and why is she still willing to follow Napoleon?

Chapter VIII
1. The theme of deception is prevalent in this chapter. Napoleon is tricked with phony bank notes. What qualities in the animals make them vulnerable to deception? Which “human vices” does deception utilize?

Chapter IX
1. Old Major’s view of the future was a bleak one for the animals under Jones. He even predicted that Boxer would be sold to the knacker. His dream was for a utopian society without man and his evil ways. Discuss Old Major’s view of the future and show how and why he was both correct and mistaken in his thinking. How does this relate to historical events?

2. Boxer’s cruel death is a result of Napoleon’s tyrannical rule. Although some of the animals are smart enough to recognize that they are living under tyranny, they do not act. Do you think Orwell is passing judgement on the animals for not trying to change their situation? Does knowledge of a crime not coupled with action constitute complicity in the crime?

Chapter X
1. Compare Manor Farm at the beginning of the story with Manor Farm in the last chapter. What changes have taken place and what things have remained the same? What, in your opinion, is better for the animals and why?

2. Assume that Napoleon was the pig exiled from Animal Farm, and that Snowball became its leader. With your knowledge of Snowball’s ideals and beliefs, discuss how you think the animals would have done under his leadership. What do you think would have been different and why?
Critical Essays: Analysis

Of George Orwell’s six novels, the two most famous, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949), were both written during the decade preceding his death. This animal fable is a political allegory of the Russian Revolution. The allegory, as various critics have demonstrated, has exact counterparts to the events and leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution, the October Revolution, and the development of the Soviet Union into a dictatorship under the control of Joseph Stalin.

The animals are led by the teachings of old Major, whose historical counterpart is Karl Marx. Snowball, the theoretician, represents Leon Trotsky, and it is Snowball who organizes the rebellion against Farmer Jones, who represents capitalism. Another swine, Napoleon, representing Joseph Stalin, discredits Snowball with the help of his propagandist, Squealer. Napoleon organizes a counterrevolution with the help of his guard dogs (the state police or palace guards, in terms of the allegory) and drives Snowball into exile (as happened with Trotsky), then plays one neighbor, Frederick (Hitler), against the other, Pilkington (a Churchillian Tory), paralleling the events of World War II.

Orwell explained his motive for writing the book in a special preface he wrote for the Ukrainian edition. He intended to expose the transformation of the Soviet Union from Socialism “into a hierarchical state, in which the rulers have no more reason to give up their power than any other ruling class.” Ultimately, the democratic principles of Animalism as defined by old Major are redefined as the totalitarian principles of Napoleon, and the Seven Commandments are changed to accommodate Napoleon’s reign of terror, particularly the two words added at the end of one central commandment to make it read, “No animal shall kill another animal without cause.”

This barnyard fantasy demonstrates how an ideal state founded on humane principles easily can be corrupted by the real world. Brutal tyrants driven by greed and ambition may lie and cheat to achieve their own selfish ends. The novel is distinguished by its clarity of style and the apparent simplicity of its narration, which has made it a classic that can be read on one level by younger readers for its story content and on other, more sophisticated levels by those interested in its political thesis. It has become a model of political allegory, a small masterpiece that speaks eloquently to the turmoil of the twentieth century.

Critical Essays: Critical Context

*Animal Farm* was George Orwell’s first book to achieve financial success and has been one of his most critically acclaimed books, having been called his finest work, a masterpiece, and a classic. Although it has occasionally been criticized for the predictability of its satire and its ideological muddle, there is little doubt that it is the best-known and most widely read allegory in twentieth century literature.

As a beast fable, it takes its place in a long line of such works, beginning with the fables of Aesop and continuing up to such modern fables as Richard Adams’ *Watership Down* (1972). As a bitter satire on the human race, it is in the tradition of Jonathan Swift and Mark Twain. Its anti-utopian message anticipates the even more bleak and barren social landscape painted by Orwell in his subsequent fantasy of future society, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949).

Because of the classic simplicity of its structure, the genius of its conception, and the centrality in the twentieth century of its political theme, *Animal Farm* is destined to remain a minor classic of its genre. It speaks both to the human aspiration for perfectibility and freedom and to human despair at the inherent limitations of life.
Critical Essays: Critical Evaluation

*Animal Farm* was written soon after George Orwell resigned from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in 1943, while he worked as the literary editor for the *Tribune*, in London. He had not written a novel during the three years he was with the BBC and was having an extremely hard time writing at all, with World War II in full force. *Animal Farm* was completed in four months. It was one year later that he found someone who would publish it and almost another year before it was finally offered to the public. *Animal Farm* and the book he wrote following it, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), are Orwell’s most highly acclaimed works.

An anti-Soviet satire, the book was ahead of its time. The U.S.S.R. was fighting with the allied forces in World War II, and the book was seen as an attack on the U.S.S.R. and Joseph Stalin. After World War II, the book was published. The political situation was different then, and *Animal Farm* appeared just as the Cold War was beginning.

Orwell called *Animal Farm* “the first . . . in which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole.” *Animal Farm* was a huge success as soon as it was published. It was established as a modern classic almost immediately. A very short book, written simply and fluently, it is a drastic departure from anything else Orwell had or would produce.

*Animal Farm* abounds with allegory, beginning with Old Major, who recalls Karl Marx. Every character and event may be seen as symbolic of historical Russian figures and events between the years 1917 and 1943. Orwell said the book’s purpose was “the destruction of the Soviet myth.” The flag raised by the animals, with hoof and horn, is similar to the Russian flag of hammer and sickle. Napoleon is generally likened to Stalin, and the countenance and actions of Snowball are thought to resemble those of Leon Trotsky. The name Snowball recalls Trotsky’s white hair and beard, and possibly, too, that he crumbled under Stalin’s opposition. The event in which Snowball is chased away from the farm is similar to the expulsion of Trotsky from Russia in 1929. The book is written with such sophistication and subtlety, however, that a reader unaware of Russian history might very well see it as an animal story only. Moreover, reading the book strictly to find reference to Russian history misses an important point: Orwell said the book “is intended as a satire on dictatorship in general.” The name of the ruling pig, “Napoleon,” is a reminder that there have been dictators outside Russia. Not Stalin in particular, but totalitarianism is the enemy Orwell exposes.

The problem Orwell addresses is how to combine power with ideals. How do the oppressed who rise above their oppressors manage to keep from becoming like the oppressors? With this book, Orwell gives an instance of the slave coming to resemble the master after overthrowing him. There is not a happy ending. From the beginning of the story, the dogs are against the rats, thus foreshadowing an animal government in which social justice will not be acquired.

**Animal Farm, George Orwell: Introduction**

*Animal Farm* George Orwell

See also 1984 Criticism and George Orwell Criticism.

(Pseudonym of Eric Arthur Blair) English novelist, essayist, critic, journalist, and memoirist.

The following entry presents criticism of Orwell’s short novel *Animal Farm*, which was published in 1945.

*Animal Farm* (1945) is considered one of Orwell's most popular and enduring works. Utilizing the form of the animal fable, the short novel chronicles the story of a group of barnyard animals that revolt against their
human masters in an attempt to create a utopian state. On a larger scale, commentators widely view *Animal Farm* as an allegory for the rise and decline of socialism in the Soviet Union and the emergence of the totalitarian regime of Joseph Stalin. Critics regard the story as an insightful and relevant exploration of human nature as well as political systems and social behavior. After its translation into Russian, it was banned by Stalin's government in all Soviet-ruled areas.

**Plot and Major Characters**

The story opens as the barnyard animals of Manor Farm discuss a revolution against their master, the tyrannical and drunken farmer Mr. Jones. Old Major, an aging boar, gives a rousing speech in the barn urging his fellow animals to get rid of Jones and rely on their own efforts to keep the farm running and profitable. Identified as the smartest animals in the group, the pigs—led by the idealistic Snowball and the ruthless Napoleon—successfully plan and lead the revolution. After Jones and his wife are forced from the farm, the animals look forward to a society where all animals are equal and live without the threat of oppression. But soon, the pigs begin to assume more power and adjust the rules to suit their own needs. They create and implement an ideological system, complete with jingoistic songs and propaganda as well as strict rules. Once partners and friends, Napoleon and Snowball disagree on several issues regarding the governing of the farm. Snowball's attempted coup is repelled by a pack of wild dogs—controlled by Napoleon—who also enforce punishment against the other animals when they oppose or question Napoleon's rule. Before long, the pigs separate themselves from the other animals on the farm and begin to indulge in excessive drinking and other decadent behavior. Under the protection of the dogs, they consolidate their iron-fisted rule and begin eliminating any animal they consider useless or a threat to their power. *Animal Farm* ends with the majority of the animals in the same position as in the beginning of the story: disenfranchised and oppressed under a corrupt and brutal governing system.

**Major Themes**

Critics note that like many classical animal fables, *Animal Farm* is an allegory—in this case, of the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalin's tyrannical government. It is generally accepted that Orwell constructed his story to reflect this purpose: Manor Farm represents Russia; Mr. Jones is the tsar; the pigs represent the Bolsheviks, the bureaucratic power elite; Snowball is Leon Trotsky, who lost a power struggle with Stalin; Napoleon is Stalin; and Napoleon's dogs are Stalin's secret police, known as the GPU. The corruption of absolute power is a major theme in *Animal Farm*. As most of the animals hope to create a utopian system based on the equality of all animals, the pigs—through greed and ruthlessness—manipulate and intimidate the other animals into subservience. Critics note that Orwell was underlining a basic tenet of human nature: some will always exist who are more ambitious, ruthless, and willing to grab power than the rest of society and some within society will be willing to give up power for security and structure. In that sense *Animal Farm* is regarded as a cautionary tale, warning readers of the pitfalls of revolution.

**Critical Reception**

*Animal Farm* is regarded as a successful blend of political satire and animal fable. Completed in 1944, the book remained unpublished for more than a year because British publishing firms declined to offend the country's Soviet allies. Finally the small leftist firm of Secker & Warburg printed it, and the short novel became a critical and popular triumph. It has been translated into many languages but was banned by Soviet authorities throughout the Soviet-controlled regions of the world because of its political content. As a result of the book's resounding commercial success, Orwell was freed from financial worries for the first time in his life. A few years after its publication, it attracted critical controversy because of its popularity amongst anticommunist factions in the United States; Orwell was alarmed that these forces were using his short novel as propaganda for their political views. In the subsequent years, *Animal Farm* has been interpreted from feminist, Marxist, political, and psychological perspectives, and it is perceived as an important and relevant
book in the post-World War II literary canon. Moreover, it is considered one of Orwell's most lasting achievements.

**Animal Farm, George Orwell: Principal Works**

*Animal Farm* (short novel) 1945


*Down and Out in Paris and London* (nonfiction) 1933

*Burmese Days* (novel) 1934

*A Clergyman's Daughter* (novel) 1935

*Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (novel) 1936

*The Road to Wigan Pier* (nonfiction) 1937

*Homage to Catalonia* (nonfiction) 1938

*Coming Up for Air* (novel) 1939

*Inside the Whale, and Other Essays* (essays) 1940

*The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius* (essays) 1941

*Critical Essays* (essays) 1946; also published as *Dickens, Dali, and Others* 1946

*James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution* (nonfiction) 1946

*The English People* (essays) 1947

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* (novel) 1949

*Shooting an Elephant, and Other Essays* (essays) 1950

*England Your England, and Other Essays* (essays) 1953; also published as *Such, Such Were the Joys* 1953

*The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell.* 4 vols. (essays, letters, and diaries) 1968

**Criticism: Times Literary Supplement (review date 25 August 1945)**


*[In the following review, the reviewer considers Orwell’s views on revolution and dictatorship as expressed in Animal Farm.]*
Animals, as Swift well knew, make admirable interpreters of the satiric intention, and Mr. George Orwell has turned his farm into a persuasive demonstration of the peculiar trick the whip wrested from the hands of a tyrant has of turning itself into a lash of scorpions and attaching itself to the new authority. The animals are naturally pleased with themselves when they rise in revolutionary fervour and chase the drunken farmer off his own land, and their enthusiasm survives the prospect of the labour and discipline that lie before them if the farm is to be properly worked. From the first, however, there are inequalities of brain and muscle, and the pigs gradually assume the intellectual leadership. The revolution changes its shape and form, but lip-service is still paid to its first precepts; if they become more and more difficult to reconcile with the dictatorial policies of the large Berkshire boar, Napoleon, such a loyal and simple creature as Boxer, the carthorse, is ready to blame his own stupidity rather than the will to power working in those who have the means to power in their trotters.

Even more powerful than Napoleon is Squealer, Napoleon's publicity agent, who justifies every reactionary decree by arguing that it is really in the animals' own interest and persuades them that to add to the seventh commandment of the revolution, “All animals are equal,” the rider “but some animals are more equal than others,” is not to tamper with the principle of equality. Dictatorship is evil, argues Mr. Orwell with a pleasant blend of irony and logic while busily telling his fairy story, not only in that it corrupts the characters of those who dictate, but in that it destroys the intelligence and understanding of those dictated to until there is no truth anywhere and fear and bewilderment open the way for tyranny ferocious and undisguised. Mr. Orwell's animals exist in their own right, and his book is as entertaining as narrative as it is apposite in satire [Animal Farm].

Criticism: C. M. Woodhouse (essay date 6 August 1954)


[In the following essay, Woodhouse discusses Animal Farm as a fairy tale.]

In the sixth volume of The Second World War, Sir Winston Churchill has described the scene at Potsdam in July, 1945, when from a little distance he watched President Truman tell Marshal Stalin of the great event that was to take place in the following month; the latest triumph of western genius, the masterpiece that was destined so profoundly to affect the history of the world. The Marshal showed polite interest, the mildest of curiosity that barely rose above the level of indifference, and no comprehension whatever. Sir Winston was sure, he tells us,

that he had no idea of the significance of what he was being told. … If he had had the slightest idea of the revolution in world affairs which was in progress his reactions would have been obvious. … But his face remained gay and genial. …

According to President Truman, he did not even ask a single question.

What Marshal Stalin was being told about was not, though as a matter of mere chronological chance it could have been, the imminent publication of a little book called Animal Farm, which appeared on the bookstalls in the same month in which the atomic bomb hit Hiroshima and Nagasaki. No doubt the Marshal's reaction would have been much the same if it had been; and perhaps—though this is still a very much longer shot—his reaction would have been just as inappropriate. It was nothing but an arbitrary coincidence that brought these two events together in August, 1945, though they took almost equally long to prepare: George Orwell's whole life was spent in preparation of Animal Farm, and the text itself bears the dates “November, 1943—February, 1944,” months when the Manhattan project was also moving towards a climax. But it was a coincidence that must have given Orwell a sad, ironic satisfaction: for there are those who have argued that, looked at in a wider historical context, the first atomic bombs were aimed at a quite different political target which had
nothing to do with the Japanese war; and there are others who have convinced themselves that *Animal Farm* was also aimed at a political target—the same one. Orwell himself might perhaps have admitted to agreeing with both interpretations; but he would also surely have argued that his personal enemy was no single individual or government—it was the system of the world capable of producing and using atomic bombs. In this case the coincidence of August, 1945, was even more remarkable. Disciples of Professor Toynbee yet unborn may well point to it as one of history's most striking conjunctions of challenge and response.

These are early days to claim that the pen is mightier than the atomic bomb; but Orwell would not have flinched from the confrontation. It is not much more than one hundred years since Bulwer Lytton discovered for us that the pen is mightier than the sword, already then an obsolescent weapon, and even that only Beneath the rule of men entirely great, a sufficiently rare state of affairs. In the last hundred years enough has happened to justify us in believing that the pen's response to the challenge of force is at least not ludicrous and hopeless; indeed, it is perhaps the one serious hope we have. Certainly it would not have seemed ludicrous to Sir Winston Churchill to have spoken in the context of 1945 of a book instead of a bomb, for the pen has always been the first weapon in his armoury; and with it he won the most crucial victory in the history of our race, in the battle that was joined with the words: “We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be …” Sir Winston had the advantage, it is true (though it is also true that he furnished that advantage himself), of proving Bulwer's epigram in the exact conditions required by Bulwer's qualifying line. George Orwell had come to doubt before he died (at any rate, when he wrote *1984*) whether those conditions would ever be seen on earth again. But there is no doubt whatever that it was a purpose of the same kind that Orwell was setting himself to achieve by his writings, and especially when he wrote *Animal Farm*.

If the book itself had left any doubt of the matter, Orwell dispelled it in an article which he called “Why I Write” a few years later:

> Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism … *Animal Farm* was the first book in which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole.

In the criticisms of some of his contemporaries which Orwell wrote even earlier than *Animal Farm*, his recurrent theme was their failure to protest against the world they lived in. This is the whole burden of his longest and most serious piece of literary criticism, written in 1940 on Henry Miller; and he called it “Inside the Whale” to illustrate this same point, that Miller had failed in his duty to protest, had “performed the essential Jonah act of allowing himself to be swallowed, remaining passive, accepting.” In the same essay he criticized a line of Mr. Auden's poem “Spain”:

> The conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder,

with the comment that: “it could only be written by a person to whom murder is at most a word. Personally I would not speak so lightly of murder.” It is odd, then, to find that in *Animal Farm* he does speak just so lightly of murder; that in fact he places on record a score of murders without a measurable flicker of emotion in excess of Mr. Auden's. It is odder still, at first sight, to find *Animal Farm* sub-titled “A Fairy Story”; for we are accustomed to think of the fairy-story as the escapist form of literature *par excellence*.

In what sense can *Animal Farm* properly be called a fairy-story? It tells how the animals captured the Manor Farm from its drunken incompetent farmer; how they changed its name to Animal Farm and established it as a model community in which all animals were equal; how two pigs, Napoleon and Snowball, gained control of the revolution and fought each other for the mastery; how the neighbouring humans reacted and counter-attacked and were beaten off; how Napoleon ousted Snowball and declared him a traitor; how economic necessity compelled the animals to compromise with the human system; how Napoleon negotiated
an alliance with the human enemy and exploited it to establish his personal dictatorship; how the farm learned
that “some animals are more equal than others” and their last state was as bad as their first; and how the ruling
pigs became daily more and more indistinguishable from their human neighbours. There is little here at first
sight that we associate with the fairy-story: there is no element of magic, once the initial convention of
zoomorphism is accepted; there is no happy ending, except one for the villains; there is no Prince Charming or
maiden in distress or sentimental interest of any kind, beyond the personal tragedy of the cart-horse Boxer and
the frivolous vanity of the white mare Mollie. The fairy-story is an elastic category—Andrew Lang included A
Voyage to Lilliput in the very first of his coloured fairy-books; and certainly not all the conventional
ingredients are essential to a fairy-story. Yet it would be natural to suppose that at least some of them ought to
be found there; and at first sight it is tempting to conclude that Orwell wrote his sub-title with his tongue in
his cheek, and to read Animal Farm with our tongues in ours. And then it is impossible to understand why the
book has had such a world-wide appeal to human sentiment in the past nine years, for books written in a mere
spirit of teasing do not.

In fact Orwell was a deep lover of words who never consciously misused them. If he said he had written a
fairy-story with a political purpose, we cannot lightly suppose he spoke lightly. A political purpose suggests
some kind of moral, and that suggests rather the fable, the medium of Aesop or La Fontaine or even Thurber.
There have been fairy-stories purporting to have morals before now: Rimsky-Korsakov called Le Coq d'Or “a
fairy-tale with a moral,” though no one except possibly the Russian Imperial Censor (who objected to the
original version of the opera as subversive) has ever been able to detect what it was. There is something
freakish about the idea, anyway, which makes it seem unlikely to stir the emotions of the common reader; and
it is impossible to attach a moral in any familiar sense to Animal Farm, where wickedness ends in triumph and
virtue is utterly crushed. There is perhaps a moral for farmers: don't take to drink and let your animals get out
of hand; but, even so, the villains will be comforted to find that everything comes out all right for them in the
end. For the downtrodden animals there is nothing but misery, cruelty and injustice; and in place of a moral
there is only the tragic chorus of the donkey Benjamin, who held that “life would go on as it had always gone
on—that is, badly.” This is not like the kind of moral that tells us to look before we leap or not to count our
boobies before they are hatched. For the animals never had a chance to choose, and if they had it would have
made no difference.

It is just this sense of purposeless cruelty, though, that gives the clue to Orwell's purpose, as well as to his
deadly serious reason for calling Animal Farm a fairy-story. The point about fairy-stories is that they are
written not merely without a moral but without a morality. They take place in a world beyond good and evil,
where people (or animals) suffer or prosper for reasons unconnected with ethical merit—for being ugly or
beautiful respectively, for instance, or for even more unsatisfactory reasons. A little girl sets out to do a good
deed for her grandmother and gets gobbled up by a wolf; a young rogue escapes the gallows (and gets an old
Jew hanged instead) by his talent on the fiddle; dozens of young princes die horrible deaths trying to get
through the thorn-hedge that surrounds the Sleeping Beauty, just because they had the bad luck to be born
before her hundred-year curse expired; and one young prince, no better or worse, no handsomer or uglier than
the rest, gets through merely because he has the good luck to arrive just as the hundred years are up; and so on
and so on. Even when Grimm's step-mothers are called “wicked,” it is well to remember that in German their
Bosheit is viciousness and bad temper, not moral guilt. For all this is related by the fairy-story tellers without
approval or disapproval, without a glimmer of subjective feeling, as though their pens were dipped in surgical
spirit to sterilize the microbes of emotion. They never seek to criticize or moralize, to protest or plead or
persuade; and if they have an emotional impact on the reader, as the greatest of them do, that is not intrinsic to
the stories. They would indeed only weaken that impact in direct proportion as soon as they set out to achieve
it. They move by not seeking to move; almost, it seems, by seeking not to move.

The fairy-story that succeeds is in fact not a work of fiction at all; or at least no more so than, say, the opening
chapters of Genesis. It is a transcription of a view of life into terms of highly simplified symbols; and when it
succeeds in its literary purpose, it leaves us with a deep indefinable feeling of truth; and when it succeeds also,
as Orwell set out to do, in a political as well as an artistic purpose, it leaves us also with a feeling of rebelliousness against the truth revealed. It does so not by adjuring us to rebel, but by the barest economy of plain description that language can achieve; and lest it should be thought guilty of a deliberate appeal to the emotions, it uses for characters not rounded, three-dimensional human beings that develop psychologically through time, but fixed stereotypes, puppets, silhouettes—or animals. (A specially good instance is The Adventures of Pinocchio: for Pinocchio was in fact a wooden puppet; and when at last, by acquiring a heart and a conscience, he became a little boy instead, at that exact point, with a sure instinct, Collodi brought the whole matter to a full-stop, since he was writing a fairy-tale and not a didactic children's romance.) In these respects Animal Farm is after all correctly labelled a fairy-story. Its message (which is by no means a moral) is that of all the great fairy-stories: “Life is like that—take it or leave it.” And because it is written by a poet, our reaction is like that of another poet, Edna St. Vincent Millay, to another (not so very different) situation:

I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.

To argue thus is to class Orwell among the poets; and that is not absurd. It happens that when he wrote in verse, the results were not particularly distinguished. The song in Animal Farm, “Beasts of England,” is not a fair example, since it was no more intended to be poetry than “God Save the Queen”: it is in fact a happy example of what Professor Collingwood, in his aesthetic theory, used to call “magic art.” But there are a few examples in Orwell's other works (in the post-humous collection of essays, England Your England, for example) which do purport to be poetry, and as such fail. Orwell was a poet who happened to find his medium in prose; a poet not so much in his means of expression as in the nature of his vision, which could strip the sprawling tangle of the world around him down to its core with the simplicity of a timeless flash of intuition (the sort of intuition enjoyed by Dionysiacs, according to Plato, or by epileptics, according to Dostoevsky, or by devotees of mescalin, according to Mr. Aldous Huxley); and which then turned deliberately to the most ascetically plain tools of expression to communicate it. He was the kind of prose-writer whom poets accepted as one of themselves, as Shelley accepted Herodotus, Plato, Livy, Plutarch, Bacon, and Rousseau among the poets he was defending in A Defence of Poetry. And Shelley, who may be supposed to have known his business, would surely have been glad to accept a writer who so confidently supported, and strove so stubbornly to substantiate, his own claim that “poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.”

Is the claim justified of Orwell? Clearly, not yet; and even for the future, only by offering precarious hostages to fortune. But everything has been a bit precarious since August, 1945, when Animal Farm and its formidable twin first saw the light of day together. Which of the two has so far made the biggest impression—there is no blinding or deafening ourselves to that; but Orwell's still, small voice has also made itself continuously heard in its own quiet, persistent, almost nagging way. Already there have been momentary intervals in the nuclear uproar of the mid-twentieth century when its steady, reassuring murmur has come through. Already in a score of countries and a dozen languages Animal Farm has made its peculiar mark in translation and in strip-cartoon (one of the most appropriate of modern vehicles for a fairy-story); and the political flavour of its message at least, whether rightly or wrongly particularized, has not been lost in the transcription. Already Orwell has launched the “long haul” of wresting back some of those cardinal, once meaningful, words like “equality,” “peace,” “democracy,” which have been fraudulently converted into shibboleths of political warfare; and already it is impossible for anyone who has read Animal Farm (as well as for many who have not) to listen to the demagogues' clap-trap about equality without also hearing the still, small voice that adds: “… but some are more equal than others.”

There is a long way to go yet; but there is a long time ahead, too. Animal Farm will not, like Uncle Tom's Cabin, contribute to changing history within a decade or so. But it probably has as good a chance as any contemporary work of winning its author a place—unacknowledged, of course—among Shelley's legislators of the world. And even if the chance does not come off, Orwell has, anyway, two strings to his bow: he is the author of 1984 as well as of Animal Farm. If the worst comes to the worst and he fails as a legislator, he is then virtually certain of immortality as a prophet.
Criticism: Timothy Cook (essay date winter 1984)


[In the following essay, Cook investigates the influence of Sinclair's *The Jungle* on *Animal Farm*.]

Although George Orwell tells us that the idea of *Animal Farm* came from his actual experience of seeing a small boy easily controlling a huge carthorse with a whip,¹ various scholars have suggested literary sources or precedents for his fable. These include a number of Kipling's short stories,² the fourth book of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and, least plausibly, a section of John Gower's tedious Latin complaint *Vox Clamantis*, cited by Sean O'Casey, who makes his dislike of *Animal Farm* and his scorn for those who think it original very clear.³

Orwell was of course far too well read to have claimed “originality,” in the narrow sense of his having been the first person to make use of the human-animal relationship for political or social commentary. As an Eton scholar he would have known that the tradition goes back at least as far as Aristophanes' *Birds*. More importantly, we know from his own writings how much he admired Swift, in particular *Gulliver's Travels*, where he would have found the relationship between man and horse devastatingly reversed; indeed it is interesting that Orwell felt the Houyhnhnm nation had reached “the highest stage of totalitarian organization,” the stage when conformity becomes so general that there is no need for a police force.⁴ In other words, this nation has achieved an equine version of the ideal Party that Orwell was to make O'Brien look forward to in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The boot he imagines stamping forever on the human face is foreshadowed by the unshod hoof that keeps the Yahoos in permanent subjection. In this context the Houyhnhnms' simplified language, although not deliberately created, can be seen as a parallel to Newspeak in making certain thoughts impossible.

The resemblances between *Animal Farm* and Houyhnhnm land are superficial. The latter may or may not be, in Orwell's words, “about as good as [sic] Utopia as Swift could construct,”⁵ but it certainly can be seen as one, whereas *Animal Farm* of course presents a version of something that has happened in the real world. Indeed, underlying O'Casey's dismissal of Orwell's importance as a writer and his scorn of critics who compare Orwell with Swift is his outraged reaction to what was really “original” in *Animal Farm*, Orwell's effective development of his farm analogy into a detailed and devastating exposé of the betrayal of the October Revolution in Russia, a revolution that for O'Casey and other Party members was still a glorious, untarnished achievement.

Like all myths about ideal societies, the myth of the socialist utopia began to lose its attractiveness once an opportunity to establish it had arisen. Eleven years before Soviet Russia had come into being, however, it was possible to believe with much more fervor in the myth's validity as the solution to man's miseries. When Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* was published in 1906, readers, depressed by his grimly vivid account of the sufferings of exploited Lithuanian immigrants in Chicago's stockyards, could still thrill to the revolutionary message of the socialist speakers and theorists in its closing pages. Orwell certainly knew *The Jungle*, and I would argue that *Animal Farm* owes more of a debt to Sinclair's best-known novel than it does to any preceding beast fable or animal story. In certain respects it can be seen as his answer to the hopeful message of the earlier book, though it is doubtful that he consistently intended it as such. Although he admired Upton Sinclair for his grasp of facts, especially in *The Jungle*, he criticized Sinclair's novels as little more than political tracts with nonexistent plots and unconvincing characters.⁶ At one point he even goes so far as to dismiss Sinclair, among other writers, as “a dull windbag.”⁷
Windy, in the sense that its rhetoric is overblown and that it makes the same points over and over again, *The Jungle* certainly is, but most people would find the first part, the misadventures of Jurgis Rudkus and his family as they struggle to survive amid the Chicago slaughterhouses and packing factories, anything but dull. Of that first part Sinclair wrote in his *Autobiography*, “I wrote with tears and anguish, pouring into the pages all the pain that life had meant to me. Externally the story had to do with a family of stockyard workers but internally it was the story of my own family.” Such passionate self-identification of the struggling young writer with his central characters has helped to keep *The Jungle* constantly in print to the present day, making the story carry more conviction than we find in much of Sinclair's later documentary fiction. It certainly made a great impression on Orwell, for he says of the Lithuanian family's experiences that they are “truly moving.”

The book is of course no beast fable, though the man-beast comparison is implicit from the start in its title. Like *Animal Farm*, *The Jungle* is written to demolish a myth, but in this case it is the opposing, and older, one of America as the promised land, the capitalist Zion, the myth enshrined in the inscription on the Statue of Liberty. This myth had brought Jurgis from his native, semifeudal Lithuania, ironically czarist-Russian dominated, to a system in which he soon finds himself as helpless, as uncomprehending, as the hogs queuing to be turned into the products of the huge Durham pork factory.

In his powerful description of the mechanical pork-making process, Sinclair stresses the individuality and the human qualities of the hogs, right up to the moment when, despite his “protest, his screams,” each is seized by a fate that “cut his throat and watched him gasp out his life.” Jurgis Rudkus, the strong, naïve peasant who is the central figure of Sinclair's novel, turns away from the scene of slaughter with the words “Dieve—but I'm glad I'm not a hog!” He has only just arrived in Chicago, and that very morning he has been given his first job in the factory. Soon he will be married to his sweetheart, Ona Lukoszaite, and they will live in an apparently new house bought on credit, but by that time he will have begun to realize how little he matters in his new country.

Later, destitute, bereft of wife and children, he finds himself at a political meeting listening to the message of a speaker calling for the socialist revolution. The speech he hears is lengthy and highly emotional, contrasting the lot of the workers being “ground up for profits in the world wide mill of economic might” with that of the few thousand bosses living in their “palaces” on “the products of the labor of brain and muscle” of the whole of society. It ends with a stirring appeal to the audience of working men, twice compared to beasts of burden, to look forward to the moment when the great giant of oppressed Labor will break free from his chains (*J*, pp. 356-366). This final vision brings the audience to its feet in wild enthusiasm. A few moments later, when someone starts singing the *Marseillaise*, and the whole crowd excitedly joins in, Jurgis is stirred as never before in his life. He seeks to learn more about socialism from the orator and is referred to a Polish tailor under whose guidance he learns about the system for which he has been working:

To Jurgis the packers had been equivalent to fate; Ostrinski showed him that they were the Beef Trust … Jurgis recollected how, when he had first come to Packingtown, he had stood and watched the hog-killing and thought how cruel and savage it was, and come away congratulating himself that he was not a hog; now his new acquaintance showed him that a hog was just what he had been—one of the packers' hogs.

(*J*, p. 376)

These passages could well have provided Orwell, consciously or subconsciously, first with the idea of choosing pigs as the animals to lead his revolution and then with the essential elements in the rhetoric of old Major's speech, through which at the start of *Animal Farm* the animals are inspired to rebel against their human masters. Indeed, Sinclair's hog with his individual character, protesting and screaming as he gasps out his life, is surely the prototype of the young porkers who (Major tells them) “will scream your lives out at the block within a year,” just as the singing of the *Marseillaise* at the end of the socialist's speech seems to foreshadow the singing of the animal liberation hymn *Beasts of England* when Major finishes his. Jurgis, the
exploited “packer's hog,” is moved by the occasion to take charge of his own destiny, just as the Manor Farm animals are, under the pigs' leadership.

Although some might feel that the ideas in these sections of Sinclair's book were readily available in any number of political tracts, Orwell's familiarity with *The Jungle* makes it possible that he had these passages, with their man-hog comparisons and their references to workers as beasts of burden, at the back of his mind when working on *Animal Farm*, and that his fable is in part an ironic and disillusioned response to the earlier work's propagandist enthusiasm, showing how cruelly deceptive the hopes of a socialist heaven on earth can be; indeed *Animal Farm* may be, in this sense, actually a sequel to *The Jungle*.

This possibility is greatly strengthened when we look at an earlier part of the book, where Jurgis and his family struggle to survive in Packingtown, ignorant of the forces that are controlling their destinies. Jurgis is one of the two strongest members of the group; the other is his cousin, the broad-shouldered, good-natured Marija, who has “a broad Slavic face with prominent red cheeks. When she opens her mouth it is tragical, but you cannot help thinking of a horse” (J, p. 8). Sinclair uses this image again in describing how the forelady at Marija's first job is attracted by her “combination of a face full of boundless good nature and the muscles of a dray horse” (J, p. 50). Later, when she loses her first job at the canning factory, she is again seen as “a human horse” (J, p. 123).

Jurgis also is described in terms of his strength, his “mighty shoulders and giant hands,” his “broad back” and his “rolling muscles.” The two cousins are the mainstays of their family and, until in one way or another they fall foul of the system, are valued by their bosses as workers. Indeed work is Jurgis' answer to every crisis. At the start of the novel Jurgis and his child-wife Ona discover that their *veselija* or wedding party is going to cost much more than expected because of swindles over the drink and because of the various subterfuges used by other members of the Lithuanian community, corrupted by residence in America, to avoid paying their traditional share of the costs. He turns to his wife and reassures her,

“Little one,” he said in a low voice “do not worry—it will not matter to us. We will pay them all somehow. I will work harder.” That was always what Jurgis said. Ona had grown used to it as the solution of all difficulties—“I will work harder.”

(J, p. 19)

When Ona discovers that the house a smooth-talking agent has persuaded them to buy, beside being hardly worth the money they are spending on it, is going to cost them more in interest than they can afford, Jurgis' response is similar: “Jurgis took it stolidly. He had made up his mind to it by this time. It was part of fate; they would “manage it somehow. He made his usual answer, ‘I will work harder’” (J, p. 83). When eventually he is sent to prison for assaulting the trucker's boss whose mistress Ona has become, he is regarded by Duane, the cynical safe-breaker who is his cell companion, as “a sort of working mule” (J, p. 193).

In the giant Jurgis and the dray horse-like Marija, as they battle on stoically and uncomprehendingly in an alien world in the early part of the book, we surely have human prototypes for Orwell's two carthorses Boxer and Clover, like them representatives of the true workers and victims of forces they do not understand. Indeed the resemblance to Jurgis as Orwell describes Boxer in the following passage surely goes beyond coincidence:

Boxer with his tremendous muscles always pulled them through. He had been a hard worker even in Jones's time, but now he seemed more like three horses than one; there were days when the entire work of the farm seemed to rest upon his mighty shoulders. … His answer to every problem, every setback was “I will work harder!”—which he had adopted as his personal motto.
As with Sinclair's Jurgis, the motto is repeated several times in the book. It is on Boxer's lips as he works on the rebuilding of the windmill before his final collapse. However, whereas Jurgis becomes aware long before the end of *The Jungle* that all his work and sweat and agony has simply gone toward strengthening a system in which he is regarded as entirely expendable, Boxer only realizes the true nature of his situation too late, when he is trapped in the knacker's van on the way to a slaughterhouse that is real rather than metaphorical, betrayed by those very pigs with whom he has cooperated in bringing about an animal version of that revolution to which Sinclair's speaker, with his reiterated comparison of the workers to beasts of burden, had looked forward. Jurgis' creator, writing in 1906, could not know that when Marxism did have the opportunity to triumph it would not be in capitalist America but in relatively undeveloped Czarist Russia, and that the results of that triumph would be simply that one tyranny would be replaced by another. His message therefore ends in hope for the Jurgises of this world. Orwell, writing with hindsight, describes similar sufferings on his postrevolutionary farm, with far greater economy in words and with a much lighter tone, but can offer no hope because he had seen how irredeemably the power won had corrupted its holders. Indeed the despotism of the pigs of *Animal Farm*, as Bernard Crick has pointed out, foreshadows the even harsher and much more somberly depicted tyranny of the Inner Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four.*

It is perhaps worth mentioning one or two other ways in which the experiences of Boxer and the other animals under the pigs resemble those of Jurgis and his family in *The Jungle*. In *Animal Farm* we have, as a central symbol of their hopes for a life free of arduous labor in an animal commonwealth, the windmill planned by Snowball but worked on after his expulsion. In *The Jungle* we have that supreme symbol of the property-owning democracy of which Jurgis and his family consider themselves independent members: the "house of their own" that Jurgis and Ona are talked into buying. Both the windmill and the house become causes of endless heartbreaking work; both help to bring about the catastrophe in the life of the major character.

The reactions of Jurgis, on coming out of prison to find that the house is now irrevocably lost, closely parallel those of the animals when they find their windmill destroyed. The relevant passage in *The Jungle* ends as follows: "All that they had paid was gone—every cent of it. And their house was gone—they were back where they had started from, flung out into the cold to starve and freeze (J, pp. 209-210).

Against it, for comparison, let us put the thoughts of the animals as they contemplate the ruin of their hopes by Jones's dynamite:

> For a little while they halted in sorrowful silence at the place where the windmill had once stood. Yes it was gone; almost the last trace of their labour was gone! … It was as though the windmill had never been!

(*AF*, pp. 89-90)

Although anyone studying these sections of the two books in their entirety will find a vast difference between Sinclair's windy rhetoric and the economy with which Orwell, writing with the relative detachment of the satirical fabulist, describes the scene, the emotional and structural correspondence between the separate situations remains striking.

Further parallels exist between the two books. Boxer's unsuccessful struggle to learn the alphabet is reminiscent of Jurgis' early struggle to read and speak English and indeed of his whole struggle toward political awareness. The accident that leads directly to the final destruction of Jurgis' hopes of happiness for himself and his family—making him recognize that he is now "second-hand, a damaged article so to speak—they had worn him out … and now they had thrown him away" (*J*, pp. 145-146) and forcing him to
work in the human scrapheap of the fertilizer plant—has its counterpart in the collapse of Boxer to which the pigs respond by selling him to the knacker's yard.

Both writers keep us constantly aware of the time of year. We move from one season to the next, each bringing its own problems but none more so than winter. If we compare the passage in Chapter Seven of The Jungle, beginning “Now the dreadful winter had come upon them,” likening the workers to “cogs in the great packing machine,” and describing the bitter winds and snowdrifts that they had to face (J, p. 92), with Orwell's account of the “bitter winter” that followed the first collapse of the windmill (AF, p. 64), we will perceive an underlying similarity of technique despite the world, or at least ocean, of difference between Sinclair's Chicago and Orwell's rural England. If Orwell seems to lack indignation as he does metaphors of the emotive kind used by Sinclair, it is because his purpose is not to inform or to arouse, as Sinclair's is. He is working with facts that are already known but presenting them in a new guise. He knows that he does not need to stir up indignation by being indignant himself. He is confident that outrage will come after we have watched the animals endure so much while building the mill, which is used to grind corn for the financial benefit of the pigs and not to fulfill Snowball's vision of an easier life for every worker on the farm. The windmill, on one level a counterpart to the Rudkus house, can also be seen as Orwell's version of what Sinclair calls, in the passage just quoted, “the great packing machine” as a whole. Sinclair's two separate symbols are economically merged into one—as human jungle is transformed in Orwell's refining imagination to porcine dictatorship.

In her interesting comparison of Orwell with Sinclair, the only significant one, I believe, in any book published on Orwell to date (indeed Sinclair's name is not mentioned in Crick's recent biography, the Meyers' critical bibliography, or any work known to me that explores Orwell's relationship with the Left), Jenni Calder mentions The Jungle appreciatively although making just criticisms of its style, tone, and technique. However, the works she chooses for comparison with Sinclair's novels, of which she mentions several, are the novels and nonfictional works that Orwell wrote before Animal Farm. After discussing Orwell's views on Sinclair, she comes to the conclusion that “Orwell's sensitivity to the adulteration of literature by propaganda probably explains why he himself refrained from attempting to deliver a directly political message in his novels, except in the form of allegory and science fiction.” In fact it is to what she calls Orwell's “allegory” that we should turn if we want to find clear evidence of the deep impression The Jungle made on him. It is also probable that the sense of hopelessness and squalor communicated by the first part of The Jungle, with its adulterated food, its cheap liquor, and its uncomprehending, helpless beast-of-burdenlike inhabitants, contributed something to Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four prole world with its shabby streets, poor food, and Victory gin. Orwell's striking ability to create vivid pictures through unpleasant factual detail, already evident in his earlier books and essays and regarded by a recent critic as a disagreeable feature of his work, may also owe much to his study of The Jungle.

Interestingly, Sinclair, after maintaining his socialist beliefs throughout the first four decades of the twentieth century, giving wholehearted support to the Russian Revolution, and being actively involved in such causes célèbres of the Left as the Sacco and Vanzetti affair and, at a distance, the Spanish Civil War, worried toward the end of his life perhaps even more than the dying Orwell about the threat to human happiness and liberty posed by left-wing totalitarianism. Indeed he even went as far, in 1953, as describing the activities of Senator Joseph McCarthy as less bad than communism. His disillusionment comes out in his late novel The Return of Lanny Budd, which, as Jon A. Yoder has rightly observed, shows that the Cold War destroyed him both as a liberal and as an effective propagandist.

As to Sinclair's reaction to Orwell's late writings, there is little evidence available to English readers out of reach of the Sinclair archives. However, it is surely significant that, five years before his death, when his massive anthology of literary extracts and documentary evidence about man's struggle for individual liberty, The Cry for Justice, was reissued in a new edition, one of the pieces added to it was the O'Brien speech from Nineteen Eighty-Four, that chilling vision of the boot on the human face referred to at the beginning of this
Returning, finally, to Orwell's own account of the genesis of *Animal Farm*, we must of course accept that the incident of the boy and the carthorse that he describes provided, either as a fresh experience or as a memory, the initial impulse that set him writing his fable. Nevertheless, the traces found in it of the impression made on his imagination by Sinclair's powerful radical novel seem clear enough to deserve acknowledgement.

Notes

15. R. A. Lee, in *Orwell's Fiction* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), sees the proles in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as “the helpless animals of *Animal Farm* transposed to a more efficient tyranny” (p. 151).
17. See W. A. Bloodworth, Jr., *Upton Sinclair* (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1977), pp. 94 and 115-123.

**Criticism: Myrddin Jones (essay date summer 1984)**

In the following essay, Jones posits that H. G. Wells's The Island of Dr. Moreau was Orwell's inspiration for Animal Farm and draws parallels between the two works.

I

In his Preface to the Ukrainian edition of Animal Farm, Orwell said that the germ of his story came from seeing

a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge cart-horse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength, we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat.¹

But if this was the actual stimulus, it was not the only source of Orwell's tale. A much more extensive and significant source is H. G. Wells's The Island of Dr. Moreau.

That Orwell knew and admired Wells's work is evident from his letters and essays. In May 1947 he said that Wells was one of the favourite authors of his boyhood (C.E.J.L. IV. 394) and a year later, that he was a 'very early influence on me' (C.E.J.L. IV. 478). We also know that he had been reading The Island of Dr. Moreau so closely that in 1941 he was able to point out to Wells himself the persistence of misprints 'in edition after edition since 1896' (C.E.J.L. IV. 326).²

Wells's singularly horrifying story is about a large-scale experiment carried out by a fanatical scientist in order to change the nature of animals and their relation to each other by turning them into men. By means of vivisection the creatures 'are carven and wrought into new shapes' (M. 81).³ But the transformation is as much mental as physical. The scientist, Dr. Moreau, argues that 'the possibilities of vivisection do not stop at a mere physical metamorphosis; a pig may be educated. The mental structure is even less determinate than the bodily' (M. 82). Consequently, by using hypnotism, he attempts to replace 'old inherent instincts by new suggestions' and by 'moral education' to change pugnacity into self-sacrifice and suppressed sexuality into religious emotion. Finally, by operating on the larynx and making the animals capable of uttering human speech, he enables them 'to frame different sound-symbols by which thought could be sustained' (M. 82).

The most significant way in which this later, and more efficient, Frankenstein brainwashes his new community was by means of a code of laws which they have to memorise and rehearse. The set of laws remarkably anticipates the Seven Commandment of Animal Farm—another code designed as 'an unalterable law by which all the animals … must live for ever after' (AF [Animal Farm]. 22). In The Island of Dr. Moreau the laws run:

'Not to go on all fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?'
'Not to suck up Drink; that is the Law. Are we not Men?'
'Not to eat Flesh or Fish; that is the Law. Are we not Men?'
'Not to claw Bark of Trees; that is the Law. Are we not Men?'
'Not to chase other Men; that is the Law. Are we not Men?'

(M. 66)

Wells's narrator, Prendick, an amateur scientist shipwrecked and forced to live on Moreau's island, is made by the Beast folk not only to participate in the ceremony of repeating the Laws 'with rhythmic fervour', but also to witness the singing of another anthem that deifies the 'Master', Moreau—and one which, this time, foretells the world of Nineteen Eighty-Four and the figure of Big Brother:

His is the House of Pain.
His is the Hand that makes.
His is the Hand that wounds.
His is the Hand that heals.

(M. 67)

One is inevitably reminded of Winston's response to O'Brien—'He was the tormentor, he was the protector, he was the inquisitor, he was the friend.' (1984. 196)—and of the 'hymn to the wisdom and majesty of Big Brother' with its 'deep, slow rhythmical chant of “B-B.” … “B-B.” … “B-B.” … a heavy, murmurous sound, somehow curiously savage, in the background of which one seemed to hear the stamp of naked feet and the throbbing of tom-toms' (1984. 17). There is the same demand for total faith, the same contradictory attribution of cruelty and love.

Well's story is an island fable in the tradition of Utopia, Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver's Travels. His island community is both an ironic and a pathetic image of the operation of evolution. The animals in their changing state represent man as the victim of the process of evolution; as a creature painfully evolving his humanity; or, in Wells's own words, as 'the round Palaeolithic savage in the square hole of the civilized state.' The power of evolution is conveyed in the figure of the amoral scientist Moreau, a man scornful of humanity and intent only on experiment. The narrator, Prendick, does not at first understand what he sees. He thinks the creatures that he meets are men, though of a repellent ugliness; later, that they are men on whom an obscene surgery has been practised; only from Moreau does he learn the truth. Ironically, after living with them for ten months, he increasingly sees the Beast People as an image of humanity; and when he returns to London, sees in Londoners the image of the beasts.

There might not at first seem to be much in common between this story and Orwell's. The totalitarian power in Wells is not a party but a process; the dictatorial figures are not politicians but scientists. But basically both fables are about intelligent and ruthless men who reorganize and exploit simpler folk into forming a new kind of society, ostensibly for their own benefit, and who use indoctrination and terror as their instruments for keeping them in subjection.

The initiating vision in each story is of a 'strange dream' (AF. 9) told by a man in rebellion against his society. Major's dream is well known and does not need repeating. In Wells's fable, Moreau tells Prendick how he was expelled from England for research which offended the nation and so set up his new laboratory and experiment on an uninhibited island. But Moreau is a more complex character than the Major. He might be thought of as combining the authority of Major with the cruelty of Animal Farm's Napoleon; or as having both the compelling power and the scientific sadism of an O'Brien. Like O'Brien (1984. 206), Moreau talks with fanaticism about his conditioning of his subjects; he dismisses the pain caused as merely part of the process of conditioning, and his account of the creation of his first man out of the gorilla is gruesomely close to O'Brien's experiments on Winston, 'the last man' (1984. 217):

… I made my first man. All the week, night and day, I moulded him. With him it was chiefly the brain that needed moulding; much had to be added, much changed.

(M. 85)

In each case, too, the pain inflicted produces not hatred and revulsion but worship. In the Ministry of Love, with the pain only 'half forgotten', Winston opened his eyes and looked up gratefully at O'Brien. At sight of the heavy, lined face, so ugly and so intelligent, his heart seemed to turn over … He had never loved him so deeply as at this moment. …
The peculiar reverence for O'Brien, which nothing seemed able to destroy, flooded Winston's heart again. …

The reverence, in this case of course, has to be transferred to Big Brother—O'Brien explains that 'it is not enough to obey him: you must love him' (1984. 227)—and Winston finally achieves it. Moreau's Beast Folk worship him in the same way:

As they came forward they began to cringe toward Morea and chant, quite regardless of one another fragments of the latter half of the litany of the Law: 'His is the Hand that wounds, His is the Hand that heals. …'

To the independent narrator, Prendick, however, Moreau's dictatorial nature is always apparent. He is everywhere accompanied by huge dogs that keep the Beast Folk in terror and—again like Orwell's Napoleon—he always carries a whip. In fact, the title that Moreau, his assistant Montgomery, and Prendick assume is 'We of the Whips' (M. 132). The ferocity of the dogs in the attack on the Ape-Man (M. 15) recalls several incidents in Animal Farm, and the pursuit of the rebel Leopard Man (M. 105) is reminiscent of the baying hunt after Snowball (AF. 39-40).

The first of the incidents on Animal Farm involving the dogs also has a significant corollary in The Island of Dr. Moreau. In both stories, the first threat to any possibility of the maintenance of a communal ideal comes in attacks by one set of animals on another. In Wells, the slaughter increases as the experiment to reverse the animals' natural tendencies breaks down and the power of propaganda fails. The first signs of reversal were the dismembered bodies of rabbits; just as, in Animal Farm the threat comes in the dog's attack on the rats. Under the influence of the Major, the inhabitants of Animal Farm tried to arrest the return to nature by voting that 'rats were comrades'; and Moreau's creatures, similarly, follow the Sayer of the Law—their Squealer, 'a grey, horrible, crooked creature' (M. 117)—in recantations and confessions.

'Evil are the punishments of those who break the Law. None escape.'

'None escape', said the Beast Folk.

'None, none', said the Ape Man. 'None escape. See! I did a little thing, a wrong thing once. I jabbered, jabbered, stopped talking … I am burnt, branded in the hand. He is great, he is good'.

'None escape', said the great creature in the corner.

'None escape', said the Beast People, looking askance at one another.

Prendick, appalled at the humiliation of the animals, tries to rouse them to rebellion, following the same line of thought as Orwell himself when he saw the little boy whipping the horse:
‘You who listen’, I cried, pointing now to Moreau, and shouting past him to the Beast Men, ‘You who listen! Do you not see these men still fear you, go in dread of you? Why then do you fear them? You are many—’

(M. 75)

But there is no hope. Those who do break the Law in following their animal natures are hunted down, and in each case the fifth commandment, ‘Not to chase other men’, is abandoned. The same happens on Animal Farm in the abandonment of their sixth commandment, ‘No animal shall kill any other animal’. But while in Wells the collapse of indoctrination and the return to the state of nature is at last recognised by the animals—‘The House of Pain—there is no House of Pain’ (M. 137)—the greater poignancy of Animal Farm, as the animals return to their subject status, is caught in their continuing acceptance of the propaganda of equality:

None of the old dreams had been abandoned. The Republic of the Animals which the Major had foretold … was still believed in … If they went hungry, it was not from feeding tyrannical human beings; if they worked hard, at least they worked for themselves. No creature among them went on two legs. No creature called any other creature ‘Master’. All animals were equal.

(AF 85-6)

There are many slighter similarities between the two stories. Boxer's inability to get beyond four letters of the alphabet mirrors Moreau's gorilla who was taught to read, ‘or at least to pick out letters’ (M. 86); Mollie's pretty ribbons and the pigs' clothes are echoes of the garments that the Beast Folk wear so incongruously; even Animal Farm's preacher, Moses, the ‘clever talker’ about Sugarcandy Mountain (AF. 17), is anticipated by the evangelical Monkey Man and his ‘Big thinks’ (M. 140).

II

Orwell's use of the animal fable, however, is radically different from that of Wells. The disturbing effect of Wells's story arises from its mixture not only of animal and human but also of realism and myth. We travel with the confused Prendick through a vivid and horrifying sequence of incidents, of animal smells, hunted terror and appalling butchery. Through these events, Wells conveys a fearful and even misanthropic picture of the animal nature of man. The process begins with Prendick's thinking at first that the animals were men and writing of ‘the black-faced man’ (M. 14), ‘the deformed man’ (M. 15), ‘brown men’ (M. 29), ‘the grey-haired man’ (M. 35). The confrontation with Moreau brings the explanation of the ‘manufactured monsters’ and Prendick's ensuing terror of the Leopard-Man, the Hyaena-Swine Man and others. But the direction of the narrative gradually changes again as Prendick gets used to them:

I would see one of the bovine creatures who worked the launch treading heavily through the undergrowth and find myself trying hard to recall how he differed from some truly human yokel trudging home from his mechanical labours; or I would meet the Fox-Bear Woman's vulpine shifty face, strongly human in its speculative cunning, and even imagine I had met it before in some city byway.

(M. 95-6)

As he gets to know them through ten months of living together, they become for him the image of humanity; ‘the whole balance of human life in miniature, the whole interplay of instinct, reason and fate in its simplest form’ (M. 108). It will not be surprising to readers of Swift that Prendick retains these feelings when back in
London; that he meets prowling women, furtive men, weary pale workers coughing by, with tired eyes and eager paces like wounded deer, and ragged tails of gibing children; and that when he goes to a chapel, he finds that ‘the preacher gibbered Big Thinks, even as the Ape Man had done’ (M. 150). Even Prendick himself is tinged with the element of animal in his nature: he is tempted to cannibalism when at extremity in the lifeboat, loves the taste of meat, and is several times satirically endowed with animal characteristics. He ends his story, fearing that he was ‘not a reasonable creature, but only an animal tormented with some strange disorder in its brain’ (M. 150-1).

In *Animal Farm*, in contrast, we meet a totally different experience. It is ‘A Fairy Story’, a world of formal allegory, with allegory's distancing and universalising effect. This is because Orwell wants to use only one element of Wells's complex story. Wells, somewhat confusingly, includes different responses to his plot: both an agonised image of human suffering under the tyranny of evolution, and a satiric exposure of the animal nature of man. The writing is sometimes indebted to Hardy and at others to Swift. He employs Moreau as the image of the sadistic tyrant and the animals as sufferers, and uses the figure of Prendick to focus the distress because he shares both roles.

Orwell, however, was writing not about the general nature of man but about the specific issue of the corrupting nature of absolute power. He needed both to keep separate the images of tyrant and victim, and to remove the confusing presence of an intermediary, participating, narrator. Instead, he adopted the traditional form of children's fable and gave us two carefully separated images: of animals as victim and of man as tyrant. The animals, of course, as William Golding indicates, convey human responses—

George Orwell's splendid fable, having to choose between falsifying the human situation and falsifying the nature of animals, chooses to do the latter. Often we forget they are animals. They are people, and Orwell's brilliant mechanics have placed them in a situation where he can underline every moral point he cares to make.

We recall not only Boxer's loyalty and Clover's grief at the loss of her pastoral, but also Benjamin's alert scepticism about politicians, Mollie's human vanity and the cat's shrewd opportunism. But they do not adopt the human image: they retain the image of animals. The increasing corruption of the pigs, in contrast, can be caught in their changing image as they become more and more like dictatorial man. The satire of the Communist dictatorship is imaged in the one group of animals which insists on its common nature and destiny with the others but increasingly departs from it.

It is in his brilliant analysis and presentation of the role of Man that Orwell achieves his most penetrating satire. ‘Only get rid of Man’, says the Major, ‘and the produce of our labour would be our own. Almost overnight we could become rich and free’. (AF. 13). Again, the relation to Wells works by contrast not similarity. In Wells's story, getting rid of Moreau freed the animals from his dictatorial power and they reverted to their earlier state. But this does not happen on Animal Farm. In Major's proposals there is an unperceived ambiguity. On the simple level of story, animals are animals and men are men. But on the allegorical level, some animals are simultaneously animals and men. Jones is simply Jones, but Napoleon is also Stalin. ‘Only get rid of Man’ works on the simple level of story; but if the pigs are simultaneously images of men, you do not get rid of Man simply by sacking Mr. Jones. The aspect of human nature that the pigs represent is a permanent part of the picture; and utopia that starts with the provision ‘Only get rid of Man’ is shown in its nature to be illusory. The historical allegory thus allows a separation between the animals and the pigs, and allows Orwell to extend his theme from that of a satire on a particular political philosophy to a more universal account of the age-old conflict between the governors and the governed.

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* reverted to a disturbing ambivalence that is closer to Wells's mixture of realism and myth. There is a deliberate uncertainty in the role of the narrator and consequently in the attitude to the people. Winston's early attitude to the proles has the same contempt as that of other members of the Party:
The Party claimed, of course to have liberated the proles from bondage … But simultaneously, true to the principles of doublethink, the Party taught that the proles were natural inferiors who must be kept in subjection, like animals, by the application of a few simple rules … Left to themselves, like cattle turned loose upon the plains of Argentina, they had reverted to a style of life that appeared natural to them, a sort of ancestral pattern … As the Party slogan put it: ‘Proles and animals are free’.

(1984. 60)

In the words of Symes, ‘The Proles are not human beings’. (1984. 46). After a bomb attack, in which his life was probably saved by one of the Proles, Smith casually kicks a severed hand into the gutter (1984. 71); and his growing belief, that ‘if there is hope, it lies with Proles’ (1984. 69), is challenged by their degraded condition after decades of Party rule. In a walk, very similar to Prendick's tour through the London suburbs, he sees

girls in full bloom, with crudely lipsticked mouths, and youths who chased the girls, and swollen waddling women who showed you what the girls would be like in ten years' time, and old bent creatures shuffling along on splayed feet, and ragged barefooted children who played in the puddles and then scattered at angry yells from their mothers.

(1984. 69)

His growing egalitarianism is characterised as ‘a mythical truth and a palpable absurdity.’ (1984. 69)

But Winston Smith is not Orwell. He is shown to be wrong at first about many other people—about Julia, O'Brien, Charrington—and it would be absurd to identify the attitudes of the characters with those of the author. Winston gradually learns the centrality of human values, and in his last moment of free insight he acknowledges the beauty and power of the representative figure hanging clothes on the line:

The mystical reverence that he felt for her was somehow mixed up with the pale, cloudless sky, stretching away behind the chimney pots into interminable distance … The future belonged to the Proles. And could he be sure that when their time came the world they constructed would not be just as alien to him, Winston Smith, as the world of the Party? Yes, because at least it would be the world of sanity. Where there is equality there can be sanity … The Proles were immortal, you could not doubt it when you looked at that valiant figure in the yard. In the end their awakening would come. And until that happened, though it might be a thousand years, they would stay alive against all the odds, like birds, passing on from body to body the vitality which the Party did not share and could not kill.

(1984. 175)

The religious euphoria of his language alerts the reader to the tragic reversal that is immediately to follow. O'Brien convinces him that History like all other structures of thought is malleable and that the Party will continue in perpetual dictatorship, stamping on the faces of the people. But again, the mad and enthusiastic O'Brien is not Orwell, either, and the reader does not accept his version of things. The book's material is not presented as an image of the truth, a prophecy of the future, but as a monstrous parody, a black satire of the possibilities that technology offers to the ruthless power-seekers of communism and capitalism. The word ‘parody’ is Orwell's own description of the book in a press release he dictated on learning of early misreadings and mis-representations. The doctrines of O'Brien and the conditions of the Proles are there, not as in Wells to offer a picture of the human condition, but to provoke a response that will see the dangers and oppose the horrors:
The moral to be drawn from this dangerous nightmare situation is a simple one: _Don't let it happen. It depends on you._

Wells might be misanthropic and contemptuous of the uneducated mob, but Orwell's vision of the corruption of power, while allowing no easy optimism, defends the dignity of human nature and of the people. He did not share Wells's confidence in scientific socialism managed by an elite, and it is significant that he can re-shape Wells's powerful fable for radically different ends.

**Notes**

2. It is clear from the Preface to the Ukrainian edition that it was about this time that Orwell was pondering *Animal Farm*: 'the main outlines of the story were in my mind over a period of six years before it was actually written' (C.E.J.L. III. 459).

Page references to both Wells and Orwell will be indicated immediately after each quotation, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* references being preceded by *M*, *Animal Farm* by *AF* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by *1984*. The *Animal Farm* edition used is the Secker and Warburg edition, 1945; the *Nineteen Eighty-Four* edition is the Penguin.

4. *The Island of Dr. Moreau* expressed in the form of fiction ideas that Wells published in theoretical form in his essay 'Human Evolution, An Artificial Process'. He summarised his argument thus:

   That in civilised man we have (1) an inherited factor, the natural man, who is the product of natural selection, the culminating ape ... and (2) an acquired factor, the artificial man, the highly plastic creature of tradition, suggestion and reasoned thought. In the artificial man we have all that makes the comforts and securities of a civilisation a possibility ... And in this view, what we call Morality becomes the padding of suggested emotional habits necessary to keep the round Palaeolithic savage in the square hole of the civilised state. And Sin is the conflict of the two factors—as I have tried to convey in my *Island of Dr. Moreau*. (See H. G. Wells: *Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction*, ed. Robert M. Philmus and David Y. Hughes (Univ. of California Press, 1975).

5. See, for instance, the last page of Chapter XVI, including:

   A blind fate, a vast pitiless mechanism, seemed to cut and shape the fabric of existence, and I, Moreau by his passion for research, Montgomery by his passion for drink, the Beast People, with their instincts and mental restrictions, were torn and crushed, ruthlessly, inevitably, amid the infinite complexity of its incessant wheels. (*M.* 109)


7. See William Golding, 'Fable', *The Hot Gates* (Faber and Faber), p. 86.


**Criticism: Jenny Mezciems (essay date 1985)**
[In the following essay, Mezciems compares the utopian fiction of Jonathan Swift and George Orwell.]

It seems appropriate that, at a Utopian conference in 1984, one should think of Swift in relation to this significant date and with substantial reference to Orwell's view of *Gulliver's Travels* as well as to his own dystopian fictions. Utopian fictions (to give definitional priority to the positive side of the genre), being essentially timeless and placeless, cannot be considered only in terms of the time at which they were written, or of particular local circumstances in the real world. They have a habit of breaking down tidy period divisions and neat chronological ordering. The year 1984 will pass; indeed it was pointed out several years ago by some expert on our calendar that we are some six years adrift in our calculations, so that here we all are in 1990.1 With the suspense gone, and also the pressure to pass or fail Orwell's novel according to how accurately it predicted the way we now live, we may set about the serious task of placing it in the broader utopian literary tradition.

*Gulliver's Travels* is a long-established utopian text in its own right, but it is also one of direct importance to Orwell. Eric Blair, as he then was, read *Gulliver's Travels* at the impressionable age of eight—or, rather, just before: I first warmed to him as a human being on reading that he had stolen the hidden birthday present from his mother to read surreptitiously in advance. If he then felt guilty at the difficulty of pretending sufficient surprise on the day, the occasion perhaps provided an appropriate foundation for the guilt he so regularly expressed in his own writings. In 1946, between publishing *Animal Farm* and writing *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell wrote his essay “Politics vs. Literature: An Examination of *Gulliver's Travels*”, and there he lists Swift's book among the six which he would preserve if all others were to be destroyed (*CEIL*, IV, 257).2 The conditions themselves sound suitably Swiftian, and the selectivity is reminiscent of Gulliver's (or Swift's) reduction, to the same number, of those “heroes” who deserve the name throughout history: “Brutus … his Ancestor Junius, Socrates, Epaminondas, Cato the Younger, Sir Thomas More … A Sextumvirate to which all the Ages of the World cannot add a Seventh” (p. 196).3

My comparisons between Swift and Orwell, however, must go beyond the obvious relationships between the best-known fictions of each. For both, the creation of a utopia or dystopia was a climactic achievement in a lifetime of political writing, and the form chosen may be seen as one way of putting into literary perspective the urgent concerns of each with the conditions of his own time. Rival prognosticators can no longer limit our attention to the merits or demerits of Orwell's last book as any kind of specific prophecy,4 and while our fears for the future are more about whether there is to be one than about what form it may take, we are likely to think of our own time as not post-utopian but post-dystopian.5 Among all the other posts we are passing is this year: 1984, like 1948, will be lost to us as a period of particular impact, but using a date for his title was a clever choice on Orwell's part, and showed that he knew the rules of the utopian/dystopian game. Just as distance in space was once essential to the positive utopia, so the date of a dystopia had to press hard and close on readers urged to avoid its seeming inevitability. Hence the usefulness of such teasing ambiguities as Thomas More's punning on the good place being noplace, of Butler's Erewhon being Nowhere spelt backwards: the fact that Nowhere, without any reordering tricks, is also Now Here, might almost serve as a mnemonic for definitions of the genre.

But since time passes, and we must look at the relationships between ephemeral and permanent features, we can, as “post-realists”, stand back from the form of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a novel, to adjust the perspective in which it stands alongside the slighter but equally powerful text of *Animal Farm*, which uses the ancient form of the fable and gives an interesting twist to a theriophilic tradition reaching back through Swift's Houyhnhnms to Erasmus, and further back to Plutarch and to Cynic and even Stoic philosophies.6 The animal fable, as both Orwell and Swift used it, simplifies and universalizes at the same time, to make a statement that cannot be confined to one series of events or set of particular circumstances. *Animal Farm* is a warning, if you
like, just as Nineteen Eighty-Four is, as well as a fictionalized account of actual happenings, but it is also, like Gulliver's Travels, a description in narrative form of natural and social forces perennally interacting in an imperfect human world, its central concern being not only with Party but with the old civic morality and its expression in government.

While we rescue Nineteen Eighty-Four from temporal limitations, Gulliver's Travels, too, is enjoying the insistence of critics on its wider scope. A recent book by F. P. Lock, The Politics of Gulliver's Travels (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), is one that urges universality of application for the seemingly most local of satiric attacks. He cites, for example, that passage in the “Voyage to Lilliput” (p. 39) where “the Emperor lays on a Table three fine silken Threads of six Inches long. One is Blue, the other Red, and the third Green. These Threads are proposed as Prizes, for those Persons whom the Emperor hath a mind to distinguish”. Obligatory footnote references usually gloss this allusion to the Orders of the Garter, the Bath, and the Thistle, and, as Lock puts it, “most readers … would … be surprised to learn that [in the first edition of 1726 these were coloured] purple, yellow, and white”. He then offers the suggestion that, far from being motivated by fear of censure, the purple, yellow, and white were chosen for the universally symbolic values of silver, gold, and imperial purple, and that blue, red, and green were introduced in later editions to sharpen and update the satire with topical allusions to Walpole's exercise of patronage (pp. 79-80).

Lock is speculating, but in doing so he is looking for a broader relevance of the kind not only Swift but also Orwell may claim in the utopian tradition. The impulse seems ahistorical, which lifts concepts out of the temporal confines to which a choice of words (or even literary forms) may confine them, when the “real” values of those words have been corrupted by the world's usage. There is significance in the number of worldly things for which Swift's Houyhnhnms have no words (their language has an innocent perfection which Orwell's Newspeak aims to pervert), but the model for this particular utopian concern with language is, I think, in Thomas More's ironic dismissal of Hythloday's Utopia, of a communism that “utterly overthrows all the nobility, magnificence, splendor, and majesty which are, in the estimation of the common people, the true glories and ornaments of the commonwealth” (p. 245). With “nobility, magnificence, splendor, and majesty”, More puts emphasis on concepts which have in European life, never mind “the estimation of the common people”, been sullied by local practice but could be restored and purified and given the original and timeless meanings of nobilitas, magnificentia, splendor, maiestas: Utopia was not written in the vernacular.

The same sense of perspective can be applied to literary forms. Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four, it is suggested, were intended as two parts of a trilogy, which would show life before, during, and after a particular kind of revolution. The fable sandwiched in the centre breaks up the consistency of form we might expect from a series of novels, but not the expectations we have of works in the utopian tradition, where the useful term Menippean satire enables us to bridge gaps not only between Orwell's separate late fantasies but between Books I and II of Utopia, and as one way of accounting for disunities between the four books of Gulliver's Travels. It then does not matter that Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four has what may already be seen as the outmoded “novel” form, with its limiting representation of ordered reality. That form may eventually be looked at as a concession to, and comment on, the time for which it was written, just as Gulliver's Travels exploited a prevailing fashion for traveller's tales, or Rabelais's Gargantua and Pantagruel make use of a popular vernacular tradition of anonymous “Chronicles”. The juxtaposition of ancient with modern forms forces us to become conscious of the relationships of literature to life, learned to popular culture, written to oral modes of transmission, and is, I believe, indicative of an author's claim on tradition for the permanence and universality of his values.

I have already mentioned the centrality of moral philosophy in the politics of the great utopists. For Swift this is a crucial element in the battle between Ancients and Moderns, Homer versus the Royal Society. I want to highlight the part played by the animal fable in the fictions of Orwell and Swift because both seem uneasy with man's dependence on that reasoning faculty which should make Utopia so easy to realize and which instead appears to bring about dystopia. The theriophilic fable undermines the basic distinction men like to
make between themselves and the beasts, either by suggesting identifications, and thus equality (as in Aesop's fables) or by making animals superior to men. A Renaissance *locus classicus* is the adage which Erasmus might almost have written expressly to place alongside Pico's "De dignitate hominis", reminding us as he does that "dog does not eat dog, fierce lions do not fight each other, there is peace between snake and snake, venomous creatures agree together", but men "use instruments invented against nature by the art of demons, to arm men for the destruction of men". In one of his most striking essays, "Shooting an Elephant", Orwell works hard to discover in his human self the fellow-feeling (not reason) that enables him to register the nobility of the falling elephant, and it is a dog that shows him the humanity of a prisoner about to be executed in "A Hanging". No one should be surprised that the discomfort we feel on getting to know certain domestic details of Houyhnhnm life in *Gulliver's Travels* (their threading needles, or riding on sledges for long journeys) is due to the fact that these creatures are neither men nor horses, as we recognize each with our Lockean faculties. Orwell brings us back to Aesop's humbling simplifications, when men and pigs become indistinguishable at the end of *Animal Farm*. The rat that is Winston Smith's undoing in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a creature I shall return to: the creature of the sewer that, with Swiftian recognition of heights meeting depths, Orwell chose as the ultimate inhuman weapon of the Party's political science, when words had failed to persuade and convert.

When I offered the title “Utopia as Nightmare” I meant to suggest a paradox, for it is of course the dystopia that is the nightmare in Orwell, presented, as is generally the rule, as a positive utopia by those in the fiction who take pride in its realization. It is easy enough to discover dystopia behind the initial attractions of Swift's Lilliput, less easy to appreciate that the grossness of life in Brobdingnag, a mirror which distorts only the superficies of human life, may offer some sober recommendations after humbling our vanity. But the Houyhnhnms, whether or not one believes as I do that Swift offers their principles seriously as a model for humanity, are both utopian and nightmarish. They are classically utopian in the strict forms of Spartan conduct that Swift took from Plato, with Stoic embellishments. Their lifestyle denies most of the human values we treasure. They are nightmarish (to us) in their deviation from the natural, from a nature that we know has room for both the innocent brutish strength of the horse and the perverse passions of feeble man: above all in their usurpation of our precious capacity for reason.

Swift, calling man *rationis capax* instead of rational, aimed to vex rather than divert the world, but he, like Orwell, has been variously misunderstood. Partly he meant to mislead of course—to have his fiction taken for real, to shock all the more for being amusing, to anger those in power by making accusations which were not quite actionable. Both Swift and Orwell have been seen as traitors to their own parties, advocates for the wrong side. But this is because they may be read too narrowly, with application to local and specific temporal allegiances: Orwell was certainly a Socialist; Swift was variously a Whig and a Tory. But then, Thomas More was some kind of communist. The labels are too small, and therefore open to contradiction. Raymond Williams aptly describes Orwell's attachment to England, for example, as a “conscious affiliation” rather than “membership” of a society (*Orwell*, pp. 16-17). Swift and Orwell experienced colonial rule in opposite situations, but some of Swift's local espousals might similarly be called “conscious affiliations”, principled but pragmatic, necessary but lacking the freedom of the Erasmian spirit he might have preferred to imitate. Texts about propaganda are easily adopted and misunderstood as propaganda, in a narrower and thus misleading interpretation of what the author may have thought he intended, let alone what he believed.

Some sympathies and similarities between Orwell and Swift have all along been generally recognized, and my concern here is to investigate differences in spirit, which interestingly are most striking where the two writers seem superficially most close. Bernard Crick, in his introduction to the new Oxford edition of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, refreshingly absolves Orwell from blame for inaccuracies in his picture of the world we have experienced in 1984. The reorientation Crick presents concentrates on Orwell's intentions, and emphasizes the connection with Swift. *Nineteen-Eighty Four*, Crick says, is "specifically ‘Swiftian satire’". “Many of the features of Oceania”, he goes on, are “wickedly comic” Even the scenes in Room 101 are “not uncomic” (the litotes suggests some awareness that his reading may be a provocative one), and when “smell and oppression,
as well as dirt, are once more linked”, “all this is farce”. The end of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Professor Crick sees as “comic, grotesque”, centring on the phrase “two gin-scented tears trickled down the sides of his nose” to describe the emotional force of Winston's final submission to Big Brother, and pointing to the textual significance of the words “The End” as echoing the winding-up of a Hollywood B-movie at the close of the narrative. A new bit of significance perhaps creeps in at this stage in Crick's edition, for there the words “The End” are accompanied prominently by the superscript number “102”, which, though presumably merely a footnote reference, accidentally opens up a whole new dimension for speculating that Winston's struggle with the Party may not, after all, be over.

The reader who comes to Orwell from Swift is unlikely to find the smells and squalor and oppression funny in either writer, and Orwell lacked the “savage indignation” which makes a certain kind of comedy possible in Swift. Orwell, for that matter, did not seem to find *Gulliver's Travels* funny when he wrote about it in 1946. He calls it “a rancorous as well as a pessimistic book” and describes “the inter-connexion between Swift's political loyalties and his ultimate despair” as “one of [its] most interesting features”. He then goes on to puzzle over what it is that makes the book enjoyable (CEIL, IV, 243, 257-58). He is right about the pessimism, and my argument is, first, that though the pessimism of Orwell's own dystopia is apparent, there is a world of difference between presenting a dystopia on the assumption that it can be avoided, and offering a utopia (that of the Houyhnhnms) from which man is by nature excluded; secondly, that if Orwell is like Swift, then the affinity is to be found more at an unconscious than at a conscious level.

Orwell allows that “Swift was an admirable writer of comic verse”; he also recognizes that Gulliver is “ridiculous” and “silly” at times, and that (presumably like Winston Smith, given that both protagonists are provided with names to express their social status and values), he represents the average Englishman of his time: “bold, practical and unromantic, his homely outlook skilfully impressed on the reader” (CEIL, IV, 256, 242, 241). It is important to the effect of both narratives that the reader should be obliged to identify with the “hero”, not just initially but to the end of each work, but if Gulliver is eventually ridiculous (particularly in neighing and trotting like a horse on his return home), an element of humour is available only through the reader's determination to separate himself from Gulliver (not entirely what Swift intended). Winston Smith's “two gin-scented tears” may also be ridiculous, but he remains a steadily sympathetic character, a victim of social circumstances, not culpably perverse by nature, and I doubt whether laughing at him would serve Orwell's purpose. As for Swift, we have it on good authority that he could “laugh and shake in Rablais' easy chair”, but Pope's words (Dunciad, I. 22) do not necessarily refer to *Gulliver's Travels*. Moreover, Pope admitted that he did not understand Rabelais at all, and Swift told him that he did not always understand Swift.

Rather than reiterate accounts of those features which make Swift's clean, rational, passionless Houyhnhnm utopia so unattractive to most readers, its lifestyle reminiscent not only of ancient Sparta but of the rigours of English public-school life (so often rendered as a nightmare experience), I will summarize very briefly a few salient points. What is most fully realized in Houyhnhnmland is glimpsed earlier on, in the three previous Voyages, as something lost, forgotten, or disregarded by most men. The faint “otherworldliness” of the good life is made more striking by the fact that it tends to be presented not so much as Gulliver's own experience but at second hand: in discussions reminiscent of Socratic debate (for example in audience with the King of Brobdingnag) or in surveying the history of the land he visits. This usually happens somewhere near the centre of each Voyage, or, more accurately, at the deepest point of discoveries before leaving a country (in Book III there is an actual visit to the underworld), all of which may remind us of classical and even epic procedures.

It is, Gulliver reminds us, only in their “original Institutions”, not their current corrupt application, that the Lilliputians “have more Regard to good Morals than to great Abilities” in government, and “suppose Truth, Justice, Temperance, and the Like, to be in every Man's Power” (pp. 60,59). Crimes against the State are (were) severely punished, but good men are honoured. The Lilliputians believe in divine Providence. Their
children are removed from their families to be educated by the State, and parents may occasionally visit but
not fondle their offspring. Training is modified according to class and gender, but breeding, as distinct from
nurture, is not strictly controlled as in Houyhnhnmland, or More's Utopia, or in Plato's Republic. From the
King of Brobdingnag we learn more about ourselves, as Gulliver takes his turn at giving an account of our
own customs, our degenerate aristocracy, our warring religious and political factions, our invention of
gunpowder as a triumph of civilization. The King's values are those of "common Sense and Reason", "Justice
and Lenity", and he believes that "whoever could make two Ears of Corn, or two Blades of Grass to grow
upon a Spot of Ground where only one grew before; would deserve better of Mankind … than the whole Race
of Politicians put together". The Brobdingnagians have no standing army, no colonizing ambitions, their
learning is limited (in that they have need of few books), and they write simply and economically in a "clear,
masculine, and smooth" style (pp. 135-37). (The Houyhnhnms have of course no written literature, though
they excel in poetry on "exalted Notions of Friendship and Benevolence, or the Praises of those who were
Victors in Races, and other bodily Exercises" (p. 274).

Book III is the most thoroughly dystopian, in that it presents a fragmented society (morally, physically,
geographically, and institutionally disorientated) which is seen by its privileged classes, and by Gulliver at
salient points, as utopian. Only one character, Lord Munodi, in his would-be Horatian retreat to a country
estate, is admirable: out of favour at court, perhaps suggestive both of Sir William Temple and the Earl of
Oxford, he cultivates his land and cares for his tenants in the old way, but is vulnerable to the imposition of
disastrous new methods in estate management. The Houyhnhnms, whose Spartan and Stoic features are too
well known to need description here, are of course most striking in their relationships with their subject race
of Yahoos: troublesome creatures mainly because Gulliver identifies himself (and therefore the reader) as one
of them. One way in which Houyhnhnmland is nightmarishly utopian is in its presentation of the passions,
which, like the imagination that includes Swift's own fantasy, are governed by reason: not human reason but
Houyhnhnm reason. Gulliver is allowed by Swift to come home, but only to confirm that passionate unreason
can indeed not be eradicated in humanity. His return to the cave, or the stable, shows him devoid of the
qualities Socrates, and Thomas More, envisaged in the hypothetical figure of the philosopher. The
Houyhnhnms would leniently have castrated him, their reason allowing something mercifully short of
extermination, hinting even at scope for improvement.

I am on the side of those who believe Swift seriously admired Houyhnhnm values, to their last degree of
severity. The other nightmare quality, at the climax of Gulliver's (or the reader's) educative adventures, is the
way he must be expelled from his utopia, however creditably he has performed to show himself superior to
other Yahoos. I believe we are not meant to laugh at his wish to be a Houyhnhnm and if we find him
ridiculous when he tries to be a horse, back home, we risk a lot by dissociating ourselves not only from his
practices but from his desires as well. We make distinctions too easily, while Gulliver does not make them
easily enough.

Orwell and Swift plainly hated and feared extremism, but Orwell saw that Swift's utopia was itself extremist:
a totalitarian state in which the Yahoos, he notes, are treated like Jews in Nazi Germany. Swift might argue
that the whole point of Gulliver's Travels is that the extremism of Houyhnhnmland is not for man; that man
cannot handle the absolutism of a virtue which is pure reason since human reason is perverted by passion.
Orwell proves the point with his invention of Newspeak: the society of Oceania, like that of Houyhnhnmland,
has simplified language to a level at which there can be no ambiguity of meaning, and should be no variety of
experience. "Neither is Reason among them a Point problematical as with us, when Men can argue with
Plausibility on both sides of a Question; but strikes you with immediate Conviction", as Gulliver says of the
Houyhnhnms (p. 267). For Swift the enemy is not unity of opinion but open disagreement.

There are awkwardnesses in Orwell's illustrations of non-reason disguised as reason, however. "2 + 2 = 5"
does not strike Winston Smith with immediate conviction. The sum is an innocent abstraction abused for the
sake of power which is craved and exercised with passion, but the "common sense" opinion that 2 + 2 = 4 is
also an abstraction. Winston's real appeal is to the individual reader's experience, and it might be more interesting if some men thought that 2 + 2 = 3. It is not reason but lack of imagination that disables the innocent Houyhnhnms from believing that Gulliver travelled across the sea in a boat. Swift's reader, laughing at their naivety, draws on a fund of human knowledge, which is not always the same as wisdom, and there are circumstances in which Swift would ask us to accept that 2 + 2 = 5. Orwell described him as a "Tory anarchist" (CEJL, IV, 253), and probably recognized that the term allows some breadth and variety of reference.

The real difference between the two, and between the effects of their powerful fictions, is that Orwell had faith in human nature, which he achieved by dint of taking on himself certain kinds of expiatory guilt; whereas Swift had no such faith and projected guilt on to his fellow men as punishment for the fact that he was one of them. This is why Orwell's dystopia is in fact optimistic, if not comic, and Swift's utopia is pessimistic. One of Swift's more notorious statements, in a letter to Pope, was "principally I hate and detest that animal called man", as he prepared to launch Gulliver's Travels in a mood of defeatist irony that it would "wonderfully mend the World" (Correspondence, III, 103, 87). Orwell, believing in progress, and in revolution if unavoidable, recognized the basic dilemmas which separate the methods of the Romantic utopist from the Classical utopist: "The one, how can you improve human nature until you have changed the system? The other, what is the use of changing the system before you have improved human nature?" (CEJL, I, 469). His outlook is clear in the application of "change" to "system" and "improve" to "human nature", and his use of "until and before" instead of "unless".

Swift's orthodox Christian pessimism was extreme: man is wilfully depraved, using his reason only to perverse ends (Gulliver's excuses for travelling are vain, worldly, scientifically curious, and socially irresponsible, and the outcome is total disorientation). Man is seen as corrupt when in power, ignorant, lazy, and dirty when poor, full of proud self-delusions that guarantee an interdependence between fool and knave, the gullible and the dishonest. Swift's realistic aim might be that men could be protected from their worst excesses by being forced to live with an appearance of tolerable civility within a decent orthodox institutional framework. This is not to say that Swift had no ideals, only that his ideals were too radical for human application, and his conservatism was all application, shallower than any creed—so Orwell's phrase "Tory anarchist" may be about right.

Orwell, forgiving us, is able eventually to forgive himself. He thought Swift sick and diseased in mind. "The most essential thing in Swift", he says, "is his inability to believe that life—ordinary life on the solid earth, and not some rationalized, deodorised version of it—could be made worth living" (CEJL, IV, 253). The protest, like some of Orwell's comforting (and nowadays embarrassing) beliefs about the English (for example in "England your England"), suggests a degree of romantic self-delusion which Swift would have dealt with savagely. "Part of our minds", says Orwell, "—In any normal person it is the dominant part—believes that man is a noble animal". He talks of Swift's "endless harping on disease, dirt and deformity", expanding repeatedly, and with gratuitous inventions of his own, on the kind of thing he means. "Something in us", he claims, though with a comforting generality, responds to [Swift's pessimism] as it responds to the gloomy words of the burial service or the sweetish smell of corpses in a country church (CEJL, IV, 259, 260).

Orwell's own poking about in the hovels of the poor, his obsessively detailed recording of stinks and other human unpleasantnesses (but especially stinks) is mostly justified in The Road to Wigan Pier by its propagandist aim against social inequality and in his evident assumption that a general decency of spirit will come to light if given material decency of circumstance. The insanitary rooms and smelly drains around which Orwell seems to linger are, I think, never satirically presented, in the manner of Swift's poem (which Orwell cites) "The Lady's Dressing Room", where Strephon has his illusions shattered about art and nature in woman:

But oh! it turn'd poor Strephon's Bowels,
When he beheld and smelt the Towels,
Begumm'd, bematter'd, and beslim'd
With Dirt, and Sweat, and Ear-Wax grim'd …
Nor be the Handkerchiefs forgot
All varnish'd o'er with Snuff and Snot.

(11. 43, 48)

Swift puts the fascination and the shock equally far from himself through the mediations of both a character (Strephon) and a moralizing narrator, but Orwell's habit is to grasp these emotions to himself. His sense of guilt is at being clean, not at the rest of humanity being dirty. He evidently never recovered from the trauma of being told as a boy that the poor smelt, and privilege seemed to be a cross he continued to bear, with self-inflicted punishments reminiscent of Thomas More's famous hairshirt: “It is a kind of duty to see and smell such places now and again, especially smell them, lest you should forget that they exist”, he remarks of slum dwellings in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, but it is rather as though he undertakes this duty on our behalf, protecting us where Swift would expose us.

If we grant that both men, in their writings, were in some sense idealists (as one might expect a utopist or dystopist to be), we may suspect that the idealism at its deepest was a private affair. In Swift's case it is not just that, as a satirist, he conventionally leaves positive views to be taken for granted, but that he deals with the world in manageable fragments through a range of personae each of which can contain one particular issue at a time. He is rarely the authority speaking for all men, but by turns the mad, wordy prose hack of *A Tale of a Tub*; the hoaxter gossip Isaac Bickerstaff; the commonsense materialist who argued for all the wrong reasons “Against Abolishing Christianity”; the solid Dublin Drapier defending the rights of a nation he disliked being a member of; the Modest Proposer whose cold logic reveals the distress Swift felt for that same nation's inhabitants. The partiality is usually eccentric and provocative, so that it is we, the rest of society, that must unite in common sense to resist. Gulliver is the obvious exception in so far as he is Everyman—but then that is even more of a shock, requiring efforts of dissociation which leave the reader asking “what must I do to be human?”.

Orwell, on the other hand, makes himself a kind of universal social conscience, putting aside, as Swift does, his own private identity, though in favour not of a multiplicity of occasional voices but of the one figure, George Orwell, whose name of course has the stability of a refuge—if not pastoral then certainly bucolic; of the land, specifically of England. Orwell, running away from the stigmas of Eton and imperialist officialdom in Burma, tried hard to be a tramp, one of the faceless proles that in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* may eventually rise in revolt but have meanwhile the saving grace of being irresponsible. In a totalitarian dystopia they are city slum dwellers, though the woman hanging out washing, and even the unattractive and corrupted Parsons, have a physique suggestive of rural peasant origins in a happier world, the Golden Country.

Orwell's attempts at anonymity, or at belonging unobtrusively to the mass in order to speak or even fight for it, are not entirely successful, though the regular expression of a sense of superiority, when not unconscious, shows that he is aiming at those who need converting, hardly the proles themselves. There are, however, moments when he sounds comfortingly snobbish, as when Winston Smith observes Parsons making up his notebook in “the neat handwriting of the illiterate” (p. 205). More deliberate, in its self-mocking honesty, is the class-directed moralizing of “Down the Mine”: “In a way it is even humiliating to watch coal-miners working. It raises in you a momentary doubt about your own status as an intellectual and a superior person generally. For it is brought home to you, at least while you are watching, that it is only because miners sweat their guts out that superior persons can remain superior” (*The Road to Wigan Pier*, p. 31). There is even a hint of that theriophilic strain I mentioned earlier, in Orwell's description of the miners' “most noble bodies”: they have “wide shoulders tapering to slender supple waists, and small pronounced buttocks and sinewy thighs” (p. 21), sounding not unlike Blake's “Tiger, tiger, burning bright / In the forests of the night”, an awesome conjunction of the divine and the infernal.
But Orwell, taking us on a conducted tour, doing the thinking and, more importantly, the feeling, for us may no more be Eric Blair (though I am not suggesting deception or dishonesty) than Swift is the Modest Proposer, whose description of the Irish poor moves along at so brisk a rate as to leave no space for the feelings we must find for ourselves, in order to protest at the inadequacy of his emotions: “It is a melancholy Object to those, who walk through this great Town” is his opening response to “the present deplorable State of the Kingdom”, in which the “prodigious Number of Children” is a “very great additional Grievance”, though the old are no problem, who “are every Day dying, and rotting, by Cold and Famine, and Filth, and Vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected” (Works, XII, 109, 114).

It was as the Drapier, stirring up resistance to the imposition on the Irish of one of Walpole's shadier fiscal schemes (or so it seemed to them), that Swift became a public hero. Orwell, a less provocative, and less isolated, fighter for less local causes, seems to have indulged in heroic acts of a more private kind. At an Orwell conference in Birmingham early in 1984, a surprise guest was Douglas Moyle, a retired (and retiring) veteran of the Spanish Civil War whom Orwell mentions several times as a comrade alongside him during incidents he records in Homage to Catalonia. Mr Moyle's own anecdotes (which had not been available to Orwell's biographers) included lively memories of Orwell's personal courage and highly individualistic leadership. He instigated night patrols to reconnoitre enemy positions, and on one occasion asked Mr Moyle to accompany him so far, then to wait (as an observer, or witness, perhaps) as he went on alone. Mr Moyle recalled being terrified on his own account, let alone Blair's, since it was a night of brilliant moonlight which made every detail of the landscape clearly visible—though Blair would not have it that they, too, could be seen. In the book, Orwell underplays his personal leadership, mentioning merely that “at night small patrols used to be sent into no man's land to lie in ditches near the Fascist lines”, etc. (my italics).

Swift had no occasion to flirt with death is such a manner. Instead he is often censured, as Orwell is not, for seeking out dirt, disease, and depravity and rubbing the reader's nose in all three. It may be natural enough that his houyhnhnm utopia is a cleaner place than Orwell's dystopian London (except for the messes made by the Yahoos), but Swift's real world of Dublin was almost certainly more depressing, and without the same prospects for renovation, than Orwell's London in 1948. In a recent study Carole Fabricant supplies documentary evidence of conditions in Dublin at the time that make Swift's responses to life about him seem not especially perverse. To be Dean of St Patrick's was not a privileged situation to a man who had once had hopes of preferment in England, on Orwell's side of the colonial fence. London's streets might flow copiously, in 1710, as

Sweepings from Butchers Stalls, Dung, Guts, and Blood,
Drown'd Puppies, stinking Sprats, all drench'd in Mud,
Dead Cats and Turnip-Tops come tumbling down the Flood,

(“A Description of a City Shower”, Poems, I, 139)

but Dublin struck people used to ordinary eighteenth-century city filth elsewhere as particularly appalling. St Patrick's was in the oldest and poorest part of the city, among the Liberties, an area exempt from the city jurisdiction. A survey later in the century reported that, as Carole Fabricant quotes (pp. 27-28):

The streets … are generally narrow, the houses crowded together; the rears or back-yards of very small extent, and some without any accommodation of any kind. … I have frequently surprised from ten to sixteen persons, of all ages and sexes, in a room not 15 feet square, stretched on a wad of filthy straw, swarming with vermin and without any covering, save the wretched rags that constituted their wearing apparel. … This crowded population wherever it obtains is almost universally accompanied by a very serious evil—a degree of filth and stench inconceivable except by such as have visited these scenes of wretchedness.
This could easily be a passage from *The Road to Wigan Pier*; the scandal for the twentieth century is that the reports should be so similar. But Orwell had to go and look for squalor, sometimes offending his northern hosts by finding it, as Crick reports in his biography (pp. 281-82), whereas for Swift it was all on his own doorstep: closer, in fact, for his cathedral, built on very low ground, was periodically flooded to a depth of some seven feet. Such floods were not, of course, made up of clean water, in a district where, as Carole Fabricant reminds us (pp. 29-30), ordure was simply thrown out of the windows, or deposited directly in the street by its human donors, in the manner, but more offensive in matter, of Gulliver's admired Houyhnhnms.

With his eye firmly on the world as it is, since its improvements seem largely cosmetic, Swift's ideal of civilization might have been relatively available in London, were it not for other kinds of corruption in spheres less physical. To leave the court for a cultivated Horatian retreat, in the style of Sir William Temple (of course in *England*), and locate a pastoral or even a Tory landowner's utopia in some country estate, was a model sharply in contrast to the reality of Swift's own exile in an inhospitable Irish environment where (again according to Carole Fabricant's description of the typical Irish “cabin”) his own house was a poor thing he had largely to build for himself, and his church or churches were in ruins. W. B. Yeats, who admired Swift's spirit and elitist values, and who was himself an “Ancient”, (with a nostalgia for Swift's own time, at that), regretted the “high horse riderless, / Though mounted in that saddle Homer rode”. Sharing Swift's ambivalent feelings about his fellow Irishmen, he was nevertheless, as he claimed, one of “the last Romantics” as Swift was not (even in poetry), and could make much, in verse, of custom and ceremony while a protégé of the Gregories. Swift's familiarity with great houses showed him only an aristocracy hardly worthy of the name, for he saw them as absentee landlords or as frivolous incumbents, with none of the traditional virtues of the outcast Lord Munodi in Gulliver's third voyage—their lands resembling more closely the Balnibarbian norm: “I never knew a Soil so unhappily cultivated, Houses so ill contrived and so ruinous, or a People whose Countenances and Habit expressed so much Misery and Want” (p. 175). Swift's “Market-Hill” poems best express his unillusioned irreverence towards his social superiors the Achesons, whose hospitality is described in thoroughly un Yeatsian fashion, and to whom the guest could best pay tribute by building a privy in their grounds, as though to teach them better manners.21

Orwell did find sources of trust and hope in nature, human and other. His adopted name asserts it, as does his choice of “Animal Farm” for the location of a utopian experiment; his period as contented rural shopkeeper and allotment-gardener confirms it; his final retreat to Jura stretches it to the limit. Even there, though making much of the complicated journey in a letter of travel itineraries to Sonia, he characteristically refers to daffodils planted, hoping for “quite a nice garden” next year—and Bernard Crick reminds us that the climate in those parts is quite mild.22 It is as though Orwell chose for himself, however, the utopian Spartan existence that Gulliver recommends, but privately, not with any zeal to impose it on society at large. His was self-consciously a working man's idyll, though one cannot imagine many real “working men” sharing his ideal. By contrast, Winston Smith's “Golden Country” seems classically pastoral, a recurring dream, a nostalgia for something he cannot be sure was ever real, until it materializes in the woodland scene with Julia at the novel's centre to sharpen our sense of treachery before and after. But the strength (more than hope) which Winston finds immanent in the proles could give rise to Gulliver's dream of Houyhnhnm aggression. “They needed only to rise and shake themselves like a horse shaking off flies”, says Winston (p. 216), and Gulliver asks us to “imagine twenty Thousand [Houyhnhnms] breaking into the Midst of an *European* Army, confounding the Ranks, overturning the Carriages, battering the Warriors Faces into Mummy, by terrible Yerks from their hinder Hoofs” (p. 293).

The animal association brings fear, as well as hope, most strikingly in the rat (which was not only Winston's undoing but Orwell's own pet phobia: “If there is one thing I hate more than another”, he confessed in *Homage to Catalonia*, “it is a rat running over me in the darkness” (p. 81), as “the filthy brutes came swarming out of the ground on every side”). Orwell's socialism obliges him to envisage a classless utopia in *Animal Farm*, but there are barriers to overcome. The animals are presented in a natural hierarchy, and their attempts to change it are not entirely convincing. “‘Comrades, [asks Major] … the wild creatures, such as rats

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and rabbits—are they our friends or our enemies? Let us put it to the vote. … Are rats comrades?’ The vote was taken at once, and it was agreed by an overwhelming majority that rats were comrades”.

This has about it an element of $2 + 2 = 5$, and is also reminiscent of the unashamed squeamishness with which the creatures of the Wild Wood are treated in Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows*. Raymond Williams notices “the speed of [Orwell’s] figurative transition from animals to the proletariat … showing as it does a residue of thinking of the poor as animals: powerful but stupid” (*Orwell*, pp. 71–72). In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the proles are in fact reassuring in their passivity, lacking the noble violence inherent in the horse, and the treachery of the rat: “Left to themselves, like cattle turned loose upon the plains of Argentina, they had reverted to a style of life that appeared to be natural to them, a sort of ancestral pattern” (p. 217).

Hope, on the other hand, seems captured in the washerwoman’s singing, her words ironically those of a mechanically-composed song, on the theme of “it was only an ‘opeless fancy’”—but life-renewing (she has “powerful mare-like buttocks”) regardless of the words: “though it might be a thousand years, they would stay alive against all the odds, like birds, passing on from body to body the vitality which the Party did not share and could not kill”, Winston thinks, a moment before Charrington’s treachery is revealed (p. 348). He is remembering the thrush in the wood:

A thrush had alighted on a bough not five metres away. … It … began to pour forth a torrent of song. In the afternoon hush the volume of sound was startling. … The music went on and on, minute after minute, with astonishing variations, never once repeating itself, almost as though the bird were deliberately showing off its virtuosity. Sometimes it stopped for a few seconds, spread out and resettled its wings, then swelled its speckled breast and again burst into song. Winston watched it with a sort of vague reverence. for whom, for what, was that bird singing? No mate, no rival was watching it. What made it sit at the edge of the lonely wood and pour its music into nothingness?

(p. 263)

Orwell’s source for this epiphanic passage (and if it is imitative the literary allusion brings extra support for its power) is surely in the work of a different kind of pessimist—and pastoralist—Thomas Hardy, in a post-millenial New Year poem (31 December 1900):

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I leant upon a coppice gate
    When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter’s dregs made desolate
    The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
    Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
    Had sought their household fires.

The land’s sharp features seemed to be
    The Century’s corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
    The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
    Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
    Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
    The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
    Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
```
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

(“The Darkling Thrush”)²⁴

The optimism in Orwell's thrush, as in Hardy's, passes humanity by, enabling Orwell both to render acceptable the class distinctions which continually associate the proles with animals, and to avoid Swift's dismissal of all humanity (in the King of Brobdingnag's terms) as “the most pernicious Race of little odious Vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the Surface of the Earth” (p. 132). The pessimism of Swift, savage rather than gloomy in its excesses, is not, as Orwell thought, life-denying, however. It offers not hope but energy, an energy Orwell recognized as anarchic: a radical energy of intolerant and intolerable ideals, and of the utopian nightmare.

Notes

5. Marijke Rudnik’s account of “Women and Utopia: Some Reflections” (to be printed among selected papers from the Amsterdam Conference in 1986) mentions a number of recent feminist utopias. Their authors would probably not subscribe either to the view that utopias are not meant to be realized, or to the classical definitions of the genre as I am using them.
9. J. A. van Dorsten, in “Recollections: Sidney's Ister Bank Poem” (pp. 231-44 below) argues for an interesting variation. For complexities in Stoic and Cynic views which filtered into the Renaissance and beyond, see again James E. Gill, “Theriophily in Antiquity”.


16. The sentiments expressed here have, for a British reader in 1984, a rather different poignancy from anything engendered by Nineteen Eighty-Four.

17. Interestingly, he contrasts Swift's treatment of the body with Blake's, in his Swift essay (CEJL, IV, 259).

18. Homage to Catalonia, Penguin edition, Hamondsworth, 1962, rpt. 1983, p. 72. The occasion referred to was an Extra-Mural Dayschool on "George Orwell: The View from 1984", University of Birmingham, 11 February 1984, at which an earlier version of this paper was read, and at which Bernard Crick was introduced to Douglas Moyle. I have since confirmed details of the anecdote with Mr Moyle, and am grateful for his permission to relate it.


21. See "A Panegyric on the D[ea]n, in the Person of a Lady in the North", Poems, III, 886. Swift cultivated a certain boorishness when among friends, which contained an element of mock-insult, so it is never easy to know how seriously to take the apparent rudeness, even when the relationship is known to have been quarrelsome.

22. CEJL, IV, 375; Orwell: A Life, p. 511.


Criticalism: Bernard Grofman (essay date spring 1990)


[In the following essay, Grofman examines aspects of Animal Farm, including its literary roots, its place in didactic literature, and its critical reception.]

This essay has a very simple aim: to rescue Animal Farm from the often repeated claim that it is merely a children's story and to demonstrate how closely its events are tied to the events of Soviet political history. In the process I hope to demonstrate that Animal Farm works at several levels, as a charming story about "humanized" animals, as an allegory about the human condition, and, most importantly, as a thinly disguised and biting political satire about Soviet totalitarianism. No reader can fully enjoy the book without knowing, for example, that the pig Snowball represents Trotsky and the pig Napoleon represents Stalin.
I. LITERARY ROOTS

The work to which *Animal Farm* is most often compared is *Gulliver's Travels* (see, e.g., 1946 reviews by Edward Weeks in *The Atlantic* and Edmund Wilson in *The New Yorker*), although comparisons with *Candide* are also common. It is true that for *Animal Farm* Orwell draws inspiration from many satirists, including, of course, Voltaire (whom Orwell greatly admired) and Swift (on whom he wrote a lengthy and penetrating essay in 1946: “Politics Versus Literature: An Examination of *Gulliver's Travels*,” in *CEJL*, Vol. 4). But it is to the moralizing beast fable that *Animal Farm* owes its form.

The beast fable is an ancient and apparently culturally universal satiric technique, as illustrated by such examples as Aristophanes's plays *The Birds* and *The Wasps; The Panchatantra*, a collection of fables from India; Aesop's *Fables; Reynard the Fox*, 1481 in the English version; and *Uncle Remus*, 1880, Harris's reworking of traditional African folk tales into an American idiom and setting. Orwell was familiar with such tales of humanized animals, having read, among others, Beatrix Potter and Rudyard Kipling. In fact, one literary critic rather snidely says of *Animal Farm*:

> This particular form of the nursery story has been borrowed from that cosy world prior to the first world war upon which … Orwell was so ready to dwell. *Animal Farm* specifically reminds us of Kipling's stories for children. The laws of the revolution that are painted on the wall of the cowshed and chanted by the animals clearly owe something to “The Law of the Jungle” in Kipling's *Second Jungle Book*. Indeed, the central device of *Animal Farm*, the convention of humanized animals, may also derive immediately from Kipling's *Jungle Book*. And Orwell's narrative tone is obviously modelled on that of the *Just So Stories*.

(Alldritt, 1969; 149)

If, however, one is going to seek the inspiration for *Animal Farm* in Orwell's childhood reading, one could with at least as much justice turn to Beatrix Potter's *Tales of Pigling Bland*. According to Orwell's childhood friend, Jacintha Buddicom (1974:3a):

> the genealogical tree of *Animal Farm* has its roots in *Pigling Bland* … Eric and I were far too old for it, but we adored it all the same. I remember his reading it to me twice over from the beginning to end, to cheer me up one time when I had a cold. And we used to call each other Pigling Bland and Pigling in moments of frivolity.

One other work that provides a direct model for *Animal Farm* has been neglected, quite strangely, by the critics, perhaps because its author is currently out of literary favor. I have yet to find a critic who mentions Anatole France's *Penguin Island* as possible inspiration for Orwell. Yet his familiarity with this work is shown in “As I Please,” June 23, 1944 (in *CEJL*, Vol. 3, pp. 172-175), in which Orwell praises Anatole France for his “passion for liberty and intellectual honesty,” calls “‘Crainquebille’ one of the best short stories I have ever read,” and refers to the author's “comic history of France.” Moreover, France's thinly disguised historical pastiche of the Frenchman as penguin, “a scathing satire of the entire course of French history” (Caute, 1968:v), offers striking parallels to *Animal Farm* in style and tone.

The two works share a pessimistic tone, an acerbic wit, and a wide-ranging historical scope. There are, of course, important differences between the two works: e.g., the beast fable element of *Penguin Island* is quickly dropped; its pessimism is less leavened by humor than that of *Animal Farm*; and its satire is often more in the nature of diatribe. Nonetheless, it seems obvious that *Animal Farm* owes at least as much to Anatole France as to Rudyard Kipling and that, as novelists and essayists, France and Orwell have much in common. Consider Orwell's comparison of Mark Twain and Anatole France in his essay on Twain. One could simply substitute Orwell's name for that of France with little loss of accuracy.
Both men were the spiritual children of Voltaire, both had an ironic, skeptical view of life, and a native pessimism overlaid by gaiety; both knew that the existing social order is a swindle and its cherished beliefs mostly delusions. Both were bigoted atheists and convinced … of the unbearable cruelty of the universe. But there the resemblance ends. Not only is the Frenchman enormously more learned, more civilized, more alive aesthetically, but he is also more courageous. He does attack the things he disbelieves in; he does not, like Mark Twain, always take refuge behind the amiable mask of the “public figure” and the licensed jester. He is ready to risk the anger of the Church and to take the unpopular side in a controversy. …

(“Mark Twain: The Licensed Jester.” In CEJL, Vol. 2:327)

II. ANIMAL FARM AS LITERATURE AND DIDACTIC

Animal Farm is the first work by Orwell which is other than grittily naturalistic. (See esp. DOPL, CD, RWP and HC.) Even Burmese Days, despite frequent lapses into purple prose, has descriptions of British colonial life which are carefully detailed and brutally precise. Animal Farm is subtitled “A Fairy Story,” which has misled some critics, for “we are accustomed to think of the fairy story as the escapist form of literature par excellence.” Indeed, Animal Farm is written so simply and entertainingly that in many libraries it will be found in the juvenile section as well as (if not instead of) the adult section. (cf. Blount, 1974:66-68)

There are two common mistakes in reading Animal Farm. The first is to confuse simplicity of form with simplicity of idea; the second is to fail to understand the importance of the events in Animal Farm as a form of political history. One persistent oversimplification of Animal Farm is typified by Laurence Brander's claim (1954:171, cited in Greenblatt, 1974:106) that Animal Farm was written by Orwell in a state where “the gaiety of his nature had completely taken charge … writing about animals whom he loved.” There are two errors here. The first is to overestimate the importance of the animal nature of the protagonists in Animal Farm. The second is to view the fable as in any way a happy one.

That Orwell was an animal lover there is no doubt. “Most of the good things in my childhood and up to the age of about twenty are in some way connected with animals.” (SSWJ; cf. “Shooting an Elephant” in SE) However, although Animal Farm rests on an analogy between animals and the exploited underclass (echoed elsewhere by Orwell in his comparisons of the proles in 1984 to the beasts and of the plongeurs in Down and Out in Paris and London to imprisoned animals), it is quite absurd to attach undue importance to Orwell's love of animals as a key to Animal Farm. “What is essential to the success of the satirical beast fable,” as Ellen Douglas Leyburn observes, “is the author's power to keep his reader conscious simultaneously of the human traits satirized and of the animals as animals.” (Leyburn, 1962:215, cited in Greenblatt, 1974:106) I am in flat disagreement with Christopher Hollis's assertion that

The animal fable, if it is to succeed at all ought clearly to carry with it a gay and light-hearted message. It must be full of comedy and laughter. The form is too far removed from reality to tolerate sustained bitterness.

(Hollis, 1962:226)

Animal Farm contradicts Hollis's literary dictum that the animal fable cannot successfully encompass tragedy. Greenblatt is correct (1974:106-107) that Orwell uses the apparently frivolous form of the animal tale to convey a profoundly bitter message.

Animal Farm does indeed contain much gaiety and humor, but even in the most comic moments there is a disturbing current of cruelty or fear. … While Snowball … is organizing
the Egg Production Committee for the hens, the Clean Tails Committee for the Cows, the Wild Comrade’s Re-education Committee …, the Whiter Wool Movement for the Sheep, Napoleon … is carefully indoctrinating the dogs for his own evil purposes. Similarly, the “confessions” forced from the animals in Napoleon’s great pages are very funny, but when the dogs tear the throats out of the “guilty” parties and leave a pile of corpses at the tyrant’s feet, the scene ceases to amuse.

Keith Alldritt, one of several critics to commit the error of viewing Animal Farm as an unsophisticated work, writes that “the allegorical form in which Animal Farm is couched is a means for turning away from the disturbing complexities of experience rather than for confronting them.” (Alldritt, 1969:149) Likening Orwell to Kipling—and a Kipling suitable only for the nursery at that—Alldritt belittles both the seriousness of purpose and the literary achievement of Animal Farm, dismissing it as written in a fashion which “allows only simple ideal, easy responses, and obvious conclusions.” (Alldritt, 1969:149)

Alldritt gives as an example of Orwell’s juvenile oversimplifying, “the emotional climax of the book, which comes when Boxer, the loyal and hard-working but unintelligent workhorse, emblematic of the ‘common people,’ is sold to knackers by the pig-commissars when he becomes too ill to work any more.” Alldritt then asserts that

The feelings of simple compassion and absolutely righteous indignation which this incident is calculated to evoke may be tolerable in a nursery tale that has no pretensions to being anything other than a nursery tale. But in one which lays claim to offer the adult intelligence some feeling for the realities of modern social and political life, they cannot, because of their crudity and sentimentality, merit serious attention …

He adds that “Whatever we may think of the Russian revolution or, for that matter of any revolution, we cannot but be aware that the crises of a society are much more complex than Orwell is here able to suggest.” (Alldritt, 1969:148-149)

Alldritt’s charges are misleading. As a story, Animal Farm is straightforward, engrossing, witty, and memorable. As a political fable, it is insightful and frighteningly accurate in its broad historical overview. Any description of events, whether it be literary or historical, excerpts from the minutiae of existence some key elements. On these the narrative is hung. Selectivity is inescapable. A work is judged at least in part by its success in capturing the “essentials.” Furthermore, the fate of one individual animal (e.g., a Boxer or a Rubashov) may be more sympathetically portrayed than the most realistic picture of the deaths of thousands of “old Bolsheviks” or millions of Kulaks in the mass.6

In “Why I Write” (1947, in CJEL), Orwell says that “what I have most wanted to do throughout the past ten years is to make political writing into an art. When I sit down to write a book I do not say to myself ‘I am going to produce a work of art.’ I write it because there is some lie I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention. …” Orwell, a harsh critic, particularly of his own work, goes on to say “Animal Farm was the first book in which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole.” In this, he achieved remarkable success.

The book generates that “willing suspension of disbelief” which allows full entrance into the world Orwell had created without a doubt of the animals’s ability to communicate with each other or their ability to successfully rebel against humanity. (cf. Hollis, 1962:226) None of the animals ever acts in a way which seems, within the context of our suspension of disbelief, to be at variance with its animal nature. The characterizations: Boxer, the loyal Stakhanovite; Molly, the bourgeois luxury lover; the chickens, as Kulaks, unhappy with collectivization; the silly geese who confess to Trotskyite-inspired crimes of a preposterous nature are among those to ring delightfully true.

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Orwell's choice of pigs as the “brain-worker” elite is biologically well-founded. Pigs are among the most intelligent of domestic animals. That pigs are also the villains of Animal Farm is consonant with common folk beliefs about the pig as a dirty, selfish, sluggish, brutish, refuse-eating animal. The terms “pig” and “swine” symbolize degradation in Christian parables (cf. “The Moral Pigsty” in Small, 1975: Chapter 4) and derivatives from these terms (e.g., “roadhog,” “male chauvinist pig,” “pig-headed”) are invariably terms of abuse in western culture.7

One of the great virtues of Animal Farm is the unforced nature of both its prose and its narratives. Although we can recognize the actual sequence of historical events, the story in Animal Farm has a life of its own which does not seem dictated by purposes external to it; further, the story is comprehensible without stepping out of the context of the fable and ascending to a higher order of understanding.

Alldritt, while erring in his judgment of Animal Farm's literary merit, is accurate in identifying the historical realities underlying the allegory:

We may identify old Major, the aged porker who has the dream and who provides the ideological impulse to the revolution, as Karl Marx, and we may recognize the quarrel between Napoleon and Snowball as representing the rift between Stalin and Trotsky. And we may like to find the allegorical counterparts of the treason trials, the emergence of the Soviet secret police, the drive for technological achievement, the perversion of the ideals of the revolution and the misuse of propaganda.

(Alldritt, 1969:148)

Other critics, some perhaps because pro-Soviet attitudes blinded them to Orwell's thrust or because of a literary penchant for the “work-in-itself” or most simply because of unfamiliarity with Soviet history, read Animal Farm as a general satire on “plus ça change plus c'est la même chose,” or on “the rule of the many by the few.” (cf. Beresford, 1945:3; Blount, 1968:66-681) This view misses the point, which is well stated by Leonard Woodcock, a writer of anarchist persuasion who became a close friend of Orwell in the 1940s:

There was no doubt in Orwell's mind about his intentions in writing Animal Farm. He felt that the English in 1943 were allowing their admiration for the military heroism of the Russians to blind them to the faults of the Communist regime, and he also believed that the Communists were using their position as unofficial representatives of Russia in England to prevent the truth from being known, as they had done in Spain. Animal Farm was meant to set his compatriots thinking again.

(Woodcock, 1966:193)

More generally, there is Orwell's statement in “Why I Write” (1947, in CJEL):

The Spanish War and other events in 1936-37 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly, or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it. … [T]he more one is conscious of one's political bias, the more chance one has of acting politically without sacrificing one's esthetic and intellectual integrity.

But the clearest statement of Orwell's purpose in writing Animal Farm and his inspirations for it is his preface to the 1947 Ukrainian Edition. Because the original English text of this edition was lost, it was not till it was retranslated from the Ukrainian in 1968 that it became readily available. (In CEJL, Vol. 3, pp. 402-406.) No one who reads this preface can doubt that Animal Farm was intended as an exposé of Soviet Communism or
that it is based quite explicitly on incidents in Soviet history. Writes Orwell,

On my return from Spain, I thought of exposing the Soviet myth in a story that could be easily understood by almost anyone and which could be easily translated into other languages … Although the various episodes are taken from the actual history of the Russian Revolution, they are dealt with schematically and their chronological order is changed; this was necessary for the symmetry of the story. … I included some events, for example the Teheran Conference, which were taking place when I was writing.

Having strongly warned against the folly of reading *Animal Farm* as if Stalin, the banishment of Trotsky, the Moscow Purge trials, etc. are irrelevant to its understanding, I will now sound a cautious note by endorsing, at least in part, the views of B. T. Oxley on reading *Animal Farm* as allegory:

This book is not an allegory in which everything has to stand for something else. To read it this way reduces it to the level of a sophisticated crossword puzzle. Thus, there is no figure corresponding to Lenin (Major dies before the rising takes place); and the farm does take on a life of its own. The friendship between Clover and Boxer, or the cynicism of Benjamin do not need to be explained in terms of actual history.

(Oxley, 1967:81)

So far so good, but I part company with Oxley when he continues:

It may be that, for those who know their history, the rebellion of the hens seems parallel to the rebellion of the Russian sailors at Kronstadt in 1921, or that the two farmers Frederick and Pilkington represent Germany and England. But it is not really necessary to an understanding of the book (and may lead to incorrect history) to work at this level of detail.

(Oxley, 1967:81)

It is crucial to an understanding of *Animal Farm* to realize that Orwell was concerned not only with the internal dynamics of Soviet Communism but also with the hypocrisy underlying relations between states of purportedly antipathetic ideologies. To fail to draw the connections between, on the one hand, the timber sale to Frederick, Frederick's payment in counterfeit notes, and the subsequent attack on Animal Farm leading to the destruction of the windmill and, on the other hand, the zigs and zags in German-Soviet and Anglo-Soviet relations from the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1939 to Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, is to miss the full irony of this section. So when another critic (Kubal, 1972:127) asserts, “The historical relevance, the fact that the author was satirizing the Soviet revolution is … of comparatively minor importance,” he is, in my view, quite wrong. Of course, Oxley is right when he claims that “Napoleon is presumably not given that name by accident, and the Russian Revolution is not the only one to have ended in dictatorship.” (Oxley, 1967:81) But *Animal Farm* is not about the French Revolution and its aftermath or the rise to power of Hitler or, for that matter, the rise to power of Genghis Khan. As Orwell himself has made explicit: however many lessons of universal applicability it may contain, *Animal Farm* is about the Soviet Union 1917-1943.

Few genres are as fleeting as satire, because satire so heavily rests on topicality and immediate relevance. Most satire written before 1920, and most satire not originally meant for an English-speaking audience, is in fact incomprehensible to us without such detailed annotation as to make reading it an exercise in pedantry not pleasure. (Here, I call your attention to the content of, say, Johnson [1945]—which was inflicted on undergraduates for a number of decades.) Works of satire that last must be capable of being read on several different levels and of being enjoyed even by those oblivious to historical or literary allusions. Even when the allusions are lost, a large part of the bite must remain. *Animal Farm* fully meets these tests.
That *Animal Farm* recapitulates in condensed and symbolic form the history of the Soviet revolution does not prevent its being seized on as a general weapon in any antidictatorial or antitotalitarian cause; and Orwell's ghost would no doubt chortle with glee at such uses.\(^9\) Orwell was never an “anti-Communist” (as we currently use that phrase, often to describe a rabid zealot of the right); he was that rarer and quite different creature, an “anti-totalitarian.” The sole reason that Orwell concentrated the bulk of his fire on totalitarianism of a left-wing variety was that he thought that England (and English intellectuals in particular) had more to fear from the seductiveness of the communist illusion than from its fascist counterpart—a view borne out by the political history of intellectuals in the 30s and 40s in Great Britain (and the U.S.).

However history-laden the details of *Animal Farm* may be, the antitotalitarian lessons it conveys are universal. In a mixed review of *1984* (“Although George Orwell's *1984* is a brilliant and fascinating novel, the nature of its fantasy is so absolutely final and relentless that I can recommend it only with a certain reservation.”) Diana Trilling (1949:716-717) perceptively evaluates Orwell's broader themes in *Animal Farm*:

> Even where, as in his last novel, *Animal Farm*, Mr. Orwell seemed to be concerned only with unmasking the Soviet Union for its dreamy admirers, he was urged on by something larger than sectarianism. What he was telling us is that all along the path the Soviet revolution has followed to the destruction of all the decent human values, there have stood the best ideals of modern social enlightenment. … In the name of a higher loyalty, treacheries beyond imagination have been committed; in the name of Socialist equality, privilege has ruled unbridled; in the name of democracy and freedom, the individual has lived without public voice or private peace. … [We] are being warned against the extremes to which the contemporary totalitarian spirit can carry us, not only so that we will be warned against Russia, but so that we will understand the ultimate dangers involved whenever power moves under the guise of order and rationality.

One last point: It is a grave error to see Snowball as the hero in *Animal Farm*, as does Laurence Brander, author of a full-length study of Orwell (Brander, 1954), who sees Snowball as “a symbol of altruism, the essential social virtue” and sees Snowball's expulsion as the defeat of “his altruistic laws for giving warmth, food and comfort to all the animals.” (Brander, 1954:175 cited in Greenblatt, 1974:109) But as Greenblatt points out, “This is very touching, but unfortunately there is no indication that Snowball is any less corrupt or power-mad than Napoleon.” (Greenblatt, 1974:109) As Orwell himself wrote, “Trotsky, in exile, denounces the Russian dictatorsip, but he is probably as much responsible for it as any man now living.” (*CEJL*, Vol. 1:38; cited in Williams, 1971:63)

### III. ANIMAL FARM'S CRITICAL DEBUT

For a time it appeared as if the fate of *Animal Farm* would parallel that of *Homage to Catalonia*, in being rejected by Orwell's regular publisher and, upon publication, vilified by the Left. *Homage* at first sold only 900 copies and was eventually remaindered. Orwell attributed this reception largely to the left intellectuals's Russophile views which blinded them to the truth about the Communist party's role in the Spanish Civil War and led them to seek to suppress evidence unfavorable to the communists. He wrote:

> I had discovered that it was almost impossible to get any publicity in the English press for a truthful account of what had been going on in Catalonia in May-June 1937 (mass imprisonments without trial, assassinations by the secret police, etc.). A number of people had said to me with varying degrees of frankness, that one must not tell the truth about what was happening in Spain, and the part played by the Communist Party, because to do so would be to prejudice public opinion against the Spanish government and so aid (the dictator) Franco. I do not agree with this view, because I hold the outmoded opinion that it does not pay to tell lies.
One influential figure, Kingsley Martin, editor of The New Statesman, epitomized for Orwell the person who acted on the point of view that “truth must bow to expediency and the Soviet Union can do no wrong”:

As soon as I got out of Spain I wired from France asking if they [The New Statesman] would like an article and of course they said yes, but when they saw that my article was on the suppression of the POUM they said they couldn't print it. To sugar the pill they sent me to review a very good book which appeared recently, The Spanish Cockpit, which blows the gaff pretty well on what has been happening. But once again when they saw my review they couldn't print it, as it was against editorial policy.

(cited in Pryce-Jones, 1971:144)

Victor Gollancz, publisher for the Left Book Club, and Orwell's regular publisher, had refused Orwell a book advance before he went to Spain, in anticipation of a probable rejection of Orwell's manuscript. Orwell's previous book for the Left Book Club, The Road to Wigan Pier, which had been commissioned by them, stirred a great deal of controversy upon its receipt. His outspoken views on the futility of intellectuals seeking to recruit workers to socialism by haranguing them with unintelligible and prolix Marxist rhetoric were not well received.

According to Philip Toynbee (Encounter, August 1959), The Road to Wigan Pier had been received “with considerable obloquy by Communists and fellow-travelers, but with enthusiasm by many”. … In The Daily Worker (which twice had reviewed earlier Orwell books quite favorably) Harry Pollitt discovered in Orwell “a disillusioned little middle-class boy” who had only to hear what Left Book circles would say about his work before resolving never to write again on any subject that he did not understand. From then on, it became standard practice on the far left to make some play about the Blair/Orwell change of name, and a mention of Eton and the Indian Imperial Police was almost obligatory.

(Pryce-Jones, 1971:145)

The Daily Worker, not surprisingly, was even less pleased with Homage to Catalonia. It referred rather nastily to

books produced by individuals who have splashed their eyes for a few months with Spanish blood. … The value of the book is that it gives an honest picture of the sort of mentality that toys with revolutionary romanticism but shies violently at revolutionary discipline. It should be read as a warning.

(cited in Pryce-Jones, 1971:146)

Although Gollancz had published Orwell's novel Coming Up for Air in 1939, he rejected the manuscript of Animal Farm. For him “the war-time alliance put the Russians beyond criticism.” (Pryce-Jones, 1971:146)

Three English and some twenty American publishers followed Gollancz's lead and turned the book down for fear of upsetting a military ally, although some thought it was too short at 30,000 words to make a book at all. T. S. Eliot, editorial director of Faber and Faber, was among those who rejected it, and for some months Orwell was gloomy about the book's prospects.
Only one publisher, Secket and Warburg, was willing to accept Animal Farm, and even that publisher “dared not bring it out till the war was over.” (“Letter to Frank Barker,” September 3, 1945, in CELJ, Vol. 3:402) Thus the publication of Animal Farm was delayed for one year, to a point when in fact the Cold War had already begun and Russophile sentiments were muted or reversed. Until the publication of Animal Farm, Orwell had never been able to live on what he earned from writing alone; and indeed his literary earnings had been scant. After Animal Farm, Orwell was comfortably prosperous. The publisher with the wisdom to accept Animal Farm sold half a million copies within three years. (Pryce-Jones, 1971:148)

Reviews in the U.S. were largely favorable and in most cases enthusiastically so, judging by the abstracts in the 1949 volume of the Book Review Digest, which includes virtually all American political and literary journals of any circulation. The reviewers who liked it said things like: “Animal Farm is a wise, compassionate and illuminating fable for our times (A. M. Schlesinger, New York Times, August 25, 1946:1); Animal Farm is a neat little book. The writing is neat, too, as lucid as glass and quite as sharp” (Edward Weeks, Atlantic, Vol. 178, September, 1946); and “It is absolutely first-rate” (Edmund Wilson, The New Yorker, Vol. 22, September 7, 1946).

But there were negatives, too. The critics of a strong anti-communist bent said things like: “[T]he book saddened and puzzled me. It seemed on the whole dull. The allegory turned out to be a creaking machine for saying in a clumsy way things that have been said better directly.” (George Soule, The New Republic, Vol. 115, September 2, 1946). “Animal Farm should have been written years ago; coming as it does in the wake of the event, it can only be called a backward work.” (Isaac Rosenfeld, The Nation, Vol. 163, September 7, 1946) Some reviewers of a communist bent wrote for esoteric small circulation journals with pens dipped in venom: “To write Animal Farm, attacking the Soviet Union at the moment that the defenders of Stalingrad struck one of the decisive blows which won the war for the United Nations was for Blair/Orwell an act of integrity. Only incidentally did it bring him a fortune from reactionaries in this country and the U.S.A.” (Arthur Calder Marshall, Reynolds News, 1949; cited in Pryce-Jones, 1971:149) “For Orwell, life is a dunghill.” (Samuel Sillen, “Maggot-of-the-Month,” Masses and Mainstream, Vol. 2, August 1949; reprinted in Howe, 1963:210)

Kingsley Martin, previously mentioned as The New Statesman's editor, also came up with reasons for discounting Animal Farm. He admitted that the story had its truth and that the “shafts strike home.” But the logic of Orwell's satire, he believed, is ultimate cynicism, and that could not be permitted. Orwell, he thought, “has not quite the courage to see that he has lost faith, not in Russia, but in mankind.” (Pryce-Jones, 1971:150). To Martin's charge, Pryce-Jones rebuts:

It was beside the point that Orwell had never had faith in Russia or in mankind, whatever faith in mankind may mean. The argument enabled the Socialist left to go in for a bit of doublethink: to accept that Orwell was a truthful, admirable, and perhaps great writer, but simultaneously to discount him because he was a pessimist … offering neither hope nor solutions.

(Pryce-Jones, 1971:150)

This overview of the initial critical reception of Animal Farm will close with citation of the view of K. T. Willis in the Library Journal (Vol. 71, August 1946): “Stimulating reading but not imperative for all libraries.”

The whole story of Animal Farm and its delayed publication is filled with ironies of a sort that are humorous only in retrospect. For example, in 1947, Orwell gave permission for Ukrainian refugees in the American
Zone in Germany and Belgium to translate *Animal Farm* into Ukrainian, charging them no fee. Of the 3500 copies of this edition, 1500 were confiscated by American authorities in Munich and handed over to Soviet officials. (“Letter to Arthur Koestler,” September 20, 1947, in *CEIL*, Vol. 4:379) Furthermore, the English language version of Orwell's preface to this translation, which provides a Rosetta stone to the events in *Animal Farm*, was lost until some two decades later. Had that preface been better known, it is inconceivable that any critic would have dared to claim that *Animal Farm* was not an allegoric account of events in Soviet history.11 However, the central irony surrounding *Animal Farm* is that “a book written against the grain of prevailing public opinion should have appeared, eighteen months later, at a time when the political situation had changed and it could be used, eagerly, in what was becoming the Cold War.” (Williams, 1971:69) Williams (1971:69) continues:

For a long time the book was inseparable from that ironic political context. Orwell was described on the left as having run “shrieking into the arms of the capitalist publishers” (*Marxist Quarterly*, January 1956) which was certainly not how it felt to him at the time (“I am having hell and all to find a publisher for it here though normally I have no difficulty in publishing my stuff.”). At the same time, the book was undoubtedly used by people with whom Orwell had no sympathy and when followed by *1984* which was even more extensively used, it fixed a vision of Orwell which he, at least, would have considered misleading.

**IV. ANIMAL FARM AS HISTORY**

The story of *Animal Farm* is so well-known that I shall assume the reader is familiar with it in basic outline. The annotations provided in Table 1 and in the footnotes thereto are based on statements in Orwell’s own writings (particularly those in *CEIL*); comments made by various Orwell scholars (especially Atkins, 1954; and Oxley, 1967); the discussion in several books on Soviet history and international relations (e.g., Wren, 1968, Kennan, 1960, Laqueur, 1965); but rest primarily on two books, Dallin (1944) and Fischer (1952), which are critical of the Soviet Union. According to Atkins (1954:223), “Orwell had read both these books and he received one.” If so, he must have read the Fischer book in a preliminary manuscript form, since this book was not published till 1952 and refers to events in 1951 which took place after Orwell's death. In any case, both review Soviet history in terms which, I believe, Orwell would find familiar and not too distant from his own views (although, especially in the case of Fischer, probably too simplistically anti-communist for his taste).

To attempt to treat events in *Animal Farm* as literal history is, of course, absurd. *Animal Farm* is a fable and the correspondence between fable and reality involves metaphoric transformations, not one-to-one and onto mappings. Furthermore, as Orwell himself notes (see “Preface to Ukrainian Edition of *Animal Farm*,” in *CEIL*, Vol. 4), in *Animal Farm*, he has taken liberties with chronology, and certain important details (e.g., the slave labor camps) are missing completely. Moreover, it is impossible to match in a simpleminded way all the characters in *Animal Farm* with their historical equivalents since many (e.g., Molly, Boxer, the sheep, etc.) stand not for particular individuals but for types (e.g., Squealer is the spineless propagandist who parrots the party line in *Pravda* no matter how much it may zig or zag); and characters may also combine traits (e.g., Boxer is a Stakhanovite worker, but he is also a simple peasant who becomes a loyal-to-the-death convert to Animalism's revolutionary and utopian vision).

Nonetheless, to belabor a point already made in the discussion above, *Animal Farm* is based on Soviet history 1917-1943; and tracing the exact correspondences provides important insights into the irony, the wit, and the tremendous presence of the apt metaphor which underpin what, in my view, is Orwell's greatest work. Furthermore, it is foolish to assume that the post-revolution history of the Soviet Union is known even in broad compass (much less in detail) to most Americans, even those with a college education. Atkins remarked in 1954 that the average British “public library borrower does know whom Snowball, Squealer, and Boxer
represent.” (Atkins, 1954:223) My own experience in teaching Animal Farm to college students in both New York and California is that the majority of students who read the book in high school were not taught that it is about Soviet history and that only a handful were clever enough or knowledgeable enough to make that connection on their own.

Notes

1. This paper would have been impossible without the extraordinary assistance of my secretary Helen Wildman and that of Lillian White, Kathy Alberti, Nancy Kain, and other staff members of UCI's Word Processing Center in translating my handwritten scribbles into finished copy, and without the extensive library research performed by my research assistants Nancy Black and Beth McFadden at Irvine and by students in my course in “Political Propaganda” at the State University of New York, Stony Brook.

To the extent that this article proves a contribution to Orwell scholarship it will be because I, a political scientist, have simply performed the somewhat tedious labor of inventorying events and individuals in Animal Farm and mapping them onto their historical counterparts. Not being an expert in Soviet history, I particularly welcome emendations to my classifications from historians and Sovietologists.

2. Kipling fell into what Orwell called the “good-bad” category, author of works which “reek of sentimentality …. yet … are capable of giving true pleasure to people who can see clearly what is wrong with them.” (“Rudyard Kipling” in CEJL, Vol. 2) For Orwell, likening his work to that of Kipling would not have been the ultimate insult it apparently is for Alldritt. Furthermore, the biblical “Ten Commandments” and the observed-only-in-the-breach clauses of the much-heralded Soviet Constitution of 1936 are much more direct sources for the “Laws of Animalism” than is Kipling's “Law of the Jungle.”

3. Once an extremely celebrated author, France's work has been denigrated since before his death in 1924. In his essay on France, Orwell attributes the author's fall from grace partly to political motives, asserting:

He may or may not have been a great writer, but he was one of the symbolic figures in the politico-literary dogfight which has been going on for a hundred years or more. … Anatole France had championed Dreyfus, which needed considerable courage; he had debunked Joan of Arc; he had written a comic history of France; above all, he had lost no opportunity of poking fun at the Church.

(“As I Please,” in CEJL, Vol. 3:173)

As Orwell catalogues France's traits, it is clear that, for him, this is a litany of virtues. A similar litany would be easy to generate for Orwell. It would be easy enough, too, to imagine events which would lead to the same virtually universal downgrading of Orwell's literary reputation as happened to France. Had Orwell lived somewhat longer, he might have made himself almost as unpopular with the Right who mistook him (on the basis of a misreading of Animal Farm and 1984) for an anti-communist of the same breed as they, and with the Labor Party hacks who still don't know what to make of someone who equated socialism with “honesty” and “decency,” and with the liberals who dislike being reminded that, if they really acted on their own professed beliefs, they wouldn't be having strawberries with cream while other human beings starve, as he still is with the dogmatic Left.

4. Critics have variously interpreted Orwell's intent in using the phrase “fairy story” as a subtitle for Animal Farm. According to the most plausible hypothesis, offered by Oxley (1967:80; emphasis ours), Orwell subtitled his book “A Fairy Story” to call attention to the Soviet Revolution as something which “had proved to be a disappointing illusion. This to many people in the West was
what one of the potentially greatest experiments in political engineering ever undertaken had turned into, as the Russia of the 1917 Revolution became the Stalinist Russia of the thirties and forties.” This interpretation of the intended meaning of “Fairy Story” is buttressed by Orwell’s own statement in the preface to the Ukrainian edition of Animal Farm (CEJL Vol. 3:405):

Nothing has contributed so much to the corruption of the original idea of Socialism as the belief that Russia is a Socialist country and that every act of its rulers must be excused, if not imitated. And so for the past ten years I have been convinced that the destruction of the Soviet myth was essential if we wanted a revival of the Socialist movement. On my return from Spain I thought of exposing the Soviet myth in a story that could be easily understood by almost anyone and which could be easily translated into other languages.

The analogy at the heart of Animal Farm arose from an incident witnessed by Orwell of “a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge cart-horse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat.” (CEJL: 406)

5. The analogy at the heart of Animal Farm arose from an incident witnessed by Orwell of “a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge cart-horse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat.”

6. A number of scholars have claimed that surpassing evil is not an appropriate target of satire; e.g., Highe (1962:23) writes:

If Leibniz’s theory of optimism had not been merely a superficial and silly hypothesis which could lead to nothing more than folly and eventual disillusionment, Voltaire could not have written a satire (Candide) about it. … No one could write a successful satire on Attila or Genghis Khan or Hulagu with his pyramids of skulls. No one could satirize leprosy or cancer … Some villains are too awful for us to despise. We can only shudder at them and in horror turn away—or try to write a tragedy. Against such crimes, satire is almost impotent. Against lesser crimes and against all follies it is a powerful weapon.

Animal Farm in large part belies this proscription. By focussing on the fates of individuals who are themselves clearly representative “types,” Orwell reduces the magnitude of evil to a scale which permits the relief of laughter, while at the same time continuing to engender horror and disgust.

7. We might parenthetically note that the pig is much maligned. “Contrary to general opinion, the pig is a clean animal if given sanitary surroundings. Many pigs are forced to live in an unsanitary environment.” (Encyclopedia Brittanica, Vol. 17, 1968, “Pig”: p. 1070)

8. For example, John Gay’s Beggars’ Opera is an attack on the 18th century prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole, depicted as the highwayman MacHeath: but we don’t need to know this to enjoy Gay’s wit (or its 20th century incarnation as Bertolt Brecht’s Threepenny Opera). Swift’s Gulliver begins with a belief that men and women are reasonably honest and wise, but “finds stage by stage, that they are ridiculous midgets, disgusting giants, eccentric lunatics, and apelike anthropods.” Of course, “Gulliver is not really voyaging to different countries, but looking at his society through distorting lenses.” (Highe, 1962:159) Gulliver’s Travels involves what were at the time thinly disguised, though to latter-day readers unversed in 18th century history, quite opaque allusions to personages in the royal courts of several European countries of Swift’s day. For example, Flibnap, the Royal Treasurer (in Book I) is almost certainly the much satirized Prime Minister Walpole; but Swift’s description of Flibnap’s skill as a tightrope walker (a prerequisite for office in the Land of the Lilliputs) is barbed wit whoever its target may be—and its sting will be felt as long as there are politicians to be mocked (which is to say, forever) (Cf. Oxley, 1967:82.)

I don’t wish to argue that the only satire that is worthwhile is that whose message is all on the surface. While Gulliver’s Travels can be enjoyed without annotation, subtleties and even not-so-subtle points
are lost through an inability to comprehend the author's intent. However enjoyable a satire may be when we read its surface meaning, it is difficult to appreciate irony when we aren't in on the joke; knowing the context helps us to appreciate the satirist's skills. An adult should not expect to read a *Gulliver's Travels* or an *Animal Farm* at the same level of understanding or, indeed, with the same innocent pleasure, as when first read as a young adult or child. For the adult rereading a classic work of satire, what was once merely comic may now be perceived as pathos or even tragedy.

9. Oxley (1967:82) points out that “*Animal Farm* was apparently serialized some years ago in an opposition newspaper in Ghana under the Nkrumah regime, and for its readers then, Napoleon presumably took on another, more local meaning.”

10. Edward Hyams, the author of *The New Statesman’s* official history, writes that Orwell came back to Britain with a blistering series of articles attacking the Spanish government and that Martin did not disbelieve them. But “*The New Statesman* had become a committed paper while recognizing that, Fascism defeated, we might then have to fight for our principles against the worst elements in Communism.” Deciding that *The New Statesman* had “the mentality of a whore,” Orwell as an alternative published his views on Spain in *The New English Weekly* where his *Homage to Catalonia* would also receive one of its most perceptive reviews, from Philip Mairet: “It shows us the heart of innocence that lies in revolution; also the miasma of lying that, far more than the cruelty, takes the heart out of it.”

11. One of the ironies concerning *Animal Farm*, which as far as I'm aware has not previously been pointed out, is that concerning a too facile equation of Orwell and Swift. Consider Orwell's judgment of Swift, “Politics vs. Literature: An Examination of *Gulliver's Travels*” (*CEJL*, Vol. 4:207; with some sentence reordering):

   Politically, Swift was one of those people who are driven into a sort of perverse Toryism by the follies of the progressive party of the moment. Part I of *Gulliver's Travels*, ostensibly a satire on human greatness, can be seen if one looks a little deeper, to be simply an attack on England, on the dominant Whig Party, and on the war with France, which—however bad the motives of the Allies may have been—did save Europe from being tyrannised over by a single reactionary power … [N]o one would deny that *Gulliver's Travels* is a rancorous as well as a pessimistic book, and that … it often descends into political partisanship of a narrow kind.

   Substitute Russia for England, Communist for Whig, and Germany for France, Orwell for Swift, and *Animal Farm* for *Gulliver's Travels*, and this could be a Left polemic against Orwell and *Animal Farm*!

**Works Cited**

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BD: *Burmese Days*; New York, 1934.


RWP: *The Road to Wigan Pier*; London, 1937.

CUA: *Coming Up for Air*; London, 1939.

IW: *Inside the Whale*; London, 1940.

LU: *The Lion and the Unicorn*; London, 1941.


SE: *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays*; New York, 1950.

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George Orwell's repeated insistence on plain, firm language reflects his confidence in ordinary truth. This is visible in the language of the narrator in Animal Farm, which is characterized by syntactic tidiness and verbal pithiness. "Mr. Jones, of the Manor Farm, had locked the hen-houses for the night, but was too drunk to remember to shut the pop-holes"; this is how the narrator begins the fable. Set in ironic juxtaposition to this terse phrasing is another distinct language: the crassly elitist, manipulative, unintelligible, and circumlocutory discourse of the pigs, through which the fictitious passes off as factitious and the animals' world is created for them. The magical agency in this fairy tale takes the form of language which becomes a distorting mirror rather than a clear pane. I suggest that the deliberate derangement of language, and linguistic exclusiveness which sustain the usurpation of power, stand out as one of the novel's central thematic concerns. In a sense, the revolution on the farm is a language-focused enterprise, a product of specifically aggressive linguistic energy, and language, which can effectively control reality, is at the root of the tragic experience rather than merely mirroring it. The animals are the negative other of the pigs. They—with an underdeveloped language, a para-language—are overpowered by the linguistic skill of the pigs; their ensnarement is less a matter substance than of generic linguistic impotence and deficient semantic memory. They are incompetent readers of the pigs' devious texts.

The beginning of the narrative quickly establishes the primacy of language. The character of old Major, who dominates the scene of this section, is reduced to a mouth. In a lengthy address to the animals, he engages in a verbal creation of what society might become. He is the "man on the white horse" who steps in with utopian discourse. A nocturnal time setting (Major "was so highly regarded on the farm that everyone was quite ready to lose an hour's sleep in order to hear what he had to say" lends to the situation a layer of fantasy. Major speaks from above ("a sort of raised platform"—perhaps a symbol of the sacred locus of revelation, distance also marks separation) and offers his text in the light of the received major prophecy. Attacks are heaped upon man. With his elocutionary style and the accent of exhortation, Major creates an atmosphere of paternalism; there is a disparity between the liberating stance and authoritative language structure. Beside the hammering imperative tone ("You cows"; "And you hens"; "And you Clover"; "get rid of Man"; "work night and day"; "Fix your eyes on that"; "pass on this message" 4-5) there is his willful persistence in the use of the first person (15 "I"s in one short paragraph; 3). He sets sights idealistically high about forming a happy collectivity with a manna economy. His general prescription that getting rid of man will bring an overnight change is delivered as gospel. The dramatic speech moves incrementally to a climatic point: "... only get rid of Man, and the produce of our labour would be our own. Almost overnight we could become rich and free" (5). According to Major, the society of the future is marked by spontaneous fraternization: "All animals are comrades" (6). In a supreme cautionary irony, the dogs suddenly chase the rats, substituting a truth for the lie and deconstructing the preceding platitude. Yet, this is lost on the animals. Major, too, is not aware that the animals will suffer under the pigs what he predicts will come if revolution does not take place. There is a grim irony in this: "To that horror we all must come—cows, pigs, hens, sheep, everyone. Even the horses and the dogs have no better fate. You, Boxer, the very day that those great muscles of yours lose their power, Jones will sell you to the knacker, who will cut your throat and boil you down for the foxhounds" (5). The oration has cunningly generated an emotional momentum which carries the animals incarcerated along with it. Their experience as naive readers seduced by the text can be viewed in terms of pleasure. Major climaxes his linguistic construct with a patriotic hymn that finds a response in the animals' euphoria (7-8). His linguistic fantasy is virtually a deathbed utterance. "Three nights later," we read, "Major died peacefully in his sleep" (9). The high ideals are as dead as Major himself. It is of significance for Orwell's deconstruction that
the visionary potential is shrouded in darkness.

A rhetorical ploy that Major uses to lease ears is varying the type of sentence structure, and varying the usual declarative statement with questions, exclamations, exhortations, and other moods of discourse. Anaphoric repetition—the repeated word “And” at the beginning of consecutive paragraphs—is another device used, creating a bouncing rhythm. This helps form cross-correspondences and build the expansion of the discourse to a climax. More still are the refrainlike restatements of the same point: “Man is the only real enemy we have,” “All men are enemies,” Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy,” “remember always your duty of enmity towards Man.” Ironical use of Oxymoron appears later in the novel in structures such as: “This work was strictly voluntary, but any animal who absented himself from it would have his rations reduced by half” (40), “Napoleon, who was directing operations from the rear” (70), and “Napoleon had commanded that once a week there should be held something called a Spontaneous Demonstration” (77).

Major's control over language, over others, builds anticipation for further makers of words, for whom the play of tyrannical power is wordplay. The uncontested owners of language and its resources use their talent to serve strategies, with foregrounding attention to the teaching process, constructing student-animals as conformers to new ideologies: “The work of teaching and organizing the others fell naturally upon the pigs, who were generally recognized as being the cleverest of the animals” (9). The pigs have a “good” claim to leadership and privileges; a hierarchy already existed among the animals. Squealer is the best game player, in him we see nothing but convoluted words. Like Major, he can project his own mental linguistic images onto the minds of the underprivileged or onto the fabric of reality itself. Endowed with the quickest tongue, he shows a remarkable disposition for diversionary oratory—its incommunicable quality notwithstanding. He shares the deconstructionist’s sense of free play in putting into the text what he regards as meaning: “He was a brilliant talker … he could turn black into white” (9). He is the apologist par excellence for the new corps of leaders. He slyly legitimates the exclusive consumption of the milk and apples by one of his palliatives, and he assigns noble motives to the pigs: “It is for your sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples” (23). It is testimony to his efficiency that he succeeds. This should not surprise us, for he is aware of and delights in his capability to incite, and takes advantage of the animals’ linguistic vulnerability. His “eloquence [carries] them away” (35), and makes it doubtful that anyone would have an opposing thought. And to circumvent the possibility of this, he plays upon their variously scaled stresses—they are apprised of Jones’s danger to them: “Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back! … surely there is no one among you who wants to see Jones come back?” (23).

Malevolent Napoleon, though in character “not much of a talker” (9), still he adequately fits words and articulatory dynamics to objects. He offers to the perplexed animals a scapegoat to soothe other anxieties; pitch raising is used for additional reinforcement of persuasion: “Comrades,” he said quietly, ‘do you know who is responsible for this? Do you know the enemy who has come in the night and overthrown our windmill? SNOWBALL!” he suddenly roared in a voice of thunder, ‘Snowball has done this thing!”’. With the absence of Snowball which leaves no resistive voice, Napoleon establishes his reign by coercion. He retires into elitist isolation and rules by remote control. Squealer most effectively helps him by the instantaneously available speeches stating untruths throughout; language stands as a substitute for the status quo: “Do not imagine, comrades, that leadership is a pleasure! … No one believes more firmly than Comrade Napoleon that all animals are equal … And as to the Battle of the Cowshed, I believe the time will come when we shall find that Snowball's part in it was much exaggerated … One false step, and our enemies would be upon us … Once again this argument was unanswerable” (37). Ailing recognition of irrelevancy and inadequacy weighs the masses down. Squealer is a master manipulator of his approving listeners and his oratorical competence continues unabated throughout the novel. As economic shortages pile one on another, he placates them with fictionality making as factuality. To the dunderheaded fools hearing is believing—particularly of scarcely remembered things—and familiarity has bred “understanding”: “On Sunday mornings Squealer, holding down a long strip of paper with his trotter, would read out to them lists of figures proving that the production of every class of food-stuff had increased by two hundred per cent, three
hundred per cent, or five hundred per cent, as the case might be. The animals saw no reason to disbelieve him, especially as they could no longer remember very clearly what conditions had been like before the Rebellion” (61-62). The reader gasps with wonder at Squealer's blatant absurdities. Claims and plain truth, signifiers and concrete reality, are widely disparate. The mass dis-informationist wraps himself in the cloak of statistics. His freely inventive handling of numbers, woven in the very fabric of his discourse, dodges and goes unchallenged. Numbers have almost magical powers; they dissolve any doubt.

Squealer's quite heated verbalization, expanding into a narrative, about the death of Boxer banishes any disbelief over outrageous incongruities (83). He has had much practice in verbal acrobatics. In using hard vocabulary, distractors, he makes the content of the text as intransparent and distancing as possible: “This, said Squealer, was something called tactics. The animals were not certain what the word meant” (39). He never feels obliged to prove the case for legibility or for logical justification. animals are caught in his semantic nets; they cannot decipher the complexities of arcane jargon and meaningless sound structures: “… it had been found necessary to make a readjustment of rations (Squealer always spoke of it as a ‘readjustment’, never as a ‘reduction’) … Reading out the figures in a shrill rapid voice, he proved to them in detail that they had more oats, more hay, more turnips than they had in Jones's day … The animals believed every word of it” (75). The finite minds of the animals are inherently incapable of the linguistically rich mind of Squealer; words do not fail him to take them further in: “You did not suppose, surely, that there was ever a ruling against beds? … The rule was against sheets, which are a human invention” (45-46). Squealer is typically quick with indigenous diction that is not part of the animals' lexicon. Language becomes so opaque that it parodies its communicative purpose: “The other animals were too ignorant to understand. For example, Squealer told them that the pigs had to expend enormous labours every day upon mysterious things called ‘files,’ ‘reports,’ ‘minutes’ and ‘memoranda’” (86). If the animals are left guessing about what happened, Squealer strikes out into further explanation that leaves them mute—their memory is viewed askance. On the issue of trading with the neighboring farms, Squealer “assured them that the resolution against engaging in trade and using money had never been passed, or even suggested” (43).

The propagandist's ability to transmute reality into linguistic artefacts, with such certainty of composure, is displayed in further situations. One such scene is that in which Squealer inflatedly attacks Snowball, tarnishing his name. He is baulked by Boxer who cannot grasp what he hears—Snowball “fought bravely at the Battle of the Cowshed. I saw him myself. Did we not give him ‘Animal Hero, First Class’?” But Squealer is adamant; with customary ease he can write or unwrite a text, and Boxer's remark is brushed aside: “That was our mistake, comrade. For we know now—it is all written down in the secret documents that we have found—that in reality he was trying to lure us to our doom” (54). And if Boxer responds to sense rather than to the untruth-filled words, his unbending trust in the infallible Napoleon immediately impels him to silence: “If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right.” When Snowball speaks falsely of the outcome of the battle, Boxer once again interrogates—he cannot see a victory as the windmill was demolished. Squealer's riddling phrases, however, confiscate disbelief (71). The passage from “Beasts of England” to the song of Minimus is unjustifiable to animals, but the commentator-at-large is “perspicacious” and interprets raison in this: “‘Beasts of England’ was the song of the Rebellion. But the Rebellion is now completed” (59).

In addition to the labyrinthine flow of words in which the rhetor indulges, he employs a language of physical gestures, bearing a false freight of emotional overtone. This emerges conspicuously in his explanation of the death of Boxer, where, amid a breakup of utterance, he affects sadness in a seemingly partisan manner: “Lifting his trotter and wiping away a tear … Squealer's demeanor suddenly changed. He fell silent for a moment, and his little eyes dated suspicious glances from side to side before he proceeded … he cried indignantly, whisking his tail and skipping from side to side” (83). This wordless language of communication has been used rather more crudely earlier by Major. Too conscious of making a speech he solemnly clears his throat twice (3,7), which raises an expectation of a high point in the paternalistic exhortation.
A secondary character who also drugs the masses with words beyond their ability to fathom is Moses. Like Squealer, he is what he is because of what he says than what he does. The clerically attired black raven gladly follows any leader, claiming a future happiness beyond the grave. He flies after an exiled Jones, then returns to the farm to be rewarded with “a gill of beer a day” (79) for his palliatives to the problems of real life circumstances—devaluing the here-and-now in favour of the everafter. His presence provides a scathing satire on religion. Being a raven, he is attracted to the odor of carrion on which he feeds, a verbal pun showing us the extent of Orwell's antipathy to religious symbolic expressions as organs of mass deception. As is the case with other successful orators, his use of a special diction and style, lacking semantic clarity, conveys a sense of authoritarian paternalism, which then puts his addresses in a credulous frame of mind.

The inflated rhetoricity of porcine texts is reinforced by the implications of the gradual lexical reformulation of Commandments, statutory, and inscriptions, in which the pigs, the appropriative authors and determinants of this text of texts, initially placed so much faith. Their success in scrambling it stems from their linguistic talent which deludes and obfuscates. As the Commandments are largely incomprehensible to the animals, Snowball “solves” the problem by conjuring a reducibly comprehensive label: “four legs good, two legs bad,” an oversimplification, like the rest of the pigs' ideology, which disguises the evil intentions of the unscrupulous. Abridgement is the first step towards perversion. Birds find it hard to concur with Snowball's “judicial” analysis of their identity. Snowball exploits his linguistic superiority and silences their subtle questioning by his unintelligible proof that a wing “should therefore be regarded as a leg” and not as a “hand, the instrument with which he [man] does all his mischief” (22). By a verbal sleight of hand, he misreads the signifier and makes the bird appear quadruped. The pigs void the Commandments of their determinate and objective content—rendering the constant variable and the impermissible permissible by interpolating new tags: “‘No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets,’ ‘No animal shall kill any other animal without cause,’ ‘No animal shall drink alcohol to excess,’ ‘Four legs good, two legs better!’ ‘ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS’” (45, 61, 73, 89, 90). This textual variation can be seen in the light of Paul Ricoeur's observation: “… a linking together of a new discourse to the discourse of the text.”3 The pigs exploit their listeners' lack of facility for recall, and their textual-comparison ineptitude. They emphasize the rhetorical basis of interpretation and discredit the denotative, univocal, and hermeneutical. In effect it would appear that they are deconstructors: they put in question the assumption that interpretation defines a stable and unquestionable truth about the Commandments.

It is remarkable that whilst most of the animals are able to make out letters and words, they cannot make the move toward meaning and semantic perception. Their learning disabilities are articulate in the reading and writing priming passage: “The dogs learned to read fairly well, but were not interested in reading anything except the Seven Commandments. Muriel, the goat, could read somewhat better than the dogs … Benjamin could read as well as any pig, but never exercised his faculty. So far as he knew, he said, there was nothing worth reading. Clover learnt the whole alphabet, but could not put words together. Boxer could not get beyond the letter D … Mollie refused to learn any but the five letters which spelt her own name … None of the other animals on the farm could get further than the letter A” (20-21). The passage charts the extent of the primates' verbal learning repertoire, their variable pacing, and endemic inequality. Some are less or more able than others. Classes prepare the dogs, who act as a punishing squad, for a particular reading task: to watch over the seven fundamental dogmas in which they have been indoctrinated. It is doubly ironic that the dog, well armed with powerful physique and canine teeth, is in fact the proverbial man's best friend. As the pigs eventually turn into “men,” tyrannical humans, this largely offers itself as a verbal pun on the proverb. Benjamin has achieved poorly owing not to mental laziness to read texts but to his self-protective obtuseness. He is the linguistic anti-Squealer. The status quo seems to justify his pose of noninvolvement. His attitude which supposes the vacuity of the text (or life) comes close to the claim of deconstruction, the most radical of skepticisms about the text. This is evident from his quip “Donkeys live a long time. None of you has ever seen a dead donkey” (19). His own silent text will remain basically unchanged until Boxer is taken off to his death. A mood of defiance takes hold of him: “It was the first time that they had ever seen Benjamin excited—indeed it was the first time that anyone had ever seen him gallop. ‘Quick, quick!’ he shouted. ‘Come
at once! They're taking Boxer away!’” (81). Here Benjamin also speaks through nonverbal forms. This is a moment of revelation when a flat character suddenly, as a result of a more positive concern, outgrows his flatness. It is ironic that he reads without fail the sign on the knacker's van, since he prefers not to read. But his reaction is one that makes the whole situation more tragic. Realistic enough to see the writing on the wall for the rebellion before it starts, and always tongue-tied, it must therefore be an immense tragedy to bring him out of his cynical silence and to make him genuinely saddened. His subsequent response is definitive, it vents all the hate pent up for years of oppressed life. He abandons self-preservation in the face of this disaster. Benjamin thus seems to be a representation of Orwell himself. Orwell is the outspoken critic of communism after an intolerable, close view of the inner working of the system. On the other hand, Orwell could be seen as a betrayed Boxer, belatedly kicking his legs against the walls of the knacker's van, having been robbed of his power by his loyalty to the pigs.

Boxer's learner's ability stops at the infancy stage. His talent is taken up with ebullient physical activities emanating from a determinedly high sense of responsibility to the community and dedication to the work ethic. He suffers from great deficiencies in both episodic and semantic memory as well as in perceptual recognition. His illiteracy, we know, will be his undoing as he is carted off in the van and is ignorant of the markings on its side. Mollie, although not categorized low in words, but vain as she is, stops at decoding the five letters forming her name. The rest of the animals—the sheep, hens, and ducks—rank very low in achievement, almost unteachable. It cannot be matter of surprise that the sheep identify with a communal ideology which makes them merge with the mass at the expense of individual autonomy. Put through a catechism, they become mere prattlers, finely tuned to pigs' ways. They loudly proclaim their unshakable loyalty by ritually breaking into “Four legs good, two legs bad” drowning any possibility of antiphonal thought.

This allows us to conclude that animals' learning disabilities will impede all efforts to improve their lot. They have the common man's responsibility in propping up tyrannies, and inviting their own victimization, through a trio of handicaps: a linguistic and cognitive deficiency, gullibility in acceptance of maneuverings at face value, and historical amnesia. However, there are a few oblique hints that the animals are not merely mindless beasts. They do have minds, they do think as we read that “they reasoned” (78), and that they have “the thought that at least he [Boxer] had died happy” (84), they also remember the issue of the pension field (85). This makes their betrayal all the more poignant since they are aware (if only obliquely) of what is happening to them.

One may ask whether it makes any sense to represent all animals as a single community. Can a mass society divided by a wide range of linguistic variation and differences in intelligence, among others, be said to hold a single doctrine? Pan-animalism cannot be a reality. It becomes apparent at the end of the novel that the pigs have firmly secured their position. The inference is that a shadow of doubt is thrown on a second insurrectionary round as long as the linguistic oligarchy will sustain their exploitation of the animals through the monopoly of language. If animals are ever to be liberated, they should be raised up into language and provided with semantic space to enable them to be conversant with the pigs and to engage them on their own ground with a counter discourse and gestures of their own.

The reader is indeed not wholly dependent upon the narrator's discourse for access to the characters. We should not be at all astonished to see that the narrator is totally coldly uncritical where tragic happenings take place. At Boxer's betrayal and at the cataclysmic massacre, extremely emotional contexts, his language is notably restrained. He ventures nothing, and soon after each event Squealer appears, attuning animals to mutability, constructing his versions of events, and explaining that what happened was justified, or what they just say was not what really occurred. Indeed, there is a comic element in all of Squealer's presentations. The comic also appears in Orwell's attention to details. Out of context the idea that a pig on hind legs, wiping “hot” tears from his eyes in memory of a “departed” friend, is absurd. But here juxtaposed against an act of extreme betrayal, it assumes a very sinister note. Orwell's very silence and detachment would seem to carry
much weight here, it is in such marked contrast to the agitation that crowds about. To add insult to injury, the pigs get drunk on whisky, paid for by Boxer's killing, on the night of his death. Though this is to be expected from the callous pigs, what makes this situation so black is that the animals do not connect Boxer's death with the pigs' drinking. Orwell's silence mirrors the animals' inability to discern truth.

A final point remains. Of some interest is Orwell's intertextual perspective which draws on his familiarity with and taste for Oriental materials. Language abets religious association which is, of course, burlesque. One detects nuances of the maximum number of wives permissible by Islam in Napoleon's "four sows [that] had all littered about simultaneously, producing thirty-one young pigs between them" (75). There is a clear injunction in the Holy Qur'an: "... marry women of your choice, two, or three or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly [with them], then only one."" In a similar vein, the lush farm of the afterlife, where earthly suffering will be recompensed, shows intertextual possibilities and Orwell's attraction to Islamic epistemology. A heavenly "Sugarcandy Mountain" as envisioned by Moses is plentiful of material benefits for all animals: "It was situated somewhere up in the sky, a little distance beyond the clouds, Moses said. In Sugarcandy Mountain it was Sunday seven days a week, clover was in season all the year round, and lump sugar and linseed cake grew on the hedges" (10-11). This evokes the description of Paradise in the Holy Qur'an: "[There is] a Parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of water incorruptible; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey pure and clear. In it there are for them all kinds of fruits" (XLVII:15). Furthermore, Moses "even claimed to have been there on one of his higher flights, and to have seen the everlasting fields of clover and linseed cake and lump sugar growing on the hedges" (78)—a clear parody of Prophet Muhammad's ascent through the seven heavens [the night journey]: "Glory to [God] who did take his servant for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did bless" (XVII:I). This contextual echo helps to keep us aware of the religious dimensions of Moses's titillating language.

Notes

2. George Orwell, Animal Farm (Penguin, 1989 edition) I. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will be made parenthetically in the text.

Criticism: Michael Peters (essay date August 1995)


[In the following essay, Peters considers the continuing relevance and influence of Animal Farm on the fiftieth anniversary of its publication.]

Few books are as well-known as Animal Farm. Published fifty years ago, in August 1945, as the Cold War was about to begin, the novel with its mixture of simple fairy-tale and historical allegory, still has the power to charm and provoke, even though that war now seems to be part of a previous age. The novel, while frequently taught in schools to thirteen and fourteen year olds, is rarely to be found in sixth form or university syllabuses. Like the author, the book occupies an ambiguous place in the literary world. Yet its fame amongst the reading
and, to an extent, the non-reading public is indisputable; the slogan, ‘All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others’, is one that has become part of the language.

Orwell was very clear about his intentions in writing the book. During the Spanish Civil War, he had seen the effects of the repressions and deceptions of Stalinism at first hand. He wished to open people's eyes to the reality of the Soviet regime ‘in a story that could be easily understood by almost anyone’, even when that regime had become an ally to Britain and the USA in the fight against German fascism. Such an exposure was essential, Orwell believed, if a true and democratic form of socialism was to be created. Working in London, first as a BBC journalist, and then as the literary editor of Tribune, Animal Farm was written whilst the bombs dropped; one bomb even damaged the manuscript when it fell on the street where Orwell and his wife lived. Certainly the process by which the book saw the light of day was a tortuous one, with publisher after publisher finding reasons for refusing or delaying publication. For Gollancz, who had first option, and Faber, in the person of T. S. Eliot, the novel was too much of an attack on Russia, which had suffered so hugely at Stalingrad. Cape first consulted the Ministry of Information, who were concerned that the Russian leaders would take offence at their depiction as pigs, before turning the book down.

At the other end of the spectrum, even the Anarchist, Freedom Press, took exception to the novel. In America, the Dial Press thought it ‘impossible to sell animal stories’. When, eventually, Warburg agreed to take the book, publication was delayed for almost a year, until the end of the European War. The question of whether this was due to a shortage of paper—the official explanation—or to political necessity, is still unresolved. From Paris, to which he travelled in February 1945, to report the War for The Observer at closer quarters, Orwell checked the proofs, making one last change. When the Windmill is attacked Napoleon stays standing, instead of dropping to the ground, as a tribute to Stalin's courage in remaining in Moscow during Hitler's advance; even to his enemies Orwell is determined to be fair.

Inevitably Animal Farm, when it was finally published, created controversy, although not of the kind originally envisaged. With the end of the struggle against fascism, a new conflict had begun to develop—the Cold War. Once effectively banned because of its politics, the book started to become an instrument of propaganda in the West's campaign to claim the moral high ground. Many new translations were produced, some with the assistance of the US State Department, and were circulated in places where Soviet influence prevailed—for example, the Ukraine and Korea. In 1947 the ‘Voice of America’ broadcast a radio version to Eastern Europe. The success of the novel in propaganda terms may be gauged by the Soviets' fear and loathing of the book, expressed by the seizure of copies in Germany, as well as by the cancellation of proposed radio dramatisations in Czechoslovakia. This occurred just before Soviet crackdowns in 1948 and again in 1968 on regimes which seemed to be dangerously libertarian.

Whilst Orwell was happy to see his book used to attack the Soviet myth, he did become increasingly worried about the way it was being used by the Right as a means of demonstrating that all revolutionary change was bound to fail. Picking out as central the moment when the pigs keep apples and milk for themselves, he makes the point that if ‘the other animals had had the sense to put their foot down then it would have been all right’. Major's dream could have been realised. The masses should be ‘alert’, ready to ‘chuck out their leaders as soon as they have done their job’. This is rather a different message than that found in the anti-Communist propaganda which so frequently surrounded, and surrounds, the novel.

For Orwell personally, Animal Farm marked his entry into the halls of literary fame. With the first impression of 4,500 copies soon sold out, sales in the UK reached 25,000 within five years, and over half a million in the US within four years. From being a marginal left-wing figure, Orwell became one of the most celebrated writers of the day, with periodic radio and television adaptations of both Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty Four. In 1954, the first animated version of a literary text—a cartoon of Animal Farm—was made. However, in the last few years of his life, with a newly adopted son to bring up alone after his wife's unexpected death, and with his tuberculosis becoming increasingly serious, the success of what Orwell called his ‘little squib’
may have been some small comfort.

George Orwell, as many readers have done, recognised that the book's great achievement was to ‘fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole’. For this reason, fifty years on, in spite of the collapse of the Soviet system, in spite of the dilution of democratic socialism into liberalism, and in spite of the habit of literary critics to favour complex texts for deconstruction, *Animal Farm* may still be read with pleasure and profit, inside and outside the classroom, as one of the most imaginatively compelling satires on what Orwell called, in another of his fine phrases, the ‘gramophone mind’.

**Criticism: John V. Knapp (essay date June 1996)**

**SOURCE:** Knapp, John V. “Creative Reasoning in the Interactive Classroom: Experiential Exercises for Teaching George Orwell's *Animal Farm.*” *College Literature* 23, no. 2 (June 1996): 143-56.

*[In the following essay, Knapp discusses his methods for teaching *Animal Farm.*]

_Simplification is vexation,_
_Work sheets are as bad;
Then the old ennui just crushes me,_
And practice drives me mad!
So give me argumentation!
More give and take agrees,
Helps me in my education,
Then Orwell seems a breeze.

(“The Bald-headed Bard” 1996)

Most of us enjoy a change now and then, whether to a different brand of ice cream or to a method by which we teach the “classic” works of literature. One older method, lecturing, has well-known limitations, especially for younger students and those not especially motivated to do close readings of literary texts. While lecturing works in some places and for some students, those of us who teach literature are always interested in alternative procedures to accomplish some fairly typical goals: we want our students to understand the text through close reading and real engagement with the printed page; we want them to have some grasp of the fictional work's historical and cultural contexts; and most of all, we want them to have some of the appropriate emotional responses through a process of their own discovery—the classic interactive processes among readers, texts, and fellow learners first articulated by Louise Rosenblatt back in the 1930s (*Literature; The Reader*).¹

More recent research, employing several of Lev. S. Vygotsky's ideas, has reiterated Rosenblatt's thinking and has suggested that “comprehension activity is simultaneously a collective, inter-mental process and an individual, intra-mental process.”² Since individual students “rarely generate and revise their knowledge based on propositional logic,” merely “presenting information [lecturing] guaranteed to be correct by authorities is not sufficient for the construction of knowledge” even though individuals possess knowledge structures” (Kobayashi 233-34). Rather, Kobayashi says, the active use of such knowledge structures is highly dependent on social conditions—both immediate conditions, such as with whom a problem is solved, and remote conditions, such as a society's educational system. As a result, comprehension activity can be regarded as a progressive development rather than a complete or final product. In other words, individuals tend to seek provisional consistency [when constructing knowledge structures].
For many teachers of literature, the most obvious social condition for increasing individual knowledge structures is whole-group class discussion (Cone 466); yet good discussions require class training for this pedagogical technique to succeed. And, in some of the better class conversations, students need to learn that consensus is not always possible and that agreeing to disagree is oftentimes the best one can hope for. Hence, the most rewarding type of individual literary learning within a social matrix is often less about winning or losing an argument and more about establishing the boundaries of dissent. The game described below not only helps students understand Orwell's novel, but provides both fun and an entry into the dynamics of good classroom conversations.

Several scholars of classroom interaction distinguish between two kinds of whole group discussion: conversation, where the teacher asks (and also responds to) authentic questions, those without pre-specified answers; and drill, where the teacher and class partake of a stereotypical classroom exchange. In drill, the teacher asks a question whose answer she already knows, the student responds, seeking to give the correct answer, and the teacher then evaluates the answer, pronouncing it acceptable or not. No matter how politely or indirectly the teacher evaluates an incorrect answer, both she and the student know in this context that the answer is “wrong.”

In most classrooms, whole-group discussion consists of a mix of conversation and drill with the more experienced (or talented) teachers focusing on the conversational elements whereas the novice teacher may initially confuse conversation and drill, wondering why in such confusion classroom discussions focused on drill just do not seem to “cook.” Indeed, the novice's skill development in conducting successful whole-group question-and-answer sequences can be marked by the relative movement from preponderately drill-type questions to conversation. One way of developing both the teacher's skill in classroom conversation and the students' interactive processes with the material is to play an interactive game, in this instance a game that teaches the text by combining collaborative learning, conversation, drill, and the students' own life experiences.

For a range of students from high school to college, I have experimented with a classroom exercise I call “Animal Farming,” or, for an older group of students, “Animal Farm Hegemony.” I employ the word hegemony as a deliberate echo of the board game, Monopoly, one most of my students have played from time to time. The difference here is that Animal Farm Hegemony is aimed at the acquisition of power as much as wealth; and, unlike Monopoly, the real learning comes both during the exercise and after the game is over. At that point students begin to reflect upon and discuss as a class one another's ethical values and procedures as well as those issues in Orwell's political satire.

As part of a larger study of politically oriented literature generally and political satire specifically, I want my students during this unit to: a) read Animal Farm and understand the political and social ideas and conditions the novel parodies: that is, they must feel how some revolutions, like the great Soviet experiment, often destroy themselves from within despite their widespread initial idealism; b) understand the genre characteristics of Swiftian satire and Aesop's beast fables, particularly the parody of specific political figures, movements, and issues (such as totalitarianism, Stalinism, the Russian Revolution), and the figures of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky and so on. To do this, students must learn to blend beast and human attributes along the lines mentioned by Edwin Honig in the reading strategy he calls the allegorical waver, the movement on a continuum from allegory to realism. Thus the complexity of Orwell's text is not reduced to mere illustration of a specific historical process while, simultaneously, the historical process enriches their reading in concrete ways. In addition, I want them to see the thematic parallels to historical phenomena, including the social advantages of learning to read carefully with attention to nuance, just as the Pigs did.

When the reading and the games are completed, my students will express their understanding through whole-group conversations as well as through a number of successful and hardly innovative types of feedback. These include such writing projects as essays, paragraphs, reflective journal entries, and sketches.
following such standard fare as small group discussions, and even pop quizzes and tests. However, the key to getting all of this under way is the completion of the experiential exercises. Particularly with whole-group question-and-answer sequences, this game allows students to “figure out things they think they don’t know—and are not expected to know until the moment arises” (Haroutunian-Gordon 50).

For a good experience, students should complete the exercise within one to two class periods. The game ends, quite simply, when those who remain free while enslaving others “win.” Students must then apply learning gained from these exercises by expressing themselves to all during subsequent whole-group discussions in later class periods, or in their writings to be read to the class. The key value to Animal Farm Hegemony is the development of students’ felt insights as well as their reasoning into the mechanisms of totalitarianism and the destruction of political idealism through discussion of and reflection upon their own behavior during the game.

Before we begin the game, I give a brief lecture on Thomas Hobbes and the influence of Leviathan on Animal Farm (Appendix 1). What I do not say directly is that playing the game requires them to understand some of Hobbes’s political philosophy in order to comprehend and to feel the dilemmas found in Orwell's novel. Such understanding will, I hope, arise from the direct experience of the game as well as from reading the novel and listening to my lecture.

I begin, for example, by telling them that in Hobbes's view, human beings are less motivated by reason than by their desires and appetites. In a densely populated and competitive world, most people seek pleasure and avoid pain either through brute strength or cleverness. But, when they cannot out-muscle or out-wit their fellow human beings individually, many will agree to band together in groups, giving up their individual rights for the greater gains, glory, and protection afforded them by belonging to a commonwealth. This collective is headed by a sovereign, one whose power is absolute, being institutionalized by all as the peaceful alternative to the “perpetual war of every man against his neighbor” (Hobbes 2.18).

As with every human action, however, individuals lose something through collective action as well. By giving up individual power to their sovereign, they have made artificial chains, called civil laws, which bind them absolutely since they are themselves the creators of its covenants. This is far better than the war of all against all, since where there is no common power, there is no law; and where there is no law, there is no injustice anyway. Their allegiance to their sovereign should be nearly absolute so long as he is able to defend them from enemies; indeed, Hobbes says that “the end of obedience is protection” (2.21).

Although I do not then make explicit the connection between Hobbes and Animal Farm in the lecture, I do hope that my students will come to understand the limitations of Hobbesian thinking as dramatized in the novel. Through the action of the game, students will feel the dangers of trading protection for political acquiescence. The animal's desire for protection from Mr. Jones through the sovereignty of the pigs and particularly through the collectivized strength of Snowball and Napoleon was only half of the tragic equation; the other half was that idealistic impulse of the pigs that wanted to protect their fellow animals. Since, however, their idealism itself became infused with personal competitiveness, they gradually moved from motivations of comradely protectiveness to the kind of autocratic dismissiveness that sent Boxer to the knackers when he was no longer useful.

In the same way, students playing the game become quickly aware of class differences and some may well be motivated to “protect” their less fortunate brothers and sisters. Nevertheless, after several rounds of the game, the students' natural competitive urges generally overwhelm their humanistic attitudes and most find themselves unable to resist taking advantage of their relatively easily beaten opponents. Only after the game is over and I require the “lower classes” to explain in detail to the “winners” what they felt at the time will the dangers of trading sovereignty for protection become emotionally clear to both losers and winners.
In any event, during the delivery of the Hobbesian material, I do not indicate why such a lecture might be important. My assumption is that students will react to the lecture as students do to many lectures on political philosophy—with relatively modest attention. That is ok by me for now; indeed, one of the points of the game is learning that interesting ideas are not always immediately seen, and, even if they are, sometimes take awhile to digest. In Appendix 1, I have reproduced the brief lecture on the reasons for collectivization that I use from part of Leviathan. Ultimately, during the pressure of the game, I want my students to return to the lecture and to the novel to find any nuggets of information they might use in pursuit of victory. Following the lecture, I read to them the rules of the game. Below are some guidelines for teachers to keep in mind.

ANIMAL FARM HEGEMONY (NOT MONOPOLY): INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER

There are two objectives to this game, the first announced by the teacher, the second unannounced: the first objective is for the whole class to learn as much as possible about Animal Farm specifically and political satire generally; the second objective of the game is for students to experience the dangers of political action, where the primary goal is ostensibly equality for all, in the absence of political balancing structures in place to keep the all-too human desire for power under control. During the game, a student's desire to “win” (answer the most questions correctly) will conflict directly with her generally strong desire for everyone in the class to learn as much as possible. This conflict often occurs even among idealistic students.

Students will quickly see that Napoleon, Snowball, and the other pigs (the ones) might try to “enslave” the rest of the animals by taking their tokens (apples and milk) during the competition and leaving everyone else weakened and hungry. Other animals must then resist whenever and however they are able by keeping as many of their tokens and rental spaces as is possible. A single winner (or a winning team with one “ruler”) must 1) remain “free;” and 2) “enslave” the others. Since all animals are equal, initially, their political equality begins with all students reading the same text (Animal Farm). The teacher's preparation, that is, his questions for whole-group discussion, now becomes material to use during the game. In Appendix 2, I have listed some sample questions, ranging from what Nystrand and Gamoran have elsewhere called report-type questions to the authentic type where the teacher does not pre-specify answers.

The winner then gets The Hobbes, an award given to those who win the battle of “all against all.” After the award ceremony, the other students are allowed (indeed, required) to tell the winner in detail what they think of his or her award and methods of winning, both orally and in writing (perferred). One of the crucial issues to be resolved during this de-briefing concerns the possibility of ameliorating human (or animal) suffering through political action without betraying that initial idealistic impulse. The questions debated during the game and the de-briefing are the heart and soul of the students' learning.

Each student in the class will assume a role during the game. Active roles (for the several major characters) include the following (ideally, the game includes 10 to 15 students or roughly half to two-thirds of a class):

Teacher = Mr (or Ms or Mrs) Jones.

Student A = old Major.

Student B = Clover (one of the Threes).

Student C = The Bank Representative (one of the Twos).

Student D = Napoleon (one of the Ones).

Student E = Snowball (initially an One), etc.
The remainder of the 10 to 15 students in the game is divided into three groups (the high (1), the middle (2), or the low (3), by randomly drawing bits of paper marked with one (pigs), or two (horses, mules, and dogs) or three (everyone else); thereafter, each student must consult the text to develop appropriate behavior, voice, values, and so on for his or her character. At least two examples of every animal mentioned in the novel (i.e., pigs, not just Napoleon; horses, not just Boxer) should be included whenever possible in every exercise.

Students in class who are not part of the game become members of the Thought Police (question experts) and must “help” the teacher either by adjudicating answers among the active members of the game or by submitting written questions (on Animal Farm or Hobbes) to be asked as the game is in progress. Ideally, following a question initially posed by the teacher, the Thought Police would follow it up with an even tougher or more thought-provoking question. The goal here is gradually to add yet another layer to the game and get the members of the audience (the rest of the class) trying to stump or outwit the players.

Students giving correct answers are rewarded for their hard work and given one or more tokens. Tokens are to be divided as follows:

- 1) upper classes (approx. 15 - 16 class) get 50 tokens;
- 2) middle classes (approx. 20 - 21 class) get 25 tokens;
- 3) lower classes (the rest) get the remainder.

Any animal with extra capital (tokens) may rent a “Free Space Rental” (by using his or her accumulated tokens) and so avoid answering one round of questions. Renters also may hire guards with their extra money to keep off trespassers or to raid other free spaces. Any action by the guards is done through questions only. That is, the guard may effect any action (protective or aggressive) by asking a question the guard's target cannot successfully answer. Any guard's question must supersede any question asked by the teacher.

The Bank will lend money (tokens) to any good credit risk, provided that the applicant shows “adequate” means of repayment. The Bank's representative may act as do Mr. Pilkington or Mr. Frederick.

Spontaneous demonstrations may be risked at any time whenever some members of a group (usually the Threes) believe that rational argument will not work. These demonstrations may be stopped by the ones through the use of their guards’ questions. One demonstrator (only) is selected to suffer a Penalty: his or her tokens are removed and deposited in the bank for the benefit of the one whose guard asked the question. The demonstrator is then sent to the knackers (is out of the game) as an object lesson for all those who might consider flouting The Seven Commandments.

**DEFINITIONS (HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS)**

1. **Tokens** are anything of local exchange value: candy bar bits, pennies, time segments, paper bits indicating work release, and so on. The total number of tokens amounts to three times the number of class members.

2. A **Character** may be defined as any entity exhibiting one or more of the following:
   - a) mimetic—real or potential human-like attributes (eg, Boxer is hardworking);
   - b) thematic—attributes belonging to ideas, concepts, goals (Molly represents the selfishness of the Nobility);
   - c) synthetic—attributes belonging to the artifice of the story (Frederick and Pilkington are characters who set in motion the final corruption of the pigs).11

3. The **Point of View** is the position from which either narrative voice speaks or focalizer sees.12

4. **Proper vocabulary** should be used at all times. Students should be encouraged to employ only the vocabulary used in the book, from lectures, or in Hobbes when attempting to express concepts appropriate to Animal Farm’s ideas and its characters.
5. **Key rules** include no violence, touching, or loud verbal coercion. All players must follow *The Seven Commandments*, unless a powerful “ruler” changes the Commandments. Ideally, students will come to feel what it is like to belong to the 1) higher; 2) middle; or 3) lower orders. As Mr. Pilkington choked out: “If you [Pigs] have your lower animals to contend with, … we have our lower classes.”

**ANIMAL FARM HEGEMONY**

The following are the procedures [rules] the teacher recites to the students while distributing tokens:

1. I want game players to clear a space in the middle of the room. After successfully answering a question, the student must then walk slowly with book in hand to the left from 1) Rebellion Place, to 2) Cowshed Corner, to 3) Manor Mansion, to 4) Jones's Livingroom (see Figure 1). Please, no one must move until after he or she has successfully answered the question I will ask of the group generally. After each successfully answered question, the respondent will get the token(s) appropriate to one's class—that is, assuming the Banker has not been corrupted and is willing to pay the Threes as quickly as she would the Ones. All animals must follow *The Seven Commandments* during disputes. The teacher by law must not interfere with the Animal Farm society; doing so would be in violation of the “prime directive.”

2. Answers are judged correct by the teacher and the Thought Police; however, either may be overruled by a “popular vote” of those who point to evidence in either Animal Farm, in Leviathan, or in *The Seven Commandments*. Animals given specific character designations (Boxer, Snowball, and so on) must stay in character and answer as that character probably would do so. Each character is, however, free to invent a new attribute if doing so works to his or her advantage, but said attribute should be reasonably appropriate to that character.

3. For each correct answer to the teacher's questions, Ones, if successful would get three (3) tokens; on the other hand, should a Two answer correctly, then he/she would get two (2) tokens; and Threes, if successful, would get one token. This “class” differential is built into our Animal Farm society to insure stability, social tranquility, and an orderly social fabric. The only way a member of the lower orders may receive a portion of tokens greater than that allotted to his class is by “proving” that the answer of a One was wrong. In such a case, the tokens go to the person who successfully corrects the One.

4. Starting with Rebellion Place, a student will walk to the next area after successfully answering the question I have asked (for example, “Why did the Pigs bury the hams?”). One must answer by raising one's hand before another student raises his or hers. Of course, the Ones always go first, Twos go second, and Threes go last. Incorrect answers are penalized in reverse order from Procedure 2 above; that is, Ones lose one token, Twos lose two tokens, and Threes lose three tokens for each incorrect answer. After two incorrect answers, any individual “goes to the Knackers,” unless living in a protected “rental” space.

5. Any “animal” with extra tokens may “bribe” another to answer for him or her. Any animal may dislodge another by paying the Bank more money for “rent,” and so may live in several rental spaces at once. One who owns a rental space need not answer a question while inside that space.

6. The first animal to get around the circle once may then “let” spaces in the rental areas and “hire” guards (like “enormous dogs wearing brass-studded collars”) to protect his or her investment. Such guards function only by asking questions which the target cannot answer correctly. A correct answer to a guard’s question indicates that the target need not obey the guard that time.

7. The first animal to “control” enough of the others may choose to rewrite any or all of *The Seven Commandments*; a “popular vote” decides passage of the new draft.

8. The Game ends when all tokens are won, or by the end of one or two class periods.

9. All disputes among students are to be settled by reference to the Seven Commandments or Animal Farm generally, or to the lecture on Hobbes. All animals vote on disputes; the majority “wins.”
Remember, in most societies, members “negotiate” for what they want, whether long or short term, by collectivizing, by argumentation, by persuasion, and by propaganda. One is limited only by one's imagination and by the (current) Seven Commandments.

FIGURE 1

All students are to begin by standing near Rebellion Place and respond in orderly fashion to the teacher's (or Thought Police's) questions according to Rule 4. After successfully answering a question, that student may move either to a Rental Space or the next numbered part of the farm. Movement is continuous to end of game.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. REBELLION PLACE</th>
<th>RENTAL SPACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. COWSHED CORNER</td>
<td>RENTAL SPACE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. MANOR MANSION</td>
<td>RENTAL SPACE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. JONES'S LIVINGROOM</td>
<td>RENTAL SPACE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX 1

Introduction (Lecture material covered before exercise begins; see explanation above): to be read aloud as students follow from handout. Students must have a copy of the material below for future consultation.

[from Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan, “Of the Natural Conditions of Mankind as Concerning Their Felicity and Misery.” (Collier's Books, 1651; 1962)].

1. Nature hath made men [and women] … equal, in the faculties of the body, and the mind [so that] the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himself. (98)

2. From this equality of ability, ariseth equality of hope in the attaining of our ends. And therefore if any two men [or women] desire the same thing, which they nevertheless cannot both enjoy, they become enemies, and in the way to their end, which is principally their own conservation … [they] endeavor to destroy or subdue one another.

3. [Hence, from this state of all against all] there is no way for a [person] to secure himself … [except] by force or wiles to master the persons of all men he can … till he see no other power great enough to endanger him. … Also there be some that [take] pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires.

4. So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel: 1) competition (or gain), 2) diffidence (or safety), 3) glory (or reputation)

5. Out of civil states, there is always war of every one against every one … wherein men [and women] live without other security, than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such a condition, there is no place for industry, … no culture of the earth, no navigation, no commodious building, no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

6. In such a war, nothing is unjust … where there is no common power, there is no law: where no law, no injustice.

7. The passions that incline men [and women] to peace: 1) fear of death; 2) desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; 3) reason suggesteth convenient articles of peace.
APPENDIX 2

Sample Questions—Animal Farm

1. Why do the characterizations of Boxer, Mollie, and Benjamin remain stable in these pages? (Analysis)
2. Do you believe Squealer's explanation about the pigs and the apples? (Record)
3. What might happen to Boxer if he doesn't learn how to read past the letter “H.” (Speculation)
4. During the discussion leading up to the Battle of the Cowshed, Orwell seems to undercut his own fictional illusion by making the human beings circulate stories about the animals rebelling against the “laws of nature.” How does Orwell keep his human characters from destroying the fictional representation the author has already built up? (Analysis)
5. Why is Boxer so upset at the thought of killing a human being? (Analysis)
6. After the battle, why do all the animals sing, Beasts of England again? (Analysis)
7. What aspect of the Russian revolution specifically and human nature generally does Molly and her behavior represent? (Generalization)
8. After Molly disappears, where is she last seen, and what is she doing? (Report)
9. Why is she allowing that to happen? (Analysis)
10. Where did Molly get the ribbons and sugar cubes found by Clover? (Report)
11. Why can't the animals make up their minds between the policies of Snowball and Napoleon? Which one is “right”? (Analysis)
12. Is Snowball a “criminal”? If so, why did he fight so bravely at the Battle of the Cowshed? (Analysis)
14. Of what larger issues is the hen's rebellion symptomatic? (Analysis)
15. Is Napoleon right about his decision to sell the eggs to Whymper? (Analysis)
17. What is the last image of the “fairy story”? (Report) Why does Orwell end the work this way? (Analysis)

Notes

1. In both works, Rosenblatt is straightforward in rejecting not only New Critical “objectivity,” but the equally undesirable polar opposite: locating the literary experience in near-complete subjectivity. As she says in The Reader, the “transactional theory expounded here repudiates recent efforts to make the reader all-important” (xiii, 4). In Literature, she is very explicit:

   Though a free, uninhibited emotional reaction to a work of art or literature is an absolutely necessary condition of sound literary judgment, it is not, to use the logician's term, a sufficient condition. Without a real impact between the book and the mind of the reader, there can be no process of judgment at all, but the honest recognition of one's own reaction is not in itself sufficient to insure sound critical opinion.

   (75)

I would add to her sense of “real impact” the necessity of interactions among peers (other minds/readers) as well. The direction the game here takes is to begin with individual student response and then move to other, more literary and historical directions, by combining ideas from the text and the immediate student experiences with the game.

2. Note that Vygotskian thinking emphasizes both inter- and intra-mental efforts at comprehending, in this instance, a literary text, whereas many reader-response critics focus primarily on the second
要素 (intra) 元素。理解这种偏见很重要，因为读者反应导向的批评已经主导了北美的文学教育，正如其 predecessor，(old) New Criticism。

3. Sorenson and Lunde, for example, emphasize that “collaborative instruction calls forth … interpersonal skills such as active listening, questioning, explaining, paraphrasing, and summarizing” (23-24).

4. See my basic explanatory essay on Animal Farm in “George Orwell.” For a sense of Orwell's thinking about allegorical fiction in his early writing, see my “Dance.”

5. This sense of self-reflection is crucial for students to understand the real importance of the game. In the language of speech act theory, students become able, by virtue of playing the game, to distinguish “the propositional content [of the arguments in Animal Farm as well as those of their colleagues] from the illocutionary force of [their] assertion[s].”

6. Honig says that the “allegorical waver” is

   [an oscillating movement continually held in balance between two levels of correspondence—one realistic, the other symbolic. … In contrast to analogical baiting, the allegorical waver serves to stabilize the allegory as a self-contained mystery. With all its meanings impacted in the narrative, the propriety of the story is such that by no extrinsic reference to logic, history, or dogma can one reach outside the story to reassure oneself as to what has taken place and what has been evoked inside of it. Rather, the matter of what the story means is one that exists solely between the reader and the story; the reader takes it as he will or can, making of it what is possible to him.

(129)

7. John Rodden has discussed the former Soviet Union's ambivalent response to Orwell during the last fifty years. During that time period, one Soviet critic, citing Orwell's preface to the Ukrainian edition of Animal Farm, transforms Orwell's “exposing the Soviet myth” to a diagnosis of the “syndrome of present-day capitalism.” Rodden charts such manipulations and outright reversals of Orwell's ideas in Soviet literary publications—examples of modern day Squealer behavior in human form.

8. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan. N.Y.: Colliers, 1651/1962. Although I have focused on the Hobbesian reference early in the novel, one could, presumably, take almost any of the historical/political references in Animal Farm and use it in the game for its own effect. Another obvious choice is the information found in Arendt.

9. Although Animal Farm Hegemony is meant to be a “walking” game somewhat analogous to Monopoly, one could, with a little improvisation, make it into a paper and pencil or board game. That might, however, take half the fun away from an exercise meant to get students up, and moving, and arguing. One influential study of this type of argumentation, combining rhetoric and social psychology, is Billig's.

10. According to Nystrand and Gamoran (1991), the extent to which the students have control over classroom discourse decides the type of question: if the teacher asks test questions, the teacher already knows the answer, is looking for specific information, and will evaluate any answer accordingly. This type of question is contrasted to authentic questions where the teacher has no pre-specified answers in mind and the students know that they are not expected to respond in any pre-specified way. Finally, the teacher may also ask quasi-authentic questions, those whose answers have several components, allowing the student to answer according to his or her own organizational plan; a quasi-authentic question may be responded to by at least two correct answers. See also note 13.

11. Mimetic, thematic, and synthetic concepts are taken from Phelan.

12. Briefly, I explain to my students that the narrator speaks while the focalizer sees. In this, I am following the work of Gerard Genette and Mieke Bal as discussed in Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan.
13. These questions were labeled according to their cognitive level, a scheme first discussed by the late James Britton and further developed by Nystrand and Gamoran.

1. *Record*—a statement of the student's thinking at the moment. What is happening?

2. *Report*—a statement of the student's past thinking, reading, or feeling. This is the most common type of response to a teacher's question in class. What happened?

The next three cognitive levels are associated with authenticity—where the teacher asks questions to which answers are not preselected; although a question's authenticity does not necessarily determine its cognitive level, the following types of questions are regularly associated with higher order thinking, or the novel organization or application of prior knowledge.

3. *Generalization*—the derivation or induction of a general concept from particulars. What happens when … ?

4. *Analysis*—the determination of the nature and relationship of parts in a whole entailing two or more concepts. Why does it happen?

5. *Speculation*—theoretical generalizing beyond mere classification by making such generalization the very topic of the discourse. What might happen?

*Works Cited*


**Criticism: Robert Pearce (essay date February 1998)**


[In the following essay, Pearce determines the influence of Tolstoy's *What I Believe* on *Animal Farm.*]

Leo Tolstoy and George Orwell are sometimes contrasted as two figures with totally opposite attitudes to life, the one an other-worldly believer and the other a this-worldly humanist. In a celebrated essay, published in 1947,\(^1\) Orwell defended Shakespeare’s *King Lear* against the Russian’s intemperate attack and, moreover, also
criticized his whole outlook on life. Tolstoy, he wrote, was an imperious and egotistical bully, and he quoted his biographer Derrick Leon that he would frequently 'slap the faces of those with whom he disagreed'.

Orwell wrote that Tolstoy was incapable of either tolerance or humility; and he considered that his attack on the artistic integrity of Lear arose partly because it was too near the knuckle. Lear's 'huge and gratuitous act of renunciation' bore an uncomfortably close resemblance to Tolstoy's similarly foolish renunciation in old age of worldly wealth, sexuality, and other ties that bind us to 'the surface of the earth—including love, in the ordinary sense of caring more for one human being than another'. But this, according to Orwell, was what love was all about, and he characterized Tolstoy—and other would-be saints like Gandhi—as forbiddingly inhuman in their attitudes.

He himself cared strongly about 'the surface of the earth' and was with Shakespeare in his interest in the 'actual process of life'. The main aim of the puritanical Tolstoy, Orwell believed, was 'to narrow the range of human consciousness', a process which he himself, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and other later writings, was struggling valiantly to counteract. It is very easy therefore to see the two men as polar opposites, in both their temperament and their artistic aims.

Yet this view is quite mistaken. Orwell's criticisms have sometimes been misunderstood; Orwell and Tolstoy had far more in common than is generally realized; and indeed the Russian influenced this peculiarly English writer in several important ways, not least in that—almost certainly—he furnished him with material for one of the most significant episodes in *Animal Farm*. The parallels between this book and Russian history are well known, but the debt owed to Tolstoy's *What I Believe* has never been acknowledged.

In his biography of Tolstoy, A. N. Wilson praises Orwell's image of Tolstoy-as-Lear but insists that this unforgettable depiction of 'the reason' for the attack on Lear is misleading because it distracts our attention from Tolstoy's more deep-seated motivation, which Wilson sees as an 'unconscious envy'. But this is a misreading of Orwell's essay. The likeness between Tolstoy and Lear was, according to Orwell, only one reason for the diatribe against Shakespeare; and towards the end of his essay he pointed to another source of inspiration, the rivalry which the great Russian novelist felt towards perhaps his only rival in world literature. Elsewhere, Orwell referred directly to Tolstoy's jealousy of Shakespeare. Wilson has therefore stolen Orwell's clothes. Indeed too often Orwell's views on Tolstoy have been treated superficially. In fact he felt tremendous admiration for Tolstoy, and his 1947 attack was unrestrained only because he had found an 'opponent' worthy of his mettle. Hence it was, in many ways, a sign of respect. In a broadcast in 1941, he insisted that if 'so great a man as Tolstoy' could not destroy Shakespeare's reputation, then surely no one else could.

Orwell read *War and Peace* several times, first when he was about 20. His sole quarrel with the book, despite its three stout volumes, was that it did not go on long enough. Its characters, he later recalled, 'were people about whom one would gladly go on reading for ever'. He judged that Tolstoy's creations had international appeal and that therefore one could hold imaginary conversations with figures like Pierre Bezukhov. Such men and women seemed to be engaged in the process of making their souls, and therefore Tolstoy's grasp was 'so much larger than Dickens's'. This was high praise indeed, and even when criticizing Tolstoy's attack on Shakespeare he paid a passing tribute to *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. Nor was Orwell familiar only with these classics. He also read *The Cossacks*, *Sebastopol*, and other works, including the later short stories, written with parable-like simplicity. Indeed, such was his regard for Tolstoy that he went to considerable trouble to read several of his more obscure works. He even judged that Tolstoy would still be a remarkable man if he had written nothing except his polemical pamphlets, for no one could read him and still feel quite the same about life.

There is no evidence that Orwell read all of Tolstoy's translated writings. We do not know, for instance, whether he read a compendium of Tolstoy's religious writings translated by Aylmer Maude and published by Oxford University Press in 1940 as *A Confession: The Gospel in Brief and What I Believe*. Certainly there was no copy among Orwell's books at his death. Yet this is the book which, I wish to argue, influenced *Animal Farm*. It may be that Orwell came to it second-hand, by the extracts quoted in Derrick Leon's biography of
Tolstoy, which Orwell read on publication early in 1944, referred to in his ‘As I Please’ column in *Tribune* and reviewed for the *Observer*, describing it as ‘an outstanding book.’ He was reading it just as he was working hard to complete *Animal Farm*.

Everyone is familiar with the parallels between Russian history and the plot of *Animal Farm*. Perhaps indeed we are over-familiar with them, for the details of the book had a wider totalitarian relevance than to any one country, and Orwell borrowed from Italian history (‘Mussolini is always right’) and from German, as well as from Russian. But there is one issue in the book for which there seems no real-life equivalent: this is the rewriting of the original revolutionary aims, the principles of Animalism. Admittedly revolutionary idealism in Russia and elsewhere was betrayed and perverted, but there was no outward repudiation of Marxist rhetoric. Although Stalin ignored such theory in his actions and imposed his will by force of arms and propaganda, he never ceased to pay lip-service to the original ideals. Even when he was arraigning the Old Bolsheviks in the Show Trials of the 1930s, he was at pains to assert that it was they—not he—who had sinned against the holy writ of Marxist-Leninist ideology. So what inspired Orwell's brilliant and hard-hitting reformulations?

First, we must look at the precise ways in which the Commandments of the first chapter of *Animal Farm* were perverted in the course of the book. ‘No animal shall sleep in a bed’ became ‘No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets’. ‘No animal shall drink alcohol’ changed into ‘No animal shall drink alcohol to excess’. ‘No animal shall kill any other animal’ became ‘No animal shall kill another animal without cause’. Most famously of all, ‘All animals are equal’ became ‘All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others’. In short, each commandment received a coda, a reservation which effectively reversed its meaning.

There is no parallel to this in Russian political history. But Leo Tolstoy had observed a very similar perversion, in Russian religious history, as Leon recounts in his biography. What Tolstoy considered the essential precepts of the Sermon on the Mount had become almost their opposites in the mouths of Russian Orthodox clerics. The original ‘Do not be angry’ had become ‘Do not be angry without a cause’. The phrase ‘without a cause’ was, to Tolstoy, the key to an understanding of the perversion of scripture. Of course everyone who is angry justifies himself with a cause, however trivial or unjust, and therefore he guessed, correctly as he soon found, that the words were a later interpolation designed to devalue the original injunction. Similarly the instructions not to promise anything on oath, not to resist evil by violence, and not to judge or go to law had all been overturned, and had become their opposites, when the church had sought accommodation with the civil power.

Orwell's reading of the extracts from Tolstoy in Leon's biography, as detailed above, may well have inspired his rewriting of the principles of Animalism. This, of course, is not to denigrate Orwell's achievement. It was he who had, first, to see the appositeness to his own work of the banal—but contextually brilliant—‘without a cause’ and, then, to invent similar reservations. But it is to insist that the provenance of the details of *Animal Farm* is far wider than the painful period of history through which Orwell lived. It is also to contend that Tolstoy was an important influence on Orwell.

Although this may be considered more speculative, it is quite possible that Orwell actually read the original Tolstoy, either before Leon's book was published or as a result of seeing its brief extracts. We do know that Orwell was prepared to search ‘all over London’ to track down a Tolstoyan quarry; and as a bibliophile he was always well aware of new material being published, even in the dark days of 1940. The fact that, for effect, Orwell italicized his codas as did Tolstoy, though Leon's quotations were all in roman script, is added evidence for this. If he did consult the original translation by Aylmer Maude, Orwell would have found other neat reformulations by Tolstoy which may well have influenced his own. To say ‘do not be angry without a cause’, Tolstoy decided, was like urging someone to ‘Love the neighbour whom thou approvest of’. He also drew attention to the 1864 edition of the Catechism which, after quoting each of the Ten Commandments, then gave ‘a reservation which cancelled it’. For instance, the commandment to honour one God had an addendum to the effect that we should also honour the angels and saints, ‘besides, of course, the Mother of
God and the three persons of the Trinity’. The second commandment, not to make idols, was perverted into an injunction to make obeisance before icons; the third, not to take oaths, became a demand to swear when called upon to do so by the legal authorities. The command to honour one’s mother and father degenerated into a call to honour also the Tsar, the ministers of the church, and all those in authority—specified on three long pages! ‘Thou shalt not kill’ was interpreted ingeniously. One should not kill ‘except in the fulfilment of one’s duties’.19

The similarity between the methods employed in the relevant passages of Tolstoy and Orwell is astonishing. The most obvious way of accounting for this is by direct influence. There are indeed other indications that Orwell’s reading and rereading of Tolstoy left its mark on his work. May not the character of Boxer in Animal Farm have been influenced by the long-suffering talking horse who was carried off to the knacker at the end of Tolstoy’s short story ‘Strider: The Story of a Horse’? Orwell’s concept of Doublespeak may also have owed something to a superb example from Vronsky’s code of principles, in Anna Karenina, ‘that one must pay a cardsharper, but need not pay a tailor; that one must never tell a lie to a man, but one may to a woman; that one must never cheat anyone, but one may a husband; that one must never pardon an insult, but may give one, and so on’. The arresting opening of Homage to Catalonia may also owe a debt to Tolstoy. Orwell took an ‘immediate liking’ to an unnamed, tough-looking Italian, whose face somehow deeply moved him. This episode, whose authenticity historians must doubt, bears a close resemblance to the passage in War and Peace where Pierre and Davout gaze at each other and, in so doing, see each other’s essential humanity. Similarly the execution, in the same book, contains details resembling those Orwell included in ‘A Hanging’. Orwell’s Burmese prisoner steps aside to avoid a puddle, despite the fact that he will soon be dead. In the same way, Tolstoy’s Russian prisoner adjusts the uncomfortable knot of his blindfold just before the execution squad put an end to his life. Finally, Tolstoy is undoubtedly relevant to the nightmare world of Nineteen Eighty-Four. The Russian wondered when the priests would understand ‘that even in the face of death, two and two still make four’;20 Orwell knew that some priests would never admit any such thing and that, after Room 101, even Winston Smith might accept that ‘2 + 2 = 5’.21

Of course it may be merely a coincidence—or a series of coincidences—that Orwell’s rewriting of the Seven Commandments bears such a strong resemblance to Tolstoy’s exposure of the perversion of the Ten Commandments, and that there are, in addition, other parallels in their writings which seem best explained by direct, if perhaps unconscious, influence. But if so, then this is good evidence that the two men had far more in common than anyone has ever pointed out. Certainly their self-presentations were similar. Tolstoy once called himself ‘a quite enfeebled, good-for-nothing parasite, who can only exist under the most exceptional conditions found only when thousands of people labour to support a life that is of no value to anyone’.22 Orwell did not go quite as far as that; but he was the British equivalent. ‘I am a degenerate modern semi-intellectual who would die if I did not get my early morning cup of tea and my New Statesman every Friday.’23 On the surface, the two men seem so different, but the fact is that there were many similarities between them.24 (Who realizes, without looking up the dates, that their deaths were separated by only forty years?) Orwell may have castigated Tolstoy as other-worldly, but both men seemed essentially puritanical to others. Whereas the one insisted on making his own shoes, the other would try to make his own furniture, and both went to considerable pains to grow their own food. Each was an enemy of the machine age. Both were dedicated writers, both moralists and humanitarians, and both polemicists. After writing discursive books early in their careers, each of them was an ‘engaged’ writer later in life. They needed a mission, or purpose, in life and shared the opinion that man could not live by hedonism alone. In addition, they berated mere intellectuals. Neither would passively accept what he was told: each had to work ideas out for himself, displaying great intellectual self-confidence—and considerable unorthodoxy—in the process. Should we compare them as religious thinkers? Certainly there are religious aspects to Orwell’s thought.25 Should we, as George Woodcock argues, even compare Orwell’s repudiation of his education and his quitting of his career in the imperial civil service with Tolstoy’s renunciations,26 or his migration to Jura with Tolstoy’s flight from Yasnaya Polyana to Astapovo? If so, then Orwell’s criticisms of Tolstoy in 1947 were similar to Tolstoy’s of Shakespeare in 1906, in that both were motivated by ‘a half-recognized similarity’.27
comparisons may be pushed too far. What does seem clear, however, is that the connections between these two figures are worth recognizing, and also worth further study.

Notes

2. Ibid. 339.
3. Ibid. 339, 344.
4. Ibid. 527.
5. Ibid. 338; ibid. i. 28.
7. *CEJL* iv. 347: ‘The more pleasure people took in Shakespeare, the less they would listen to Tolstoy.’
8. Ibid. ii. 154.
9. Ibid. 157.
10. Ibid. iii. 129.
11. Ibid. i. 500.
12. Ibid. iv. 348.
14. Ibid. iii. 129; *Observer*, 26 Mar. 1944: I am grateful to Professor Peter Davison for providing me with a photocopy of Orwell's review.
16. *CEJL* ii. 156.
20. For these and other parallels, see my editions of *The Sayings of George Orwell* (London, 1994) and *The Sayings of Leo Tolstoy* (London, 1995).
24. R. Rees, *George Orwell: Fugitive from the Camp of Victory* (London, 1961), 114: ‘It seems to me that Orwell was a good deal nearer to the other-worldly Tolstoy and Gandhi and a good deal further from the average humanistic progressive than he himself was prepared to recognise.’
27. Ibid.

Criticism: Christopher Hollis (essay date 1998)


*[In the following essay, originally published in 1956, Hollis regards Animal Farm as a successful animal fable.]*

Whatever the advantages or disadvantages of the German invasion of Russia, at least it saved Britain from the risk of immediate invasion and defeat, and thus such a man as Orwell, who was alarmed at the ultimate
consequences of the Russian alliance, was able to live his life under a lesser strain in the last years of the war than in the first. He was able to give his mind once more to creative writing. Yet the problem what to write was not simple. The crying need to his mind was to arouse public opinion to the dangers of the Russian alliance. Yet the mood of the country at the time when Stalingrad was being defended was not such that it would tolerate a straightforward and bitter attack on Russia—the kind of attack which he had already launched in his essay in the composite volume, the *Betrayal of the Left*, which he had published in 1941, when of course public opinion in Britain was willing to tolerate it because Russia was still bound in hostility to us by the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Now direction could only be found out by indirection. The consequence, immediately and apparently inconvenient to Orwell as a writer, turned out in the event to be brilliantly fortunate. For it caused Orwell to make his point by the indirect, roundabout, whimsical road of an animal fairy-story and thus led him to experiment with a new form of writing of which he proved himself magnificently the master. Whereas his previous books had never had more than small and struggling sales, *Animal Farm* at once caught the public fancy in almost every country of the world—particularly in the United States—was translated into every one of the leading languages, established him as one of the best-selling authors of the day and incidentally gave him for the first time in life a tolerable income. …

**THE FABLE’S MEANING**

The interpretation of the fable is plain enough. Major, Napoleon, Snowball—Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky—Pilkington and Frederick, the two groups of non-Communist powers—the Marxian thesis, as expounded by Major, that society is divided into exploiters and exploited and that all the exploited need to do is to rise up, to expel the exploiters and seize the ‘surplus value’ which the exploiters have previously annexed to themselves—the Actonian thesis that power corrupts and the Burnhamian thesis that the leaders of the exploited, having used the rhetoric of equality to get rid of the old exploiters, establish in their place not a classless society but themselves as a new governing class—the greed and unprincipled opportunism of the non-Communist states, which are ready enough to overthrow the Communists by force so long as they imagine that their overthrow will be easy but begin to talk of peace when they find the task difficult and when they think that they can use the Communists to satisfy their greed—the dishonour among total thugs, as a result of which, though greed may make original ideology irrelevant, turning pigs into men and men into pigs, the thugs fall out among themselves, as the Nazis and the Communists fell out, not through difference of ideology but because in a society of utter baseness and insincerity there is no motive of confidence. The interpretation is so plain that no serious critic can dispute it. Those Russian critics who have professed to see in it merely a general satire on bureaucracy without any special reference to any particular country can hardly be taken seriously.

Yet even a total acceptance of Orwell's political opinions would not in itself make *Animal Farm* a great work of art. The world is full of animal fables in which this or that country is symbolized by this or that animal, and very tedious affairs the greater number of them are—and that, irrespective of whether we agree or disagree with their opinions. To be a great book, a book of animal fables requires literary greatness as well as a good cause. Such greatness *Animal Farm* surely possesses. As Orwell fairly claimed, *Animal Farm* ‘was the first book in which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole’—and he succeeded.

The problems that are set by this peculiar form of art, which makes animals behave like human beings, are clear. The writer must throughout be successful in preserving a delicate and whimsical balance. As Johnson truly says in his criticism of Dryden's *Hind and the Panther*, there is an initial absurdity in making animals discuss complicated intellectual problems—the nature of the Church’s authority in Dryden's case, the communist ideology in Orwell's. The absurdity can only be saved from ridicule if the author is able to couch his argument in very simple terms and to draw his illustrations from the facts of animal life. In this Orwell is as successful as he could be—a great deal more successful incidentally than Dryden, who in the excitement of the argument often forgets that it is animals who are supposed to be putting it forward. The practical
difficulties of the conceit must either be ignored or apparently solved in some simple and striking—if possible, amusing—fashion. Since obviously they could not in reality be solved at all, the author merely makes himself ridiculous if he allows himself to get bogged down in tedious and detailed explanations which at the end of all cannot in the nature of things explain anything. Thus Orwell is quite right merely to ignore the difficulties of language, to assume that the animals can communicate with one another by speech—or to assume that the new ordinance which forbids any animal to take another animal's life could be applied with only the comparatively mild consequence of gradual increase in animal population. He is justified in telling us the stories of the two attacks by men for the recapture of the Farm but in refusing to spoil his story by allowing the men to take the full measures which obviously men would take if they found themselves in such an impossible situation. The means by which the animals rout the men are inevitably signally unconvincing if we are to consider them seriously at all. It would as obviously be ridiculous to delay for pages to describe how animals build windmills or how they write up commandments on a wall. It heightens the comedy to give a passing sentence of description to their hauling the stone up a hill so that it may be broken into manageable fractions when it falls over the precipice, or to Squealer, climbing a ladder to paint up his message.

THE ANIMAL FABLE MUST BE LIGHT-HEARTED

The animal fable, if it is to succeed at all, ought clearly to carry with it a gay and light-hearted message. It must be full of comedy and laughter. The form is too far removed from reality to tolerate sustained bitterness. Both Chaucer and La Fontaine discovered this in their times, and the trouble with Orwell was that the lesson which he wished to teach was not ultimately a gay lesson. It was not the lesson that mankind had its foibles and its follies but that all would be well in the end. It was more nearly a lesson of despair—the lesson that anarchy was intolerable, that mankind could not be ruled without entrusting power somewhere or other and, to whomsoever power was entrusted, it was almost certain to be abused. For power was itself corrupting. But it was Orwell's twisted triumph that in the relief of the months immediately after the war mankind was probably not prepared to take such dark medicine if it had been offered to it undiluted. It accepted it because it came in this gay and coloured and fanciful form.

The film version gives to Animal Farm a happy ending. The animals all the world over, hearing how Napoleon has betrayed the animal cause, rise up against him at the end and in a second revolution expel him. After this second revolution, we are left to believe, a rule of freedom and equality is established and survives. But of course this ending makes nonsense of the whole thesis. It was the Orwellian thesis, right or wrong, that power inevitably corrupts and that revolutions therefore inevitably fail of their purpose. The new masters are necessarily corrupted by their new power. The second revolution would necessarily have failed of its purpose just as the first had failed. It would merely have set up a second vicious circle.

Animal Farm possesses two essential qualities of a successful animal fable. On the one hand the author of such a fable must have the Swift-like capacity of ascribing with solemn face to the animals idiotic but easily recognized human qualities, decking them out in aptly changed phraseology to suit the animal life—ascribe the quality and then pass quickly on before the reader has begun to find the point overlaboured. This Orwell has to perfection. Thus:

Snowball also busied himself with organizing the other animals into what he called Animal Committees. He was indefatigable at this. He formed the Egg Production Committee for the hens, the Clean Tails League for the cows, the Wild Comrades' Re-education Committee (the object of which was to tame the cats and rabbits), the Whiter Wool Movement for the sheep, and various others, besides instituting classes in reading and writing. On the whole these projects were a failure. The attempt to tame the wild creatures, for instance, broke down almost immediately. They continued to behave very much as before and, when treated with generosity, simply took advantage of it. The cat joined the Re-education Committee and was very active in it for some days. She was seen one day sitting on a roof talking to some
sparrows who were just out of reach. She was telling them that all animals were now comrades and that any sparrow who chose could come and perch on her paw; but the sparrows kept their distance.

Or:

When the laws of Animal Farm were first formulated, the retiring age had been fixed for horses and pigs at twelve, for cows at fourteen, for dogs at nine, for sheep at seven and for hens and geese at five. Liberal old-age pensions had been agreed upon. As yet no animal had actually retired on a pension, but of late the subject had been discussed more and more. Now that the small field beyond the orchard had been set aside for barley, it was rumoured that a corner of the large pasture was to be fenced off and turned into a grazing-ground for superannuated animals. For a horse, it was said, the pension would be five pounds of corn a day and, in winter, fifteen pounds of hay, with a carrot or possibly an apple on public holidays.

LOVE OF ANIMALS

But what is also essential—and this is often overlooked—is that the writer should have himself a genuine love of animals—should be able to create here and there, in the midst of all his absurdity, scenes of animal life, in themselves realistic and lovable. In that Chaucer, the first and greatest of Orwell's masters in this form of art, pre-eminently excelled. It was in that that Orwell himself excelled. He had always been himself a lover of animals, intimate with their ways. ‘Most of the good memories of my childhood, and up to the age of about twenty,’ he wrote in Such, Such were the Joys, ‘are in some way connected with animals’, and it was the work with animals which attracted him in maturer years to agricultural life. There is a real poetic quality, mixed whimsically in with absurdity, in his picture of the first meeting of the animals in the barn with which the book opens.

Criticism: Spencer Brown (essay date 1998)


[In the following essay, originally published in 1955, Brown contends that Animal Farm is one of the best anticommmunist books ever written and was written specifically about the communist government in the Soviet Union.]

Published in 1946, George Orwell's Animal Farm remains to this day, in my opinion, the best of anti-Communist books. If we had to do without all the others, fine as some of them are—Koestler, Dallin, Silone, Borkenau, Serge, and the rest—and were left with Orwell alone, we could still get by. For no other writer has shown us so clearly the worst tragedy of our age, worse in one respect at least than the crimes of the Nazis, for the Soviet tyranny combines with its terror the utter perversion of man's highest ideals.

The story is a detailed parallel with the Russian Revolution and its aftermath, from 1917 to 1945. The drunken farmer Jones flees from his mistreated and aroused animals, who, following the teachings of the late boar Major, set up an egalitarian commonwealth and attempt to run the farm by and for themselves. Few of them, unfortunately, are intelligent enough to do anything but heavy labor, and the direction of things gradually devolves upon the pigs, who lead a successful defense against Jones's armed intervention. A struggle for power develops between the two leading pigs, Napoleon (Stalin) and Snowball (Trotsky). Napoleon, by means of his Chekist (GPU, NKVD, MVD) dogs, exiles Snowball, seizes absolute power, and sets about
building a windmill (the Dnieper Dam, symbol of Russia's industrialization) originally planned by Snowball.

The hardest work is done by the horse Boxer, who represents the long suffering, toiling, loyal Russian people. Because of faulty construction, the windmill collapses and, when rebuilt, is again destroyed by a neighboring farmer, Frederick (Hitler), who attacks Animal Farm shortly after swindling Napoleon in a timber deal. Frederick's men are at last routed, at terrible cost. Wounded in the war but still working to rebuild the mill, the superannuated Boxer is sent to the Knacker's to be boiled down for glue. Napoleon has by this time revised all the egalitarian principles of Animalism, originally enunciated by Major and codified by Snowball, to read: “All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.” Having assumed human vices, Napoleon gives a banquet for another neighbor, Pilkington (the English ruling classes), at which they drink each other's health colossally and cheat each other in a card game. The bewildered animal slaves, watching from outside the windows, can no longer tell which is man and which is pig.

PARALLELS TO THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The parallels with the Russian Revolution are three and four to the page. Indeed, some critics wholly friendly to Orwell and his anti-Communism find this plain, point-by-point historical correspondence an artistic defect. I cannot agree. I find Animal Farm a tour de force, but one of such extraordinary ease and realism in every phrase and incident that it is a masterpiece apart from the satire, and also a masterpiece of satire in which moral purity and breadth of human sympathy are combined with crushing wit.

At the center of Animal Farm is Orwell's sadness, and our sadness, as the hope of our century transforms itself before our eyes into total evil:

Never had the farm—and with a kind of surprise they remembered that it was their own farm, every inch of it their own property—appeared to the animals so desirable a place. As Clover looked down the hillside her eyes filled with tears. If she could have spoken her thoughts, it would have been to say that this was not what they had aimed at when they set themselves years ago to work for the overthrow of the human race. These scenes of terror and slaughter were not what they had looked forward to on that night when old Major first stirred them to rebellion. If she herself had had any picture of the future, it had been of a society of animals set free from hunger and the whip, all equal, each working according to his capacity, the strong protecting the weak, as she had protected the lost brood of ducklings with her foreleg on the night of Major's speech. Instead—she did not know why—they had come to a time when no one dared speak his mind, when fierce, growling dogs roamed everywhere, and when you had to watch your comrades torn to pieces after confessing shocking crimes.

This is George Orwell at his best, and our century at its best. Being unable to make a wreath of my own, I lay his wreath on his grave.

Now Animal Farm has been made into a full-length cartoon film by the English husband-and-wife team of John Halas and Joy Batchelor. Released by Louis de Rochemont Associates, it opened at the Paris Theater in New York on December 29. And thereby hangs more of a tale than the hopes and disappointments of animals.

Much of the satire of Orwell's novel—or for that matter of such similar works as Gulliver's Travels and Penguin Island—must remain inaccessible to this or any film. The wry, laconic understatement, the backlash of wit, can be selected from but not rendered entire, for the pace of the motion picture is incomparably slower than that of prose fiction. Nevertheless the film has many merits, stemming chiefly from Orwell's ingenuity in incident and his marvelous knack of securing the suspension of disbelief by sympathetic and detailed realism.
It has certain defects, too, worst among which is the animators' revision of the ending: the sorrow of Orwell's animals is unrelieved, intensified finally by the realization that their revolution and suffering have been in vain, that their pig-exploiters are no different, even in appearance, from Mr. Pilkington. In the Halas-Batchelor film, however, it is not human exploiters who attend Napoleon's orgy, but other pig-bureaucrats from pig satrapies elsewhere. They all get drunk, the animals of the world unite in revolt and converge on Animal Farm, Napoleon whistles to his dogs for help, but they too are sodden in liquor and unable to prevent the overthrow of the tyrant. 'Tis the final conflict—a truly Trotskyite touch, but notably out of keeping with Orwell's melancholy view of world politics.

Another detail that might be objected to is the excessive prettying up of the animals' toil. When they are getting in the harvest and when Boxer prances as he pulls stone for the windmill, one almost expects the Seven Dwarfs to pop round the barn, singing “Hi-Ho” and pitching in with right good will. The temptation to Disneyize must have been irresistible, but Disney is not Orwell.

Yet with its flaws, the film has not seriously damaged Orwell and may have the merit of bringing his satire to those who do not know the novel. In the promotion of the film, however, and in the response of the critics, something happened that is worthy of note.

**MEALYMOUTHED MARKETERS**

What, according to critics and advertisers, is Orwell's anti-Communist classic *Animal Farm*?

It is, says Bosley Crowther in the New York *Times*, “a pretty brutal demonstration of the vicious cycle of tyranny”; it presents “the leaders of the new Power State as pigs” and conveys “a sense of the monstrous hypocrisy of the totalitarian leader type.” In a lengthy review, Mr. Crowther never comes closer than this to mentioning Russia.

It is, says Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., in the *Herald Tribune*, “a political parable satirizing the various isms in a story about animals taking over a farm and founding their own society. … It tells how an animals' revolution is converted into a pigs' Fascism with the passage of time and the corruption of democratic ideals.”

“The main point about *Animal Farm,*” says Archer Winsten in the New York *Post*, “is that it has something to say about dictatorships, democracy, and the conflicts between those who toil and those who rule. It says this without pulling punches.” It is “intelligence week” at the Paris Theater, says Mr. Winsten, providing “egghead ecstasy.” For the program also includes an old March of Time [newsreel] on Huey Long and is “of extraordinary, inter-related quality.” …

Even in the *Daily News*, where one might expect something else, Wanda Hale writes, truly but vaguely: “Like Orwell's fable, the film is a vitriolic satire on dictatorship, uncomfortably realistic in the comparison of man to the lower form of animal and a frightening example of the oppressed masses under tyrannical rulers drunk with power.” She does not mention Russia.

In the *Herald Tribune's* advance story on the making of the film, we learn that “In *Animal Farm* Orwell was satirizing the Dictator State in terms of Animals vs. Man. … The parable follows close to the history of twentieth-century totalitarianism.”

As late as January 16, Mr. Crowther wrote in the Sunday *Times*: “These two highly facile young artists have converted the Orwell parody of a totalitarian political system into a clever and sardonic cartoon that is touched with bits of tearful pathos and barbed with trenchant points of caricature. …”

Still no word about Russia.
The promotion of the film had been in the same general vein. In a publicity handout before the opening, Irving Drutman, of Louis de Rochemont Associates, says: "Orwell's world-renowned satirical fable, which lampoons the modern Power State, deals with the revolt against the tyrannical Farmer Brown [sic]. … The parable ironically parallels the history of the 20th century." …

**TRUTH OF THE SATIRE IS WHITEWASHED**

All this is embarrassing to me, since as a teacher I have for some years been recommending Animal Farm to my students. Frequently one of them reports in class on the novel, usually with enthusiasm, for the story of the animals who in their inept innocence try to solve problems that the human race has failed to solve is both humorously and deeply pathetic. All the students except those completely ignorant of modern history recognize that the story parallels the Russian Revolution. Without assistance they identify Napoleon as Stalin, Jones as the Czar, and Frederick as Hitler; if they have ever heard of Trotsky, they recognize him at once as Snowball. Other niceties of Orwell's satire, such as the changes of line, the ban on singing the “Internationale,” the rewritings of history, are spotted only by the sophisticated. In all these years, no student has yet come up with the notion that the fable is about either the Nazis or Senator McCarthy (of whom they have heard).

Fortunately, if any of my students should ever reproach me for having misled them on the meaning of Animal Farm, there will be one or two authorities to whom I can appeal. Delmore Schwartz, in the New Republic, does say quite clearly that Animal Farm is about Russia, though he thinks the film frequently clumsy and generally unsatisfactory. Time's reviewer, too, had by January 17 either heard what was happening or figured the thing out for himself, for he discusses “George Orwell's political fable, the famous animallegory about Communism.” Rose Pelswick, in the Journal-American of December 30, begins her review with: “Based on the powerful anti-Communist fable of George Orwell, the picture is an interesting adaptation. …” And Alton Cook, in the World-Telegram and Sun, says: “If you were attentive to your homework on the book pages back in 1946, you will recall that the novel was a biting satire on the rise of the Communist dictatorship. Animals revolted against their farmer owner and events paralleled the course of the Russian Revolution.” Mr. Cook concludes: “The Communists never had it so rough.”

It is interesting that three out of these four reviews appeared in “right-wing” publications. Has truth become a luxury no longer available to liberals? …

A middle course was taken when it came to Louis Berg, of This Week. Back in August 1953, Mr. Berg wrote a piece on Animal Farm. It was illustrated with drawings from the film-in-progress, including a marvelous sketch (unfortunately omitted from the finished film) of the Politburo Pigs on the reviewing stand watching their animal slaves march past. Mr. Berg called Animal Farm a “devastating satire on Russian Communism,” and commended the forthcoming film as a faithful adaptation of the book. Mr. Berg's piece was called “The Fable That Rocked the Kremlin.” But the early ads for the film, for example in the Times for December 31, read: “‘A devastating satire—an important film!’ (Berg, This Week Magazine).”

As a matter of fact, the publication and advertising history of the novel Animal Farm in this country might have prepared us for the kind of promotion by selective quotation that has been given to the film.

Before its acceptance by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Animal Farm was turned down by eighteen or twenty American publishers—notable among them Little, Brown and Company, whose then editor, Angus Cameron, wielded his hatchet on many an anti-Communist book while pushing Howard Fast and Albert E. Kahn. (Equally notable, perhaps, is the publisher who turned it down because “there's no market for animal stories.”) When Harcourt, Brace at last published the book, the advertising material on the dust-jacket did not mention Russia or Communism, but proclaimed, instead: “About this little book there is the same kind of reality one concedes to Alice in Wonderland.” The author of that sentence is like Homer in one way—in being unable to
Of course, one might say, that was in 1946 when we were still in the afterglow of the wartime alliance with Russia and there might still have been a Communist under a bed here and there. However, as it happened, even at that time some of the literary critics were not so nervous as the publishers. Animal Farm was a Book of the Month Club selection in August 1946. Harry Scherman, president of the Club, made an almost unprecedented appeal to members not to make use of their substitution privilege that month, and commended to their attention the review by Christopher Morley in the same issue of the Club's News. Mr. Morley's review begins: “In a narrative so plain that a child will enjoy it, yet with double meanings as cruel and comic as any great cartoon, George Orwell presents a parable that may rank as one of the great political satires of our anxious time. … It is plain enough that the satire is explicitly turned on Russian Communism, yet I also wish that the reader might see in it a parable even larger than that.”

The point was made more fully by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., who in the Times book section for August 25, 1946, concluded his acute and admiring review thus: “Appreciation of the precision and bite of the satire increases with knowledge of the events in Russia. The steadiness and lucidity of Orwell's merciless wit are reminiscent of Anatole France and even of Swift. The exact and deadpan transposition of the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky, the fight over industrialization, the Moscow trials, the diplomatic shenanigans with Britain and Germany, the NKVD, the resurrection of the state church, and so on, will be a continuing delight to anyone familiar with recent Soviet developments. The story should be read in particular by liberals who still cannot understand how Soviet performance has fallen so far behind Communist professions. Animal Farm is a wise, compassionate and illuminating fable for our times.”

Now it is 1955, when all America has had the disillusioning lessons of ten years of postwar experience with the Soviet rulers, and when domestic Communist influence, we understand, no longer exists. So how account for the fact that, when Harcourt, Brace now decides to reissue Animal Farm to accompany the film, Mr. Morley and Mr. Schlesinger are quoted on the dust-jacket in curiously adapted versions? On the front cover is the quotation from Christopher Morley: “A parable that may rank as one of the great political satires of our anxious time.” Inside the cover is a long quotation from Mr. Scherman, fortunately innocuous but demonstrating that space was not lacking, and the same quotation from Mr. Morley. Then this from Mr. Schlesinger: “A wise, compassionate and illuminating fable for our times. … The steadiness and lucidity of Orwell's merciless wit are reminiscent of Anatole France and even of Swift.”

This, too, has some of the “reality one concedes to Alice in Wonderland.”

UNMENTIONING RUSSIA

Am I only trying to stir up a tempest in a samovar? After all, you may ask, what's the harm if the critics see Animal Farm as a “universal” satire on all tyrannies everywhere? Anyway, isn't it obvious that the satire applies to Russia? Why labor the obvious?

Well, it is not, as it happens, a “universal” satire. No doubt Animal Farm has “universal” implications. So does Swift's A Modest Proposal. But A Modest Proposal is about British oppression of the Irish peasantry, and Animal Farm is about the Bolshevik betrayal of the people of Russia. Do we add to our sense of the “universal” by omitting these facts? If so, then perhaps we might enrich our sense of American history by forgetting the issues involved in the Civil War, omitting the names of Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, and remembering only that the war was an example of the eternal aggressiveness of the human spirit.

Can the parable of Animal Farm be applied equally to all forms of totalitarianism? My “reinterpretation” of this fable as it would apply to Nazi Germany should, I think, stand as a sufficient answer. Those who unmention Russia are asking us to believe that so sophisticated an anti-Communist as George Orwell wrote a
book in which by mere accident every event and every character can be shown to correspond exactly to some fact, general or particular, of Soviet history. Moreover, it is clear that the demagogy in Animal Farm can only be the demagogy of a dictatorship whose origin was egalitarian and pacifist socialism: Comrade Napoleon—when was it ever Comrade Hitler or Comrade Mussolini? The Nazis and Fascists specifically condemned equality and socialism and denounced democracy as corrupt. Only the Communists claimed to be more democratic than anyone else; only to the Communists could one satirically attribute such a slogan as “All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.”

As for laboring the obvious: in reviewing a film about Sister Kenny, for example, would critics avoid using the word “polio”? Would they refer instead to “a controversial disease”? Would they find “a clear and unmistakable reference to a scientific problem of interest to every patient and doctor”? Would they commend the film, in spite of defects, as “having something to say about medicine, suffering, and therapy”? Would they fail to mention Sister Kenny by name, and make only elliptical references that might apply as well to Koch or Pasteur? Or, politically speaking, when Chaplin made The Great Dictator, did these critics fail to indicate, by outright statement and unambiguous leer, that the butt of Chaplin's satire was Hitler?

Perhaps it is worth mentioning that the Communists themselves seem to know very well what the book is about. Mr. David Platt, in the Sunday Worker of January 9, writes: “This list would not be complete without a mention of Louis de Rochemont's feature-length cartoon based on George Orwell's anti-human novel ‘Animal Farm’ which was intended to frighten people out of any belief in the possibility of social progress. The point of the cartoon was that the overthrow of capitalism can bring only ruin to the world, that a society based on the people's rule carries within it the seeds of its eventual destruction.” Mr. Platt, obviously, is not a liberal, and he has given the game away: Animal Farm is an attack on Russian Communism.

ADVERTISING TURNAROUND

This, however, is not quite the end of our story of the liberal mind's visit to Animal Farm. About two weeks after the picture opened, a change took place, not suddenly but yet with fair rapidity. On January 7, there appeared in the ads a quotation from Mr. Cook (but an innocuous one); and Mr. Berg's phrase, “The Fable That Rocked the Kremlin,” not only appeared but headed the list of endorsements. And there are other signs that from now on the film will be presented and advertised for what it is—a fable about Russian Communism. On January 16, the ad for the film in the Sunday Times was a reprint from the review in Time. Apparently someone has discovered that the fable isn't really so “universal” after all.

How was that discovery made? And why did it take so long to make it? Why do people spend three years of painstaking labor on an anti-Communist film only to deny, when the job is finished, that it is anti-Communist? I have no answers to these questions. Advertising is a mysterious business, and liberalism these days seems to be a mysterious business too; when you put the two mysteries together, you get something like the kind of story I have been telling. Perhaps Mr. Crowther, Mr. Guernsey, Mr. Winsten, et al., and Mr. de Rochemont and his associates, might help to clarify what happened and why.

I think the whole story would tickle George Orwell's satiric sense, though no doubt it would also depress him to see how long some people have taken to learn so little.

Criticism: Daphne Patai (essay date 1998)

In the following essay, originally published in 1984, Patai provides a feminist interpretation of Animal Farm.

Although Animal Farm is mentioned in scores of studies of Orwell, no critic has thought it worth a comment that the pigs who betray the revolution, like the pig who starts it, are not just pigs but boars, that is, uncastrated male pigs kept for breeding purposes. Old Major, the “prize Middle White boar” who has called a meeting to tell the other animals about his dream, is initially described in terms that establish him as patriarch of this world: “He was twelve years old and had lately grown rather stout, but he was still a majestic-looking pig, with a wise and benevolent appearance in spite of the fact that his tushes had never been cut.” In contrasting his life with those of the less fortunate animals on the farm, Major says: “I am one of the lucky ones. I am twelve years old and have had over four hundred children. Such is the natural life of a pig.” Orwell here repeats the pattern we have seen in his other fiction, of stressing paternity as if the actual labor of reproduction were done by males. Authority comes from the phallus and fatherhood, and the sows, in fact, are hardly mentioned in the book; when they are, as we shall see, it is solely to illustrate the patriarchal control of the ruling pig, Napoleon. Leaders, then, may be good (Major) or bad (Napoleon)—but they must be male and “potent.”

Contrasting with the paternal principle embodied in Major is the maternal, embodied in Clover, “a stout motherly mare approaching middle life, who had never quite got her figure back after her fourth foal.” Clover is characterized above all by her nurturing concern for the other animals. When a brood of ducklings that had lost their mother come into the barn, Clover “made a sort of wall round them with her great foreleg,” and they nestled down inside it. Though Clover works along with Boxer—the enormous cart horse “as strong as any two ordinary horses put together” whom Orwell uses to represent the working class, unintelligent but ever-faithful, to judge by this image—she is admired not for her hard labor but rather for her caring role as protector of the weaker animals. Orwell here attributes to the maternal female dominion over the moral sphere but without any power to implement her values. As in Nineteen Eighty-Four, this “feminine” characteristic, though admirable, is shown to be utterly helpless and of no avail. In addition, this conventional (human) division of reality restricts the female animal to the affective and expressive sphere and the male to the instrumental.

**AMBIVALENT IMAGERY**

Orwell at times utilizes the same imagery in opposing ways; imagery relating to passivity, for example, is presented as attractive in “Inside the Whale” and repulsive when associated with pansy pacifists. This ambivalence is demonstrated as well in Orwell's use of protective maternal imagery. Clover's protective gesture toward the ducklings, viewed positively in Animal Farm, is matched by Orwell's ridicule of a similar image in his verse polemic with Alex Comfort in 1943, about half a year before Orwell began composing Animal Farm. Falling into his familiar tough-guy rhetoric, Orwell angrily defended Churchill against pacifist gibes. … The protective environment must be rejected if manly status is to be preserved. But the protective gesture itself, in its inevitable futility, is admired in Animal Farm, and it is through Clover that Orwell expresses the sadness of the failed revolution after the ‘purges’ occur, as the stunned animals huddle around her:

As Clover looked down the hillside her eyes filled with tears. If she could have spoken her thoughts, it would have been to say that this was not what they had aimed at when they had set themselves years ago to work for the overthrow of the human race. These scenes of terror and slaughter were not what they had looked forward to on that night when old Major first stirred them to rebellion. If she herself had had any picture of the future, it had been of a society of animals set free from hunger and the whip, all equal, each working according to his capacity, the strong protecting the weak, as she had protected the last brood of ducklings with her foreleg on the night of Major's speech.
Clover is here contrasted with Boxer, who is unable to reflect on these matters and simply resolves to work even harder than before. Though Clover too “would remain faithful, work hard, carry out the orders that were given to her, and accept the leadership of Napoleon,” she has the moral awareness to know that “it was not for this that she and all the other animals had hoped and toiled.” But she lacks the words to express this awareness and instead sings “Beasts of England.”

Clover stands at one of the poles of Orwell's conventional representation of female character. The other pole is represented by Mollie, “the foolish, pretty white mare who drew Mr Jones's trap” and is shown, early in the book, to have a link with human females. When the animals wander through the farmhouse, Mollie lingers in the best bedroom: “She had taken a piece of blue ribbon from Mrs Jones's dressing-table, and was holding it against her shoulder and admiring herself in the glass in a very foolish manner.” A less important female character is the cat who, during Major's speech, finds the warmest place to settle down in and does not listen to a word he says. Both Mollie and the cat, we later learn, avoid work; and Mollie is the first defector from the farm after the revolution, seduced by a neighboring farmer's offerings of ribbons for her white mane and sugar.

Orwell's characterizations of old Major, Boxer, Clover, Mollie, and the cat all appear, clearly packaged and labeled, in the book's first three pages. The animal community thus forms a recognizable social world, divided by gender. This world is presented to us complete with stereotypes of patriarchal power, in the form of male wisdom, virility, or sheer strength, and female subordination, in the form of a conventional dichotomy between “good” maternal females and “bad” nonmaternal females. It is difficult to gauge Orwell's intentions in making use of gender stereotypes in Animal Farm. Given the evidence of his other texts, however, it seems unlikely that the possibility of a critical, even satirical, account of gender divisions ever crossed his mind. Perhaps he simply incorporated the familiar into his animal fable as part of the “natural human” traits needed to gain plausibility for his drama of a revolution betrayed. But in so doing he inadvertently reveals something very important about this barnyard revolution: Like its human counterparts, it invariably re-creates the institution of patriarchy.

SEXUAL POLITICS ON THE FARM

Not only does Orwell's satire of a Marxist (“Animalist”) revolution fail to question gender domination while arguing against species domination, it actually depends upon the stability of patriarchy as an institution. This is demonstrated by the continuity between Mr. Jones, the original proprietor of the farm, and Napoleon (Stalin), the young boar who contrives to drive out Snowball (Trotsky), the only competing boar on the premises, and assumes Jones's former position as well as that of Major, the old patriarch.

In her study of feminism and socialism [The Curious Courtship of Women's Liberation and Socialism], Batya Weinbaum attempts to explain why socialist revolutions have tended to reestablish patriarchy. Describing this pattern in the Russian and Chinese revolutions, Weinbaum utilizes the terminology of kin categories: father, daughter, brother, wife. These categories allow her to point out that revolutions have expressed the revolt of brothers against fathers. Though her analysis relies on a Freudian model of sexual rivalry, agreement about motivation is not necessary in order to see the value of the kin categories she proposes. While daughters participate along with brothers in the early stages of revolution, they are increasingly left out of the centers of power once the brothers realize they can occupy the positions formerly held by the fathers, thus gaining privileged access to the labor and services of women.

It is intriguing to note how closely this scheme fits Animal Farm. Although Orwell describes a generalized revolt of the animals, inspired by a wise father's message of freedom, this revolt against the human exploiter Jones is quickly perverted into a struggle between two of the brothers, each eager to occupy the father slot and eliminate his competitor. Orwell makes it explicit that the struggle goes on between the only two boars among the pigs. The male porkers (castrated pigs) are not contenders for the father role. There is even an especially
nasty portrayal of Squealer, the public relations porker who, in keeping with Orwell's other slurs against the press, is depicted as devoid of masculinity (in Orwell's terms): He stays safely away from the fighting. Once Napoleon wins out over Snowball, we see just what the father role means in terms of access to females. As the sole potent male pig on the farm, Napoleon is of course the father of the next generation of elite pigs: “In the autumn the four sows had all littered about simultaneously, producing thirty-one young pigs between them. The young pigs were piebald, and as Napoleon was the only boar on the farm, it was possible to guess at their parentage.”

In addition, the relations among the sows, competing for Napoleon's favor, are hinted at near the story's end, when Napoleon is on the verge of complete reconciliation with the human fathers, the neighboring farmers. Orwell informs us that the pigs (males) began to wear Mr. Jones's clothes, “Napoleon himself appearing in a black coat, ratcatcher breeches, and leather leggings, while his favourite sow appeared in the watered silk dress which Mrs. Jones had been used to wearing on Sundays.” Perhaps because these details seem to be beside the point in terms of the allegory, they are all the more intriguing as instances of Orwell's fantasy at work. Intentionally or not, Orwell has re-created the structure of the patriarchal family. As in human families, power among the pigs is organized along two axes: sex and age.

**MALES SHOWN AS SUPERIOR**

Though we are told that the pigs as a whole exploit the other animals (by keeping more and better food for themselves, claiming exemption from physical labor because they are doing the “brainwork” of the farm, and finally moving into the farmhouse and adopting all the formerly proscribed human habits), it is only the male pigs whom we see, in the book's closing line, as indistinguishable from human males: “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.” Piggish adaptation to the human world involves not only the general class discrimination evident in the rewritten Commandment: “All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.” It also appears more specifically in the gender hierarchy that culminates in this last scene, so different from the account of the revolution itself in which virtually all the animals and both sexes had participated.

Even as the animal allegory duplicates Orwell's gender assumptions, it also liberates him to some extent from the confines of his own androcentric framework. This is apparent in the unfolding of old Major's speech early in the book. He begins with general comments about the animals' lot: “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 an animal is misery and slavery: that is the plain truth.” But as he continues to speak, his emphasis shifts slightly:

> Why then do we continue in this miserable condition? Because nearly the whole of our produce is stolen from us by human beings. There, comrades, is the answer to all our problems. It is summed up in a single word—Man. Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished forever.

> Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits.

Here, for the first and only time in his writings, Orwell recognizes female reproductive labor as part and parcel of a society's productive activities and as a form of labor that gives females the right to make political and economic demands. In old Major's speech, it is this female labor, specifically, that becomes the most dramatic focal point. The passage quoted above continues:

> Yet he [Man] is lord of all the animals. He sets them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving, and the rest he keeps for himself. Our labour tills the soil, our dung fertilizes it, and yet there is not one of us that owns more than his bare
skin. You cows that I see before me, how many thousands of gallons of milk have you given during this last year? And what has happened to that milk which should have been breeding up sturdy calves? Every drop of it has gone down the throats of our enemies. And you hens, how many eggs have you laid this year, and how many of those eggs ever hatched into chickens? The rest have all gone to market to bring in money for Jones and his men. And you, Clover, where are those four foals you bore, who should have been the support and pleasure of your old age? Each was sold at a year old—you will never see one of them again. In return for your four confinements and all your labour in the field, what have you ever had except your bare rations and a stall?

In this passage Orwell is finally able to make the connection between “public” and “private”—between the male's (typical) work of production and the female's (typical) work of reproduction. He sees that both forms of labor can be expropriated and that the “private” sphere in which relations of caring and nurturing go on is very much a part of the overall system of exploitation that old Major protests. Thinking about animals, Orwell notices that females are insufficiently rewarded for the labor stolen from them by men.

**EXPLOITING FEMALES**

As the revolution decays, there occurs an episode in which Napoleon forces the hens to give up more of their eggs, so that they can be used for export to a neighboring farm. At first the hens sabotage this plan by dropping their eggs from the rafters of the barn. But they are quickly brought into line by the cessation of their rations (the acquisition of food still not being under their direct control). After holding out for five days, the hens capitulate. This increased expropriation of the hens' products is viewed by Orwell in precisely the same terms as the increased labor time extracted from the other animals. In contrast, when Orwell wrote about the human working class, he never noticed the economics of reproduction or objected to women's exclusion from women's work and position in capitalist society.

In *Animal Farm*, furthermore, Orwell touches on the problem of political expropriation of female reproductive capacity. Napoleon provides himself with a secret police force by separating a litter of newborn puppies from their mothers and rearing them himself, and these puppies, when grown up, drive out the rival brother, Snowball, and inaugurate Napoleon's reign of terror. Orwell here seems to protest against the breakup of the “natural” pattern by which the pups are suckled and raised by their mothers. This theme is reiterated when Napoleon seizes the thirty-one young pigs—his offspring—and appoints himself their instructor, so as to prepare the continued domination of pigs over the other animals in the future. Such “unnatural” expropriations stand in sharp opposition to the traditional patterns of family life so strongly supported by Orwell. The same sort of “state” interference in family life occurs, in more detailed form, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Although his fiction suggests a strong distaste for these examples of state expropriation of female reproductive labor, Orwell was actually urging the adoption in England of population policies that, if put into practice, would have openly treated women as mere vehicles for fulfilling state priorities. In “The English People,” written in 1944 (that is, shortly after *Animal Farm*) though not published until 1947, Orwell, in the throes of a panic about the dwindling birthrate, exhorts the English to have more children as one of the necessary steps in order to “retain their vitality.” Interpreting the declining birthrate primarily as an economic problem, he urges the government to take appropriate measures:

Any government, by a few strokes of the pen, could make childlessness as unbearable an economic burden as a big family is now: but no government has chosen to do so, because of the ignorant idea that a bigger population means more unemployed. Far more drastically than
anyone has proposed hitherto, taxation will have to be graded so as to encourage child bearing and to save women with young children from being obliged to work outside the home.

In addition to economic and social incentives, Orwell says, a “change of outlook” is needed: “In the England of the last thirty years it has seemed all too natural that blocks of flats should refuse tenants with children, that parks and squares should be railed off to keep the children out of them, that abortion, theoretically illegal, should be looked on as a peccadillo, and that the main aim of commercial advertising should be to popularise the idea of ‘having a good time’ and staying young as long as possible.”

“BREED FASTER, WORK HARDER”

In brief, what the English must do is, among other things, to “breed faster, work harder, and probably live more simply,” a program ominously reminiscent of Napoleon's exhortation to the other animals: “The truest happiness, he said, lay in working hard and living frugally.” In Orwell's concern with socially adequate human breeding there is no more consideration for the choices of women than Napoleon shows for the desires of the hens or bitches whose eggs and puppies he removes. Orwell seems to assume that the “natural” desires of women will precisely coincide with the lines he sets out—if, that is, he has paused to look at the matter from their point of view at all. Several years later, Orwell still viewed the “population problem” in the same terms. In a newspaper column in 1947, he voices alarm that, if England does not quickly reach an average family size of four children (instead of the then existing average of two), “there will not be enough women of child-bearing age to restore the situation.” He worries about where future workers will come from and again recommends financial incentives. Though Orwell was hardly alone in expressing such concerns at that time, it is instructive to note the limited perspective he brings to the problem. And yet in Nineteen Eighty-Four he satirizes the Party's control over Outer Party members' reproductive behavior through the character of Winston's wife, Katharine, who chills Winston's blood with her commitment to regular sexual intercourse as an expression of “our duty to the Party.” It seems obvious that Orwell's opinion of such state interference in sex and procreation has nothing to do with any sympathy for women as individuals but depends entirely upon his judgment of the merits of the state that is being served.

Nothing in Orwell's earlier writings reveals an awareness of the economic contributions made by women as reproducers, rearers, and caretakers of the labor force, not to mention as ordinary members of the work force. It is therefore all the more surprising that in letting his imagination translate human conflicts into animal terms this aspect of female roles at once sprang to his attention. At the same time, his female animals are still rudimentary in comparison with the more subtly drawn portraits of the male animals on the farm. The hens and cows, for example, appear primarily as good followers, prefiguring Orwell's description of Outer Party female supporters in Nineteen Eighty-Four. With the exception of the maternal Clover and, to a lesser extent, Mollie, the female animals are unimportant as individual actors in the fable. …

As the pigs duplicate the human model of social organization, they not only reproduce the pattern of patriarchy already familiar to the animals (judging by Major's status early in the book) but add to it those human characteristics that Orwell found most reprehensible—especially softness. They slowly adopt Mr. Jones's manner of living, complete with cushy bed and booze. This is contrasted with the heroic labor of the immensely strong Boxer, who literally works himself to death. Relations between the pigs and the other animals follow the patriarchal model also in that they are hierarchical and discipline-oriented; submission and obedience are extracted from the worker animals as the price of the supposedly indispensable pig leadership.

MALE BONDING

In addition to the touching solidarity evident among the worker animals, some individual relationships also emerge. One of these is the nonverbal “masculine” friendship between Boxer and Benjamin, who look forward to their retirement together. There is no female version of this friendship, however. Instead, Clover
plays the role not only of maternal mare to the other animals but also of “wife”—to use Weinbaum’s kin categories again—in that she has a heart-to-heart talk with Mollie. Cast in the role of the rebellious “daughter” who refuses to adhere to the farm's values, Mollie disbelieves in the communal cause and prefers to ally herself with powerful human males outside the farm, thus assuring her easier life as a kept and well-decorated mare. Orwell signals his disapproval of Mollie by showing her cowardice as well as her vanity and sloth. Given the revolution's eventual outcome, however, Mollie's behavior, though egocentric, is not as misguided as it may seem. Orwell makes it explicit that under the rule of Napoleon the animals (except the pigs and Moses, the raven, who represents the church) have an even more arduous work life than animals on the neighboring (i.e., capitalist) farms. Mollie might better be viewed as having some spontaneous understanding of the rules of patriarchy, characterized by Weinbaum in these words: “Brothers may step across the line to become fathers; but daughters face a future as a powerless wife.” …

It is fascinating to see Orwell describe the betrayal of the animals' revolution in terms so suggestive of women's experience under patriarchy. It is women who, more than any other group and regardless of the race and class to which they belong, have had their history obliterated, their words suppressed and forgotten, their position in society confounded by the doublethink of “All men are created equal,” their legal rights denied, their labor in the home and outside of it expropriated and controlled by men, their reproductive capacities used against them, their desire for knowledge thwarted, their strivings turned into dependence—all of these under the single pretext that they are not “by nature” equipped to do the valued work of society, defined as what men do. When read as a feminist fable, however, Animal Farm has another important message. The origins of the Seven Commandments of Animalism lie in Major's warnings against adopting Man's ways: “And remember also that in fighting against Man, we must not come to resemble him. Even when you have conquered him, do not adopt his vices.”

**Animal Farm, George Orwell: Further Reading**

**BIOGRAPHY**


*Authorized Orwell biography; Crick was the first biographer to be granted access to Orwell's personal papers by his widow.*

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


*Extensive bibliography of Orwell criticism.*

**CRITICISM**


*Consider the fiftieth anniversary edition of Animal Farm, its illustrations by Ralph Steadman, and the contemporary relevance of the story.*


*Provides support and instruction for those studying Orwell's works.*

Examines Orwell's *Animal Farm* on its fiftieth anniversary, Orwell's politics, and whether the story continues to be relevant.


*Considers Orwell’s work and its relevance.*


*Describes Animal Farm as Orwell's masterpiece, a successful satire of dictatorship written with unaccustomed good humor and detachment.*


*Extensive bibliography of Orwell criticism between 1975 and 1983.*


*Considers an alternate reading of Orwell's famous phrase from Animal Farm concerning the equality of animals.*


*Examines how perceptions of Animal Farm have been changed over the years by historical conditions.*


*Collection of essays on Animal Farm.*


*Recounts the difficulties Orwell had in getting Animal Farm published.*


*Considers Animal Farm’s origins, its attitude toward revolutionary change, Orwell as a “literary Trotskyist,” and comments that Ralph Steadman’s illustrations in the 1995 edition do not do justice to the text.*

Additional coverage of Orwell’s life and career is contained in the following sources published by the Gale Group: *Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: Biography & Resources*, Vol. 3; *Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults*, Vol. 5; *British Writers*, Vol. 7; *Children's Literature Review*, Vol. 68; *Concise Dictionary of British Literary Biography, 1945-1960*; *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vols. 15, 98, 195, 255; *DISCovering Authors: British Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century*, Ed. 3; *Exploring Novels Literature and Its Times*, Vols. 4, 5; *Literature and Its Times Supplement*, Ed. 1; *Literature Resource Center; Novels for Students*, Vols. 3, 7; *Reference Guide to English Literature*, Ed. 2; *Science Fiction Writers,*
Critical Essays: Critical Overview

Although Orwell endured many rejection notices from publishers on both sides of the Atlantic before *Animal Farm* finally appeared in print, ever since it was published in 1945 it has enjoyed widespread critical approval. From the start, reviewers were apt to make a favorable comparison between Orwell's book and the work of the great satirists of the past. In an important early review, influential *New Yorker* critic Edmund Wilson commented that while Orwell's style was reminiscent of that used in the fables of French author Jean de La Fontaine and British author John Gay, he conceded that "*Animal Farm* even seems very creditable if we compare it with Voltaire and [Jonathan] Swift." Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and Adam de Hegedus were among the first critics to attach more significance to the novel beyond that of a political satire. Schlesinger wrote in the *New York Times Book Review* that Orwell's ability to make the reader empathize with the plight of the animals "would compel the attention of persons who never heard of the Russian Revolution." In *Commonweal*, de Hegedus stated: "[The novel] has implications—and they are many—which are older and more universal than the past and present of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." He, like many critics have since, pointed out the similarity between conclusions drawn from Orwell's text and the famous aphorism of British historian Lord Acton who wrote, "Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely." Early negative criticism of the novel included *Nation* contributor Isaac Rosenfeld's belief that since the events satirized by Orwell had already passed, it was "a backward work," and *New Republic* critic George Soule's complaint that the book was "on the whole dull."

On Orwell's death in 1950, Arthur Koestler, a friend who shared Orwell's own disillusion with Soviet Communism, again raised comparisons with Swift. "No parable was written since *Gulliver's Travels*," he wrote in the Observer, "equal in profundity and mordant satire to *Animal Farm.*" British journalist Christopher Hollis examined Orwell's ability to craft a fable. "The author of such a fable must have the Swift-like capacity of ascribing with solemn face to the animals idiotic but easily recognized human qualities," Hollis wrote in his *A Study of George Orwell: The Man and His Works*, "decking them out in aptly changed phraseology to suit the animal life—ascribe to them the quality and then pass quickly on before the reader has begun to find the point overlaboured. This Orwell has to perfection." Essayist and novelist C. S. Lewis compared *Animal Farm* to *1984*, Orwell's last novel, and found *Animal Farm* the more powerful of the two. In an essay in *Tide and Time* he wrote, "Wit and humour (absent from the longer work *1984*) are employed with devastating effect. The great sentence 'All animals are equal but some are more equal than others' bites deeper than the whole of 1984."

In the 1960s and 1970s, critical interest in Orwell continued with scholars such as Jenni Calder, George Woodcock, Stephen I. Greenblatt, and Jeffrey Meyers publishing books that discussed Orwell and his works. Like Lewis, Greenblatt and Woodcock considered both *Animal Farm* and *1984* in their criticism, concluding that 1984 was a thematic continuation of *Animal Farm*. In his *Three Modern Satirists: Waugh, Orwell, & Huxley*, Greenblatt wrote: "The horror of both *Animal Farm* and the later *1984* is precisely the cold, orderly, predictable process by which decency, happiness, and hope are systematically and ruthlessly crushed." In his *The Crystal Spirit: A Study of George Orwell*, Woodcock observed: "By transferring the problems of caste division outside a human setting, Orwell was able in *Animal Farm* to avoid the psychological complications inevitable in a novel. In the process he left out one element which occurs in all his other works of fiction, the individual rebel caught in the machinery of the caste system. Not until he wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four* did he elaborate the rebel's role in an *Animal Farm* carried to its monstrously logical conclusion." Calder and Meyers both noted that since Orwell was not adept at creating believable human characters, his use of animals in the book made it more effective than any of his other novels. Calder remarked in her *Chronicles of Conscience: A
The 1980s brought a spate of books, articles, and reviews on Orwell's works as the literary community marked the year 1984, the date that Orwell used as the title to his last novel. The literary world also celebrated Animal Farm's fiftieth anniversary in 1995, which saw the publication of a new illustrated edition. While most critiques of the novel remained positive, some reviewers, such as Stephen Sedley, offered negative opinions. In an essay contained in Christopher Norris's Inside the Myth: Orwell, Views from the Left, Sedley argued that the book's popularity had as much to do with an atmosphere of anti-communism in England following World War II as it did with Orwell's vision, stating, "Between its covers Animal Farm offers little that is creative, little that is original." In the New York Times Book Review, however, Arthur C. Danto maintained that "the sustained acceptance of the book is testimony to a human meaning deeper than anti-Soviet polemics." In Commonweal Katharine Byrne summarized many critics' opinions when she wrote: "Should Animal Farm be read during the next fifty years? Of course, but for the right reasons: setting up as it does, with crystal clarity, the price paid when we do not safeguard our freedoms."

**Essays and Criticism: Historical Setting for Orwell's Animal Farm**

In the following essay, Fitzpatrick, a Ph.D candidate at New York University, notes that an understanding of the historical setting for Orwell's novel is imperative if the reader is to understand the work as not simply an indictment of Communism in the Soviet Union.

Stephen Sedley, in a 1984 article in Inside the Myth • Orwell, Views from the Left attacking George Orwell's Animal Farm as both politically and artistically lacking, points to the fact that his thirteen-year-old daughter was "bored stiff" by the novel, because she, like most students today, was "too new to political ideas to have any frame of reference for the story." In this, Sedley has a point: in the early 1980s, I was in high school and was given Animal Farm to read for the first time, along with the simple (indeed, simplistic) advice that this novel was an allegory of the Russian Revolution and the decline of subsequent Soviet Communism. The political environment in the United States being what it was in the early 1980s, coupled with the fact of my total lack of awareness of the circumstances of the Russian Revolution and the principles of Marxist-Leninist Socialism which the Revolution at first fought for and then lost sight of, my own interpretation of the novel resembled in both content and complexity the following statement: "George Orwell thought Communism was Bad."

Animal Farm is in fact one of the most studied and most readily misinterpreted novels of the twentieth century. And, given our distance from the events which it allegorizes and from the ideas it counterposes, it has only become easier to misinterpret since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The pigs have at last been vanquished, and Mr. Jones has returned to the farm, as we knew he would all along.

But in 1984, as Stephen Sedley was writing, there was no end to the Cold War in sight. The atmosphere on the Right was one of suspicion of all things Communist—the Soviet Union was, after all, the "Evil Empire," and the anti-Communist forces in the United States government held an unquestionable position of moral superiority. The atmosphere on the Left was no better—anything which looked like a criticism of the Soviet Union was considered a reactionary justification for the oppressions of capitalism.

It is this environment, then, which underscores Mr. Sedley's willful misreading of Orwell's tale. How else could he come to the conclusion that Orwell's argument in the novel is "that socialism in whatever form offers the common people no more hope than capitalism; that it will be first betrayed and then held to ransom by those forces which human beings have in common with beasts; and that the inefficient and occasionally
benign rule of capitalism, which at least keeps the beasts in check, is a lesser evil"

Insofar as I believe Orwell to have an argument in Animal Farm, I suspect that it was stated much more closely, with less intervening static, by Adam de Hegedus in an early review of the novel in The Commonweal:

Orwell is not angry with Russia, or with any other country, because that country "turned Socialist." On the contrary he is angry with Russia because Russia does not believe in a classless and democratic society. In short, Orwell is angry with Russia because Russia is not socialist.

Contrary to Sedley's claims, Animal Farm is not arguing for capitalism as the lesser of two evils, but is rather angrily pointing out the ways in which the Soviet experiment turned its back on its own principles—and is perhaps of the opinion that such descent from idealism to totalitarianism is inevitable in any violent revolution.

In order to read Animal Farm as the allegory which Orwell's contemporaries understood it to be, one must first have an outline of the key players. Old Major, the prize boar who first passes on his ideas about animal oppression by the humans and the future Rebellion of the animals, is commonly thought to represent either Karl Marx, one of the authors of the 1848 Communist Manifesto, or Vladimir Lenin, who adapted Marx's ideas to the Russian Revolution. Neither Marx's nor Lenin's influence remained long in its original state. Just as with Major's ideas, followers of Marx and Lenin "elaborated" their ideas into a complete system of thought which did not exactly reflect the intent of the original. (Late in his life, Marx insisted that he was certainly not a Marxist.)

Napoleon and Snowball, the pigs who are primarily responsible for this elaboration of ideas into doctrine, represent Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky, respectively. Some of the novel's details slip a bit from a strict representation of reality, as Orwell found it necessary to compress some events and change some chronologies in order to make his story work. For instance, Snowball's original plans for building the windmill correspond to Lenin's plans for the electrification of Russia; however, though this plan was not the point on which the Stalin/Trotsky conflict turned, the ultimate result was the same as that between Napoleon and Snowball: Trotsky was driven from the country under a death warrant; he was reported to be hiding in various enemy states; he was held responsible for everything that went wrong under the Stalinist regime; and, ultimately, his supporters were violently purged from the ranks of the Communist Party.

These correspondences between the Russian Revolution and the Rebellion on Animal Farm are generally agreed upon by the critics. Not much has been said, however, about the allegorical roles played by the humans in the story. Mr. Jones, quite clearly, represents the last Czar in Russia, whose dissolution and cruelty laid the groundwork for the workers' rebellion. The neighboring farmers, Mr. Pilkington of Foxwood and Mr. Frederick of Pinch-field, who are described as being "on permanently bad terms," represent the leaders of England and Germany respectively. The closeness of their names seems to imply an essential sameness—quite a shocking notion for a novel written at the end of World War II!—but Pilkington is described as "an easy-going gentleman farmer who spent much of his time in fishing or hunting according to the season," and his farm is "large, neglected, [and] old-fashioned." Frederick, on the other hand, is "a tough, shrewd man, perpetually involved in lawsuits and with a name for driving hard bargains," and his farm is "smaller and better kept." Pilkington is thus representative of the Allies' lackadaisical attitude toward their neighbors, while Frederick carries with him elements of German aggressiveness and bellicosity.

In fact, late in the novel, "terrible stories" begin leaking out of Pinchfield about the cruelties Frederick inflicts on his animals, no doubt corresponding to the horrors of Hitler and the Holocaust. It is thus that much more shocking when Squealer (who, as Napoleon's mouthpiece, might be said to correspond to Pravda, the Soviet...
propagandist press) announces that the deal Napoleon had been working out to sell some timber to Pilkington has instead been changed so that the deal will be made with Frederick. This devastating turn of events corresponds to the revelation in 1939 of the secret Nazi-Soviet anti-aggression pact which, like the peace between Frederick and Animal Farm, did not last long, but was abruptly ended by Hitler's attempted invasion of Russia.

Once Russia entered the European war on the side of the Allies (culminating in victory for the Soviet Union, as Squealer claims for Animal Farm, though the only victory was in gaining back what they had before), increasing attempts were made by Stalin to achieve some level of entente, or agreement, with the other Allied nations. A series of meetings were held between the leaders of the various nations, and one particular conference held in Teheran after the war began the eruption into detente, or discord, which resulted in the protracted Cold War. This conference is represented in the novel by the meeting between the pigs and the humans at the end, at which a quarrel breaks out over cheating at cards.

Despite this discordant note, however, the final lines of the novel reveal the greatest shock of all. As the other animals watch through the windows, they notice:

Twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. 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.

These lines are crucial to a full understanding of the novel. Orwell does not claim here that Napoleon/Stalin is worse than the humans, and thus that the animals would be better off under benign human control. In fact he points to an ultimate identity between the pigs and the humans, between Stalin and the leaders of the "free" nations, an idea which would have been considered heresy by both sides. This conclusion implies not that the Rebellion has been a failure because the animals are worse off than they would have been under the rule of Mr Jones, but that the Rebellion is a failure because it has completely set aside its own ideals—which may be seen in the corruption of each and every one of Animal Farm's Seven Commandments—and landed everyone back exactly where they started, with the many suffering abuses in order to support the position of an elite few. Or, in the interpretation of George Woodcock in The Crystal Spirit: A Study of George Orwell:

old and new tyrannies belong to the same family; authoritarian governments, whether they are based on the codes of old social castes or on the rules of new political elites, are basically similar and present similar dangers to human welfare and liberty.

It seems clear as I reread the novel now, understanding better than I did as a teenager the background against which Orwell wrote his allegory, and paying close attention to the implications of the novel's last few lines, that no part of the novel presents any such simplistic, cut-and-dried message as "Communism is Bad." Even Stephen Sedley's more sophisticated argument about the novel's ideological unsoundness suffers from an apparent—and misguided—belief that Orwell as novelist held any sympathy for Jones, Pilkington, or Frederick.

Other critics, such as Robert A. Lee, writing in Orwell's Fiction, hold that it is in fact dangerous to read Animal Farm too strictly as an allegory of a specific set of events, as one may in that way miss a broader applicability of its meaning. Lee argues that Animal Farm is more than an allegory of twentieth-century Russian politics, and more even than an indictment of revolutions in general: "Orwell is also," claims Lee, "painting a grim picture of the human condition in the political twentieth century, a time which he has come to believe marks the end of the very concepts of human freedom."

This picture of the human condition is what Orwell's allegory has to offer us today, now that the Cold War has been "won" and the humans are back in control of the farm. I do not believe, as Sedley seems to, that Orwell
would be relieved that the "benign, inefficient" capitalists are back in charge; I believe he would instead point out that we are deluding ourselves if we think we are closer to those revolutionary ideas of justice, brotherhood, and equality than were the citizens of Stalinist Russia.

Source: Kathleen Fitzpatnck, in an essay for Novels for Students, Gale, 1998.

**Essays and Criticism: Orwell and Socialism**

In the following excerpt, Greenblatt explains how *Animal Farm* reveals Orwell's disgust and disillusion with the socialist causes he once expounded.

Throughout Orwell's early novels, journals, and essays, democratic socialism existed as a sustaining vision that kept the author from total despair of the human condition, but Orwell's bitter experience in the Spanish Civil War and the shock of the Nazi-Soviet pact signaled the breakdown of this last hope and the beginning of the mental and emotional state out of which grew *Animal Farm* and *1984*. The political disappointments of the late '30s and '40s did not in themselves, however, disillusion Orwell—they simply brought to the surface themes and tensions present in his work from the beginning. The socialism Orwell believed in was not a hardheaded, "realistic" approach to society and politics but a rather sentimental, Utopian vision of the world as a "raft sailing through space, with, potentially, plenty of provisions for everybody," provided men, who, after all, are basically decent, would simply use common sense and not be greedy. Such naive beliefs could only survive while Orwell was preoccupied with his attacks on the British Raj, the artist in society, or the capitalist system. The moment events compelled him to turn his critical eye on the myth of socialism and the "dictatorship of the proletariat," he discerned fundamental lies and corruption. Orwell, in his last years, was a man who experienced daily the disintegration of the beliefs of a lifetime, who watched in horror while his entire life work was robbed of meaning.

The first of his great cries of despair was *Animal Farm*, a satirical beast fable which, curiously enough, has been heralded as Orwell's lightest, gayest work. Laurence Brander, in his biography of Orwell paints a charming but wholly inaccurate picture of *Animal Farm*, presenting it as "one of those apparently chance pieces a prose writer throws off ... a sport out of his usual way," supposedly written by Orwell in a state where "the gaiety in his nature had completely taken charge ... writing about animals, whom he loved." The surface gaiety, the seeming good humor and casual-ness, the light, bantering tone are, of course, part of the convention of beast fables and *Animal Farm* would be a very bad tale indeed if it did not employ these devices. But it is a remarkable achievement precisely because Orwell uses the apparently frivolous form of the animal tale to convey with immense power his profoundly bitter message. Critics like Laurence Brander and Tom Hopkinson who marvel at Orwell's "admirable good humour and detachment" miss, I think, the whole point of the piece they praise. *Animal Farm* does indeed contain much gaiety and humor, but even in the most comic moments there is a disturbing element of cruelty or fear that taints the reader's hearty laughter. While Snowball, one of the leaders of the revolution of farm animals against their master, is organizing the "Egg Production Committee for the hens, the Clean Tails League for the cows, the Wild Comrades' Re-education Committee, the Whiter Wool Movement for the sheep," Napoleon, the sinister pig tyrant, is carefully educating the dogs for his own evil purposes. Similarly, the "confessions" forced from the animals in Napoleon's great purges are very funny, but when the dogs tear the throats out of the "guilty" parties and leave a pile of corpses at the tyrant's feet, the scene ceases to amuse. Orwell's technique is similar to a device used by Evelyn Waugh, who relates ghastly events in a comic setting.

Another critical mistake in appraising *Animal Farm* is made, I believe, by critics like Christopher Hollis who talk of the overriding importance of the author's love of animals and fail to understand that Orwell in *Animal Farm* loves animals only as much or as little as he loves human beings. To claim that he hates the pigs because they represent human tyrants and sympathizes with the horses because they are dumb animals is
absurd. Nor is it necessary, as Hollis believes, that the truly successful animal fable carry with it "a gay and light-hearted message." Indeed, the very idea of representing human traits in animals is rather pessimistic. What is essential to the success of the satirical beast fable, as Ellen Douglass Leyburn observes in *Satric Allegory: The Mirror of Man* (1956), is the author's "power to keep his reader conscious simultaneously of the human traits satirized and of the animals as animals." The storyteller must never allow the animals to be simply beasts, in which case the piece becomes a non-satirical children's story, or to be merely transparent symbols, in which case the piece becomes a dull sermon. Orwell proved, in *Animal Farm*, his remarkable ability to maintain this delicate, satiric balance.

The beast fable, an ancient satiric technique in which the characteristic poses of human vice and folly are embodied in animals, is, as Kernan points out, "an unrealistic, expressionistic device" (Alvin Kernan, *Modern Satire*, 1962), which stands in bold contrast with Orwell's previous realistic manner. But the seeds for *Animal Farm* are present in the earlier works, not only in the metaphors likening men to beasts but, more important, in Orwell's whole attitude toward society, which he sees as an aggregation of certain classes or types. The types change somewhat in appearance according to the setting—from the snobbish pukka sahibs, corrupt officials, and miserable natives of *Burmese Days* to the obnoxious nouveaux riches, greedy restaurateurs, and overworked plongeurs of *Down and Out in Paris and London*, but there remains the basic notion that men naturally divide themselves into a limited number of groups, which can be isolated and characterized by the astute observer. This notion is given dramatic reality in *Animal Farm*, where societal types are presented in the various kinds of farm animals—pigs for exploiters, horses for laborers, dogs for police, sheep for blind followers, etc. The beast fable need not convey an optimistic moral, but it cannot portray complex individuals, and thus it can never sustain the burden of tragedy. The characters of a satirical animal story may be sly, vicious, cynical, pathetic, lovable, or intelligent, but they can only be seen as members of large social groups and not as individuals.

*Animal Farm* has been interpreted most frequently as a clever satire on the betrayal of the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalin. Richard Rees comments in *George Orwell: Fugitive from the Camp of Victory* (1961), that "the struggle of the farm animals, having driven out their human exploiter, to create a free and equal community takes the form of a most ingeniously worked-out recapitulation of the history of Soviet Russia from 1917 up to the Teheran Conference." And indeed, despite Soviet critics who claim to see only a general satire on bureaucracy in *Animal Farm*, the political allegory is inevitable. Inspired by the prophetic deathbed vision of Old Major, a prize Middle White boar, the maltreated animals of Manor Farm successfully revolt against Mr. Jones, their bad farmer, and found their own Utopian community, *Animal Farm*. The control of the revolution falls naturally upon the pigs, particularly upon Napoleon, "a large, rather fierce-looking Berkshire boar, not much of a talker, but with a reputation for getting his own way," and on Snowball, "a more vivacious pig than Napoleon, quicker in speech and more inventive, but ... not considered to have the same depth of character." Under their clever leadership and with the help of the indefatigable cart horses Boxer and Clover, the animals manage to repulse the attacks of their rapacious human neighbors, Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick. With the farm secured from invasion and the Seven Commandments of Animalism painted on the end wall of the big barn, the revolution seems complete; but as the community develops, it is plain that there are graver dangers than invasion. The pigs at once decide that milk and apples are essential to their well being. Squealer, Napoleon's lieutenant and the ablest talker, explains the appropriation:

"Comrades" he cried. "You do not imagine, I hope, that we pigs are doing this in a spirit of selfishness and privilege. Many of us actually dislike milk and apples. Our sole object in taking these things is to preserve our health. Milk and apples (this has been proven by Science, comrades) contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig ... We pigs are brainworkers ... Day and night we are watching over your welfare. It is for your sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back."
A growing rivalry between Snowball and Napoleon is decisively decided by Napoleon's vicious hounds, who drive Snowball off the farm. Laurence Brander sees Snowball as a symbol of "altruism, the essential social virtue" and his expulsion as the defeat of "his altruistic laws for giving warmth, food and comfort to all the animals." This is very touching, but unfortunately there is no indication that Snowball is any less corrupt or power-mad than Napoleon. Indeed, it is remarked, concerning the appropriation of the milk and apples, that "All the pigs were in full agreement on this point, even Snowball and Napoleon." The remainder of Animal Farm is a chronicle of the consolidation of Napoleon's power through clever politics, propaganda, and terror. Dissenters are ruthlessly murdered, and when Boxer can no longer work, he is sold to the knacker. One by one, the Commandments of Animalism are perverted or eliminated, until all that is left is:

ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL
BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

After that, it does not seem strange when the pigs live in Jones' house, walk on two legs, carry whips, wear human clothes, take out subscriptions to John Bull, Tit-Bits, and the Daily Mirror, and invite their human neighbors over for a friendly game of cards. The game ends in a violent argument when Napoleon and Pilkington play an ace of spades simultaneously, but for the animals there is no real quarrel. "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."

The interpretation of Animal Farm in terms of Soviet history (Major, Napoleon, Snowball represent Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky) has been made many times and shall not be pursued further here. It is amusing, however, that many of the Western critics who astutely observe the barbs aimed at Russia fail completely to grasp Orwell's judgment of the West. After all, the pigs do not turn into alien monsters; they come to resemble those bitter rivals Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick, who represent the Nazis and the Capitalists. All three major "powers" are despicable tyrannies, and the failure of the revolution is not seen in terms of ideology at all, but as a realization of Lord Acton's thesis, "Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely." The initial spark of a revolution, the original intention of a constitution may have been an ideal of the good life, but the result is always the same—tyranny. Communism is no more or less evil than Fascism or Capitalism—they are all illusions which are inevitably used by the pigs as a means of satisfying their greed and their lust for power. Religion, too, is merely a toy of the oppressors and a device to divert the minds of the sufferers. Moses, the tame raven who is always croaking about the sweet, eternal life in Sugarcandy Mountain, flies after the deposed Farmer Jones, only to return when Napoleon has established his tyranny.

Animal Farm remains powerful satire even as the specific historical events it mocked recede into the past, because the book's major concern is not with these incidents but with the essential horror of the human condition. There have been, are, and always will be pigs in every society, Orwell states, and they will always grab power. Even more cruel is the conclusion that everyone in the society, wittingly or unwittingly, contributes to the pigs' tyranny. Boxer, the noblest (though not the wisest) animal on the farm, devotes his unceasing labor to the pigs, who, as has been noted, send him to the knacker when he has outlived his usefulness. There is real pathos as the sound of Boxer's hoofs drumming weakly on the back of the horse slaughterer's van grows fainter and dies away, and the reader senses that in that dying sound is the dying hope of humanity. But Orwell does not allow the mood of oppressive sadness to overwhelm the satire, and Squealer, "lifting his trotter and wiping away a tear," hastens to announce that, after receiving every attention a horse could have, Boxer died in his hospital bed, with the words "Napoleon is always right" on his withered lips. Frederick R. Karl, in The Contemporary English Novel, believes that Animal Farm fails as successful satire "by virtue of its predictability," but this terrifying predictability of the fate of all revolutions is just the point Orwell is trying to make. The grotesque end of the fable is not meant to shock the reader—indeed, chance and surprise are banished entirely from Orwell's world. The horror of both Animal Farm and the later 1984 is precisely the cold, orderly, predictable process by which decency, happiness, and hope are systematically and ruthlessly crushed.
In the following excerpt, Brander applauds Orwell's use of colorful characters and lyrical narrative to balance his bitterly satirical story.

*Animal Farm* is one of those apparently chance pieces a prose writer throws off, which immediately becomes more popular than his more ambitious writings. A sport, out of his usual way; and yet more effective in the crusade to which he was dedicated than anything else he wrote.

For once, the gaiety in his nature had completely taken charge. He was writing about animals, whom he loved. He had had a rest of nearly three years from serious writing. He wrote with zest, and although humour rarely travels across national boundaries, his enjoyment has been shared everywhere. Humour travels most easily in peasant portraiture, as in *The Good Soldier Schweik* and *Don Camillo*; and in animal stories. Not many books have been translated into so many languages so successfully and so quickly as *Animal Farm*....

The style, like the form, is unique in Orwell's work. He had been a master of the descriptive way of writing from the beginning, from the opening words of *Down and Out*, but he had never before achieved pure narrative. In *Animal Farm*, from the start, we feel the special power of the storyteller. The animals expel the farmer and his men and take over the farm. The farmer tries to come back but is driven away. The other farmers do not interfere because they look forward to taking the farm over cheaply when the animals have ruined it. The animals, led by the pigs, do not make a mess of it, and the farm is well enough run for the authorities to leave it alone. Eventually, the pigs turn out to be harder slave-drivers than men, so in the end the neighbouring farmers make friends with the pigs and admit that they have much to learn from the labour conditions on *Animal Farm*.

There is no looseness anywhere in the structure. The story is rounded, the end joining the beginning. The opening speech of the old boar, Major, is answered at the end in the words of Mr. Pilkington and Napoleon. The various levels of satire are similarly rounded, so that the story and all its implications form circles each in its own plane.

The convention of writing animal stories is as old as Aesop in European literature and has been used in England from Chaucer's time. Every animal corresponds to a human type, and though there were many animals in the Ark, there are still human types to place against them. Orwell restates the convention right at the beginning, in the meeting of the animals:

> At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was already ensconced on his bed of straw, under a lantern which hung from a beam. He was twelve years old and had lately grown rather stout, but he was still a majestic-looking pig, with a wise and benevolent appearance in spite of the fact that his tuskes had never been cut. Before long the other animals began to arrive and make themselves comfortable after their different fashions. First came the three dogs, Bluebell, Jessie, and Pitcher, and then the pigs who settled down in the straw immediately in front of the platform. The hens perched themselves on the window-sills, the pigeons fluttered up to the rafters, the sheep and cows lay down behind the pigs and began to chew the cud. The two cart-horses, Boxer and Clover, came in together, walking very slowly and setting down their vast hairy hoofs with great care lest there should be some small animal concealed in the straw....
The two horses had just laid down when a brood of ducklings, which had lost their mother, filed into the barn, cheeping feebly and wandering from side to side to find some place where they would not be trodden on. Clover made a sort of wall round them with her great foreleg, and the ducklings nested down inside it and promptly fell asleep. Last of all came the cat, who looked round, as usual, for the warmest place, and finally squeezed herself in between Boxer and Clover, there she purred contentedly throughout Major's speech without listening to a word of what he was saying.

It is an enchanting description. There is the bustle and excitement of assembly, just as in Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules*:

> And that so huge a noysan gan they make That erthe, and eyr, and tre, and every lake So full was, that unethe was there space For me to stonde, so full was all the place.

There is the pleasure of watching each animal comporting itself according to its nature. The animal kingdom at once becomes a reflection of human society.

The scene is a parody of a successful meeting of the political opposition. Get the people together with some bait. Turn on the orator to bemuse them, and send them away feeling happy and satisfied, but with the seeds of revolt planted where you want them. The best thing in the parody is the mockery of the egotistical gravity of political rabble-rousers:

> I feel it my duty to pass on to you such political wisdom as I have acquired. I have had a long life I have had much time for thought as I lay alone in my stall, and I think I may say that I understand the nature of life on this earth as well as any animal now living.

Three days later, Major dies and the spotlight falls upon two younger boars, Napoleon and Snowball, the Stalin and Trotsky of the story. Napoleon was "not much of a talker" but had "a reputation for getting his own way." Snowball was intellectually quicker, but "was not considered to have the same depth of character." (Part of the fun of the animal story is the enormous gravity of the author's approach to his characters.) Snowball obviously has much more brains than Napoleon. It is Snowball who paints the seven commandments against the end wall of the barn, and when it comes to the battle for Manor Farm, and Jones the farmer tries to recover his property, it is Snowball who has prepared and drilled the animals for the expected attack. It is Snowball who leads them and Snowball who is wounded. In the whole episode, Napoleon is never mentioned.

As the community develops, it is observed that Snowball inspired the "Animal Committees," while Napoleon took no interest in such things. Snowball "formed the Egg Production Committee for the hens, the Clean Tails League for the Cows ... the Whiter Wool Movement for the sheep...." This is the sort of exuberant invention of absurd trivialities that Swift enjoyed in *Gulliver*. Napoleon, meanwhile, said that "the education of the young was more important than anything that could be done for those who were already grown up." Snowball had altruism, the essential social virtue; Napoleon had a lust for power, and intended to get it by making the animals "less conscious," and that was all he meant by educating the young. Eventually Napoleon wins by his education of a litter of young hounds, who attack Snowball after his eloquent exposition of the windmill scheme, and chase him out of the farm. At his best moment, just when his altruistic plans for giving warmth, food and comfort to all the animals are completed and ready to be carried out, Snowball's brutal rival stakes. It is the same sort of dramatic timing that we shall find in *1984*, an ironic twist to the satire.

After that, the Snowball theme is the denigration of the fallen hero. The animals are all greatly upset by the incident, and Napoleon's young lieutenant, Squealer, works hard to make them less conscious of what has happened:
"He fought bravely at the Battle of the Cowshed," said somebody. "Bravery is not enough," said Squealer.

"Loyalty and obedience are more important. And as to the Battle of the Cowshed, I believe the time will come when we shall find that Snowball's part in it was much exaggerated. Discipline, comrades, iron discipline! That is the watchword for today. One false step, and our enemies would be upon us. Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?"

"Discipline!" the invariable cry of the political gangsters who are destroying freedom and truth. That is the first step in the legend that Snowball is the source of evil. The legend grows step by step with the building up of Napoleon as the leader who thought of everything and is the father of the farm. The windmill was of course really Napoleon's own idea, and Snowball had stolen the plans from among Napoleon's papers. When the windmill falls down at the first puff with wind, Napoleon himself comes forth and sniffs around till he smells Snowball. "'Comrades,' he said quietly, 'do you know who is responsible for this? Do you know the enemy who has come in the night and overthrown our windmill? SNOWBALL!' he suddenly roared in a voice of thunder."

Next spring, it was discovered that Snowball "stole the corn, he upset the milk-pails, he broke the eggs, he trampled the seed-beds, he gnawed the bark off the fruit-trees." A typical touch of hypnosis is supplied when "the cows declared unanimously that Snowball crept into their stalls and milked them in their sleep."

Napoleon orders a full investigation, and Squealer is able to tell the animals that "'Snowball was in league with Jones from the very start! He was Jones's secret agent all the time. It has all been proved in documents which he left behind him and which we have only just discovered.'" The authentic note this, and it is heard again when Boxer argues that Snowball was once a good comrade: "'Our leader, Comrade Napoleon,' announced Squealer, speaking very slowly, and firmly, 'has stated categorically—categorically, comrade—that Snowball was Jones's agent from the very beginning.'"

Boxer was too simple to be safe. So the dogs are set on him, but he kicks them aside and releases the one he traps under his vast hoof only on Napoleon's orders. At the trial, the confessions of the animals are invariably of complicity with Snowball. Later it is discovered that far from being the hero of the Battle of the Cowshed, Snowball was censured for showing cowardice. At all these stages the simple animals are very much perplexed. Eventually it is shown (by the discovery of further documents) that Snowball fought on Jones's side at the Battle of the Cowshed. The animals are perplexed at each stage of this long denigration, but they are tired, overworked and underfed and do not remember clearly and the lies are so persuasively put across that at every stage they believe.

This parable of human perplexity in the face of contemporary propaganda methods is told with great skill. It is one of Orwell's most effective treatments of the problem which had focused his attention since his experiences in Spain.

Squealer is the modern propagandist, the P.R.O. (Public Relations Officer) who explains away the worst with the best of spurious reasons. He is a familiar type, with: "very round cheeks, twinkling eyes, nimble movements, and a shrill voice. He was a brilliant talker, and when he was arguing some difficult point he had a way of skipping from side to side and whisking his tail which was somehow very persuasive. The others said of Squealer that he could turn black into white."

He was the mouthpiece of the pigs, the new class who were elbowing their way into power by the methods Orwell marks in an essay on James Burnham: "All talk about democracy, liberty, equality, fraternity, all revolutionary movements, all visions of Utopia, or 'the classless society,' or 'the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth,' are humbug (not necessarily conscious humbug) covering the ambitions of some new class which is elbowing its way into power."
In contrast to Squealer is Moses, the tame raven, who specialized in the kingdom of heaven, but not on earth. Moses disappeared completely for years when the animals took over. It was only when the pigs were in complete control and had turned themselves into an aristocracy at the expense of the lean and hungry animals that Moses returns. His tales of Sugar Candy Mountain, where "it was Sunday seven days a week, clover was in season all the year round, and lump sugar and linseed oil grew on the hedges," are useful again, and in no way threaten the power of the pigs.

Moses has his allowance of a gill of beer a day from the pigs and he does no work. Squealer works hard all the time. He represents the organized lying practised in totalitarian states, which, Orwell says in "The Prevention of Literature": "is not, as is sometimes claimed, a temporary expedient of the same nature as military deception. It is something integral to totalitarianism, something that would still continue even if concentration camps and secret police forces had ceased to be necessary."

Squealer comes into his own when Snowball is expelled, after making his name on the milk-and-apple question. All supplies had been reserved for the pigs, and there is some grumbling: "Many of us actually dislike milk and apples. I dislike them myself. Our sole object in taking these things is to preserve our health." Needless to say, for the purpose of keeping Jones away.

At the moment of Snowball's expulsion, when Napoleon takes over the leadership, Squealer is at his best: "'Comrades,' he said, 'I trust that every animal here appreciates the sacrifice that Comrade Napoleon has made in taking this extra labour upon himself. Do not imagine, comrades, that leadership is a pleasure!'

When there is any fighting, Squealer is unaccountably absent. His time comes afterwards, when the victory has to be celebrated:

"What victory" said Boxer
"Have we not driven the enemy off our soil ..."
"Then we have won back what we had before," said Boxer
"That is our victory," said Squealer.

A few mornings after that conversation, all the pigs are suffering from a dreadful hangover. It is the drollest incident in the book, and like everything else has its satirical implications:

It was nearly nine o'clock when Squealer made his appearance walking slowly and dejectedly, his eyes dull, his tail hanging limply behind him, and with every appearance of being seriously ill. He called the animals together and told them that he had a terrible piece of news to impart. Comrade Napoleon was dying! A cry of lamentation went up. Straw was laid down outside the doors of the farmhouse, and the animals walked on tiptoe.

The next bulletin was that Comrade Napoleon had pronounced a solemn decree as his last act on earth: "the drinking of alcohol was to be punished by death." Within a couple of days the pigs are busily studying books on brewing and distilling.

Squealer is central. He keeps the animals quiet. He puts their minds at rest. He has the air of a beneficent being, sent to make animals happy. He is the agency by which they become "less conscious."

Napoleon develops in personality. He takes on the character of the legendary Leader more and more. He becomes progressively remote. From the beginning he is quite different from Snowball and Squealer. He has none of their mercurial qualities, he is no talker. In the range of porcine character—which would seem to be as great as the human range—he is at the other extreme a saturnine, cunning pig. A deep pig, with a persistent way of getting what he wants. He is by far the strongest character on the farm. Just as Benjamin, the donkey,
has the clearest idea of things, and Boxer, the carthorse, is the strongest physically.

Boxer's simplicity of character is sentimental comedy of the purest kind. It is the story of the great big good-natured person who thinks harm of nobody, believes all is for the best, so everybody should work as hard as possible and then a little harder still. He is so simple that he does not see his questions are dangerous, and when the pigs make an effort to eliminate him—which is quite hopeless because of his great strength—he never understands what has happened. In the tiny Orwell gallery of pleasant characters, Boxer is the favourite. He is the expression of Orwell's liberal belief in the people: "one sees only the struggle of the gradually awakening common people against the lords of property and their hired liars..." He is the great big gentle peasant, the finest flower of the good earth; and he has the usual reward. When at last he collapses from overwork, the pigs pretend to send him to hospital, and sell him to the knacker. It is the only time that Benjamin, the donkey, forsakes cynicism for action. He attempts a rescue, but too late. With the money they get from the knacker, the pigs buy another case of whisky and hold a Boxer memorial dinner.

Squealer is able to give a complete narrative of Boxer's last moments in hospital and is able to quote his last words: "Long live Animal Farm! Long live Comrade Napoleon! Napoleon is always right." Fortunately, too, he is able to refute the ridiculous rumour that Boxer was sent to the knacker. "The animals were enormously relieved to hear this."

The last stage of the story comes with the legend on the end of the barn which has replaced the seven commandments. None of the animals ever detected that only four of them were commandments and the others were statements of belief. None, except probably Benjamin, who gave no sign, ever quite realized how they were modified. One by one they had been broken-down and now they had all disappeared and in their place stood the legend: "All animals are equal but some are more equal than others." The significance of this expunging of the law is explained in Orwell's essay on Gulliver's Travels, where he says:

In a Society in which there is no law, and in theory no compulsion, the only arbiter of behaviour is public opinion. But public opinion, because of the tremendous urge to conformity in gregarious animals, is less tolerant than any system of law.

Squealer arranged public opinion. The pigs were now walking on two legs and wearing clothing. Soon they were indistinguishable from the other farmers, except only in their superior discipline over their workers. Mr. Pilkington, proposing the toast of "Animal Farm" at the dinner which the pigs gave to their neighbours, put it very well: "... a discipline and an orderliness which should be an example to all farmers everywhere. He believed that he was right in saying that the lower animals on Animal Farm did more work and received less food than any animals in the county."

Was it wonderful that when the poor animals gazed in they "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"?

The question one poses at the end of this fairy story is whether Orwell had given up hope that mankind would ever find decent government. It is very difficult here, as in 1984, to decide. He had said in his essay on Swift that: "Of course, no honest person claims that happiness is now a normal condition among adult human beings; but perhaps it could be made normal, and it is upon this question that all serious political controversy really turns."

Essentially, Animal Farm is an anatomy of the development of the totalitarian State: "In each great revolutionary struggle the masses are led on by vague dreams of human brotherhood, and then, when the new ruling class is well established in power, they are thrust back into servitude." ("Second Thoughts on James Burnham.")
It is a comment on all revolution: "History consists of a series of swindles, in which the masses are first lured into revolt by the promise of Utopia, and then, when they have done their job, enslaved over again by new masters." (Same essay.)

Nothing is more obvious than where Orwell's sympathies lay. But whether he hoped that the common man could learn to find rulers is not clear. In Animal Farm he is an artist, posing great questions imaginatively; not a preacher, proclaiming a revelation.


Critical Essays: Animal Farm

Major, an old pig, gathers the animals of the Manor Farm together to tell them that if it were not for the presence of man they could achieve a utopia. Soon afterward, the animals revolt against Mr. Jones, the owner, and take over the farm themselves, changing its name to Animal Farm.

For a time all goes well, but eventually the animals must yield much of the affairs of management to the pigs, the most intelligent of the animals. Among the pigs, Snowball and Napoleon continually vie for leadership, until Napoleon drives out his rival and declares him to be a traitor.

With the pigs responsible for all intellectual efforts, they soon become the master class and take on man’s privileges, justifying everything through the propaganda of the pig Squealer. Napoleon establishes a personality cult around himself and becomes the leader, ordering all activities. The animals’ lives move back into the pattern of the time before the revolution.

This novel can be seen simply as a satire on the Soviet Union and its betrayal of the ideals of socialism, but it is more than that. Orwell makes the animals’ revolt a symbol for any modern revolution. The rise of a ruling class of intellectual workers, the development of a leader figure, the use of scapegoats, and, above all, the rewriting of history and the misuse of language for party purposes, all figure in this satire.

The use of multiple historical references gives a universal quality to this work. Orwell appears to be saying that any revolutionary movement is self-defeating. This is a bleak picture, but the novel asks the reader to make his own decision.

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Analysis

Point of View
The third-person point of view traditionally used for fables and fairy tales is the one Orwell chooses for Animal Farm, his tale of an animal rebellion against humans in which the pigs become the powerful elite. The storyteller in this case, as is also typical of the fable, tells the reader only what is needed to follow the story and the bare minimum about each character, without overt commentary. Orwell focuses on the bewilderment of the simple beasts—the horses, birds, and sheep—in the face of their manipulation by the pigs, eliciting sympathy from the reader.

Setting
Animal Farm takes place at an unspecified time on a British farm near Willingdon, a town that is mentioned only in passing. The farm is first called Manor Farm, later renamed Animal Farm and, finally, Manor Farm once more. Manor—which can mean the land overseen by a lord, the house of a lord, or a mansion—associates the farm with the upper, or ruling, class. Orwell focuses entirely on activities taking place at the farm, except for a brief scene in Willingdon when Jones asks his neighbors to help him. By keeping a narrow focus, Orwell makes the location in England unimportant.

Narrator
The narrator in the novel functions as a storyteller, telling a fable Orwell gives the fable ironic overtones by using a naive narrator, one who refuses to comment on events in the novel that the reader understands to be false. After Muriel tells Clover that the fourth commandment of Animalism reads, "No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets," the narrator declares: "Curiously enough, Clover had not remembered that the Fourth Commandment mentioned sheets; but as it was there on the wall, it must have done so." Both the reader and the narrator know the truth of the matter—that the words of the commandment have been changed—but the narrator does not admit it. The tension between what the narrator knows but does not say and what the reader knows is dramatic irony.

Dramatic Irony
With dramatic irony an audience, or reader, understands the difference between the truth of a situation and what the characters know about it, while the characters remain ignorant of the discrepancy. For instance, Squealer explains that the van in which Boxer was taken to the hospital formerly belonged to a horse slaughterer. He further explains that the veterinarian who now uses it did not have the time to paint over the horse slaughterer's sign on its side, so the animals should not worry. The narrator says: "The animals were enormously relieved to hear this." The reader, who assumed the truth when the van originally appeared to carry the horse away, feels doubly outraged by Squealer's explanation.
Fairy Tales
The fairy story, or fairy tale, is a type of folk literature found all over the world. It involves a highly imaginative narrative told in a simple manner easily understood and enjoyed even by children. While they do not have a moral, fairy tales instruct by placing their characters in situations that they have to overcome; children who hear the tales can imagine what they would do in a similar situation. Fairy tales, also, often involve animals that can talk. Orwell gave his work the subtitle "A Fairy Story." The reader can surmise that the story told in Animal Farm is universal, with implications for every culture or country, and that it will be easily understood. Using "fairy story" to describe his novel is another bit of irony, because the political story behind the tale is far from the light entertainment the term implies.

Satire
A work that uses humor to criticize a weakness or defect is called a satire. The satirist makes whatever he is criticizing look ridiculous by a variety of methods, often through irony or other types of biting humor. Satire ©eNotes.com. The satirist hopes to change the behavior he is satirizing. Orwell ridicules the so-called achievements of the Russian revolution in a number of ways: by comparing its proponents to animals, by developing irony through the use of the naive narrator, and by allowing each animal or group of animals to stand for one human trait or tendency that he criticizes.

Fable
A fable is a short, imaginative narrative, usually with animal characters, that illustrates a moral. The characters often embody a specific human trait, like jealousy, to make fun of humans who act similarly. Orwell uses details to make his animal characters seem like real animals: the cat vanishes for hours at a lime; Molly the mare likes to have her nose stroked. The animals also represent human traits or characteristics: the pigs are selfish power-grabbers, the sheep are dim-witted "yes-men," and the horses are stout-hearted workers. Animal Farm, like the traditional fable, is told in a simple, straightforward style.

Allegory
In an allegory, characters and events stand for something else. In this case, the characters in the novel stand for significant figures in twentieth-century Russian history. Orwell makes the characters easily identifiable for those who know the historic parallels, because he gives each one a trait, or has them perform certain tasks, that are like that of a historical figure. Old Major is identified with Karl Marx because, just as Old Major develops the teachings that fuel the Animal Rebellion, Marx formulated the ideas that spawned the Russian revolution. Napoleon and Snowball, both pigs, stand for Russian leaders Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky. Stalin and Trotsky had a falling out much like Napoleon and Snowball do. Events from history—the revolution itself and the Moscow purge trials of the 1930s—also appear in allegorical form in the novel.

Analysis: The Plot
A prize-winning boar named Major has a dream that he shares with the other animals of Manor Farm one night after the drunken farmer who owns the farm, Mr. Jones, has fallen asleep. Major advises the animals to reject misery and slavery and to rebel against Man, "the only real enemy we have." The rebellion, on Midsummer's Eve, drives Mr. Jones and his men off the farm.

Major draws up Seven Commandments of Animalism to govern the newly named Animal Farm, stipulating that “whoever goes on two legs is our enemy,” that “all animals are equal,” and that they shall not wear clothes, sleep in beds, drink alcohol, or kill any other animal. The pigs quickly assume a supervisory position to run the farm, and two of them, Snowball and Napoleon, become leaders after the death of old Major. Factions develop, and Napoleon conspires against Snowball after the animals defeat an attempt by Mr. Jones and the neighboring farmers to recover the farm at the Battle of the Cowshed.
Snowball is a brilliant debater and a visionary who wants to modernize the farm by building a windmill that will provide electrification. Two parties are formed, supporting “Snowball and the three-day week” and “Napoleon and the full manger.” Meanwhile, the pigs reserve special privileges for themselves, such as consuming milk and apples that are not shared with the others.

Napoleon raises nine pups to become his guard dogs. After they have grown, his “palace guard” drives Snowball into exile, clearing the way for Napoleon’s dictatorship. Napoleon simplifies the Seven Commandments into one slogan: “Four legs good, two legs bad.” With the help of Squealer, his propagandist, Napoleon discredits Snowball’s bravery and leadership in the Battle of the Cowshed and claims as his own the scheme to build a windmill. Every subsequent misfortune is then blamed on Snowball.

Thereafter, the animals work like slaves, with Napoleon as the tyrant in charge. Gradually the pigs take on more human traits and move into the farmhouse. Before long, they begin sleeping in beds and consuming alcohol. Napoleon organizes a purge, sets his dogs on four dissenting pigs who question his command, and has them bear false witness against the absent Snowball. He then has the dogs kill them, violating one of the Seven Commandments, which are slyly emended to cover the contingencies of Napoleon’s rule and his desires for creature comforts.

Eventually, Napoleon enters into a political pact with one neighboring farmer, Pilkington, against the other, Frederick, whose men invade Animal Farm with guns and blow up the windmill. Working to rebuild the windmill, the brave workhorse Boxer collapses. He is sent heartlessly to the glue factory by Napoleon, who could have allowed Boxer simply to retire. All the principles of the rebellion eventually are corrupted and overturned. Finally, the pigs begin to walk on their hind legs, and all the Seven Commandments ultimately are reduced to a single one: “All Animals Are Equal, but Some Animals Are More Equal Than Others.” The pigs become indistinguishable from the men who own the neighboring farms, and the animals are no better off than they were under human control.

Analysis: Places Discussed

Manor Farm

Manor Farm. English farm at which the entire novel is set. When the novel opens, it is called Manor Farm and is run by a farmer named Jones. These names indicate that this farm stands for any farm, or any place, and that the entire novel should be read as an allegory. However, since Orwell wrote in the introduction to the Ukrainian edition that he wanted to expose the Soviet myth, Animal Farm also stands for the Soviet Union in particular. When the animals take over the farm, they rename it Animal Farm; when the pigs revert to the name Manor Farm in the final pages of the book, the complete failure of the animals’ revolution is indicated. No animal leaves the farm unless it is a traitor (Molly), declared an enemy of the state (Snowball), or sold to the enemy to be killed (Boxer). When they do leave, the animals rewrite history. Animal Farm is like the Soviet Union in having its own official history that serves the purposes of its rulers.

Orwell’s love of animals and his practice of raising his own vegetables and animals are clear in his loving description of the farm; his socialist politics come through in his sympathies with the animals as real workers and in his descriptions of the barn.

Farmhouse

Farmhouse. House in which Jones originally lived. Like the farm, the farmhouse is perfectly ordinary, until the animals drive the humans from what the humans see as their rightful place. The farmhouse symbolizes the seat of government; no real work is done there. When the pigs move into the farmhouse, it is a sign that the
revolution will fail. The novel closes with the other animals, the workers, watching through the windows of
the farmhouse as the pigs meet with Mr. Pilkington to toast the renaming of Animal Farm as Manor Farm. This
symbolizes the tendency of rulers to ignore the abuses suffered by the common people in all countries,
British socialism’s betrayal of the worker in particular, and how the animals/workers are always excluded
from gatherings of their leaders.

Barn

Barn. Originally an ordinary barn used for work, shelter, and storage. Under the rule of the animals, the barn
becomes a meeting place, a place to resolve disputes, and the place where all legitimate political decisions are
made. The barn is where all the real work is done, and it is where the revolution is born. The laws of Animal
Farm are painted on the side of the barn.

Foxwood

Foxwood. One of farms bordering Manor Farm. Foxwood is described as large and neglected, with run-down
hedges. It represents England, with its substandard military and ill-kept borders. Its clumsy but easygoing
owner Mr. Pilkington symbolizes British politicians.

Pinchfield

Pinchfield. Another of the neighboring farms. Pinchfield is described as smaller and better kept than
Foxwood. It symbolizes Germany; its owner, Mr. Frederick, stands for Hitler. Pinchfield and Foxwood put
pressure on the animals’ revolution, are threatened by it, and threaten it in turn. Jones asks for help after the
animals’ rebellion, and the farmers reject his plea, as the nations of Europe rejected the pleas from the
displaced czars. The business deals between farms symbolize the political deals in which the Soviet
Communists sold out their own people.

Sugarcandy Mountain

Sugarcandy Mountain. Imaginary utopia in the preachings of Moses, the raven. Sugarcandy Mountain is
animal heaven. Moses is useful to Jones because he preaches a dream beyond this life and keeps the animals
pacified, but Moses leaves when the animals actually try to establish a utopia on earth. At the end of the book,
he is not only back, but actively supported by the pigs. This indicates that the idea of heaven is threatening to
real revolutionaries, but that tyrants find it useful for their subjects to have another realm about which to
dream.

Analysis: Historical Context

Ever since Orwell wrote Animal Farm readers have enjoyed it as a simple animal story. While it is possible to
read the book without being aware of the historical background in which Orwell wrote it, knowing the world’s
situation during the 1940s adds interest to the novel. The reader understands why the political implications of
the book were so important to Orwell, and is encouraged to read the book again, looking for its less obvious
political and societal references. As the date of the original publication of the work becomes more remote, the
historical events that preceded it lose their immediacy, but Orwell's story remains viable. In fact, Orwell
emphasized the universality and timelessness of his message by not setting the story in any particular era, and,
while placing the farm in England, not making that fact important.

World War II

The target of Orwell's satire in Animal Farm was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the U.S.S.R, or the
Soviet Union), which at the time the work was written was a military ally of Great Britain during World War II. The book's publication was delayed until after fighting had ended on the war's European front in May 1945. When England declared war on Germany in September 1939, it would not have seemed likely that by the war's end England and the U.S.S.R. would be allies. Just a week before, the world community had been stunned by news of a Soviet-German nonaggression pact. Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalm secretly worked out the agreement, while the Soviet leader publicly pursued an alliance with Great Britain and France against Germany. The pact called for the development of German and Russian spheres of interest in Eastern Europe and the division of Poland between the two countries. The world, which had for several years watched Germany's expansionist moves, was suddenly confronted with the Soviet Union sending troops into eastern Poland and several other bordering countries. In his book, George Orwell: The Ethical Imagination, Sant Singh Bal quotes Orwell on the situation: "Suddenly the scum of the earth and the bloodstained butcher of the workers (for so they had described one another) were marching arm in arm, their friendship 'cemented in blood,' as Stalin cheerily expressed it." Orwell portrays the Hitler-Stalin pact in his novel as the agreement between Mr. Frederick and Napoleon.

When the war began, Orwell and his wife were living in a 300-year-old cottage in Wallington, a rural community in southeastern England, where they raised animals and owned a store. When it appeared that Germany was preparing to invade England, the couple moved to London. Disappointed that he was unable to fight in the war against fascism, Orwell wanted to at least be in London where he might still be called on to defend his country. The German Air Force, or Luftwaffe, tried in vain to bring about England's surrender with nightly bombing raids over London that continued sporadically for nearly two years. The bombings and shortages of practically every staple made life in London particularly difficult. Orwell felt compelled to stay there. According to Peter Lewis in George Orwell: The Road to 1984, Orwell told a friend, "But you can't leave when people are being bombed to hell." The writer, like most of his countrymen, suffered the loss of a family member in the war; his wife's brother, Laurence, an Army surgeon, died during the battle of Dunkirk in 1940.

The war changed when the Soviet Union was unexpectedly invaded by the Germans in June 1941. Still stung by Stalin's betrayal just two years earlier, the Allies (France, England, and—after Pearl Harbor—the United States) were nevertheless forced to join him in order to defeat Hitler. Orwell cringed at photographs of the leaders of England and the United States—Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin Roosevelt, respectively—and Stalin conferring with each other at the Tehran Conference held November 28 to December 1, 1943. Orwell sat down to write his book at exactly the same moment. In the preface to the Ukrainian edition of the novel, Orwell wrote: "I thought of exposing the Soviet myth in a story that could be easily understood by almost anyone and which could be easily translated into other languages.” Orwell knew he would have trouble publishing it because Stalin had become quite popular in England as the one who saved England from an invasion. Orwell couldn't forgive the Soviet leader's complicity with Hitler, or his bloody reshaping of the Soviet Communist Party during the 1930s which resulted in the death or deportation of hundreds of thousands of Russians. Orwell included these so-called purge trials in Animal Farm when the animals confess to aiding Snowball in various ways after the pig is exiled from the farm.

Although finished in February 1944, Animal Farm wasn't published until 1945, a pivotal year in world history. The war ended, but the year also included such disparate events as the first wartime use of a nuclear bomb and the approval of the charter establishing the United Nations, an international organization promoting peaceful economic cooperation. The cost of the war was staggering: estimates set the monetary cost at one trillion dollars, while an estimated 60 million people lost their lives. Nearly sixty countries were involved in the conflict, with daily life changed dramatically for those in the war zone. The war's end meant the end of rationing, but it also meant an end to the economic machinery that had produced war materials, the return of the soldiers who glutted the suddenly slackened employment market, and a dramatic increase in births in the United States, called the "Baby Boom," that would affect American society until the end of the century. The war had allowed only the United States and the Soviet Union to survive as world powers. So the end of the
war brought the beginning of a Cold War, an ideological conflict pitting the Soviet Union and its allies against the United States and its allies, that persisted with varying degrees of intensity until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Analysis: Setting

The novel takes place on Manor Farm, which is renamed Animal Farm after the animals expel Mr. Jones, the farmer, from its grounds. It is a typical barnyard, except that the animals have assumed the farmer's tasks. Their aspirations are high; they write seven commandments on the wall of the barn, including "All animals are created equal," and "Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy," and thus stake their claim. They build a windmill—an object of much contention—that is rebuilt several times after being destroyed by a storm and then by a band of farmers with dynamite. Originally, the animals pledge to preserve the manor house as a museum, but as the power structure becomes more unbalanced, the pigs move into the house, which becomes their domain. The farmhouse symbolizes the new totalitarian rule of the pigs and is indeed indicative of the "revised" commandment: "All animals are created equal but some animals are more equal than others." Orwell, by restricting all the action to the farmyard, creates a microcosm of society.

Analysis: Literary Techniques

Throughout his career, Orwell is generally considered to have matured both creatively and perceptively as a writer, yet he never warranted nor received critical recognition as a literary innovator. His personalized blend of moral commitment and social commentary distinguished Orwell as a major spokesperson for his generation; however, his body of work is remarkably similar in structure and temperament. An extremely disciplined writer, Orwell consistently utilized language to enhance the development of plot while providing insight into thematic concerns. This is especially true in Animal Farm, an imaginative examination of the interaction of language and political method.

Written in a pure, subtle, and simplistic form of narrative, Animal Farm evokes both descriptive imagery and stunning clarity of purpose. As political allegory, Animal Farm was conceived as a beast fable, the ideal form for Orwell to communicate his highly sensitive and unorthodox message. In so doing Orwell was able to employ irony as the most effective means to articulate the embodiment of human traits in the animals of the farm. Interspersed with religious overtones, the novel begins with a relatively light tone before depreciating into a menacing and debilitating void. Coming full circle, the novel ends with a tremendous sense of futility and loss as even the memory of the revolution fades into quiet and passive oblivion.

Literary Precedents

Created as an allegorical beast fable, Animal Farm stems from an artistic tradition attributed to Aesop and dating from the seventh century B.C. Popular in almost every literary period, the beast fable is most often designed to satirize human folly as well as to provide moral instruction. An avid reader, Orwell was undoubtedly influenced by the work of the seventeenth-century French writer La Fontaine and in his own century by Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Books and Just So Stories.

Of additional importance, Orwell clearly descends from an impressive lineage of English satirists, particularly those of the eighteenth century, including Dryden, Swift, and Pope. Animal Farm is consistently and appropriately compared to Swift's Gulliver's Travels as having the capacity to simultaneously delight while pointing an accusing finger at the limitations of human kindness and decency. In the twentieth century, satire is generally utilized in the fictional narrative as it is in Animal Farm to criticize with the ultimate goal of improvement. In this capacity, Orwell joins company with such diverse writers as Evelyn Waugh, Mark Twain, Sinclair Lewis, and Aldous Huxley.
Analysis: Literary Qualities

An extremely disciplined writer, Orwell consistently used language to enhance the development of plot while providing insight into thematic concerns. This is especially true in *Animal Farm*, an imaginative examination of the interaction of language and political method. Written in a pure, subtle, and simplistic style, *Animal Farm* evokes descriptive imagery and stunning clarity of purpose. Although the novel begins with a relatively light tone, it gradually evolves into a menacing and debilitating void. Coming full circle, the novel ends with a tremendous sense of futility and loss as even the memory of the revolution fades into quiet and passive oblivion.

Orwell conceived of *Animal Farm* as an allegorical beast fable, drawing on a literary convention attributed to Aesop and dating from the seventh century B.C. Popular in almost every literary period, the beast fable is most often designed to satirize human folly as well as to provide moral instruction. An avid reader, Orwell was undoubtedly influenced by the work of the seventeenth-century French writer La Fontaine and in his own century by Rudyard Kipling’s *Jungle Book* and *Just So Stories*.

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Analysis: Social Concerns

During the mid-1930s, Orwell like many of his literary contemporaries became increasingly aware of the social and political concerns of the age. Clearly a turning point for Orwell, this period would ultimately define his artistic purpose and direction as a writer and simultaneously crystallize his prophetic vision of the future. Deeply affected as a young man by the social injustice he encountered in Burma, Orwell entered the decade in direct opposition to the doctrine of imperialism which fostered aristocratic privilege at the expense of the poor and disadvantaged. By 1936, this perspective would be radically altered, transforming Orwell into one of England's most prominent political writers.

Commissioned by Victor Gollancz to write a book on the conditions of the unemployed in the industrial north of England, Orwell began what was intended as a study on poverty. The result, however, was *The Road to Wigan Pier*, published in 1937, which is best described as an expose of the English class structure and the first significant identification of Orwell with the ideology of socialism. This was followed by Orwell's investigative journey to Spain and his subsequent involvement in the Spanish Civil War. Undoubtedly, this experience had a profound impact on Orwell, confirming his inherent belief in human decency and community as well as deepening his political commitment to democratic socialism. Adversely, however, Orwell returned from Spain with a fervent disillusionment with the Communist party and convinced of the impending threat of totalitarianism to the survival of intellectual freedom.

Unquestionably a literary extension of Orwell's political development, *Animal Farm* is most often identified as a satire on communism, or more specifically the totalitarian state of Soviet Russia and the dictatorship of Joseph Stalin. Orwell early recognized the ability of emerging political regimes to replace poverty with a form of security based on social and economic servitude. Committed to the preservation of intellectual liberty,
Orwell further realized the inherent danger of sacrificing this ideal to governmental control. Having observed the process firsthand in Spain, Orwell understood all too well how suppression and distortion of information could deny individual freedom and political truth. Orwell's primary concern by the close of the decade was to discover the proper medium through which to communicate his message. Integrating political and artistic purpose, the beast fable proved a radical departure from his previous work but an extremely successful literary vehicle and quite possibly Orwell's most distinguished creative achievement.

**Additional Commentary**

During the mid-1930s, Orwell like many of his literary contemporaries became increasingly more perceptive of the social and political concerns of the age. Clearly a turning point for Orwell, this period would ultimately define his artistic purpose and direction as a writer and simultaneously crystalize his prophetic vision of the future. Unquestionably a literary extension of Orwell's political development, *Animal Farm* is most often identified as a satire on totalitarian communism and the dictatorship of Joseph Stalin. Orwell recognized the ability of emerging political regimes to replace poverty with a form of security based on social and economic servitude. Committed to the preservation of intellectual liberty, Orwell further realized the inherent danger of sacrificing this ideal to governmental control. Orwell's primary concern by the close of the decade was to discover the proper medium through which to communicate his message.

**Analysis: Ideas for Group Discussions**

1. Discuss the pig's idea of "animalism." What happens to this theory as the novel progresses?

2. Why is the windmill such an important object?

3. Why is the song Beasts of England important to the animals in the beginning, and why do they abolish it at the end?

4. What happens to the original seven commandments? Why are they later revised?

5. Discuss how the events of the Battle of the Cowshed are changed to present snowball in a bad light.

6. Why are the sheep taken to a corner of the farm at the end of the novel and kept there for a week?

7. Why do Snowball and Napoleon disagrees. Could the farm have functioned with both pigs as leaders?

8. Moses, the tame raven, speaks of Sugarcandy Mountain. What is the significance of this? Why do the animals hate him?

**Analysis: Compare and Contrast**

1940s: The first half of the decade is spent dealing with the hardships and turmoil caused by World War II; the second half, adjusting to a post-war economy and the new U.S. role as a world superpower.

Today: Controversy erupts over a planned $100 million World War II memorial slated to be built on a 7.4 acre site on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

1940s: The truth of rumors of Nazi atrocities during World War II were finally confirmed in 1945 as the Allied Armies liberated the remaining occupants of the Nazi death camps.
Today: The World Jewish Congress and other organizations demand a full accounting for millions of dollars in gold and other valuables looted from Jews and others killed by the Nazis in World War II that remain in unclaimed Swiss bank accounts.

1940s: President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin met at Tehran, Iran, and other locations to discuss war strategy.

Today: After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, U. S. presidents regularly meet with the president of Russia to discuss European security and strategic warhead stockpiles in both countries.

Analysis: Topics for Discussion

1. Discuss the pigs' idea of "animalism." What happens to this theory as the novel progresses?

2. Boxer and Clover, the two cart-horses, are described as the "most faithful disciples." What makes them such?

3. Why is the windmill such an important object in the novel?

4. Examine the novel's ending and particularly the final paragraph. Has Napoleon compromised the integrity of the farm?

5. Why is the song Beasts of England important to the animals in the beginning of the novel? Why is the song later abolished?

6. What happens to the original Seven Commandments? Why are they later revised?

7. Discuss how the events of the Battle of the Cowshed are changed later in the novel in order to present Snowball in a bad light.

8. Why are the sheep taken to a comer of the farm in the end of the novel and kept there for a week?

9. Compare Snowball and Napoleon. Why do they disagree? Do you think the farm could have functioned with both pigs as leaders?

10. Moses, the tame raven, speaks of Sugarcandy Mountain. What is its significance? Why do the animals hate him?

Analysis: Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. Research the Russian Revolution of 1917 and its origins. What similarities do you see between it and the events in Animal Farm? Are the major characters in each of the revolutions alike? Why or why not?

2. Why does Napoleon take great efforts to downplay Snowball's contributions to the rebellion and to denounce his memory? List the episodes in which Squealer and Napoleon retell events in order to discredit Snowball. Why do the other animals believe them?

3. Read Nineteen Eighty-Four and discuss any similarities it has to Animal Farm.
The animals react differently to the revolution —some are trusting, some resist. Discuss the way Orwell characterizes the different breeds of animals. Are they symbolic of the different classes of humans?

5. How do the pigs take advantage of the other animals' lack of intelligence. Explain some of the situations where the pigs use this to their advantage. How is language important to the pigs and the novel in general? Would the revolution have been more successful if all the animals were indeed equal?

**Analysis: Topics for Further Study**

Research a current political scandal on the state, local, or national level, or one from the past (such as Watergate or Tammany Hall). Develop a brief animal allegory of the main figures involved, using some of the same animals found in Orwell's novel.

Using examples from classic animal fables, report on how Orwell's novel conforms and/or deviates from features found in those you’ve investigated.

Analyze how Squealer manipulates language to get the animals to go along with him, then watch the evening news or read periodicals to find similar uses of language in speeches or press releases from contemporary politicians.

**Analysis: Related Titles / Adaptations**

Similar in thematic content to *Animal Farm, Nineteen Eighty-Four* is both an indictment of political oppression and a vigorous attack on the corruption of language. Throughout the novel, Orwell is relentless in his disparaging analysis of totalitarian society. More impressive, however, is his ability to demonstrate the use of language as a tool of government to exercise and ensure control over its people. Deprived of access to their historical and cultural traditions, the inhabitants of Orwell's world become enslaved to the immediacy of existence.

*Animal Farm* was made into an animated cartoon in 1954, directed and produced by John Halas and Joy Batchelor and released by Louis de Rochemont Associates. Presented as a full-length adult satire, the film was considered an artistically successful rendering of Orwell's book made into vivid and realistic animation. A superb creative achievement, the film is executed with technical precision and visual brilliance, distinctly reminiscent of the "Disney" style. The thematic elements of Orwell's novel remain consistent in the film and quite possibly are enhanced by the striking contrast of presenting political satire in the medium of cartoon.

**Bibliography: Bibliography and Further Reading**


Isaac Rosenfeld, review of *Animal Farm*, in *Nation*, September 7, 1946, p. 373.


**For Further Study**


Short review praising the novel on the fiftieth anniversary of its publication.


An early review of *Animal Farm* in which Frye criticizes the novel for failing to explore the reasons why the principles behind the Soviet revolution failed.
Karl briefly discusses Animal Farm as a failed, predictable satire.

Peter Lewis, George Orwell: The Road to 1984, Harcourt, 1981.
Mainly a biographical work, profusely illustrated, that gives important background material behind the writing of Animal Farm.

Important essay for understanding how Orwell came to write the book.

A significant essay in which Orwell analyzes his need to write.

Praises Animal Farm as a perfect fusion of the political and the artistic.

**Bibliography**

Gardner, Averil. George Orwell. Boston: Twayne, 1987. Gives information on Orwell at the time of writing Animal Farm and a chapter-by-chapter synopsis of meaning and symbols as they apply to Russian history. Includes some criticism that Animal Farm received at its publication.

Hammond, J. R. A George Orwell Companion. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1982. Features pictures of Orwell spanning his career and gives an extended reference to characters and events of Animal Farm as they compare to historical Russia. Considers the evolution of Orwellian philosophy through his novels and essays.


Kalechofsky, Roberta. George Orwell. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1973. Has an extended section on Animal Farm about the corruption of the seven commandments of animalism and compares the themes of Animal Farm as similar to those of Nineteen Eighty-Four.


Williams, Raymond. George Orwell. New York: Viking Press, 1971. Includes several quotes from Orwell and the criticism he received for Animal Farm. Also explains the difficulties Orwell went through in trying to find a publisher.
Analysis: Media Adaptations

*Animal Farm* was adapted as a film by John Halas and Joy Batchelor and released in 1955.

*Animal Farm* was also adapted by Nelson Slade Bond for a play of the same title, Samuel French, 1964.

Analysis: What Do I Read Next?

Child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim's National Book Award-winning *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976) examines the characteristics of the classic fairy tale and the importance of such stories in society.

George Orwell's essays, especially "Why I Write" (1947) and "Politics and the English Language" (1946), in which the author explains his dire need to express himself in words and how politicians and others misuse them, ending with a list of six principles for good writing.

Orwell's 1949 look at a terrifying future world dominated by a totalitarian state, *1984*, which added to the English language such catchwords as "Big Brother," "doublespeak," and "Orwellian."

Jonathan Swift's satirical *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), especially the fourth voyage which takes Gulliver to Houyhnhnmmland, a country inhabited by a race of horses and a human-like inferior race called the Yahooos.

Analysis: For Further Reference


Quotes in Context: "All Animals Are Equal, But Some Animals Are More Equal Than Others"

Context: Through allegorical means Animal Farm presents a scathing satire on government. The events of the story, though particularly referring to the French Revolution, suggest elements of almost all totalitarian governments. The animals of Manor Farm, feeling suppressed by the tyrannical master, Mr. Jones, rebel and set up their own government. They develop a constitution, consisting of seven commandments written on the barn wall, by which their government is to function. The pigs become the natural leaders, the animal state establishes its position in the community, several wars are waged, and the animals become adjusted to a new life. However, a transformation takes place; ideals are rationalized away; group welfare is sacrificed to individual ambitions. Kept in ignorance, deceived and exploited, the common animals are reduced to a state of misery and permissive slavery. As the principles of government change, the commandments are conveniently altered to accommodate the will of the leaders. To the commandment, "no animal shall sleep in a bed," for instance, is added the words, "with sheets." Finally the commandments are reduced to only one, it also having been altered:

There was nothing there now except a single Commandment. It ran: ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

Character and Theme Quotes: Essential Quotes by Character: Napoleon

Essential Passage 1: Chapter 5

Napoleon, with the dogs following him, now mounted on to the raised portion of the floor where Major had previously stood to deliver his speech. He announced that from now on the Sunday-morning Meetings would come to an end. They were unnecessary, he said, and wasted time. In future all questions relating to the working of the farm would be settled by a special committee of pigs, presided over by himself. These would meet in private and afterwards communicate their decisions to the others. The animals would still assemble on Sunday mornings to salute the flag, sing “Beast of England,” and receive their orders for the week; but there would be no more debates.

Summary

Napoleon, assisted by Snowball, had led the animals in revolution against humans, gaining control of the farm. Based on the equality of all animals, the leadership has, however, been retained by the pigs, most notably Napoleon. Though Snowball has fought valiantly and supplied much of the plans for the success of Animal Farm, Napoleon has seized complete control, driving Snowball from the farm, and has begun the process of villainizing him. While the animals have held Snowball to be a hero, Napoleon (through Squealer) begins to paint him as a traitor. Flanked by his specially trained guard dogs, Napoleon presents the new order of things to the other animals. There will be no more meetings in which all animals have a voice. Decisions will be formed by a committee, ruled over by Napoleon. These meetings will be held in secret, with the decisions presented to the animals by Squealer, the voice of the revolution. Only the minimal, superficial rites of the rebellion are kept in place for the moment.

Essential Passage 2: Chapter 8

All orders were now issued through Squealer or one of the other pigs. Napoleon himself was not seen in public as often as once in a fortnight. When he did appear, he was attended not
only by his retinue of dogs but by a black cockerel who marched in front of him and acted as a kind of trumpeter, letting out a loud “cock-a-doodle-doo” before Napoleon spoke. Even in the farmhouse, it was said, Napoleon inhabited separate apartments from the others. He took his meals alone, with two dogs to wait upon him, and always ate from the Crown Derby dinner service which had been in the glass cupboard in the drawing-room. It was also announced that the gun would be fired every year on Napoleon’s birthday, as well as on the other two anniversaries.

Summary
Things have changed on Animal Farm, with many of the Seven Commandments having been “revised.” Despite the injunction that “No animal shall kill any other animal,” there has been a purge in which several animals were killed, having been suspected of conspiring with the exiled Snowball. The animals continue to work hard, with Squealer reading off the production reports weekly, indicating that they are succeeding more than when the farm was controlled by humans. As no one can remember, or was aware, of what the production totals were with the farm belonged to Mr. Jones, they accede to these numbers. In the meantime, Napoleon becomes to retreat from the common populace. When he does appear, he is flanked by his dog body guard, along with the rooster who announces his speeches so that all animals can attend. Living apart, he has taken over the luxurious living of the humans, eating from fine china. He has also elevated himself to public adulation by having his birthday celebrated with great fanfare.

Essential Passage 3: Chapter 9

There were many more mouths to feed now. In the autumn the four sows had all littered about simultaneously, producing thirty-one young pigs between them. The young pigs were piebald, and as Napoleon was the only boar in the farm, it was possible to guess at their parentage. It was announced that later, when bricks and timber had been purchased, a schoolroom would be built in the farmhouse garden. For the time being, the young pigs were given their instruction by Napoleon himself in the farmhouse kitchen. They took their exercise in the garden, and were discouraged from playing with the other young animals. About this time, too, it was laid down as a rule that when a pig and any other animal met on the path, the other animal must stand aside: and also that all pigs, of whatever degree, were to have the privilege of wearing green ribbons on their tails on Sundays.

Summary
The farm is deemed a success, though the winter is hard, the animals go hungry (except for the pigs), and food becomes rationed. As the year progresses, however, only the weather improves. The population increases, and mostly it is in pigs, the offspring of Napoleon. As pigs were treated more favorably than the other animals on the farm, Napoleon’s children are treated even better. He personally supervises their education, and makes the building of a school (for his children only) a priority. The piglets are kept separate from the other animals, enforcing the new elitism that continues to grow. Animals are now subservient to the pigs, and must give way to them as to a higher being. It is only pigs who are allowed to wear ribbon decorations, something that Mollie the cart horse had wished for strongly but had been denied as being contrary to the revolution. Napoleon has at last succeeded in making himself that against which they had rebelled.

Analysis of Essential Passages
Napoleon represents Joseph Stalin, the Communist dictator of the Soviet Union in the early part of the USSR after the Russian Revolution. With Trotsky, he set up the communist government as a replacement for the corrupt tsarist monarchy. With control supposedly given to the people (namely the workers), communism was hailed as to be the new Enlightenment, with Stalin as its leader. However, from the very first, Stalin proceeded to merely replace the tsar’s tyranny with his own. In the same way Napoleon elevates himself throughout the novel so that he eventually becomes the same as Mr. Jones, the farmer they had driven out.
Napoleon, along with Snowball, developed the principles of Animalism, in which all that was human was evil, and all that was animal was good. The strict regulations against animals taking on any of the characteristics and practices of the humans were designed to increase productivity, security, and happiness for all animals. Initially, this success was achieved, but eventually it came at a price.

As Stalin drove out Trotsky, Napoleon drives out Snowball and begins to revise history as to Snowball’s contributions. As Orwell has pointed out elsewhere in his other novel 1984, he who controls the past controls the future. With such revisionism Napoleon convinces the animals that he alone is the creator of Animal Farm. In this role, he begins to acquire those luxuries that he had previously condemned as inconsistent with the Rebellion, such as stealing the milk and apples that had been available to all. Bit by bit, he eliminates those aspects of the Rebellion that had given the animals a voice in their welfare (such as the Sunday meetings), which were the foundation of the Revolutions to begin with.

With the training of the puppies to be his guard (similar to the Stalinist Secret Police), Napoleon has set himself apart from the day-to-day dealings of Animal Farm. While he requires its bounty, he contributes nothing to its production. Though the initial premise was that all animals are equal, Napoleon has placed himself on a pedestal, having his speeches preceded by the “announcements” by the cockerel. His self-importance stretches even to the use of the fine china that Mr. Jones had left behind. As Stalin began to live in the manner of the tsar, so Napoleon begins to live in the manner of the formerly hated humans.

As Napoleon enlarges his family, so he enlarges the privileged class. Though the Rebellion had intended to strike against the elite and classicism of the reign of the humans, he simply denies it to the other animals and reserves it for himself and his children. As the Soviet party members were the new aristocracy that replaced the old in Russia, so Napoleon’s family replaces the privilege that the humans enjoyed at the expense of the animals. Thus Napoleon betrays the very revolution he started by becoming that against which he rebelled. He has become what he hated. Eventually, going beyond the mere revision of the Seven Commandments to justify his desires, he abandons them totally. He moves into Jones’ house, uses the human luxuries, begins to walk on two legs, wear clothes, and in effect becomes human. He begins to make deals with the humans, especially Pilkington (who represents Great Britain). Though they have agreed to live in harmony and even cooperate, there is still mutual distrust, as is evidenced by both trying to cheat at cards. In the end, the animals cannot tell the difference between man and pig. Both have been sublimated into each other.

Character and Theme Quotes: Essential Quotes by Theme: Propaganda

Essential Passage 1: Chapter 1

“Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: our lives are miserable, laborious, and short. We are born, we are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies, and those of us who are capable of it are forced to work to the last atom of our strength; and the very instant that our usefulness has come to an end we are slaughtered with hideous cruelty. 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 an animal is misery and slavery: that is the plain truth.”

Summary
Old Major, the oldest boar on Manor Farm, has called all the animals together after Mr. Jones once again neglected their welfare due to his love of drinking. As the disparate group of animals gathers in the barn, Old Major stands upon the platform to address them. Speaking of his dream of liberty for animals, Old Major endeavors to inspire his fellow creatures to fight for their freedom from humans. The land is good, they are all
excellent workers, and all conditions are ripe for fruitfulness and happiness. But because of the tyranny and neglect of humans, animals must suffer. Old Major points out the blunt facts of their existence. Though they receive sustenance, it is only enough for survival. They are worked to the point of death, and when they are no longer able to give anything more, they are put to death.

Essential Passage 2: Chapter 9

Reading out the figures in a shrill, rapid voice, he [Squealer] proved to them in detail that they had more oats, more hay, more turnips than they had had in Jones’s day, that they worked shorter hours, that their drinking water was of better quality, that they lived longer, that a larger proportion of their young ones survived infancy, and that they had more straw in their stalls and suffered less from fleas. The animals believed every word of it. Truth to tell, Jones and all he stood for had almost faded out of their memories. They knew that life nowadays was harsh and bare, that they were often hungry and often cold, and that they were usually working when they were not asleep. But doubtless it had been worse in the old days. They were glad to believe it so. Besides, in those days they had been slaves and now they were free, and that made all the difference, as Squealer did not fail to point out.

Summary
After the Battle of the Windmill, when the animals “successfully” prevented the humans from conquered the farm (and despite the destruction of the windmill), conditions continue to slide downhill for the animals. Though animals such as Boxer have labored hard and long for Animal Farm, their lives are continually plagued by hunger and, as winter sets in, cold. Yet they labor on. Squealer, as the voice of Napoleon, reads off the statistics that “prove” that their lives have indeed improved. Despite evidence to the contrary, the animals believe the statistics, for statistics do not lie. The tyranny of the humans under Mr. Jones has faded, and they know only the present. They are told that conditions had been worse, but they do not stop to question exactly how.

Essential Passage 3: Chapter 10

There was a deadly silence. Amazed, terrified, huddling together, the animals watched the long line of pigs march slowly round the yard. It was as though the world had turned upside-down. Then there came a moment when the first shock had worn off and when, in spite of everything—in spite of their terror of the dogs, and of the habit, developed through long years, of never complaining, never criticising, no matter what happened—they might have uttered some word of protest. But just at that moment, as though at a signal, all the sheep burst out into a tremendous bleating of—

“Four legs good, two legs better! Four legs good, two legs better! For legs good, two legs better!”

Summary
After many years, the farm has never looked better. Crops are good, and the land is doing well. The living condition of the animals, however, still is hard. Yet they are reassured over and over that production is much improved under animals than under humans. The pigs are the only ones, it is evident, whose lives have any form of comfort and sufficiency. They have long lived in the farmhouse and slept in beds (the rule against doing so having been revised to mean that sleeping in beds with sheets is the restriction, not the beds themselves). The elitism of the pigs is evident to all and widely accepted as necessary if they are to lead effectively. But one summer day, the other animals are shocked when Squealer, followed soon by the other pigs, appears in the farmyard walking on two legs. The Animalist motto, “Four legs good, two legs bad,” obviously is not going to work anymore. Without Squealer revising the rule for them, the sheep (and soon the
other animals) revise the rule for themselves to match their new reality.

**Analysis of Essential Passages**
The use of propaganda in *Animal Farm* shows the slow progression by which the innocent citizens of a community are gradually duped into submission. From the revolutionary ideas of Old Major to the self-delusion of the sheep, Orwell demonstrates the path that totalitarian governments take in convincing their people that “Freedom is Slavery,” as Orwell states it in *1984*. The willing collusion of the animals into compliance leads them into the slavery that they rebelled against earlier.

Old Major, the acknowledged wise leader of the barnyard, inspires the animals with dreams of freedom. Rather than using heavily charged, emotion-laden words, he states the simple facts of their lives. They are hungry. They are worked hard. They are subjected to cruelty. No one is free. All are subject to the whims of humans. Old Major has appealed to the facts more than the emotions. He has placed his philosophy on the foundation of reason and observable proof. The situation is clearly black and white, slavery versus freedom, cruelty versus kindness. By the simplicity of his rhetoric, Old Major has convinced his fellow creatures of the sorry nature of existence. He points the blame where it justly belongs, and he prophesies a day when animals shall live in peace and happiness.

The use of heavy-handed propaganda will be left to Napoleon, Old Major’s successor and the implementer of his philosophy. Napoleon has wisely codified the philosophy in the form of the Seven Commandments, simple statements of observable regulations. Easy to understand, they can be learned by the slowest mind. And yet Napoleon, as time goes on, begins to bend the philosophy to his own benefit, resulting in the concentration of power in his own hands (or hooves, rather). To do so, the rules must be “revised,” thus beginning the progress of propaganda to convince the animals of the fact that “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.” The brainwashing begins as each successive commandment must be rewritten to allow for “exceptions” to justify the past actions of Napoleon. Napoleon wants to sleep in a bed, so the rule must be modified to mean “beds with sheets.” Napoleon gets drunk, and he thus must revise the rule to mean no drinking alcohol “to excess.”

Through ignorance and an inability to reason, the animals fall for the propagandistic messages, thus giving up more and more of their freedom. The power of Napoleon’s words belies the fact of the animals’ meager existence. They are cold and hungry, but they are “free.” They do not even realize that they are still slaves: the master now is merely different.

The final triumph of the propagandistic machine is when it no longer needs to exist, when citizens themselves “revise” the regulations and their reality to coincide with the teaching of the rulers. As the sheep now proclaim that “two legs are better,” so the victory of tyranny is complete.

The ultimate tool of tyranny, as Orwell shows in both *Animal Farm* and *1984*, is not military might but propaganda. Armies can kill, but they cannot convince. Combatants may threaten lives, but they cannot thrive in the hearts of the opposition. The real battlefield is not on the scorched earth of the enemy but in the minds of the people.

**Teaching Guide: Introduction**

So you’re going to teach George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Whether it’s your first or hundredth time, this classic text has been a mainstay of English classrooms for generations. While it has its challenging spots, teaching this text to your class will be rewarding for you and your students. It will give them unique insight into revolutionary politics, social hierarchies, and the nature of power, as well as promote discussion of the roles that education, free speech, and civic participation play in preventing tyranny.
Facts at a Glance

- Publication Date: 1945
- Author: George Orwell
- Country of Origin: Great Britain
- Genre: Allegory, Fable
- Literary Period: Modernism
- Conflict: Person vs. Person, Person vs. Society
- Narration: Third-Person Omniscient
- Setting: A country farm in England, the first half of the 20th century.
- Literary Devices: Characterization, Personification
- Tone: Objective, Cynical, Grim

Teaching Guide: Key Plot Points

**Revolutionary Ideas Spread (Chapter I):** Old Major, a senior pig on Manor Farm, calls all the animals together to share a vision he’s had in a dream. In his dream, animals govern themselves, freed from the burdens of their human overlords who reap the products of animal labor without ever working themselves. Inspired to take control of their lives and the farm, the animals sing their new anthem, “Beasts of England,” in chorus.

**The Animals Revolt (Chapter II):** Upon Old Major’s death, the other pigs on the farm name the ideology he put forward: Animalism. When Mr. Jones, the owner of Manor Farm, forgets to feed the animals, the animals break into the store-shed to feed themselves. Mr. Jones and his men try to take control of the animals and the animals attack, running the humans off the farm. The animals rename the farm “Animal Farm” and write the Seven Commandments of Animalism on the barn for all to see.

**The Pigs Claim Milk and Apples for Themselves (Chapter III):** The animals cooperate to keep Animal Farm running and collectivize their resources. The pigs argue that they are owed all the milk and apples the farm produces, saying that they are completing the challenging mental rigors of running the farm and need the additional nutrition. Convinced, the animals vote in favor of this arrangement.

**The Battle with the Neighbors (Chapter IV):** Neighboring human farmers Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick learn about the revolution on Animal Farm and fear that the revolution will spread to their animals. The neighbors attack, and a battle ensues. Snowball, one of the most tactically minded pigs on the farm, leads the animals in battle and awards himself the prize “Animal Hero, First Class.”

**Napoleon Exiles Snowball (Chapter V):** Conflict brews between Snowball and another large, dominant pig on the farm, Napoleon. The two argue about whether or not the animals should build a windmill. While Napoleon initially rejects the idea, Snowball persuades the others with an eloquent speech. Before an official vote can take place, Napoleon has his dogs run Snowball off the farm. With Snowball gone, Napoleon takes credit for planning the windmill.

**Life Under Napoleon (Chapter VI):** Napoleon works the animals at a gruelling pace in order to build the windmill and keep themselves fed. Some of the animals start to notice that the pigs are breaking some of the early tenets of Animalism, such as sleeping in beds. Napoleon blames any problems that arise on the farm, such as the wind that knocks over the burgeoning windmill, on Snowball. Some animals notice that the Seven Commandments of Animalism are not written exactly as they remember.
Slaughter in the Yard (Chapter VII): A brutal winter causes famine on the farm, and rebellion develops when the hens learn their eggs will be confiscated by the pigs. Napoleon uses his dogs to starve the hens, and nine die. When Napoleon calls a meeting saying that he knows there have been animals on the farm maintaining an alliance with Snowball, some animals come forward and confess. Napoleon has the confessors slaughtered by his dogs.

Cheated by the Neighbors (Chapter VIII): As shortages on Animal Farm continue, Napoleon decides to trade with the neighbors. Refusing to accept a check from Mr. Pilkington, the animals accept cash from Mr. Frederick, only to find out after the transaction that the cash is fake. The humans attack again, using dynamite to destroy the windmill the animals were rebuilding. The animals attack the humans and successfully drive them away. The pigs claim victory, but the other animals only see the loss of life and the windmill. The pigs celebrate by wearing human clothes and drinking alcohol. Muriel later observes that the animals must have remembered the Fifth Commandment of Animalism incorrectly, for it now reads "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess."

Boxer Is Sent to the Glue Factory (Chapter IX): Since the revolution, the most reliable and hardest working animal on the farm has been Boxer, a large and powerful horse. Now, years after the revolution, Boxer is in decline and looking forward to retirement on the farm. Instead, the pigs arrange to sell him to a local slaughterer and glue producer. The other animals read the letters on the slaughterer’s carriage too late, and Boxer fails to escape. Squealer and Napoleon persuade the animals that Boxer went to a hospital but died despite the doctor's best efforts. The animals learn that the pigs have somehow acquired money to buy whiskey.

Some Animals Are More Equal Than Others (Chapter X): Years pass and the farm continues to change. The animals are shocked to see Squealer, then other pigs, walk on two legs. As supplies on the farm continue to be depleted, Napoleon and the pigs argue that their survival necessitates an alliance with the nearby farms owned by humans. Clover has Benjamin read her the commandments, but only one remains: All Animals Are Equal But Some Animals Are More Equal Than Others. In the end, the pigs change the farm’s name back to Manor Farm, wear clothes, walk on two feet, and cavort alongside the human owners of neighboring farms. The animals can no longer tell the difference between the humans and the pigs.

Teaching Guide: Historical Context

Animal Farm’s Publication History and Reception: Though Animal Farm enacts the events of the Russian Revolution, George Orwell was prompted to write and publish Animal Farm in response to concerns he had about censorship within the British media during the 1940s. Though critical of Lenin and Stalin in the 1920s and 1930s, Great Britain allied with Stalin’s Soviet Union in the latter half of World War II. To garner public support for this alliance, the media began to censor anti-Stalin and anti-Soviet publications. In his proposed preface to Animal Farm, Orwell describes the British press as

“extremely centralized, and most of it is owned by wealthy men who have every motive to be dishonest on certain important topics . . . At this moment what is demanded by the prevailing orthodoxy is an uncritical admiration of Soviet Russia.”

Orwell wrote Animal Farm in order to convey the nature of the Russian Revolution and Stalin’s Soviet regime to the people of Great Britain and the Western world at large. Rejected by four separate publishers, among them T. S. Eliot at Faber and Faber, Animal Farm was eventually published on August 17, 1945.

- Animal Farm was an immediate success. Popularized by favorable critical reviews in the US, Animal Farm quickly become a radio play, a printed cartoon, an animated film, and a mainstay in educational
curricula. By 1950, when Orwell died, 25,500 copies had been issued in Britain and 590,000 copies had been issued in the US. Since publication, *Animal Farm* has been translated into all major European languages, as well as Farsi, Telugu, Icelandic, Ukrainian, and other languages across Asia. Many cite the novel as having inspired refugees and resistors of totalitarian regimes over the course of the twentieth century.

**Animal Farm as an Allegory of the Russian Revolution:** In 1917—the midst of World War I—Russia was in a particular state of crisis. Though a nation of 157 million and rich in metal ores, it had struggled to industrialize the way other European countries had in the previous decades. As a result, soldiers were sent to the front without proper equipment. As casualties mounted, poor working conditions, low wages, and food shortages intensified unrest in the cities. In February, a popular revolution forced Czar Nicholas II to abdicate. Power was shared between the bureaucrats who had formed his government and representatives from councils of working-class interest groups. By October, continued frustration within the working class caused another violent revolt, this time led by Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik party. After years of civil war, the nation coalesced into the Soviet Union in 1922, with Lenin at its head. With the support of other Bolsheviks, including Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin, Lenin worked to enact an economic policy similar to that described by Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto*. Upon Lenin’s death in 1924, Stalin began to consolidate power and eventually had Trotsky exiled in 1928. Stalin ruled the Soviet Union as a dictator until his death in 1953.

“Every line I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism,” wrote Orwell in the summer of 1946. A journalist, theorist and self-identified democratic socialist, Orwell fought with the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War alongside other left-wing groups, among them the Communists and Spanish Trotskyists. When the Communists gained partial control of the Spanish government in 1937, Orwell witnessed the ruthlessness with which they attacked other left-wing groups that might pose a threat to their power. Never having stepped foot within Russian territory, Orwell wrote *Animal Farm* as a satirical allegory, illustrating the means through which a dictator can rise to tyrannical, totalitarian power.

**Teaching Guide: Teaching Approaches**

**Analyzing Characterization for Social Themes:** When Orwell subtitled the novella “a fairy story,” he did so not because the text contains unreal creatures or magical events, but because of the flat, stereotypical characters within. The text captures the complexities of the Russian Revolution in storybook characters whose actions and motivations can be understood by readers who otherwise lack specific knowledge about that period’s history. Taking as his inspiration the simplicity and clarity of Aesop’s fables, Orwell communicates the dangers of the rise of a totalitarian dictator from the midst of a social revolution to the masses.

- *For discussion:* Have students compare and contrast Boxer and Napoleon as character foils. What are their different motivations, means, and ends? What does each character reveal about the role of the individual in society?
- *For discussion:* Extend this line of questioning to secondary characters, such as Mollie, Old Major, Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick.
- *For discussion:* Ask students to brainstorm other historical examples that fit the characters in the book. Do the themes that they have drawn from the text apply to these other examples?

**Rhetoric and the Role of Propaganda:** One of *Animal Farm*’s frequent accolades is that it distills many years of socio-historic understanding into an easy-to-understand fable. From Old Major’s speech through Napoleon’s ascension to power, students can trace the tools modern tyrannies use to control populations. Of these tools, the most notable is the use of propaganda: biased, incorrect, or incomplete information disseminated with a specific end in mind. Through the intellectual gradient that exists among the animals, the
pigs manipulate the shared history of the animal revolution for their own ends. In reading Animal Farm, students have the opportunity to study the rhetoric the pigs use to take power and the rhetoric Orwell uses to criticize the abuses of a totalitarian government.

- For discussion: As students read, have them examine the scenes in which the pigs give the other animals new information about the revolution. What rhetorical devices do Squealer, Napoleon, and the pigs use to manipulate the animals to act against their best interest? What information do they add? How does this new information affect the other animals?

- For discussion: How do the animals, other than the pigs, share information among themselves? Who do they consider credible or unreliable? Why?

- For discussion: Ask students to consider the moral complexity of Squealer’s character. To what extent is he at fault for Napoleon’s rise to power? Is he culpable for the failure of the revolution, or is he justified in acting in his own self-interest?

- For discussion: Engage students in a close reading of chapter VII, particularly the scene in which many animals confess to acting against Animal Farm and are slaughtered. Are these confessions authentic? Are they lies? Are these animals being coerced into confession? How can students tell the difference? To what extent does the truth of these confessions matter?

- For discussion: Some have argued that Animal Farm itself is an example of anti-communist propaganda. Invite students to share the extent to which they agree or disagree with this view and why.

- For discussion: What could the animals have done to have preserved the events of the revolution with greater verisimilitude? Invite students to give advice to the animals. Further, consider recording a memorable class event, challenging students to try to remember the event during the following class session accurately. Then, compare the class’ memory with the recording.

Self-Interest and Social Order: After the revolution on Manor Farm, the animals are united in organizing their farm around new principles and divide resources equally amongst themselves. As Napoleon manipulates the tenets of their new social order for his own gain, many characters exhibit a willingness to act against their own best interests: Boxer works himself into exhaustion; the sheep overpower meaningful discussion among the animals; the farm animals labor on in the hope of arriving one day at Sugarcandy Mountain, without any evidence of its existence. Though the novel reveals the ease with which the informed can manipulate the ignorant, it also reveals the complex matrix of choices involved in group living.

- For discussion: Which animals in the text are selfish? Which animals are willing to make sacrifices for others? Which animals seem indifferent to the success of Animal Farm? Why?

- For discussion: Consider the animals that are willing to make sacrifices for others. What motivates them to act against their own self-interest? What benefits do they gain from helping others? Are the benefits worth the sacrifice?

- For discussion: Many of the animals make sacrifices for the farm knowing that they will be allowed to retire to a pasture when they are older. How does the return of Moses the raven complicate their sacrifices? How does the promise of retirement compare to that of Sugarcandy Mountain?

Teaching Approaches: Tricky Issues to Address

The Personified Animals Seem Childish: Many students will be familiar with personified animals though children’s stories and films. Some may roll their eyes when asked to read a similar story in high school.

- What to do: Remind students that there is a reason fables are effective instructional stories for young children. By reducing complex relationships to symbolic animals, those relationships become much easier to understand. Ask them to share with a partner or the class stories they experienced as children
that were instructional. Use this discussion as an opportunity to discuss the value of fables.

• **What to do:** Invite students to read the first two paragraphs before you introduce the text. When students read that Mr. Jones “was too drunk to remember to shut the pop-holes,” most students will be convinced that they aren’t reading a children’s story.

• **What to do:** Provide students with the historical context surrounding the Russian revolution, the rise of Hitler’s Nazi party, or other examples of dictators who gain power to rule over a country. With this context in mind, tell students that Orwell uses personified animals in the context of a fable to make these historical examples more accessible to readers.

**The Story Is Moralistic:** Though *Animal Farm* is a work of fiction, Orwell had specific intentions in writing it and crafted the story from a known historical antecedent, the Russian Revolution. This can lead many students to think it is a closed text—in other words, not open for interpretation.

• **What to do:** Invite students to consider the motivations of different characters over the course of the text. Though the novel conveys a clear warning against tyranny, by comparing and contrasting the motivations of different characters, students can explore the complex choices made by individuals that culminate in tyranny.

• **What to do:** Invite students to compare the novel to historical examples other than the Russian Revolution, evaluating whether or not *Animal Farm* accurately represents the relevant events. With myriad examples at hand, students can assess the universality of the themes in the text.

**The Main Characters Are All Male:** Despite the critical role that women played in instigating and defending the Russian Revolution, the key actors in *Animal Farm* are all male. Further, the notable female characters in the text that receive the most narrative attention, Clover and Mollie, draw on stereotypes that characterize women as passive and vain, respectively.

• **What to do:** Compare Clover and Mollie. As the two female characters who receive the most attention in the story, how are they alike? How are they different? Is there evidence to suggest that either one is empowered? Why or why not?

• **What to do:** Invite students to research and discuss the role women played in World War I and the Russian Revolution. Introduce students to figures such as Maria Bochkareva, who enlisted in World War I and led battalions of women into the fray. Remind students that it was the tens of thousands of women who gathered for Women’s Day Protests in March of 1917 that lead to the overthrow of the czar.

• **What to do:** Study the behavior of the hens. Does their femininity affect their experiences on Animal Farm? How? How do their actions compare to those of Clover or Mollie?

**The Text Conveys a Grim View of Social Order:** Students will likely be quick to point out the dark, even hopeless tone of the story, embodied by Benjamin’s wisdom: “... life would go on as it had always gone on—that is, badly.” For some, Orwell’s *Animal Farm* suggests that average citizens don’t have the intellect to protect themselves from an oppressive government and that revolutions fought to ensure social equality inevitably result in violent dictatorship.

• **What to do:** Ask students to consider the extent to which humans are necessarily a hierarchical species. Must there be a lowest rung on the social ladder? In the text, what characteristics put an individual on the bottom? Compare the text to social orders students are familiar with, within their school community or society at large.

**What to do:** Remind students that just because *Animal Farm* illustrates a threatening social order doesn’t mean that it is the only social order available. Invite students to consider what the animals could have done to prevent Napoleon’s rise to power, or ask students to think creatively about alternate sequences of events and
**Short-Answer Quizzes: Chapter I Questions and Answers**

**Quiz Questions**

1. Where do the animals live?
2. Who owns the farm?
3. Who is Old Major?
4. What is Old Major’s dream?
5. How is life bad for the animals on the farm?
6. What does Old Major suggest that the animals do?
7. What is “Beasts of England”?
8. What sets the pigs apart from the other animals?
9. What decision is reached about wild animals?
10. What does Old Major caution the animals against doing if they successfully overthrow man?

**Quiz Answers**

1. The animals live on Manor Farm in England.
2. The owner of Manor Farm is Mr. Jones.
3. Old Major is Mr. Jones’s old white prize boar. He is highly respected by the other animals.
4. Old Major has a dream about a world where man has disappeared.
5. Mr. Jones works the animals hard and steals the products of their labor until they eventually die at his hand.
6. Old Major suggests that one day animals must rebel against their human masters.
7. “Beasts of England” is a song that Old Major learned in childhood. The other animals pick it up quickly.
8. The pigs are the most intelligent of the farm animals and sit in the front of the audience.
9. The animals vote that wild animals should be considered “comrades.”
10. Old Major warns the animals not to adopt the habits of man and lists seven specific things they must not do.

**Short-Answer Quizzes: Chapter II Questions and Answers**

**Quiz Questions**

1. What happens to Old Major?
2. Who leads the preparations for the rebellion?
3. Who is Squealer?
4. What is Animalism?
5. Why don’t the pigs like Moses?
6. Why does Mollie seem concerned about Animalism?
7. What prompts the rebellion?
8. What have the pigs secretly learned to do?
9. What are the Seven Commandments?
10. What happens to the milk from the cows?

**Quiz Answers**
1. Old Major dies three days after his speech.
2. The pigs—especially Napoleon and Snowball—lead the farm in preparing for the rebellion.
3. Squealer is a very persuasive pig.
4. Animalism is a theory that the pigs derive from Old Major’s speech.
5. The pigs don’t like Moses because his talk of Sugarcandy Mountain distracts the animals from the need for rebellion.
6. Mollie is concerned that she won’t get to wear hair ribbons or enjoy lump sugar after the rebellion.
7. Farmer Jones starts drinking more and neglects to feed the animals for over twenty-four hours.
8. The pigs reveal that they have taught themselves to read and write.
9. The Seven Commandments are:
10. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.
11. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.
12. No animal shall wear clothes.
13. No animal shall sleep in a bed.
14. No animal shall drink alcohol.
15. No animal shall kill any other animal.
16. All animals are equal.
17. It is implied that Napoleon stole the milk.

Short-Answer Quizzes: Chapter III Questions and Answers

Quiz Questions

1. What is different about this year’s harvest?
2. What does Boxer adopt as his motto?
3. What do the animals do on Sundays?
4. Do Snowball and Napoleon get along?
5. Why don’t any animals except pigs submit resolutions for debate?
6. What does Snowball want to focus on at the farm?
7. What does Napoleon want to focus on?
8. What happens to Jessie’s and Bluebell’s puppies?
9. What has been happening to the milk?
10. What does Squealer explain about the milk and apples?

Quiz Answers

1. This year the animals have the largest harvest yet, and they also finish it faster than normal.
2. Boxer adopts “I will work harder!” as his personal motto.
3. On Sundays, the animals don’t work and instead hold farm-wide meetings to debate and vote on new resolutions.
4. Snowball and Napoleon disagree on almost everything.
5. Only the pigs are smart enough to come up with new resolutions.
6. Snowball wants to focus on educating the animals and putting them into committees.
7. Napoleon thinks the pigs should focus on the education of the young.
8. Napoleon takes Jessie’s and Bluebell’s puppies up to a secret loft, and everyone soon forgets about them.
9. It is revealed that the milk is being mixed in with the pigs’ mash.
10. Squealer explains that the pigs need the vitamins in the milk and apples to continue being the brainworkers of the farm.
Short-Answer Quizzes: Chapter IV Questions and Answers

Quiz Questions

1. How do Snowball and Napoleon send word of the rebellion to other animals?
2. Who is Mr. Pilkington?
3. Who is Mr. Frederick?
4. What rumors spread about Animal Farm?
5. What has Snowball been doing to prepare for Jones’s return?
6. How is Snowball injured?
7. Why is Boxer upset after the battle?
8. Where was Mollie during the battle?
9. What do the animals name the battle?
10. What awards do the animals create?

Quiz Answers

1. Snowball and Napoleon send out pigeons to other farms to try to encourage further rebellion.
2. Mr. Pilkington is an easygoing farmer who owns neighboring Foxwood Farm.
3. Mr. Frederick is the owner of Pinchfield Farm and is known for being tough and shrewd.
4. Rumors spread among the humans that the animals on Animal Farm are starving and practicing cannibalism and torture.
5. Snowball has been studying the battle tactics of Julius Caesar to prepare to fight off Jones.
6. Snowball is injured when a shot grazes his back as he charges Mr. Jones.
7. Boxer kicks a young farmhand in the head and stuns him. Thinking that he killed the boy, Boxer feels extremely guilty.
8. Mollie fled when she heard the guns go off and was found hiding in the barn.
9. The battle is named the “Battle of Cowshed.”
10. The animals create “Animal Hero, First Class” and “Animal Hero, Second Class.”

Short-Answer Quizzes: Chapter V Questions and Answers

Quiz Questions

1. What does Clover see Mollie doing?
2. What happens to Mollie?
3. What has changed about Sunday meetings?
4. How are Napoleon and Snowball different?
5. What is Snowball’s big idea?
6. Why does Napoleon oppose the windmill?
7. What happens when Napoleon gives a whimper?
8. How does Squealer justify Napoleon’s behavior?
9. What new maxim does Boxer adopt?
10. What does Napoleon decide about the windmill?

Quiz Answers

1. Clover sees Mollie allowing a farmhand to pet her nose over the hedge.
2. Mollie eventually runs away and is taken in by a pub owner who spoils her with ribbons and sugar.
3. The animals now accept that only pigs can suggest resolutions at the meetings, though all the animals get to vote on them.
4. Snowball is a very effective orator, while Napoleon is better at gaining support behind the scenes.
5. Snowball wants to build a windmill to supply electricity to the farm.
6. Napoleon claims that if the animals focus on building the windmill, they will all starve to death.
7. When Napoleon gives his signal, nine ferocious dogs appear and chase Snowball away from the farm.
8. Squealer claims that Napoleon is being selfless by taking on the burden of leadership.
9. Boxer begins to say “Napoleon is always right” in addition to “I will work harder!”
10. After taking power, Napoleon changes his mind and supports the windmill, claiming that it was originally his idea.

Short-Answer Quizzes: Chapter VI Questions and Answers

Quiz Questions

1. Why is it hard to build the windmill?
2. What does Napoleon propose to do to deal with the shortages on the farm?
3. Who is Mr. Whymper?
4. What happens to the commandment against trade?
5. What does Squealer threaten might happen if the pigs are not allowed to get rest?
6. Where do the pigs move to?
7. What happens to the commandment against sleeping in a bed?
8. What happens to the windmill when it is half finished?
9. What is responsible for the destruction of the windmill, according to Napoleon?
10. What evidence do the pigs provide to show that the windmill was deliberately sabotaged?

Quiz Answers

1. The stones for the windmill are far away and must first be dropped off a cliff and broken into manageable pieces.
2. Napoleon announces that he will sell some of the farm’s seasoned timber and possibly some eggs.
3. Mr. Whymper is hired as Napoleon’s human contact for his business with other farms.
4. Squealer makes the animals believe that there was never a written prohibition against trade.
5. Squealer suggests that Mr. Jones might return if the pigs are not kept well rested.
6. The pigs move in to the farmhouse.
7. The commandment against sleeping in a bed is modified to prohibit “sleeping in a bed with sheets,” though the pigs pretend it always said that.
8. The windmill falls over in a windstorm.
9. Napoleon blames the windmill’s failure on Snowball and accuses him of secretly returning to destroy it.
10. The pigs “discover” the tracks of a pig near the ruined windmill and declare that this is proof of Snowball’s involvement.

Short-Answer Quizzes: Chapter VII Questions and Answers

Quiz Questions

1. What “rumors” are spread about the windmill?
2. How is the new windmill constructed differently?
3. What happens when Mr. Whymper comes to visit?
4. Why do the hens rebel?
5. Why do the hens relent?
6. What does Squealer announce about the Battle of Cowshed?
7. What happens at the meeting in the yard?
8. What happens when the dogs try to grab Boxer?
9. What do the animals do after the meeting in the yard?
10. Why does Squealer say “Beasts of England” has been outlawed?

Quiz Answers

1. It is rumored that the windmill’s walls were too thin, which is why it was knocked over during the windstorm.
2. The new windmill has walls that are three feet thick.
3. Whenever Mr. Whymper comes to visit, the animals are instructed to loudly lie about ration increases, and the empty barrels of food are made to appear full.
4. The hens rebel because Napoleon announces that he will be selling their eggs.
5. The hens relent after Napoleon stops their rations and nine hens die.
6. Squealer announces that Snowball was actually in league with Mr. Jones during the Battle of Cowshed.
7. During the meeting, several animals come forward and confess to traitorous acts, for which they are then executed.
8. When the dogs attack Boxer, he easily defends himself and pins one of them down until Napoleon tells him to release him.
9. After the meeting in the yard, the animals huddle together and sadly sing “Beasts of England.”
10. Squealer claims that “Beasts of England” is a revolutionary song that is no longer needed since the revolution is complete.

Short-Answer Quizzes: Chapter VIII Questions and Answers

Quiz Questions

1. What happens to the commandment about killing other animals?
2. Why don’t the animals dispute Squealer’s claims that their quality of life and productivity have improved?
3. Why do the animals prefer Mr. Pilkington to Mr. Frederick?
4. Why are the animals shocked when Napoleon sells the timber to Mr. Frederick?
5. How does Mr. Frederick betray Napoleon?
6. What happens the morning after Napoleon discovers Mr. Frederick’s trick?
7. Why don’t the animals initially feel victorious after the battle?
8. What is really wrong with Napoleon when the pigs report that he is dying?
9. What do the animals find when they are woken up by a loud crash?
10. What does the commandment against drinking alcohol now say?

Quiz Answers

1. The words “without cause” are added to the end of the commandment against killing other animals to justify the executions.
2. The animals have begun to forget what life was like under Mr. Jones, so they have no way of knowing whether things have really improved.
3. The animals have heard terrible rumors about how cruel and abusive Mr. Frederick is to his animals.
4. The animals are shocked when Napoleon sells to Mr. Frederick because Napoleon had been pretending he was going to sell to Mr. Pilkington.
5. Mr. Frederick pays Napoleon in forgeries rather than real money.
6. The morning after the forged money is discovered, Mr. Frederick and his men blow up the windmill.
7. The animals are too depressed by the loss of the windmill and their own heavy casualties to feel excited about their victory in battle.
8. Though the pigs think he is dying, Napoleon is really just hungover.
9. The animals are woken up by a crash and then find Squealer sprawled on the ground near the barn wall with a ladder and a can of paint.
10. The commandment against drinking now has the words “to excess” added.

**Short-Answer Quizzes: Chapter IX Questions and Answers**

**Quiz Questions**

1. What is wrong with Boxer’s hoof?
2. Who fathered the new piglets?
3. What new rules about the pigs are introduced?
4. What is ironic about the “Spontaneous Demonstrations”?
5. What official change is made to the government of Animal Farm?
6. What happens with Moses, the raven?
7. Why is Benjamin upset when he sees the van taking Boxer away?
8. Why can’t Boxer escape from the van?
9. How does Squealer explain the lettering on the van?
10. How did the pigs afford the case of whiskey?

**Quiz Answers**

1. Boxer’s hoof is split, though he continues to work anyway.
2. Napoleon is the father of the new piglets.
3. The pigs are allowed to wear ribbons on their tails on Sundays, and all animals that meet a pig on a path must step aside.
4. The “Spontaneous Demonstrations” are planned out and therefore not spontaneous.
5. Animal Farm is officially declared a republic with Napoleon as president.
6. Moses is allowed to return to the farm and continues to tell the animals about Sugarcandy Mountain.
7. Benjamin is one of the few animals who can still read, which allows him to see that Boxer is being taken away in a knacker’s van.
8. Boxer is too weak to kick down the door of the van, though he tries his best.
9. Squealer tells the animals that the veterinarian had recently purchased the van from the knacker and had not yet repainted it.
10. It is implied that the pigs bought the whiskey with the money they gained from selling Boxer to the knacker.

**Short-Answer Quizzes: Chapter X Questions and Answers**

**Quiz Questions**

1. What animals from the original rebellion are still on the farm?
2. What happened with the windmill?
3. What does Benjamin say about life on the farm now compared to life under Mr. Jones?
4. What does Squealer do with the sheep?
5. What do the pigs do that shocks the animals?
6. What happens to the Seven Commandments?
7. What does Mr. Pilkington say about Animal Farm?
8. What does Napoleon change the name of the farm to?
9. Why is it important that Napoleon and Mr. Pilkington both play the same card?
10. What confuses the animals as they look through the window at the pigs and the humans?

Quiz Answers

1. Only Clover, Benjamin, Moses, and several of the pigs (including Napoleon and Squealer) are still alive.
2. The windmill was finished, though it was not used to provide electricity for the animals’ stalls. A second windmill is now under construction.
3. Benjamin says that life is now no better or worse than it has always been and will always be.
4. Squealer takes the sheep aside and teaches them a new slogan.
5. The pigs shock the animals by learning to walk on two legs.
6. The Seven Commandments are painted over and replaced with “ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS.”
7. Mr. Pilkington compliments Napoleon on working the animals so hard and giving them so little food.
8. Napoleon changes the name of the farm back to Manor Farm.
9. The fact that Napoleon and Pilkington play the same card means that one of them is cheating.
10. As they look through the window, the animals can no longer tell who is a pig and who is a human.