

STRUCTURE

10.0 Objectives**10.1 Introduction****10.2 Themes of the Novel****10.3 Characters****10.4 Style and Language****10.5 Let Us Sum Up****10.6 Key Words****10.7 Books Suggested****Answers**

10.0 OBJECTIVES

- Recognize examples of satire in the novel.
- Understand the structure of allegorical novel.
- Comprehend the characters in *Animal Farm*.
- Learn about the different styles and language used by the author.
- Define and describe the fundamental conflicts of the novel.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The novel *Animal Farm* communicates the story of Farmer Jones's animals that rise up as rebellions and take control of the farm. As the animals get exhausted of being exploited for human advantages, they decide to create a new better and fair society. The novel is a satire comprising a message about world politics and particularly the former Soviet Union. As the Bolshevik revolutions of the early 1900s, the former Soviet Union had seized the attention of the world with its socialist experiment. Stalin's form of government had some supporters in Britain and the United States, but Orwell was against this whole system.

10.2 THEMES OF THE NOVEL

Animal Farm is a moralistic (didactic) novel - Orwell purposes to teach the reader a number of lessons on class equality, inequality power, control, and corruption. These themes are explored through the events and characters in the novel, and are an allegory for the Russian Revolution. The animals' grief signifies class struggle; this leads to the Rebellion which offers some equality. Then the pigs' actions allow inequality back on the farm. The theme of power and control is identified throughout the text and is emphasized by the characters' associations with the farm. The themes are political and explore what happened within Russian society in

1917 onwards. Orwell initially captioned the novel 'a fairy story' suggesting he anticipated it as a fable.

One of the most significant themes of the novel is totalitarianism. Orwell argues that any revolution led by a small, biased group can only degenerate into domination and dictatorship. He makes this debate through the symbol of the farm. The revolution begins with firm ideologies of equality and justice. Initially, the results are positive, as the animals get to labor for their own straight profit. However, as Orwell demonstrates, revolutionary leaders can become as an unethical and an ineffectual as the government they conquered.

The pigs adopt the human ways they once aggressively opposed (such as drinking whiskey, sleeping in beds, etc.), and they make business agreements with farmers that benefit them alone. Meanwhile, the other animals see only negative changes in their lives. They continue to support Napoleon and work harder than ever despite the decline in quality of living. Ultimately, they realize that the promises of heated stalls and electric light what they've been working for all along become fantasy. *Animal Farm* proposes that totalitarianism and hypocrisy are widespread to the humans. Without education and true empowerment of the lower classes, Orwell argues, society will always default to tyranny.

The pigs' descent into exploitation is a key element of the novel. Orwell, a socialist, believed that the Russian Revolution had been corrupted by power-seekers like Stalin from the start. The animals' revolution is originally led by Snowball, the key architect of Animalism. At first, Napoleon is a secondary player, much like Stalin. However, Napoleon plots in secret to seize power and drive Snowball away, undermining Snowball's policies and training the dogs to be his authoritarian. The standards of equality and unity that inspired the animals become mere tools for Napoleon to grab the power. The slow destruction of these values reflects Orwell's criticism of Stalin as nothing more than a tyrant hanging onto power through the fiction of a communist revolution.

Orwell doesn't reserve his bitterness for the leaders. The animals demonstrating the people of Russia are portrayed as complicit in this corruption through indecision, fright, and unawareness. Their devotion to Napoleon and the unreal benefits of his leadership enable the pigs to maintain their hold on power, and the ability of the pigs to convince the other animals that their lives were better even as their lives become obviously worse is Orwell's disapproval of the choice to submit to propaganda and magical thinking.

Animal Farm depicts a revolution in progress. Like all popular revolts, the uprising in *Animal Farm* progresses out of a hope for a better future, in which farm animals can enjoy the fruits of their own labor without the overbearing rule of humans. At the time of the revolution, all of the animals on Mr. Jones's farm, even the pigs, are dedicated to the notion of universal equivalence but these high ideals that powered the revolution in the first place gradually give way to individual and class-

based self-interest. *Animal Farm* thus illustrates how a revolution can be corrupted into a totalitarian regime through slow changes.

One of the main principles of Animalism, the ideology that Napoleon and Snowball develops, is that all animals are equal. However, it doesn't take long for the pigs to begin to refer to themselves as "mind workers" to differentiate themselves from the other animals, who work as physical laborers. Through this, the novel shows how variances in education and profession lead to the development of a class hierarchy, which leads inevitably to class warfare, in which one class seeks to dominate the other. Though the text suggests that the "mind working" or intellectual class almost always conquers in this struggle, it also goes to great lengths to suggest that whether because of ignorance, inaction, or fear, this is something that the working class allows to happen.

The novel portrays the class struggle in which once class divisions are established. It's very difficult to change them or break them down, even in light of guiding principles like the Seven Commandments that would hypothetically suggest that class shouldn't exist in the first place. However, even more critical is the novel's proclamation that this is something that the repressed lower classes allow to happen to them when they're unable to identify their oppressors or refuse to speak out when they do see what's going on. The novel eventually suggests that silence especially when combined with fear and a lack of education is the primary reason for oppression and the reason why the upper classes are able to maintain their power so effectively.

By the end of the novel, the pigs are so powerful that their language and intellectualism do not have to make sense or be true in any way; rather, it simply has to look like they're smart and in charge. Squealer's continuous recital of figures "proving" that Animal Farm is producing more than ever function to make him look powerful and intelligent, but the animals are unable to fully reconcile that in reality, they have little food no matter what Squealer says. Likewise, the final change to the Seven Commandments, in which the Commandments change from seven (albeit altered) guiding principles to the phrase "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" encapsulates this idea. The phrase ridicules the meaning of the word "equal," for one if all animals are equal, there should not be a hierarchy among them, when clearly, and there is one while also being vague enough for the pigs to fundamentally make the phrase mean whatever they want it to. In this sense, it allows them to preserve their power, since they can insist the phrase means they should have more power, while also still employing words like "equal" that make the other animals feel as though, per the phrase, everything is still fine. In this way, *Animal Farm* shows clearly how those in power and with a firm grasp of language can easily use it to effect those who don't have the education or memory to stand up to them and in doing so, keep those individuals down, deny them any opportunity of development, and create the delusion that things are just as they should be.

10.3 CHARACTERS

All the major and minor characters of the novel are equally important to comprehend. They play a significant role in conveying the satirical message of Orwell. Manor Farm is allegorical of Russia, and the farmer Mr. Jones is the Russian Czar. Old Major stands for either Karl Marx or Vladimir Lenin, and the pig named Snowball represents the intellectual revolutionary Leon Trotsky. Napoleon stands for Stalin, while the dogs are his secret police. The horse Boxer stands in for the proletariat, or working class.

Napoleon: The character of Napoleon who is based on Stalin is ambitious pig who tries to become a leader at Animal Farm after the death of Old Major. He used all the means to achieve the goal and this means all the persuasive speeches and limitless violence. He can be described as a political tyrant.

Snowball: Based on Leon Trotsky, Snowball is intelligent, passionate, persuasive, and less subtle and devious than his counterpart, Napoleon. Snowball seems to win the faithfulness of the other animals and strengthen his power.

Boxer: The cart-horse Boxer's incredible strength, dedication, and loyalty play a key role in the early prosperity of Animal Farm and the later completion of the windmill. Quick to help but rather slow-witted, Boxer shows much devotion to Animal Farm's ideals but little ability to think about them independently. He honestly trusts the pigs to make all his decisions for him. His two mottoes are "I will work harder" and "Napoleon is always right."

Squealer: Squealer is the pig who spreads Napoleon's propaganda among the other animals. Squealer justifies the pigs' monopolization of resources and spreads false statistics pointing to the farm's success. Orwell uses Squealer to explore the ways in which those in power often use rhetoric and language to twist the truth and gain and maintain social and political control.

Old Major: Old Major is an old pig whose character is written basing on the personality of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. Old Major is wise and he is focused on finding better ways for living at farm while avoiding the exploitation of the animals of the lower class.

Benjamin: The long-lived donkey called Benjamin who refuses to feel inspired by the Rebellion. Benjamin firmly believes that life will remain unpleasant no matter who is in charge. Of all of the animals on the farm, he alone understands the changes that take place, but he seems either unwilling or unable to oppose the pigs.

Minimus: Minimus, the poet pig who writes verse about Napoleon and pens the banal patriotic song “Animal Farm, Animal Farm” to replace the earlier idealistic hymn “Beasts of England,” which Old Major passes on to the others.

10.4 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

Animal Farm discovers how propaganda can be used to control people. From the start of the novel, Orwell depicts the animals being manipulated by common propaganda techniques, including songs, slogans, and ever-changing information. Singing "Beasts of England" evokes a demonstrative response that highlights the animals' loyalty to both Animalism and the pigs. The agreement of slogans like Napoleon is always right or four legs good, two legs bad establishes their unfamiliarity with the complex philosophical and political concepts underlying the revolution. The continuous change of the Seven Commandments of Animalism demonstrates how those in control of information can manipulate the rest of a population.

From the beginning of the popular revolution on Manor Farm, language both spoken and written is influential to the animals' collective success, and later to the pigs' consolidation of power. Through *Animal Farm*, Orwell exemplifies how language is an influential tool that individuals can use to seize power and manipulate others via publicity, while also showing that education and one's corresponding grasp of language is what can turn someone into either a manipulative authority figure or an unthinking, illiterate member of the working class.

The pigs, who serve as the leaders of the farm, are the only animals with a strong command of language. Snowball is a persuasive speaker who comprises the philosophy of Animalism and persuades his fellow beasts with the power of his oratory. Squealer is adept at lying and spinning stories to maintain control. (For example, when the other animals are upset about Boxer's cruel fate, Squealer quickly composes a fiction to defuse their anger and confuse the issue.) Napoleon, while not as smart or as eloquent as Snowball, is skilled at imposing his own false view on everyone around him, as when he falsely inserts himself into the historical record of the Battle of the Cowshed.

The style of *Animal Farm* is simple and clear. The novel's language is solid, truthful and delivered in short sentences. The simplicity of style concludes at the novel's end, in one-sentence paragraphs: “It was a pig walking on his hind legs. He carried a whip in his trotter” (Chapter 10). Throughout the book, characters use language in deceptive ways for political purposes. Some characters make their language complex in order to deceive, like Squealer when he is explaining Napoleon's actions. Other characters use simplistic language to distort the truth, like the sheep with their slogan, “Four legs good, and two legs bad.” Together with these examples of deceptive language, Orwell's own writing style offers a constant reminder that truth can be conveyed in straightforward language anyone can understand. The strong contrast between the up-front style of the novel and the manipulative styles adopted by characters who want to

seize power illuminates the difference between truthful language and political deception.

A notable feature of *Animal Farm*'s style is the use of the passive voice. For instance, when Napoleon steals the cows' milk, we are not told which character or characters notice that the milk is missing. Instead we are told that "it was noticed that the milk had disappeared" (Chapter 2). The use of the passive voice underlines the animals' helplessness. The events occur without any particular animal taking action, creating the impression that things happen without the animals' consent. The passive voice also helps to show the power of rumor and false information in an oppressive society. When no one knows exactly who said, did or "noticed" something, it's easy to claim that the thing didn't really happen, or that it happened differently, and this is exactly what the pigs do.

Orwell chose a difficult genre the fable, often associated with children's literature to offer a complex critique of one of the most difficult regimes in modern history. He succeeds by capturing both realistically and amusingly the characteristics of many of the animals and by convincing the reader that these characteristics lend themselves, at least figuratively, to understanding human life in the totalitarian context. Rather than simply mocking his subjects, Orwell suggests that there is indeed something beastly about them: that there is something sheep-like about those who learn dogma by repetition, something dog-like about secret police trained to attack on command, and something horse-like about those who unthinkingly give themselves body and soul to the bankrupt reason.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN DETAIL.

1. Justify *Animal Farm* as an allegory.

2. What is Animalism?

3. What is George Orwell's message in the novel *Animal Farm*?

4. Discuss the main themes of *Animal Farm*.

5. Discuss the satirical aspects of the novel *Animal Farm*.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

1. Who reduces the ideals of Animalism to the phrase “Four legs good, two legs bad”?
 - A. Snowball
 - B. Dogs
 - C. Minimus
 - D. Benjamin
2. What is Mr. Jones’s main vice?
 - A. Gambling
 - B. Theft
 - C. Alcohol
 - D. Robbery
3. Which Russian leader does Napoleon most resemble?
 - A. Lenin
 - B. Stalin
 - C. Malenkov
 - D. Brezhnev
4. Who inspires the rebellion with his vision, a speech, and "Beasts of England"?
 - A. Old Major
 - B. Napoleon
 - C. Boxer
 - D. Minimus
5. What's the name of the song about an animal utopia that Old Major teaches the animals?
 - A. “The Songs of England”
 - B. “The People of England”
 - C. The Beasts of England”
 - D. “The Birds of England”

10.5 LET US SUM UP

George Orwell, the author of *Animal Farm*, was an author of Socialism. He saw the working class as being abused and exploited by the capitalist government. He wanted a socialist economy with equality and abolition of selfish individual interest. In his book, the *Animal Farm*, he showed the evils of a Communist market system. The novel shows the way it is human nature for people to create classes in the society which leads to oppression of the poor. The working class are naive, uneducated and gullible and do not question the intentions of the government. In the text Orwell shows the way totalitarian governments use terror and violence to control the people. A capitalist economy was democratic and the best model to emulate for any country. His warnings on Communism were true however adopting Socialism is not the way either. Orwell used the themes, characters and language most suitably to convey his message to the readers.

10.6 KEY WORDS

Satire	the use of irony, sarcasm, ridicule, or the like, in exposing, denouncing, or deriding vice, folly, etc.
Socialism	(in Marxist theory) the stage following capitalism in the transition of a society to communism, characterized by the imperfect implementation of collectivist principles.
Revolution	an overthrow or repudiation and the thorough replacement of an established government or political system by the people governed.
Ideology	the body of doctrine, myth, belief, etc., that guides an individual, social movement, institution, class, or large group.

10.7 BOOKS SUGGESTED

- *Modern Classics Penguin Essays* of George Orwell
- *Fascism and Democracy* by George Orwell
- *George Orwell: A Life in Letters* by George Orwell

ANSWERS

1. Snowball 2. Alcohol 3. Stalin 4. Old Major 5. “The Beast of England”