

POWER AND PARODY: THE SATIRICAL VISION OF GEORGE ORWELL'S ANIMAL FARM

Dhanya. R., Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sree Narayana Guru College, Coimbatore.

Abstract

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* serves as a powerful political satire disguised as a simple story. While it tells the tale of a group of farm animals overthrowing their human master, it is, in fact, a sharp critique of the Soviet Union under Stalin. Orwell uses the format of a fable to expose how revolutionary ideals like equality and justice can be manipulated by those seeking power. This paper examines the way Orwell blends satire, allegory, and historical commentary to illustrate the mechanics of political control, propaganda, and betrayal. Despite being written in the mid-20th century, the themes of the book remain strikingly relevant in the modern world.

Keywords: Satire, Orwell, *Animal Farm*, Totalitarianism, Power, Propaganda, Allegory, Russian Revolution, Equality, Social Commentary

Introduction

George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, published in 1945, is much more than a fictional tale about animals managing a farm. Beneath the surface, it's a scathing satire on political systems, specifically the corruption seen in totalitarian regimes. Orwell cleverly uses a simple narrative and familiar setting to communicate a larger message about how revolutions can go astray when power becomes concentrated in the hands of a few.

Inspired by the rise of Soviet communism and disillusioned by his experiences during the Spanish Civil War, Orwell saw firsthand how political ideals could be twisted. *Animal Farm* critiques how revolutions that start with promises of freedom and equality often end with new forms of oppression. Through satire, Orwell encourages readers to remain skeptical of political authority and to recognize the warning signs of authoritarian rule.

1. Allegory as a Reflection of Politics

In *Animal Farm*, George Orwell uses allegory to reflect historical and political events through symbolic storytelling. Each character and event is a metaphor for real-world figures and occurrences. For example, Napoleon represents Joseph Stalin, Snowball mirrors Leon Trotsky, and Mr. Jones symbolizes the Russian Tsar. The animals' revolt reflects the Russian Revolution, while their gradual slide into dictatorship illustrates the emergence of totalitarianism.

By setting the story on a farm with anthropomorphic animals, Orwell simplifies complex political history, making it easier for readers to engage with these themes. This approach allows readers to reflect on issues like leadership, corruption, and the betrayal of ideals without needing a deep historical understanding. The simple farm setting underscores the core message: the pursuit of power can corrupt even the noblest of revolutionary goals.

2. Language as a Tool for Control

A central theme in *Animal Farm* is how language can be manipulated to influence thought and maintain control. Squealer, Napoleon's spokesperson, constantly distorts facts to justify the leadership's actions. His role exemplifies how those in power use language as a tool for deception and maintaining dominance.

A key example of this is the gradual alteration of the farm's original commandments. As the pigs gain more authority, they change the rules to fit their personal desires, rewriting history and reshaping the animals' understanding of reality. The phrase, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others," captures Orwell's critique of political double standards. This manipulation of language is also a prominent theme in Orwell's later work, *1984*, where language becomes a central means of oppression.

3. The Corruption of Revolutionary Ideals

At first, the animals' rebellion is inspired by the hope of building a fair society where all are treated equally. Old Major's vision sparks the desire for a new world free from exploitation. However, as power shifts into the hands of the pigs, they begin to forsake these original ideals. Eventually, the pigs become indistinguishable from the human oppressors they initially sought to overthrow. This transformation serves as Orwell's warning about how revolutionary movements can become corrupted when those in power lose sight of their founding values. The story parallels the Soviet Union's evolution, where socialist ideals were replaced by an authoritarian regime. Orwell's critique goes beyond a specific political system, emphasizing the dangers of unchecked power.

4. Continued Relevance

Though *Animal Farm* is grounded in a particular historical context, its themes remain highly relevant today. Governments worldwide still manipulate facts, suppress dissent, and alter public perceptions to preserve their authority. Orwell's observations transcend time and political systems, showing how power can be misused in any society.

As historian John Newsinger notes, Orwell's work serves as a cautionary tale that extends beyond a single period in history. Democracy and justice need constant protection and active involvement from citizens, who must remain alert to manipulation and deceit. *Animal Farm* challenges readers to remain skeptical of those in power and to recognize the early signs of corruption before ideals are lost.

Conclusion

Animal Farm endures not just because of its clever storytelling, but because of its clear and urgent warning about power. Orwell uses satire to show how easily political ideals can be corrupted and how language can be weaponized by those in control. His portrayal of a revolution gone wrong is not just a historical commentary, but a timeless lesson.

Even today, the themes of *Animal Farm* resonate with readers who recognize the signs of political decay and manipulation in their own societies. Orwell's novel challenges us to question authority, seek truth, and remain vigilant in the face of power that threatens liberty. Its simplicity makes it approachable, but its insights ensure that its message will not be forgotten.

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