Chapter VI

Animal Farm
Introduction

Animal Farm (1945) is conceived and written in the classic tradition of satire, the tradition of receding planes, which gives it precisely the depth of every reader. Like Gulliver’s Travels or Aesop’s Fables, it makes a delightful children’s story. It is manifestly an attack on Stalinism and can be read as a lament for the fate of revolutions. It was the first of his books to achieve substantial commercial success. It was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection in the United States, had a large sale and was translated into many languages. Perhaps, for the first time in his life, Orwell was moderately well off-the book brought to him economic prosperity and popularity both. Till today this is the most praised work of Orwell. It is regarded as the rare book by Karl because of the “predictability” of satire. Tom Hopkinson pronounced that it is “by far Orwell’s finest book.” It is rated as one of only two present-day books so good that before it “the critic abdicates.” Sir Richard Rees considers this book as a “little masterpiece” in form and style.

The book deserves much praise because it succeeded despite the problems in form-a specific political allegory. The principal danger of allegory in fiction is artificiality. The second difficulty is that it demands precise equivalents which may dominate the tale, and the result is that primary narrative loses its pretence of reality and spontaneity. But this does not happen in Animal Farm. The allegory of the Russian Revolution and subsequent events is probably only noticeable to the eye which has been made aware of it.

Origin and Background

The narrative sets up equivalents with the history of political action in Russia from roughly 1917 to the Second World War. Major and Snowball are Lenin and Trotsky; Napoleon is Stalin; and the warring farms and farmers around Manor Farm naturally come to stand for Germany (Frederick) and the Allies (Pilkington). Certain events in the story are said to represent events of history. The timber deal, in which Frederick later reneges on the animals, is of course the short-lived Russo-German alliance of 1939. The Card game at the end of the book is supposed to represent the Teheran Conference following the war. It is remarkable that one need to pay little attention to all historical events in order to understand the book in its full political significance. It is
not only an allegory of twentieth century Russian politics but also an anatomy of all political revolutions. A.E. Dyson says:

"Animal Farm is by no means about Russia alone. Orwell is concerned to show how revolutionary ideals of justice, equality and fraternity always shatter in the event."

In the idea of a revolution carried out by farm animals, Orwell found a kind of extended metaphor (technically, a fable) by which he could embody his first-hand experience of Spain and what he had read about Soviet Russia, and by which he could symbolize the tyrannous possibilities inherent in any revolutionary seizure of power. It was a book in which he was fully conscious of his act. He tried to fuse political satire and artistic purpose into one whole. It was an attempt to create a piece of that Concentration Camp literature, which he felt an over shattered England needed to know.

Theme and Technique

Experimentation with the literary techniques that could most forcefully convey his ideas is predominant characteristic of Orwell. He wrote the book to make people conscious of what was happening outside their small circle. The familiar and affectionate tone of the story and its careful attention to details allowed the unpopular theme to appear pleasant and convincing. The Soviet myth was exposed to the world. It was written in clear and simple language that could easily be translated. It is a short fiction easy to read and to be said.

Orwell had defined the theme of this book as early as *Inside the Whale* (1940), and he wrote in an essay on James Burnham (1946):

"History consists of 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."

In his Preface to the Ukrainian edition of *Animal Farm* (1947), he stated that ‘The man-hunts’ in Spain went on at the same time as the great purges in the USSR and were a sort of supplement to them. He gave his concluding remarks on Russian revolution and socialism:

"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 exposed, 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 revival of the socialist movement. 

The Development of the Animal Revolution

Under the incapable regime of the human farmer, Jones, the animals are shown that their lives are ignorant of happiness and leisure, and they are miserably enslaved. They are not so because it is in their nature, but because the animals are exploited by the farmer.

"Is it not crystal clear, then, comrades, that all the evils of this life of ours spring from the tyranny of human beings? Only get rid of Man, and the produce of our labour would be our own. Almost overnight we could become rich and free. What then must we do? Why, work night and day, body and soul, for the overthrow of the human race!... And remember, comrades, your resolution must never falter. No argument must lead you astray. Never listen when they tell you that Man and the animals have a common interest, that the prosperity of the one is the prosperity of the others." 

Some day, when the man the exploiter and expropriator is himself expropriated, a golden future time will come when the fruitful fields of England are trodden by beasts alone:

"Bright will shine the fields of England,
   Purer shall its waters be,
   Sweeter yet shall blow its breezes
   On the day that sets us free."

After the spontaneous uprising of the animals, the hurried departure of Jones and his wife, and the destruction of the old instruments of oppression kept in the harness room, it seems as if Major's Utopian dream has come true. In the spring dawn the animals survey the farm:

"Yes, it was theirs-everything that they could see was theirs! In the ecstasy of that thought they gambolled round and round, they hurled themselves into the air in great leaps of excitement. They rolled in the dew, they cropped mouthfuls of the sweet summer grass, they kicked up clods of the black earth and snuffed its rich scent."

When the first crop is brought, everybody is happy. Everyone works according to his capacity, and more efficiently than the humans. Nobody steals; nobody
grumbles: 'the quarrelling and biting and jealousy which had been normal features of life in the old days had almost disappeared'.

The pigs, having learnt to read, immediately emerge as what sociologists call a power elite. They are the only ones able to put forward resolutions at the weekly policy-debates (while such debates continue); they are the organizers of the various animal committees; they are the ones who declare they must govern, if Jones is not to return. Therefore, one who governs, requires privilege. At first this is trivial. The pigs get milk in their mash; they get all the apples; they move into the farmhouse which it had originally been resolved, should become a museum; they rise later than the other animals. Then it becomes less trivial. The pigs do not work but bureaucratically supervise the work of others; they and the dogs seem to be the only animals to benefit from the farm's increasing prosperity. Then it is so untrivial as to represent a fundamental betrayal of the revolution. The pigs walk upright and carry whips; the slogan now becomes: "Four legs good, two legs better."11 While previously it was "Four legs good, two legs bad."

Within the elite there is the expected struggle for leadership: there are stormy debates between Napoleon and Snowball over the farm's sowing policy, over the question of whether the farm should concentrate on self-defence or on exporting the revolution to neighbouring farms, over the building of the Windmill. The struggle is decided by Napoleon's possession of the savage dogs which wag their tails to him as their predecessors used to do to Mr. Jones, and which finally chase Snowball off the farm. Once this has happened, and the leader has become a further elite of one within the elite itself, the familiar pattern emerges:

"Napoleon was now never spoken of simply as 'Napoleon'. He was always referred to in formal style as 'Our leader, Comrade Napoleon', and the pigs liked to invent for him such titles as Father of All Animals, Terror of Mankind, Protector of the Sheep-fold, Ducklings' Friend .... It had become usual to give Napoleon the credit for every successful achievement and every stroke of good fortune."12

There are the modifications in the Party-line. Napoleon had only pretended to oppose the building of the mill as a tactic to get rid of Snowball. Fictitious production figures reeled off by Squealer, food bins filled with sand and topped off with meal, ritual designed to distract attention from empty bellies. Life becomes harsh and bare. All animals are often hungry and cold and usually working when not asleep. But
Squealer did not fail to point out that previously they were slave, now they were free.

The consummating act of the Revolution, according to Squealer, is the massacre of all oppositional elements—the pigs who had protested against the discontinuation of the meetings, the hens who led a rebellion, the sheep who had urinated in the drinking pool. There is a pile of corpses at Napoleon’s feet. A melancholy spring evening balances the joyous summer morning experienced by the animals at the start of their revolutionary society:

“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.”

‘Beasts of England’, the song that proclaimed liberty, is replaced by Animal Farm. “Never through me shalt thou come to harm”, a song that proclaims only loyalty. Yet even an almost unquestioning loyalty is betrayed. Boxer, with his slogans of ‘I will work harder’ and ‘Napoleon is always right’, ends up at the knacker’s as soon as his strength is exhausted, and so fulfils Major’s prophecy of what would happen to him under the regime of humans.

The pigs have become ‘the new class’. Their children are isolated from the rest of the community, brought up and educated as a hereditary elite. In fact, the pigs have become far more efficient exploiters of the other animals than ever Jones was, and other human farmers come to learn from them the new techniques. Having denied the bringer of the original revolutionary message, having changed the name of the farm back to its ‘correct’ pre-revolutionary one, having suppressed the ‘foolish custom’ the animals had of calling one another ‘comrade’, the pigs in their duplicity become physically identical with the human beings they are entertaining.

**Totalitarianism in Animal Farm**

Orwell was a socialist in the true sense. He perceived the falsehood and pretences of the Soviet Revolution. In the pre-Soviet Revolution period, he finds, man was chained to exploitation and physical suffering. Man, he finds, were economically wretched and pathetic in that period. Later on, in the post - Soviet Revolution period man’s deprivation continues unabated. The revolution brought nothing but further economic exploitation. Social revolution failed to abolish human sufferings as it
was politics of poverty and exploitation that could bring "power" to the socialists, the Fascists and imperialists and to the totalitarians. This is quite evident in Animal Farm. Before the revolution in Animal Farm, the animals think that after the expulsion of Mr. Jones, there would be no more exploitation and they would get rid of sufferings and humiliation. But their bewilderment and annihilation knew no bounds when their exploitation grew larger and working conditions became inhumane and difficult.

In this way, Orwell has been successful in showing the pathos of the common man in the post-Revolution period. The pigs not only eat the apples but also drink the milk of the cows. They diabolically pretend that they are the 'brain workers' and they are the messiah who will bring happiness, liberty and equality for the animals. On the contrary, such hopes are foiled. Clover, one of the cart horses, suffers from pathos and annihilation when all the hopes of joy and amelioration of their suffering prove to be false. This not only shows the betrayal of revolution but also the politics of dehumanization by the totalitarians. In Animal Farm Clover is shocked over the fate of the revolution:

"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 any picture of the future, it had been of a society of animals set free from hunger and whip, all equal, each working according to his capacity, the strong proceeding the weak.

The irony is, of course, the claim for a "better society" as the animals sit in the shadow of the heap of freshly slaughtered corpses. But the implications are more profound. Terror, beastiality and senseless death are at least comprehensible and do not radically alter the conceptualized values of the survivors. Far more terrifying is the overt alteration of consciousness, which follows the slaughter, the blatant misinterpretation of the past, which goes unchallenged.

The animals can only "sense" that the new song ('Animal Farm, Animal Farm/Never through me shalt thou come to harm') is different from Beast of England. Squealer's pronouncement that the "better society" has now been established is uncontroverted. The Commandments which have begun to be altered recently, are now
more rapidly and unquestioningly changed and change pervades Animal Farm. A proposed timber deal vacillates between Pilkington and Frederick until the animals are forced to admit "a certain bewilderment but Squealer was soon able to convince them that their memories had been at fault".  

The animals are unable to recognize reality. We see the goodness and corruption, strength and weakness in the Farm. Even then all animals finish the Windmill-an impossible task. Napoleon being cheated in his dealing, precipitates an attack upon the Farm by Frederick and his followers. Animals are grievously injured and the Windmill but clever Squealer declares that they have a "Victory, we have won back what we had before".  

There is celebration in the farm. Each animal is given an apple, two ounces of corn for each bird, and three biscuits for each dog- while Napoleon gets drunk. The surface irony is compounded by the irrational falsification of fact. The next morning, the animals discover that the Fifth Commandment did not read, as they had thought, "No animal shall drink alcohol", but instead "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess".  

The most dark and pessimistic aspect of the fable is that the animals are unable even to recognize their new oppression. The difference is that pigs can control thoughts as they are educated. Mr. Jones controlled only action- not thought. None of the animals oppose Napoleon. Napoleon has trained dogs who can attack his opponents. Boxer is quite powerful and can overthrow Napoleon's regime. His strength is shown, when Napoleon's vicious dogs attack him, Boxer simply "put out his great hoof, caught a dog in mid-air, and pinned him to the ground. The dog shrieked for mercy and other two fled with their tails between their legs".  

Boxer is quite stupid, he cannot comprehend the present; only can conceptualize the past. He ingenuously looks to Napoleon to see whether or not he should let the dog go, when the slaughter is over. But he retreats to work, thinking the fault must lie within the animals; so is the influence of totalitarians. Boxer cannot think against his commandment and feels contended that 'if Comrade Napoleon has said this, it must be right.'  

Orwell, in Boxer's character portrays the basic goodness, social sacrifice and stupidity of common man. Clover is shown more intelligent and perceptive than is Boxer but she has a corresponding lack of strength. Her instincts are
maternal and pacifistic; her intelligence is partial. Benjamin, the donkey, the oldest animal in the farm is physically ineffectual and socially irresponsible. Beneath the surface cynicism, he is almost, predictably, blessed with a heart of gold. He is the one who discovers the plot to deliver Boxer to the glue maker. But Benjamin is essentially selfish and apolitical.

Napoleon's totalitarian rule continues; years pass. Jones dies in an inebriates' home; Boxer and Snowball are forgotten. A new generation of animals has grown up. The situation on the farm is unchanged for most of the animals. The farm is more prosperous now, but the fruits of prosperity never pass beyond Napoleon and his comrades. The attempt to judge whether the present situation is better or worse than it had been under Jones is fruitless.

"Sometimes the older ones among them racked their dim memories and tried to determine whether in the early days of the Rebellion, when Jones' expulsion was still recent, things had been better or worse than now. They could not remember. There was nothing with which they could compare their present lives: they had nothing to go upon except Squealer's lists of figures, which invariably demonstrated that everything was getting better and better". 20

Animals remain contended. "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 Master. All animals were equal". 21

The primary political gain of the revolution remains valid for the animals but that too is violated in the Seventh Commandment:

"All animals are equal. But some animals are more equal than others". 22

It is not strange that after these pigs take the humans' newspapers, that the pigs dress like human, invite neighbouring humans to feast and drink, that the name of farm is changed back to Manor Farm. Things remain unchanged: 'hunger, hardship and disappointment are indeed the unalterable law of life'.

Power inevitably corrupts the best of ideologies, no matter who possesses the power. Communism is no better than and no worse than capitalism or Fascism; the ideals of socialism were long ago lost in Clover's sorrowful thoughts. The irony is that everyone good or bad is a contributor to tyranny. The betrayal of the
revolution reaches a point of climax when a large number of animals are accused of treason, insubordination, disloyalty and all sorts of serious offences in collusion with Snowball.

In Animal Farm, Orwell has exposed power-hunger motif of the totalitarian powers. To say that 'all animals are equal but some are more equal than others' is a betrayal of the socialistic belief. In fact, it shows that the ruler-rulled and rich-poor structures of misery and want could not be removed even by revolutions. The pigs walking on two legs like their human exploiters against whom they had revolted, show the pretence and failure of revolutions. Orwell exposes the inherent ghastliness and crookedness of man. He shows the discrepancy between the ideal of socialism and its actual manifestation. He firmly believes that such totalitarianism and power-worship should be eradicated and man should be given an opportunity to live natural, worthy and humane life, unhindered by external dictates and control.

Orwell perceives that totalitarians and pacifists had no concept of irrational behaviour that could give them solace and real happiness or which could restrain them from violating the code of human behaviour. His vision of democratic socialism and common decency could be feasible against the totalitarianism, war, oppression and poverty. It was the only ray of hope which could bring man out of the abyss and chaos. Greenblatt concludes:

"Orwell believed that a regime based on the principles of democratic socialism could enable man to live a tolerable, even mildly pleasant life, and that such a regime could isolate and destroy the forces of violence, injustice and tyranny".23

It shows Orwell's staunch faith in the resilience of human nature.

**Animal Farm as a Socio-cultural Utopia**

Orwell believed in a classless society based on common decency and hope in future. He was a socialist of a different kind who was not concerned with any political party either Left of Right. He was contemptuous of both Communism and Catholicism. He advocated a socio-cultural Utopia in which hopes of mankind in future lay in the continued integrity of the individual as the fundamental component of the society. He wrote his novel, Animal Farm, with a multi-foliate vision of democratic socialism, common decency, liberty, justice and righteousness. He saw culture and heritage and
the land itself belonging to the common people not to the gentry and the upper middle classes. He was wholly on the side of the oppressed, always against the oppressors. He “was against every form of man’s dominion over man.”

In *Animal Farm*, Orwell suggests that bloody revolutions do not necessarily change the lot of the common man. On the contrary, there is usually an addition of misery to the devoted party worker and the loyal comrade. The noble horse, Boxer and his deeds are a case in point. He works harder each day with the illusion that he is improving the condition of other animals. But the irony is that by listening ungrudgingly to the orders of Napoleon, he contributes in no small way to increasing tyranny of the pigs. It is a pity to see, what fate has in store for him. When he is incapacitated, he is sent to the knacker’s van so that he “may be done away for good.”

In *Animal Farm*, merely three or four persons under a dictator are shown as moulding the people in the name of new order of socialism. The human spirit is crushed in the totalitarian society. Orwell has shown in *Animal Farm* and still more in *1984*, that a society that moves on the wheels of power has no place for the spirit of love and egalitarianism. The corruption inherent in the Rebellion is manifested as each of the commandments is successively betrayed, until none of the original revolutionary idealism remains. The animals get nothing but mere frustration and shattering of hopes and welfare. It is a betrayal of trust in the true sense. Orwell tries to show that the spread of socialism under the cloak of totalitarianism and human welfare is deceptive. It has enslaved the man and made him helpless and powerless.

The socio-political outlook, which emanates from Orwell’s novel *Animal Farm*, is evident in his ideas expressed in his essays. According to him, democratic socialism is a planned society in which private property would be abolished and the country would be ruled lawfully by the elected representatives of the people. Orwell proposed a programme for turning England into a socialist democracy. In the “Lion and the Unicorn” he articulated a six-point programme.

1. “Nationalization of land, mines, railways, bank and major industries.
2. Limitation of incomes.
3. Reform of the educational system along democratic lines.
4. Immediate Dominion status for India, with power to secede when the war is
5. Formation of an Imperial General Council, in which the coloured peoples are to be represented.

6. Declaration of formal alliance with China, Abyssinia and all other victims of the Fascist powers.26

Orwell sincerely wishes a society in which exploitation and competition would be supplanted by equality and co-operation, a society in which every human being will be entitled to enjoy freedom. He remarks regarding the aim of socialism and how it is related to human rights:

"Socialism aims, ultimately a world- state of free and equal human beings. It takes the equality of human rights for granted."27

Orwell wants international unity so that the economic resources of the world can be used for the eradication of poverty and inequality among men. His concept of socialism is essentially ethical and spiritual. Victor Gollancz and Laski describe Orwell's vision a Utopian Socialism in The Critical Heritage. We can disagree with them. A theory which emphasizes a material change in the society through nationalization of industries and farms but disregards justice and liberty for human beings is an apology for socialism. He is a democratic socialist who wishes to bring socio-cultural Utopia.

During the writing of Animal Farm, Orwell has seen the merging of Nazism and Bolshevism. He fears that such a merger would create a destructive kind of socialism. His predictions were proved true in Stalinist Russia where all the principles that culminated in the Socialist Revolution were trampled underfoot by the totalitarian rulers. Orwell's social-political vision can be reduced thus; a political change without a regard for social, cultural and moral values was bound to create anarchy and spiritual degeneration.

It was not meant to be only a commandment. It was meant to be sermonic powder mixed with excellent jam for totalitarian rulers. He is a socialist who is also an anti-hedonist and an anti-perfectionist. Some degree of suffering, he believes, is ineradicable from human life. He wants the society to be organized along more equitable lines but never cataclysmically through war or a blood bath. He defends individual's autonomy as the most sacred thing and yet arrives at the despairing
conclusion that to imagine the human being as an autonomous individual is a mistake. He is aware of evils of feudalism and capitalism, but he cannot seek comfort in dubious eschatologies. All the same, he realizes that there is no end to man's quest for spiritual identity.

Orwell believed that a writer's commitment is "the desire to push the world in a certain direction to alter other people's idea of the kind of society they should strive after. All art was propaganda."28

**Animal Farm as a political Satire**

*Animal Farm* is conceived and written in the classic tradition of satire. It is manifestly an attack on Stalinism. It should be read as a political satire and a lament for the fate of revolutions. It appeared in the history at a time when western Allies were becoming disillusioned with the station regiment, their potentialities of co-operating with the policies of Stalin were gradually narrowing down. The book makes the reader alert about this future danger of Fascism. Orwell has remarked:

"It was an attempt to create a piece of that Concentration Camp literature."29

*Animal Farm* was written between November 1943 and February 1944, after Stalingrad and before Normandy, when the Allies first became victorious and there was a strong feeling of solidarity with the Russians, who even in retreat had deflected Hitler from England. Distinguished writers like Wells, Shaw, Barbusse and Rolland had praised Russia highly. But Orwell's book belongs with Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*30 (1937), Gide's *Return From the USSR* (1937) and Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1941), which present attacks on the Stalinist regime; and it anticipates post-war denunciations like Crossman's compilation *The God That Failed* (1949) and Djilas' *The New Class* (1957).

*Animal Farm* introduces to the Communist revolution and its process, to the revolution and the way they were all shattered to pieces just after that. It tells us now in the wake of revolution, the leaders take up all advantages to themselves, try to brainwash the poor, keep them busy with ambitious prefects and frighten them with reservance of capitalism. Thus, while in *Animal Farm* the revolution which ushers in the Communist system and leads to totalitarianism criticism, both in its operation and accomplishment.
It is a novel about a revolution that has sprung, not from theory, but from real, natural need. No matter how corrupt the ideals of revolution become, Orwell never questions the validity of the uprising. The target here is not a social-and socialistic-revolution, contrary to the many who simply want to see the book as a satire of communism, but rather the target is the inability of humans to live within a community of ideals.

The inevitable corruption of the revolution is presaged immediately. The animals have driven out their masters.

"For the first few minutes the animals could hardly believe in their good fortune. Their first act was to gallop in a body right round the boundaries of the farm, as though to make quite sure that no human being was hiding anywhere upon it; then they raced back to the farm buildings to wipe out the last traces of Jones' hated reign. The harness-room at the end of the stables was broken open; the bits, the nose-rings, the dog-chains, the cruel knives with which Mr. Jones had been used to castrate the pigs and lambs, were all flung down the well."

The reaction is understandable; but the description of the inevitable and immediate violence that seems to follow all revolutions foreshadows that this revolution will suffer the common fate of its genre: reactionary cruelty, the search for the scapegoat, the perversion of the ideals of the revolution, and the counter-revolution. Thus, the good intentions of the animals are immediately endangered when it is learnt that the pigs "had taught themselves to read and write from an old spelling book which had belonged to Mr. Jones' children." The pigs' reading ability is a valuable skill for the animals, one which is necessary to run a farm, even for animals. But it is also patently a human attribute and one which already violates one of Major's cardinal tenets:

"Remember also that in fighting against Man, we must not come to resemble him."

Orwell's political purposes, though varied, had been consistently present to that point in his career; however, their infusion into his novels had been the obstacle he had to overcome to achieve fully realized and coherent art. For Orwell, politics had been a sine qua non; the common constituents of imaginative writing-character, image, narrative-were for him obstructions rather than guideposts. He remarked that it is "invariably where I lacked a political purpose that I wrote lifeless books and was betrayed
into purple passages, sentences without meaning, decorative adjectives and humbug generally.” Yet we also know that Orwell's impulses were toward "artistic purpose."

Not only was Orwell the potential polemicist but the demands of the appropriate conventions provided an impersonality and distance which created art, not journalism. That the beast fable was a natural choice for Orwell is borne out by John Wain. *Animal Farm* is:

"... so remarkably similar in its tone, and in the balanced fairness of its judgments, to the critical essays as to be, almost, seen as one of them. It is, after all, a fable, and a fable is closer to criticism than to fiction in the full imaginative sense."

The essential characteristic of the beast fable is irony. The form provides for the writer "the power to keep his reader conscious simultaneously of the human traits satirized and of the animals as animals." The beast fable is in many ways the ideal form in which to articulate attack. The presence of beasts provides a ready-made vehicle for the tenor of the hatred in this essentially metaphorical mode. The correlation of a man, or a class of men, as swine or sheep allows savage hatred on the sub-narrative level and concurrently provides the coolness of impersonalness in the facade of the narrative. As I. A. Richards says of the properly functioning metaphor, the vehicle should not be "a mere embellishment of a tenor which is otherwise unchanged but the vehicle and tenor in co-operation give a meaning of more varied powers than can be ascribed to either."

The allegory of the Russian Revolution and subsequent events is probably only noticeable to the eye which has been made aware of it.

It is notable that one needs to pay little heed to this to understand the book in its full political significance. Instead of being just an allegory of twentieth century Russian politics, *Animal Farm* is more meaningfully an anatomy of all political revolutions. As A.E. Dyson says:

"*Animal Farm* is by no means about Russia alone. Orwell is concerned to show how revolutionary ideals of justice, equality and fraternity always shatter in the event."

Orwell is 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. "Man is the only creature that consumes without producing" is, of
course, an ironic variation of Marxian anti-capitalism.

The employment of biological language in a political context is obviously related. We begin to be aware of the complexity of this seemingly simple little book. It is not simple political allegory, but neither is it merely classical satire built on multiple or "receding planes." The various levels interact thematically: Animals are like humans; humans are, pojoratively, only like animals; human politics are really no more profound than natural biology. The social revolution per se is not the object of his satire. He emphasizes that no matter how bad things become for the animals later and they do become bad-the animals "were far better off than they had been in the days of Jones." Though this fact will itself have to be qualified, there is a justness in the statement.

The revolution sprung, not from theory, but from real, natural need. No matter how corrupt the ideals of the revolution become, Orwell never questions the validity of the uprising. The target here is not social-and socialistic revolution, contrary to the many who simply want to see the book as a satire of communism, but rather the target is the inability of humans to live within a community of ideals. The positive aspects of the rebellion achieve their high peak with the codification of the "unalterable law by which all the animals on Animal Farm must live ever after", the Seven Commandments:

1. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.
2. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.
3. No animal shall wear clothes.
4. No animal shall sleep in a bed.
5. No animal shall drink alcohol.
6. No animal shall kill any other animal.
7. All animals are equal."

This "unalterable law" provides the major structural basis for the rest of the fable. For this point in the plot reveals a gradual alteration of these commandments, ending in the well-known contradiction that epitomizes the new nature of the farm at the end of the book.

Selfishness is the note on which the pioneers of the revolution follow the spontaneous and successful take-over of the farm and the articulation of unselfish ideals by which all the animals are to live. We see further spoiling of the revolution's ideals as the pigs supervise rather than work. From the beginning, all animals are not equal. But
one must be careful. In light of what is to happen, it is easy to see that the pigs’ managerial role is further foreshadowing of the ultimate perversion of the Seventh Commandment, or that Orwell thinks that all revolutions are inevitably self-corrupting. That capable people are inevitably evil; or, conversely, that evil people are inevitably the most capable.

In addition, though the animals work hard, there is no leisure. Each animal works “according to his capacity”⁴². The Marxian slogan at the base of the success of the farm seems to me to prove conclusively that Orwell does not question socialistic ideology. He does question the failure of ideology to accommodate human variety, implicit in the missing half of the quotation.

It is important that these animals are portrayed kindly and humorously: The cat, for example, “always made such excellent excuses, and purred so affectionately, that it was impossible not to believe in her good intentions”⁴³. We soon learn the real nature of these “good intentions.” The cat is spied one day talking to some sparrows who were “just out of her 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”⁴⁴.

Orwell reminds us of natural instinct and its inevitable conflict with political absolutism. Clover finds sugar and several ribbons hidden under the straw in her stall. And so Mollie disappears, to be seen pulling a cart, her coat “newly clipped and she wore a scarlet ribbon around her forelock. She appeared to be enjoying herself, so the pigeons said”⁴⁵. In political terms, she is, of course, a heretic, and her selfish behaviour is inconsistent with selfless social ideals. But there is no intention on Orwell’s part to criticize her. He rather suggests that too strict attention to the harsh social demands of life obscures the love of beauty in the world. Any criticism seems rather to be directed at a political norm which makes the aesthete the apostate. While the humans, hearing in the song of Animal Farm “a prophecy of their future doom,”⁴⁶ invade the farm.

At the meeting in which the final vote for approval is to be taken, nine enormous dogs, “as ferocious as wolves,” suddenly appear and chase Snowball off the farm; the dogs return and sit by Napoleon, wagging their tails, “as the other dogs had
been used to do with Mr. Jones"47. And it is just a short time until Squealer appears to announce blandly that Napoleon, "who had advocated it from the beginning," himself proposes the building of the windmill. More is suggested here than the simple power struggle attendant on all revolutions, or the more specific overthrow of Trotsky, the party theoretician and planner, by calculating Stalin.

**Irony and Symbols**

The symbol of the windmill suggests much about Orwell's complex attitudes toward the political concepts within the story well beyond the primary irony of the pigs' manipulation of the hopes of *Animal Farm's* animals. The windmill has Quixotic overtones: Orwell suggests that the way the animals focus all their efforts on building it is a false and deluded if not a heroic struggle. The windmill becomes the means by which Napoleon controls deviation; he uses it to direct the animals' attention away from the growing shortages and inadequacies on the farm, and the animals ignorantly concentrate all their efforts on building the windmill—but its symbolic nature suggests an empty concentration, a meaningless, unheroic effort, for the idea is literally misguided.

At the same time the symbol works in other directions. The windmill is analogous in the political allegory to the New Economic Policy. As such, it functions in much the same way as do other symbols of secular paradise in twentieth century writing.

In *Animal Farm*, precise religious satire is confined to Moses, the raven, who talks to the animals of "a mysterious country called Sugarcandy Mountain, to which all animals went when they died."48

The condemnation of religion is confined to its portrayal as an ineffectual force, with no real value, of no real harm. In *Animal Farm*, Orwell's secularism has no great need for the convenient metaphors that religion provides; the windmill is sufficient to suggest the hopeless transparency of the animals' goals.

The construction of the windmill, its subsequent destruction in a storm during which the hens hear a gun go off in the background; the allusion is probably to World War I, and its rebuilding provides the linear movement of the plot in the rest of the book. The thematic development is centred on the progressive alteration of the Seven Commandments. Two monstrous indignities are suffered by the animals, but even these are thematically secondary.
There is a bitter winter on the farm and rations become scarce: "starvation seemed to stare them in the face." A scapegoat is needed, and Snowball is conveniently used by Napoleon—who blatantly tells the other animals that not only is Snowball responsible for all the mysterious destruction that suddenly begins to occur on the farm, but that his brave actions in fighting the humans at the Battle of the Cowshed, which all the animals witnessed, had never happened. This is, of course, a direct prevision of the rewriting of history in 1984. Four days later, after being warned by Napoleon that Snowball's secret agents are still among them, the animals are ordered to assemble in the yard. Suddenly the dogs attack four of the other pigs and Boxer; but Boxer easily fights them off.

"Presently the tumult died down. The four pigs waited, trembling, with guilt written on every line of their countenances. Napoleon now called upon them to confess their crimes. They were the same four pigs as had protested when Napoleon abolished the Sunday meetings. Without any further prompting they confessed that they had been secretly in touch with Snowball ever since his expulsion, that they had collaborated with him in destroying the windmill, and that they had entered into an agreement with him to hand over Animal Farm to Mr. Frederick. They added that Snowball had privately admitted to them that he had been Jones' secret agent for years past. When they had finished their confession, the dogs promptly tore their throats out, and in a terrible voice Napoleon demanded whether any other animal had anything to confess."

It is not the threat of violence, even the radically inexplicable self-violence which the deracinated individual most, ironically, bring upon himself for his own secular salvation in a wholly political world, nor the war, nor the social injustice that man is suffering that is the cancer of our times, but the loss of "objective truth." Choices vanish in a society which has no bases for choice.

The most darkly pessimistic aspect of Animal Farm is that the animals are unable even to recognize their new oppression, much less combat it. The difference is that the pigs control language; Mr. Jones controlled only action—not thought. When Napoleon's vicious dogs attack him, Boxer simply "put out his great hoof, caught a dog in mid air, and pinned him to the ground. The dog shrieked for mercy and the other two fled with their tails between their legs." But Boxer is stupid; he cannot comprehend the present, much less conceptualize the past. The most complex thought
that Boxer can express is "If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right."

To Benjamin, the social and political situation is irrelevant. Human nature suffers and prospers in the same degree, no matter who is the master. He believes "that things never had been, nor ever could be much better or much worse-hunger, hardship and disappointment being, so he said, the unalterable law of life." We know too much about Orwell's social beliefs from other contexts to assume that Benjamin speaks for Orwell here. He demonstrates the Orwellian heinous sin of irresponsible intelligence. Napoleon's totalitarian rule so portrayed, there is little suspense in the outcome of the situation the novel describes.

The social and economic hopes of the revolution may have become lost in the actualities of history, but the primary political gain of the revolution remains valid for the animals. Orwell articulates this one, final achievement of the animals.

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

Manor Farm, and that in the final image of the book, the pigs become indistinguishable from the humans.

Power inevitably corrupts the best of intentions, apparently no matter who possesses the power. At the end, all the representatives of the various ideologies are indistinguishable, they are all pigs, all pigs are humans. Communism is no better and no worse than capitalism or Fascism; the ideals of socialism were long ago lost in Clover's uncomprehending gaze over the farm. Religion is merely a toy for the corrupters, neither offensive nor helpful to master or slave. But perhaps more distressing yet is the realization that everyone, the good and the bad, the deserving and the wicked, are not only contributors to the tyranny, are not only powerless before it, but are unable to understand it.

It seems to me that the basis of this society's evil is the inability of its inhabitants to ascertain truth and that this is demonstrated through the theme of the corruption of language. So long as the animals cannot remember the past, because it is continually altered, they have no control over the present and hence over the future. A society which cannot control its language is, says Orwell, doomed to be oppressed in terms which deny it the very most elemental aspects of humanity. To live in a world which allows the revised form of the Seventh Commandment of Animal Farm is not
merely to renounce the belief in the possibility of human equality, but in the blatant perversion of language; the very concept of objective reality is lost.

The mode by which the recognition of reality is denied is the corruption of language. When a society no longer maintains its language as a common basis by which value, idea, and fact are to be exchanged, those who control the means of communication have the most awful of powers-they literally can create the truth they choose. Animal Farm, then, seems to be in one respect only an extension of Burmese Days-the common problem is the failure of communication and its corollary, community. But if in Burmese Days their failure was contingent, in Animal Farm it is brought about by wilful manipulation. The next logical step is seen in 1984, where the consequences press to the premonition of apocalypse.

Conclusion

In short, the unalterable law of Seven Commandments devised the major structural irony for this socio-political fable. Farms and revolutions need leaders, managers, and, for all their evil, the pigs are the most capable animals on the farms. In this novel Orwell may be suggesting that capable people are inevitable evil, or evil people are inevitably the most capable. Orwell’s political and literary insights are not limited to any one terrible conflict. In his writings we see many of the significant intellectual perceptions of our culture. Where else can we better find these examples other than in Animal Farm.

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