

ANIMAL FARM



GEORGE
ORWELL

Animal Farm by George Orwell: An Academic Review of Revolutionary Degeneration and the Rise of New Elites

Bibliographic Information: Orwell, George. *Animal Farm*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1945.

I. Introduction and the Author's Central Thesis

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is one of the best-known political allegories of the twentieth century. Although it is written as a short novella, the work offers an important insight into how revolutionary movements can gradually lose their original ideals and turn into systems of concentrated power.

The central thesis of the novella suggests that an egalitarian revolution, when it lacks strong institutions, legal safeguards, and mechanisms of accountability, can eventually produce a new ruling elite. Orwell does not simply criticize one historical regime; he also raises a broader question about how power can corrupt political ideals when it is left unchecked.

II. Methodological Analysis and Core Concepts

Animal Farm can be connected to several important theories in political science and sociology. Orwell's portrayal of the pigs' rise to power reflects ideas found in Robert Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy and Vilfredo Pareto's theory of the circulation of elites.

- **Revolutionary charisma and bureaucratization:** At the beginning of the story, the pigs appear as intellectual leaders of the revolution. Over time, however, their leadership becomes increasingly bureaucratic and hierarchical, which resembles Max Weber's discussion of charismatic authority turning into a more formalized system of rule.
- **Manipulation of laws and language:** The "Seven Commandments" initially symbolize the ideals of equality and justice. As the pigs gain more power, these commandments are gradually altered to justify their privileges. For example, the commandment "No animal shall drink alcohol" is changed to "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess," showing how legal principles can be manipulated for the benefit of those in power.
- **Class exploitation and unequal distribution:** The novella also illustrates how the rhetoric of equality can coexist with economic inequality. Boxer, the hardworking horse, represents the laboring class whose effort sustains the farm, while the pigs increasingly enjoy the rewards and privileges produced by the animals' collective labor.

III. Academic Contribution and Comparative Analysis

Animal Farm is widely interpreted as an allegorical representation of the 1917 Russian Revolution and the later development of the Soviet Union under Stalin. The major characters correspond to important historical figures and political forces:

- Snowball represents the idealistic and theoretical wing of the revolution, often associated with Leon Trotsky.
- Napoleon represents Joseph Stalin and the consolidation of authoritarian power.
- Squealer represents the propaganda machinery of the totalitarian state, which manipulates information and public opinion.

From a political science perspective, the novella effectively demonstrates how authoritarian regimes can maintain legitimacy by creating constant threats and enemies, such as Mr. Jones or Snowball. This strategy helps the ruling elite justify repression and discourage dissent among the population.

IV. Critical Perspectives and Limitations

Despite its strengths, *Animal Farm* has some limitations as a political model. Because Orwell presents complex political processes through the behavior of animals, the novella can oversimplify the many social, economic, and historical factors that shape real revolutions.

For instance, the story gives relatively little attention to international relations, economic conditions, technological change, or geopolitical pressures. In addition, Orwell's narrative sometimes appears highly deterministic, suggesting that revolutionary movements are almost certain to become authoritarian. Some critics argue that this leaves too little room for the possibility of successful democratic institutionalization.

V. Conclusion

Overall, *Animal Farm* remains a powerful and valuable text for political sociology. Orwell's novella shows how quickly ideals of equality and justice can be undermined when accountability is weak and political power becomes concentrated in the hands of a small elite.

While the work was originally written as a critique of Stalinism, its broader insights continue to be relevant for understanding authoritarian tendencies in many political systems. For this reason, *Animal Farm* is still an important case study on the relationship between revolution, power, and institutional accountability.

(Biloliddin Boymurotov, 13.10.2025)