

Maintaining Power:

History has shown time after time that those in power will do anything to keep that power. George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is a masterfully crafted allegory that shows the dangers of dictatorial actions and the ways they manipulate others. Even though this novel was written over 80 years ago, it remains increasingly more relevant in current U.S politics. To maintain control, those in power exploit fear and ignorance, as seen through Orwell's successful use of personification, irony and symbolism in *Animal Farm*.

One of the most successful literary devices Orwell uses is personification. He does this by giving human traits to the animals which helped Orwell emphasize the political messages within the story. For example, the pigs, in particular Napoleon and Squealer, are depicted as manipulative and dictatorial figures. Napoleon rises to power as the leader of the farm with the initial desire to institute equality among the animals of the farm, yet he primarily creates a dictatorship while becoming a true dictator of the farm, silencing anybody who opposes him. This was evident when Napoleon uses fear and violence to maintain control, like "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." (75) This shocking moment shows a clear shift from a society that prioritizes equality to a ruthless dictatorship. These actions by Napoleon mirror some tactics that are seen in modern U.S politics. For example, Donald Trump initially campaigned with promises to "drain the swamp" and fight for

the working class but later showed dictatorial actions when he attempted to silence the free press, told his supporters to storm the capital and claiming the 2020 election was rigged in order to undermine the integrity of the U.S constitution. Squealer essentially just spreads Napoleon's propaganda to the other animals, convincing them Napoleon's actions are for their benefit. Through the use of personification, Orwell highlights how those in power exploit others by using censorship and promoting false narratives.

Additionally, irony plays a huge role in shaping how fear and ignorance is exploited. For instance, the original commandments and ideals are slowly abandoned throughout the story. The animals initially meant to create their own society of equality. Yet, at the end of the novel, the pigs became just like the humans they hated in the first place. The ironic final commandment, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others," not only forces the reader to acknowledge the shift in focus, but that the hierarchical quality of the situation has changed. Thus, the use of irony in *Animal Farm* solidifies the idea that those in control manipulate a fearful, ignorant, unsuspecting majority so that no one will question them or their fallacies and authoritative power. This theme resonates with modern-day America as well, with politicians nationwide being corrupted, and supporting one cause merely to get elected and supporting another cause to get themselves more money. In addition, so much disinformation spreads from politically motivated cable news outlets and social media. Napoleon and Squealer's fabricated tales to get what they want to keep the powerful in charge are very much a reality today as well. For example, during the Battle of the Cowshed, Squealer says "Do you not remember how, just at the moment when Jones and his men had got inside the yard, Snowball suddenly turned and fled, and many animals followed him?"(73) In reality, Snowball had fought bravely, but

Squealer's propaganda convinces the animals otherwise, showing how misinformation is used to secure and maintain power.

Symbolism further reinforces Orwell's message about power and control. The farm is a smaller version of a dictatorial state, and all the events that occur during the novel represent historical figures and movements. Napoleon is an allegory for Joseph Stalin, the dictator who censored his people to hide all the bad that was happening. The dogs Napoleon fathers to keep power in his hands are the threat of secret police, frightened into murdering or injuring anyone suspected. Boxer, the faithful horse, represents the working class, beaten down to such a degree, becoming ignorant of reality which leads to their demise. The continued examples of Boxer's loyalty show how dictatorial powers depend on people with dedication for their own gain and then discard them when they are no longer useful.

Overall, through Orwell's masterful use of personification, irony, and symbolism, he effectively exposes how those in power manipulate fear and ignorance to maintain control.

Animal Farm serves as a warning to the readers to be more aware in their societies and emphasizes the importance of education and critical thinking. Orwell's argument remains relevant today in current U.S politics as there are a lot of signs of danger within our own government. reminding us to question those in power and recognize the tactics they use to maintain dominance.

WORK CITED:

Orwell, George. *Animal Farm*. Pharos Books, 2020.