

“Animal Farm” by G. Orwell: Characteristics of Personages

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Abstract:

This article examines the characters in George Orwell's "Animal Farm" as symbols of power and corruption. Napoleon represents authoritarianism, Snowball embodies betrayed ideals, and Squealer illustrates the manipulation of truth. Boxer and Benjamin reflect the exploited working class and disillusioned intellectuals. Through this analysis, the article underscores Orwell's warning about the corrupting influence of power and the necessity of vigilance against authoritarian rule, highlighting the timeless relevance of "Animal Farm".

Keywords: Animal Farm, George Orwell, character analysis, power, corruption, authoritarianism, Snowball, Napoleon, Squealer, allegory, Russian Revolution, manipulated truth, working class, disillusionment, vigilance.

Introduction

George Orwell's "Animal Farm", published in 1945, is a poignant allegorical novella that delves into the dynamics of power and corruption through the story of a group of farm animals who revolt against their human oppressor. Set against the backdrop of the Russian Revolution and the subsequent rise of the Soviet Union, the narrative employs a cast of animal characters to critique the betrayal of revolutionary ideals and the ease with which noble aspirations can be corrupted by authoritarianism. Orwell's work remains a vital commentary on the nature of political power, illustrating how those in positions of authority can exploit and manipulate others to achieve their ends. At the heart of "Animal Farm" is a rich tapestry of characters, each representing specific historical figures or societal classes. For instance, Napoleon, the shrewd pig who becomes the farm's dictator, embodies the ruthless tactics of Joseph Stalin, while Snowball, his eloquent rival, reflects the ideals of Leon Trotsky and the potential for progressive change that is ultimately thwarted. Squealer, the pig responsible for disseminating propaganda, symbolizes the manipulation

of truth and the role of media in shaping public perception. Other characters, such as Boxer, the hardworking horse, and Benjamin, the cynical donkey, represent the exploited working class and the disillusioned intellectuals who are aware of the corruption but feel powerless to enact change. Orwell's characters are not merely static representations; they evolve throughout the narrative, mirroring the trajectory of the revolution itself. Their interactions and conflicts serve as a microcosm of the broader social and political upheaval, revealing the complexities of human (and animal) nature in the face of power struggles. As the story unfolds, Orwell presents a sobering examination of how revolutions can betray their foundational principles, leading to a new form of oppression that mirrors the old.

This introduction lays the groundwork for a detailed analysis of the characters in "Animal Farm", exploring their significance in illuminating the novella's themes of power, corruption, and the cyclical nature of tyranny. By examining the traits and actions of each character, this analysis aims to uncover the moral lessons embedded in Orwell's work, highlighting its enduring relevance in discussions about governance, ethics, and the responsibilities of leaders and citizens alike. Ultimately, "Animal Farm" serves as a cautionary tale about the fragility of freedom and the vigilance required to uphold it in any society.

Materials and Methods

This character analysis of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* employs a qualitative literary analysis approach, utilizing a range of materials and methodologies to examine the characters and their symbolic significance within the novella. The following sections detail the materials used and the methods employed in this study.

Materials

Primary Text: Orwell, George. "Animal Farm". Harcourt, 1945. This edition serves as the foundational text for character analysis, thematic exploration, and the examination of allegorical elements. The text will be read and annotated to capture relevant passages related to character development and thematic representation.

Secondary Sources:

- A selection of academic articles, literary critiques, and historical analyses that discuss Orwell's "Animal Farm", its context, and its themes will be utilized. Key sources include:
- Essays from literary journals that explore the political implications of the novella, such as critiques focusing on its allegorical representation of the Russian Revolution.
- Biographies of George Orwell that provide insights into his motivations and the historical background of the period in which he wrote.
- Critiques and analyses of specific characters within "Animal Farm" to understand their roles and functions within the narrative.

Theoretical Framework: The study will be grounded in literary theory, particularly in the realms of allegory and political criticism, to interpret the characters as reflections of social and political dynamics. This includes drawing on theories of Marxism and totalitarianism to frame the analysis of power structures depicted in the text.

Methods

Textual Analysis: A close reading of "Animal Farm" was conducted to identify and analyze the characteristics, actions, and interactions of each key character. This method facilitates an understanding of how each character embodies specific themes related to power, corruption, and the

human condition. Passages that highlight key moments of character development or thematic significance will be selected for detailed examination.

Character Mapping: A character mapping technique will be utilized to visually represent the relationships between characters and their symbolic meanings. This method helps clarify the connections between individual actions and broader political allegories, enabling a more organized understanding of the interplay between characters.

Contextual Analysis: The characters will be examined in the context of the historical events surrounding the Russian Revolution and the rise of totalitarian regimes. This analysis will provide a framework for understanding how Orwell's characters serve as representations of real-life figures and movements, offering insights into the historical accuracy and implications of their portrayals.

Comparative Analysis: Comparisons will be made between the characters in "Animal Farm" and their historical counterparts to elucidate the allegorical significance. This method enhances the understanding of Orwell's commentary on power dynamics and social structures, as well as the potential for historical parallels to contemporary political situations.

Thematic Analysis: The themes of power, betrayal, and the cyclical nature of oppression will be systematically identified and analyzed in relation to each character. This approach allows for a deeper exploration of how these themes are woven throughout the narrative, highlighting Orwell's critique of both individual and collective behavior in the face of authority.

The combination of these materials and methods provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the characters in "Animal Farm". By employing qualitative literary analysis, this study aims to uncover the nuanced portrayals of power and corruption within the novella, illustrating Orwell's enduring critique of totalitarianism and the complexities of human nature in the face of authority.

The results of this analysis will contribute to a broader understanding of the moral lessons embedded in Orwell's work, highlighting its relevance in contemporary discussions about governance, ethics, and the responsibilities of leaders and citizens alike.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of characters in George Orwell's "Animal Farm" reveals profound insights into the nature of power, corruption, and the dynamics of societal change. Each character serves a dual purpose, both as a distinct personality and as a symbol of broader social and political themes. The results of this analysis are organized around key characters and the thematic implications of their actions and relationships.

Character Analysis and Thematic Implications: Napoleon, the primary antagonist, represents the corrupting influence of power. His ascent to authority reflects the shift from revolutionary ideals to oppressive rule. Initially, he champions the principles of Animalism, but as the story progresses, he becomes increasingly tyrannical, using fear and propaganda to maintain control. His actions illustrate how leaders can manipulate ideologies for personal gain, highlighting the danger of unchecked power. The discussion here emphasizes Orwell's warning about the potential for revolutions to result in new forms of tyranny.

Snowball: Snowball symbolizes the lost potential of revolutionary ideas. He embodies the vision of a better society and strives for progress through education and innovation. However, his expulsion by Napoleon showcases the brutal reality of political power struggles, where idealism is often sacrificed for authoritarian control. This character's trajectory underscores the theme of betrayal, as Snowball's vision is co-opted and distorted by those in power. The discussion focuses on the

importance of dissenting voices in a society and the risks faced by those who challenge the status quo.

Squealer: As the propagandist of the farm, Squealer represents the manipulation of truth and the role of media in shaping public perception. His ability to twist language and facts to suit Napoleon's agenda highlights the theme of deception in political discourse. Squealer's rhetoric serves to confuse and control the other animals, illustrating how language can be weaponized to maintain power. The analysis emphasizes the critical need for transparency and accountability in leadership and the dangers of propaganda in undermining democratic values.

Boxer: Boxer epitomizes the working class's loyalty and strength, symbolizing the exploited labor force in any society. His unwavering dedication to the farm and his famous motto, "I will work harder," reflect the idealistic spirit of the proletariat. However, his tragic fate—being sold to the glue factory—serves as a stark reminder of the betrayal faced by those who blindly follow authority without questioning it. This character's story prompts a discussion about the exploitation of workers and the moral obligation of society to protect the vulnerable.

Benjamin: Benjamin, the cynical donkey, represents the disillusioned intellectual who understands the flaws in the system yet remains apathetic. His skepticism and refusal to engage actively in the revolution suggest a critical view of the potential for meaningful change. Benjamin's character invites discussion on the role of intellectuals in society and the dangers of complacency in the face of injustice. This analysis stresses the importance of active participation in governance and the responsibilities of educated individuals to advocate for the greater good.

Thematic Insights: The interplay between these characters reveals key themes central to "Animal Farm". The cyclical nature of oppression is evident in how the animals' initial revolt leads to a new form of tyranny, mirroring historical patterns of revolution. Orwell's narrative illustrates that without vigilance and accountability, revolutionary movements can devolve into the very systems they sought to overthrow. The analysis reinforces the idea that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely, a timeless lesson relevant to contemporary discussions on governance and civic responsibility.

The results of this character analysis highlight George Orwell's incisive critique of power dynamics, corruption, and the complexities of social change. Through the characters in "Animal Farm", Orwell warns of the ease with which noble ideals can be subverted by authoritarianism. The discussion underscores the relevance of these themes in understanding contemporary political structures and the need for continuous scrutiny of those in power. By engaging with Orwell's work, readers are prompted to reflect on their roles within society and the importance of protecting democratic values against the encroachment of tyranny.

Conclusion

In conclusion, George Orwell's "Animal Farm" serves as a powerful allegory that explores the dynamics of power, corruption, and societal change through its richly drawn characters. The analysis reveals how each character embodies specific themes and reflects historical figures and ideologies, illustrating the complexities of revolutionary movements and the potential for new forms of tyranny to emerge from the ashes of old regimes. Napoleon's rise to power exemplifies the corrupting influence of authority, while Snowball's tragic fate underscores the loss of idealism in the face of political machinations. Squealer's manipulative rhetoric highlights the role of propaganda in shaping public perception, while Boxer's loyalty and ultimate betrayal serve as a poignant reminder of the exploitation faced by the working class. Benjamin's cynicism calls attention to the dangers of apathy and disengagement among intellectuals in times of social upheaval. Ultimately, Orwell's narrative emphasizes the cyclical nature of oppression and the critical need for vigilance, accountability, and active participation in governance. The themes

presented in “Animal Farm” resonate deeply in contemporary discussions about power structures, the responsibilities of leadership, and the importance of safeguarding democratic ideals against the threat of authoritarianism. By engaging with the lessons embedded in Orwell’s work, readers are encouraged to reflect on their roles in society and the ongoing struggle for justice and equality.

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