

ANIMAL FARM
BY GEORGE ORWELL

ALLEGORY: A STORY IN WHICH THE CHARACTERS, SETTING AND EVENTS STAND FOR ABSTRACT OR MORAL CONCEPTS. ALLEGORIES HAVE TWO MEANINGS: A LITERAL MEANING AND A SYMBOLIC MEANING THAT FLOWS BENEATH THE SURFACE STORY.

FABLE: A SHORT STORY MEANT TO TEACH A MORAL, ESPECIALLY ONE USING ANIMALS OR INANIMATE OBJECTS AS CHARACTERS.

TOTALITARIANISM: A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IN WHICH ONE POLITICAL PARTY AIMS AT TOTAL CONTROL OVER THE LIVES OF PEOPLE. TOTALITARIAN GOVERNMENTS USUALLY EMPLOY A POWERFUL SECRET POLICE; RESTRICT MEETINGS AND CENSOR PUBLICATIONS IN ORDER TO SUPPRESS OPPOSITION AND CRITICISM. A DICTATORSHIP IS A FORM OF TOTALITARIANISM WHERE A SINGLE PERSON CONTROLS THE LIVES OF PEOPLE.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TOTALITARIANISM:

ORGANIZED VIOLENCE/ POLICE TERROR: FORCE USED TO CRUSH ALL OPPOSITION

PROPAGANDA: ONE-SIDED INFORMATION TO PERSUADE & INFLUENCE, SUPPORT THE STATE ONLY

CENSORSHIP: ONLY OFFICIAL VERSIONS OF INFORMATION ARE ALLOWED-ALL OTHER INFORMATION IS LIMITED, SUPPRESSED OR DESTROYED

CULT OF THE INDIVIDUAL/ SINGLE STRONG LEADER: GLORIFICATION OR DEIFICATION OF POLITICAL LEADER. LEADER IS ELEVATED TO GOD-LIKE STATUS.

STATE CONTROL OVER THE INDIVIDUAL: DEMAND OF TOTAL UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE & SACRIFICE FOR THE STATE.

STATE CONTROL OVER SOCIETY: CONTROL OF BUSINESS, EDUCATION, FAMILY, HOUSING, RELIGION, ETC.

IDEOLOGY OF THE STATE: GLORIFIED AIMS OF THE STATE USED TO JUSTIFY ALL GOVERNMENT ACTION.

DICTATORSHIP / ONE PARTY RULE: ABSOLUTE CONTROL MAINTAINED BY A SINGLE LEADER OR PARTY. THE STRUCTURE OF A TOTALITARIAN DICTATORSHIP LOOKS LIKE A TRIANGLE; THE SINGLE LEADER OR PARTY WHO REIGNS AT THE TOP CONTROLS *EVERYTHING*.

UTOPIA: THE IDEAL SOCIETY, PERFECT EXISTENCE FOR MAN ON EARTH

THEME: ORWELL'S THEME IN THE NOVEL IS THAT GOOD WILL AND NOBLE IDEALS WILL ULTIMATELY BE BETRAYED OR PERVERTED BY EVILS THAT ARE INHERENT IN HUMAN NATURE.

PLOT: AFTER THE OVERTHROW OF MR. JONES, THE PIGS, LED BY NAPOLEON, SLOWLY BEGIN TO UNDERMINE THE UTOPIAN DREAM OF THE REVOLUTION AND TURN IT INTO A DICTATORSHIP.

HISTORICAL: THE NOVEL IS ALSO A FABLE THAT TRACES THE HISTORICAL EVENTS OF THE RUSSIAN BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION OF 1917. DURING THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, THE REIGNING CZAR AND ALL OF THE RULING RUSSIAN ARISTOCRACY WERE OVERTHROWN AND PUT TO DEATH. THE BOLSHEVIK (LIT. "MAJORITY PARTY") DREAM FOLLOWED THE TEACHINGS OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHER KARL MARX, AUTHOR OF THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO. THE DREAM OF THE BOLSHEVIKS AND COMMUNIST TEACHING WAS TO GIVE THE LAND BACK TO THE PEOPLE AND RESTRUCTURE GOVERNMENT SO THAT ALL COULD SHARE EQUALLY THE WEALTH OF THEIR LABOR. SHORTLY AFTER THE REVOLUTION HOWEVER, THOSE WHO TOOK POWER BEGAN TO ABUSE IT TO THEIR OWN ENDS, AND IN FACT COMMUNIST RUSSIA BECAME A TOTALITARIAN DICTATORSHIP.

CHARACTERS & CORRESPONDING HISTORICAL COUNTERPARTS:

OLD MAJOR: KARL MARX, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHER, AUTHOR OF THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

SNOWBALL: TROTSKY

NAPOLEON: STALIN

BOXER: REPRESENTS THE PATIENT, PLODDING MASSES, THE ORDINARY MAN WHO WORKS FAITHFULLY AND THEN DIES WITHOUT COMPLAINT.

BENJAMIN: THE PERPETUAL SKEPTIC

MOSES: RELIGION

SQUEALER: STALIN'S PROPAGANDA AGENT.

JONES: CZAR NICHOLAS II, RUSSIAN ARISTOCRACY

FREDERICK AND PINCHFIELD FARM: GERMANY

PILKINGTON AND FOXWOOD FARM: BRITAIN

MAN: MARX'S CAPITALISTS

ANIMALS: THE WORKING MAN

THE ANTHEM/ THE FLAG: A UNIFYING DEVICE, EASY TO RECITE & RECOGNIZE

BATTLE OF THE WINDMILL: REPRESENTS GERMAN INVASION OF RUSSIA DURING WORLD WAR II

ANIMALISM: COMMUNISM, THE IDEAL PHILOSOPHY OF A GOVERNMENT.

SUGAR CANDY MOUNTAIN: ANIMAL HEAVEN

RIBBONS/ "BADGES OF SLAVERY": SYMBOLS OF STATUS

7 COMMANDMENTS: 10 COMMANDMENTS, BILL OF RIGHTS

SPECULATION ABOUT CAUSES ASSIGNMENT:

TRACE THE LITERAL AND ALLEGORICAL PROCESS OF THE CORRUPTION OF THE DREAM OF THE PERFECT SOCIETY INTO A TOTALITARIAN NIGHTMARE.

WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL UTOPIAN DREAM OF THE ANIMALS?

HOW WAS THE UTOPIAN DREAM TRANSFORMED AND CORRUPTED?

LITERAL: WHAT DID THE PIGS DO? WHAT DID THE OTHER ANIMALS DO, OR NOT DO?

HOW DID THE ANIMALS' IGNORANCE AND FAILURE TO ACT AID THE PIGS?

ALLEGORICAL: WHAT CHARACTER TRAITS DO THE ANIMALS EXHIBIT THAT ARE INHERENT EVILS OF HUMAN NATURE?

LOOK AT THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TOTALITARIANISM ABOVE TO HELP YOU IDENTIFY THE TACTICS THAT THE PIGS USE TO MANIPULATE POWER FOR THEIR OWN SELF-INTEREST.