

The story of an opposition group that came to power with the support of the people and failed to live up to its promises has been repeated across the world for centuries. This was especially true of the many communist revolutions that took place in the 20th century, none more so than the one that started it all. The Soviet Union was molded out of the ruins of the Russian empire, promising everything the old empire had failed to deliver. Its promise sounded simple, they would simply eliminate the upper class and form a society with total equality. The first part was shockingly successful, but the second was soon determined unviable and quietly pushed to the curb. These are the aspects of revolution that Orwell seeks to examine in *Animal Farm*, largely due to his firsthand experiences. Orwell had been a leftist for most of his life, and in 1936 he went to Spain to fight for the leftists against the Francoists, however when he was there, he was targeted by other factions of leftists when they gained control of Barcelona. Specifically, this can be seen throughout chapter 10 of *Animal Farm*, where George Orwell utilizes techniques such as allusion and irony with a satirical tone in order to cleverly demonstrate the hypocrisy and deviation from ideals that occurs when groups that rebel successfully come to power.

The core strength of Orwell's parallel of the occurrences on the farm to the real-world rests on the continuous allusion to the Soviet Union, making this an absolutely critical step for taking the ideas Orwell expresses through the animals and applying them to human activity. One of the strongest parallels that persists throughout the book but is especially emphasized in chapter 10 is the one between the pigs and the upper echelons of Soviet leadership. The Soviet system was initially designed to give everyone equal access to

resources, but the phrase “power corrupts” has perhaps never been shown to be so true on such a large scale. My grandfather once told me a story about the corruption in the Soviet Union from his experience growing up there: “There were allotment cards that we had received that were meant to give us the ability to purchase some fruits and chocolates that were normally impossible to find. We were supposed to purchase them from the next shipment by going to the store to buy them. In theory, enough should have been sent so that every person in the district that had received a card would be able to buy one. There was only one issue, every single intermediary took a part of the shipment from the time they were picked to the time they were sold. This started with the pickers, then the shipping workers and finally the store employees themselves. The worst offenders though were the local administration because they were the ones that did the count, they didn’t have the risk of facing any repercussions for their actions as they could explain away any difference in the final quantity of goods. Sometimes higher-level officials would even make this state-sanctioned, as they were able to create rules which helped them receive more of the allotments than others. They took so much in total that we would show up around 5:30 am every day to wait in line for hours in the hopes of being able to get some of the remnants of the shipment.” This pairs well with the corruption emphasized in *Animal Farm*, “pigs had to expend enormous labours every day upon mysterious things called "files," "reports," "minutes," and "memoranda" ... and as soon as they were so covered, they were burnt in the furnace” (Orwell 142). The pigs here failed to do much productive work at all, with their only goal being to increase their status and power by any means necessary as well as consuming the resources produced by the working population. Corruption of authority is a

common reason for the beginning of rebellions, and the fact that this features so prominently in Orwell's description of a post-revolutionary government is crucial in understanding his desire to demonstrate the similarities between his animal government and the USSR. An additional parallel that is clearly depicted in chapter 10 which strengthens the real-world mirroring is the enormous power and ridiculousness of propaganda. The USSR had one of the most expansive and long-lasting propaganda machines ever seen in history, with production exaggerated and the people convinced the government was helping them as well as indoctrinated into a hatred of the bourgeoisie. Additionally, the hateful and violent propaganda also has parallels to another regime despised by Orwell, the Nazi party in Germany which used the fear of "untermenchen" or "lower races" to justify horrific actions and inspire fanatical devotion. The parallel with Nazi Germany's propaganda is a bit dubious because the external force in *Animal Farm* is considered aggressive rather than subversive, and it is overall more similar to Soviet propaganda despite the separation of the living things by the way they were born. Orwell really drives home the point of how the government uses propaganda to trick the people, specifically referencing Soviet propaganda in this line, "they had nothing to go upon except Squealer's lists of figures, which invariably demonstrated that everything was getting better and better" (Orwell 142). This is a sardonic parallel to the actions of the Soviet Union and the many famines that occurred across the 20s and 30s even though the government claimed that food production was on the rise. Overall, Orwell's use of extremely specific allusions is used to tie the fictional story to the many horrific events that occurred in real

life in order to help the reader understand and sympathize with the ideas presented in the book by channeling their genuine reactions and emotions to the events this book satirizes.

Orwell uses a lot of irony in this text to help carry across his point by forcing the reader to think about the insanity and unfairness of what occurred. This irony is most clear when discussing the animals' commandments and their opinions about the actions of the pigs. In chapter 10 is one of the most famous parts of this text, where Benjamin reads the only Commandment left, "ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS" (Orwell 145). This phrase is particularly ironic and paradoxical, due to the contradiction between the two parts of the statement. Another ironic statement about the new order the pigs have instituted was in was made when "Mr. Pilkington once again congratulated the pigs on the low rations, the long working hours, and the general absence of pampering which he had observed on Animal Farm" (Orwell 151). The irony in this statement is beautifully written, highlighting the ways in which the pigs have made life more difficult for the other animals and how their repression is more effective which is ironic because this the exact opposite of what a government should be doing for its citizens. Crucially, both examples of irony are purposefully made extremely blatant and ridiculous to highlight the complacency of the population and the degeneration of the government. Both examples use an irony pushed to absurdity to help Orwell complete the pig's transformation into oppressors, perfectly

encapsulating the way in which rebels do the very things they fought against when given the chance.

In summation, the evidence demonstrates how throughout chapter 10 of *Animal Farm*, George Orwell utilized techniques such as allusion and irony with a satirical tone to cleverly demonstrate the hypocrisy and deviation from ideals that occurs when groups that rebel successfully come to power. When Orwell writes this book, it is critical to think why he wrote it. Was this just a reaction to the events in his world or was he trying to teach us something? Perhaps it was the former, but just in case it wasn't, maybe next time you hear something that sounds well-meaning but extreme stop for a second and question it in depth.

Bibliography:

Orwell, George. 'Chapter X'. *Animal Farm*, Secker & Warburg, 1995, pp.140-157