

How does orwell explore the theme of education in 'animal farm'?

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



How Does Orwell Explore The Theme Of Education In Animal Farm? 'All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others'. George Orwell writes this toward the end of his highly acclaimed allegory, Animal Farm. From this single statement we can tell quite a bit about Orwell's views on education which he puts across strongly throughout the novel. A message I see that this statement portrays is that everyone has the right to an education but some people were getting a better education than others at the time.

During this essay I will be arguing that George Orwell was critical of the education system in 1945 (the year the book was written) and that he aired his views, hidden as they were, in many places through the book. One of the ways he used to put across his views was to use biblical references. Orwell was strongly anti-Christianity and he put this across in the novel partly through his reference to the bible's ten commandments by creating a list of rules that the animals must live by entitled 'The Seven Commandments'. No animal shall kill any other animal without cause'. The last two words were added by Squealer under the orders of Napoleon, adding their own twist on Old Major's original commandments thus tweaking them to their advantage. This was not the only commandment to be edited: in fact all of them were but only slightly, just enough so the pigs wouldn't be breaking any and so the other animals wouldn't notice. The pigs were able to use the fact that they were educated well as an advantage over the other animals in order to do what they liked and get away with it.

The fact that Orwell used the commandments in this way, just that the pigs were changing them so regularly seemed to me rather disrespectful of the Christian faith and when seen like this, Orwell's religious views are blatantly obvious. From this part of the book I remembered being taught about priests in the Anglo-Saxon times and how they had been educated well before beginning their ministry. They would ask for money from the innocent but fairly foolish and uneducated people worshipping or just visiting the church and the priests would say if they hand over the money, they would avoid purgatory and go straight to heaven.

To these poor people, this seemed like the perfect solution for the problem and hand over their money is just what they did. This links in with the book in that the priests would use the fact that they were educated in their favour to brainwash these unknowing people just as the pigs did to the other animals in the book. Another element of education Orwell is critical of is the private education system. ' The pigs and dogs were educated separately to the other animals'.

This brings in Karl Marx's ideas of class and hierarchy in society. Marx's writings formed the theoretical base for modern international communism, the idea of a classless society in which everyone is equal and nothing is privately owned. As we know Animal Farm is an allegory of the Russian revolution in 1917 during which Joseph Stalin (portrayed in the novel as Napoleon) and Leon Trotsky (Snowball) fought for power after the defeat of Tsar Nicholas II and the monarchy.

When Stalin came to power and exiled Trotsky, he began to form the new Soviet Union around the basis of Marx's writings and the fact that the pigs and dogs were educated separately to the other animals shows that before Stalin's seizure of power, class and hierarchy still remained in Russia. The pigs and dogs represent the nobles and government who were all seen as superior to the lower, working class citizens and were therefore privately educated.

If there was to be equality amongst the animals on the farm, they should all have been treated exactly the same and this would mean they should be educated in the same way. However, this wasn't what happened and the pigs and dogs continued to see themselves as better than the other animals. Orwell really wasn't a fan of the private education system, as I said at the beginning; he wanted an education for everyone and the same education for everyone at that. Orwell continues to represent class on the farm through the character of Boxer.

Boxer represents the lower, working class who were uneducated and inferior to the nobles and government, in this case the pigs and dogs. ' I will work harder. ' and ' Napoleon is always right. ' his mottos show just how loyal and hard-working he was. Boxer would work and work until he was at the point of collapsing and this is just what the working class of Russia would do, slaving away their today for a better tomorrow. Boxer is key in building the windmill, which represents change, the change that Boxer wants to bring to the farm through his hard work and determination.

Boxer may have had all these credits but what Orwell uses Boxer to say is that no matter how physically strong you are, it's nothing compared to knowledge and mental strength. When Napoleon tells Boxer he is to retire after he collapsed whilst working, Boxer naively gets on the van that is not really to take him to where he will retire, but to the knackers' yard to be killed. Even though Boxer was so driven and committed in what he did, he wasn't able to spot that Napoleon was tricking him because he wasn't nearly as well educated as Napoleon.

So to cut a long story short, the fact that Boxer was poorly educated eventually lead to his demise. The pigs as we know by now, were the best educated but they gradually demoralise through the novel. ' All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others'. This quote for me epitomises the whole part the pigs play in the book in that the great advantage they once had over the other animals because they were educated had now just become plain ignorance. Orwell uses the pigs in Animal Farm to tell us not to let education go to our heads but to respect it and appreciate it.

Not only this but Orwell also wanted to tell us through the pigs the dangers of power and to appreciate it also. The pigs wanted to look like they strived for equality, to look like they were doing things for the good of everyone when really everything they said and did was for the benefit of themselves. Almost all of the seven commandments had something to do with the importance of not letting the pigs' ways become human, which is exactly what had happened by the end of the book. The creatures outside looked

from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again: but already it was impossible to say which was which'. That the pigs had changed so much the other animals couldn't identify them amongst the humans is pretty shocking. One of the most important points of the whole ideology of Animalism (which allegorically speaking refers to communism) is that the animals should always remain animals and never adopt human characteristics like drinking alcohol or sleeping in a bed and these rules were all layed out clearly in the seven commandments.

In conclusion, George explores the theme of education in Animal Farm in many ways. He uses the allegory to refer to the different classes through different characters and how the classes were educated differently, some not at all. He uses Boxer to compare physical strength with mental strength and he also uses the pigs to warn us of the dangers of letting education ruin us and our morals. Animal Farm is a tragedy in my eyes; the original ideology of Animalism gradually fell apart piece by piece until the pigs had practically become human.

It's all well and good to have this great idea of a revolution to gain equality for animals but the pigs just couldn't see past themselves to carry out Old Major's plan and that's what makes this story so tragic. Orwell thought that everyone deserved an education, especially the working class but the people who actually got a good education just took it for granted and wasted it and I think that's the overall point he tries to put across about education in the novel. Education is powerbut power corrupts. By James Lawrence, J7.