

Social stratification and class in animal farm

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



The different classes in Animal Farm resulted in the corruption of the farm. Throughout the entire novel, a social hierarchy is present. This class-defined society in Animal Farm changes throughout the novel, but it is always there.

In the book, the classes shift from a human run society, to an animal run society, and then to a society run by the pigs on the farm. Because Animal Farm is based on the Russian Revolution, social classes are also present in Russia. During this time in Russia, the classes shifted from ultimate power of the Tsar of Russia to Stalin, the leader of Communism. No matter who is in control, a lower class is always taken advantage of and underprivileged.

The novel Animal Farm begins with a farm ruled by a single man. This farmer, Mr. Jones, is a terrible leader who does not take care of his animals, the lower class. This is similar to when Russia was ruled by Tsar Nicholas II in the early 1900s. Tsar Nicholas II would live in luxury while most of the Russian population lived in poverty. Mr. Jones also was unable to rule effectively because of his addiction to alcohol. This attribute corresponds with Tsar Nicholas II because he was also unable to rule Russia effectively. Tsar Nicholas became dictator of Russia at the age of twenty-six. This means that during this time, Russia was being ruled by a young, inexperienced dictator. Russia did not succeed under his power due to his lack of ability for him to rule. The main reason Russia did not succeed during this time was because their nation was corrupt due to the class system. In Russia, the social class system consisted of a small upper class group of people who ruled the country and lived comfortable lives, while the rest of the population had little to no privileges due to the corruption of the upper class.

As the book progresses, the animals of the farm rebel against Mr. Jones. This occurrence in the book very accurately resembles the Russian Revolution of 1917. Once Mr. Jones is gone, the animals create a list of seven commandments that they are all to live by. A synopsis of the rules would be that no animal should act like a human, and all animals are equal. By making these rules, the animals are trying to create a utopia for themselves.

At this point in the book, there is no class system. However, slowly the pigs on the farm start to take the leadership role. They start to deceive the other animals to gain power for themselves. An example of this is when the animals find out the pigs are stealing the milk and apples. The pigs trick them into thinking that in order for them to manage the farm properly, it is necessary for them to have the milk and apples. This is similar to when Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky first started to gain power after the Russian Revolution. This proves that a Communist utopia, which quickly turns into a society with class systems, cannot exist in any country.

As the pigs continue to manage the farm, they gradually start to gain more control. It then becomes a race for power between two pigs, Napoleon and Snowball. They represent Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky of Russia. This race ends with Napoleon forcibly kicking Snowball out of the farm. Once Napoleon is dictator, the class system becomes even more corrupt. When Stalin gained control, Russian citizens' freedoms were diminished. Stalin would use his KGB, a police agency, to eliminate anyone who opposed him. The KGB was also used as supervision of border troops, and the general surveillance of the population(Pringle). This is equivalent to when Napoleon uses the dogs to kill

the animals that disagree with him. Also the seven commandments that the Farm was founded on are replaced with the statement all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others”(Orwell 112).

Napoleon’s power slowly turns him into the thing that all of the animals originally destroyed, Mr. Jones. Napoleon and the other pigs become so human-like that by the end of the book, the other animals can not tell the difference between the pigs and the humans. At the end of the book, the pigs are living in the farmhouse, sleeping on beds, drinking alcohol, wearing clothes, and walking on two legs. They are essentially acting exactly like humans. The pigs’ desire for complete authority corrupted them into becoming the evil the animals originally eliminated from their society. Just like the pigs, when Joseph Stalin became dictator of Russia, the inhabitants of Russia had no rationale beyond assuring Stalin’s absolute dominance(Library of Congress).

The desire for power and authority that the pigs had resulted in the creation of the social classes on the farm. The different social classes on the farm were the main cause for the farm’s downfall. In Russia during the time of the Russian Revolution, social classes introduced a totalitarian system that gave one man all authority over a nation. A nation run by a dictatorship contains citizens that are all deprived of their freedoms, just like the animals, outside of the pigs, in Animal Farm. A society with a lower, underprivileged class is always followed by corruption, and eventually the society’s downfall.