

# A comparison of animal farm and macbeth philosophy essay



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Animal farm and Macbeth have many common elements that can be paralleled between the two stories. The both share elements such as power hungry tyrants who go to extremes to secure their power and use other as scapegoats. Even though both tyrants have similar goals they both have very different methods of reaching them.

Napoleon and Macbeth have similar goals but both chose very different paths in reaching their goals. Napoleon is the kind of leader that is not very forward about his intentions and slowly secures his power with clever manipulation and propaganda. Napoleon enslaves the animals through mental manipulation, "all animals worked like slaves, but were happy in their work; they grudged no effort or sacrifice". (Animal farm page 12) He tricks the animals and preys upon their innocence. The commandments that Napoleon set out in the beginning are often changed to benefit the pigs and when the animals question the pigs "squealer is able to convince them that their memories had been at fault". (Animal farm. pg 10) Napoleon revises these commandments whenever he wishes and as he changes these commandments he slowly converts the animals into slaves. Finally all of the animal's rights are stripped away and Napoleon makes himself supreme ruler when he begins carrying a whip and the only commandment left is "all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others"(animal farm pg. 53) Lastly all the animals are told that a windmill must be constructed to produce electricity for the farm to make life easier, however this was just a ploy to make Napoleon richer because the windmill "was used for milling corn and brought in a handsome money profit"(animal farm pg. 50). It is

quite evident that Napoleon is manipulative ruler who enslaves the animals through trickery.

Macbeth has the same basic goal as Napoleon and wishes to attain power and secure it. However he has very different methods, he uses violence and abuse to secure his power. After he does as he pleases to attain power Macbeth kills the king in cold blood who he had sworn loyalty to, this clearly shows Macbeth treacherous character. Once again it is shown that Macbeth is willing to go to an extreme to attain power when he says "The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step on which I must fall down, or else o'erleap, for in my way it lies." (1. 4. 48 - 51) this shows that Macbeth is an extremist and will eliminate anyone for power. He feels his power is ultimate and he must answer to no one and can kill whoever he likes this characteristic can be seen when he says "With barefaced power sweep him from my sight" (3. 1. 120). Since Macbeth feels he is supreme he gives the order "hang all who speak of fear" (5. 3. 37) since he orders to have people who did not commit any crime it once again shows that Macbeth does as he wants. Another example is when he has Malcolm's family murdered, these were people who did not harm Macbeth in any way but he has them murdered simply because he wishes them to die. It is clear that Macbeth is a ruthless tyrant who does as he pleases, kills who ever he wants and answers to no one.

Both Napoleon and Macbeth are tyrants that go to great lengths to protect their power. They believe in killing or chasing away anyone who undermines their power. Macbeth expresses his concerns regarding his situation with Banquo when he says "To be thus is nothing, but to be safely. Our fears in Banquo stick deep, and in his royalty of nature". (3. 1. 50-52) Due to his

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concern Macbeth has Banquo assassinated because he feels it will secure his power which is demonstrated when he says “ who wear our health but sickly in his life, which in his death were perfect”. (3. 1. 109-110) Banquo is punished for absolutely no reason, he did not commit any crime and Macbeth did it only for his selfish reason. Napoleon is also in similar situation which his comrade snowball. Napoleon feels threatened by Snowball because “ the two disagreed on at every point where disagreement was possible” (animal farm pg. 10) and “ snowball often won the majority with his brilliant speeches” (animal farm pg. 10). Due to napoleons feeling of discomfort he has Snowball chased from the farm by pack of hungry dogs. Also when people mention that they prefer snowballs leader ship over Napoleons that are killed. Both tyrants are the kind of individuals that eliminate any threat that stands in the way.

The tyrants are both warriors and play big roles in battles. Macbeth is brave general who is praised by all. The captain praises him and says “ Brave Macbeth-well he deserves that name” (1. 2. 116). The king makes him thane of Cawdor. It is quite clear that he is praised because of his bravery and valor in battle. This fondness that people develop for him empowers him greatly. Napoleon on the other hand did not do anything in the battle of cowshed and snowball received much glory. However later on snowball uses his magic with words to make everyone believe that napoleon was the brave warrior and received animal hero first class as his rewards. Even though napoleon has already taken over he still becomes empowered by it. This also helps Napoleon use Snowball as a scapegoat and convince them that he is evil.

To protect their power Napoleon and Macbeth use scapegoats to take the blame and keep their image clean. After Snowball is chased from the farm "when ever anything went wrong it became attributed to snowball". (Orwell pg. 38) Also when a key is lost " the whole farm is convinced that snowball had thrown it down the well". However even after " the mislaid key is found under a sack of meal, the animals still blame snowball" (Orwell pg. 38) Snowball is used to spur hatred towards the humans. When Napoleon is trying to sell his timber but neither farm makes him good offers " it was noticed that whenever he seemed on the point of coming to an agreement with Fredrick, snowball was declared hiding on Foxwood, when napoleon was inclined towards Pilinkgton, snowball as said to be on the other farm"(Orwell pg 40) Lastly squeal constantly tells the animals with the loss of freedom and tell them that Napoleon's leadership is absolute and when they question him he always says " you don't want Jones to come back do you" and the animals are scared and stop all questions. Macbeth also follows a very similar method. He uses the king son and has the suspicion placed on them and macduff proves this by saying " Malcolm and Donaldbain the kings two sons are stolen and fled, which put them under suspicion".(2. 4. 25-26)Also in order to get the murders co-operation Macbeth he tells them " both of you know Banquo is your enemy"(3. 1. 116-117).

A characteristic that Macbeth and Napoleon do not share is the support system. Napoleon has group of pigs that support and are very useful to him. Macbeth however does not use support system and does everything by himself. Napoleon uses his dogs to strike fear into the animals, " no one dared speak their mind, with fierce growling dogs"(Orwell pg. 52)Also

Napoleon uses squealer who has great power with words as he can "turn black into white"(Orwell pg. 6) and he uses his talent to manipulate the animals and gain support. Eventually napoleon builds a very large support group and rarely appeared in public. When he did emerge...it was with several pigs and an escort of six dogs who closely surrounded him and growled if anyone came to near" (Orwell pg. 30) Macbeth on the other hand is very lonesome person. He does not receive nay help from friends to steal the throne. The only people that helped him are hired thugs who do not care about Macbeths well being only their money. He even isolates himself from his wife, when she asks him " what is to be done" (3. 1. 44), he replies" be innocent of knowledge" and leaves her out of his plans.

In both book parallels can be drawn between the plots. Both tyrants follow different paths but have the same basic goal. The tyrants are power hungry and will do anything to secure their power. The tyrants think of themselves as ultimate rulers and do anything they please. The major difference in both book are that Macbeth concentrates on the pain of Macbeth and animal farm concentrates on the pain of the animals.