

Satire: orwell's animal farm, swift's a modest proposal assignment

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Orwell wanted to alert the world to the growing menace and hypocrisy of Communism, Swift was passionate about his native Ireland and used satire to expose the lousiness of the British parliament in ignoring the millions dying of famine in Ireland. Ben Elton's purpose was more universal to hold ourselves up to reveal the folly and greed of those who seek to rule over most of us, particularly the Generals in World War 1.

Orwell uses a deceptively simple allegory, a narrative of farm animals usurping their human owner, to caution the world about the clash between idealism and human nature in a system similar to Communism which over time loses its checks and balances, namely the right to remove a leader we don't think is good for us. Animal Farm reflects the actual events and the leaders of the Russian Revolution in the aftermath on this little farm. By reducing them to pigs, it reduces the leaders of the revolution in stature and enabled people to see their real characters.

The pigs in Animal Farm resemble the characters of the Russian Revolution; Old Napoleon is Karl Marx, Snowball the ill-fated Trotsky. Orwell directs his satirical attack through irony. Just before his death, Old Major warns the animals against mankind "All men are enemies... We must not come to resemble him... All animals are equal. However, as the novel progresses, we see the gradual change, which takes place in the pigs. At first, the pigs reserved the apples and milk for themselves, under the justification "of keeping the pigs in good health".

The pigs begin to develop more humanistic qualities, such as living in the farmhouse, sleeping in beds and eventually carrying whips and walking on

two legs. This is extremely ironic; as it conflicts with the original laws, set by Old Major, one of which was “ we must not come to resemble him (mankind’). The irony reaches its peak towards the end of the novel, where Old Major’s doctrines are completely reversed. All of the seven commandments were breached, and subsequently altered one by one. Orwell inserts the concept of totalitarianism into his novel, through the use of satire.

In *Animal Farm*, Mr. Jones, and the pigs are depicted as totalitarians, however with different justifications. Mr. Jones believes that humans’ dominance over animals is the natural order, and thus runs the farm accordingly. The pigs run the farm with the claim that they are fighting for animals against humans. Orwell’s principle point is that the justification for totalitarianism is irrelevant, since every tyranny is founded on the oppression of the individual and invariably the lower classes. A *Modest Proposal* written by the prolific pamphleteer, Jonathan Swift is also a satire even more biting than the novel *Animal Farm*.

Unlike Orwell’s animal fable, Swift adopts a completely different medium, to mirror the flaws of society, using an economist’s pamphlet to ridicule the oppression and exploitation of the Catholic Irish peasants by the English Protestants. In a response to the flaws of society, Swift promoted the idea of fattening Irish babies to sell on the meat market, much like piglets, “ A young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing and wholesome food. ” This odious comparison (of babies for food) certainly meant to horrify and disgust the readers.