

Elements of Literature and Creative Communication
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Lecture - 38
Animal Farm - 1

Hi there, welcome to our ongoing discussion on fiction. This is lecture 38, if you can quickly recall, we have been discussing fiction for three weeks now, beginning with a discussion of fiction we moved on to understanding different types of fiction, different genres of fiction, and narrative techniques used in fiction and as we had announced in our earlier classes, we are going, to begin with, a discussion on *Animal Farm*, a remarkable novel written by George Orwell.

I hope by now you have read the novel. It is in fact, a novella. Generally, it is called a novella, a very short novel because unless we apply all that we have learnt about fiction to one or two works of fiction, our understanding of fiction becomes slightly incomplete. That is the reason why I asked all of you to read this small novel, many of you may have already read it, even if you have not read it, no problem.

But please read it because of course, we will be discussing the novel straight away in this class, maybe if you have not read it please pick up the novel and read it, and then you would be able to understand this discussion all the more. And for those of you who have not read it do not worry, we are going to introduce the novel in a very detailed manner. And then apply the various narrative techniques we learnt, the various elements of fiction we learnt in the class to this particular novel and see how our understanding of this novel enhances when we apply all that we have learnt about fiction to this particular novel. *Animal Farm* by George Orwell is considered a 20th-century classic. In fact, one of the critics goes on to the extent of calling it one of the most widely read 20th-century novels.

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- George Orwell (born Eric Arthur Blair; 1903 in Motihari of Bengal region): English novelist, essayist, journalist and critic.
- *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) 'more widely read than perhaps any other serious works of the twentieth century'
- Political Allegory: A story or painting that, on the surface, tells one tale, but has a hidden political meaning underneath.
- Indian Civil Service -- a policeman in Burma
- *Burmese Days*(1934), *Homage to Catalonia*(1938), and *Road to Wigan Pier*(1937) are some of his other w

So, this indicates the iconic status the novel has come to acquire. Well though when it was published in the 1940s, it did not pick the momentum. In fact, it was not even critically recognized as a major work of fiction, most critics considered George Orwell a minor writer and *Animal Farm* a kind of second-rate work. It required the second part of the 20th century to reassess the literary importance of George Orwell, especially his *Animal Farm*, and then reevaluate and recalibrate its own critical standards.

And now they have come to call it an iconic work or an iconoclastic work. Before we discuss *Animal Farm* in a little more detailed manner let us get to know the writer George Orwell. In fact, George Orwell is an acquired name and today he is recognized as George Orwell though he was born Eric Arthur Blair in 1903.

Interestingly he was born in India of course, he is an English writer, but he is born here; he was born in Motihari of then Bengal region in 1903, and today he is considered a very well known novelist, essayist, journalist, literary critic, and all that. He joined the Indian civil service and then went on to even serve in Burma as a police officer.

And most of the novels that he writes are a fallout of his experiences, extensive travels in South Asia, and all these places. Some of his novels include the *Burmese Days* written in 1934, *Homage to Catalonia* in 38, *Road to Wigan Pier* in 37. So, these are some of his works; however, George Orwell today is well known for two of his extraordinary novels. In fact, if you think of an adjective for the best well it would invariably be applicable to these two novels.

The first novel is *Animal Farm* published in 1945 and just a couple of years later he publishes some kind of a futuristic novel called *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*; this novel called *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* was published in the year 1949. And as I said more than any other great novel be it a novel by Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, or D H Lawrence, Charles Dickens, more than any of their novels, these two novels have been widely read.

And that is the reason why they are considered the greatest of the classics that the twentieth century has published. So, what is the reason behind this kind of popularity? Is it just a part of popular fiction? Is it serious fiction or is it mainstream fiction? In fact, we discuss these varieties though it began as literary fiction, it became a part of the mainstream fiction considering the huge success it gained especially in the latter part of the 20th century.

And today it is called a political allegory. In fact, those of you who have read the novel may even wonder, in fact, that it looks like children's literature. Because it makes use of some animals on a farm in England and how they kind of revolt against it and then establish a farm of their own and all these things, it looks like a work of Children's literature.

However, the significance of the novel goes much beyond the scope of Children's literature and today it is called a political allegory. As an allegory is a story or a work of art that tells a story at the surface whereas, the true meaning of it is hidden somewhere in the layers of the text. Unless you read the layers of the text you and I may not even be able to understand the complete significance of the novel.

So, in political allegory, the hidden layers are the hidden meanings are political in nature. So, that is a broad category, this novel belongs to, of course, a Dystopian fiction. We will discuss in a short while what is Utopian fiction, what is Dystopian fiction, and all that, but of course, briefly we had mentioned while discussing Apocalyptic fiction we discussed Dystopian fiction.

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- Aesop, Jonathan Swift (especially in the Houyhnhnm section of *Gulliver's Travels*), Bernard Mandeville (*The Fable of the Bees*), and Jean de La Fontaine (*Fables*) successfully mask their critique of contemporary society through fables and parables.
- Defamiliarization: Sets human problems in the animal kingdom
- "Orwellian" - "ghastly political future," (Big Brother, thoughtcrime, doublespeak, alternative facts)
- Lucid prose, biting social criticism, total opposition to totalitarianism, and outspoken support of democratic socialism

In fact, this political allegory that George Orwell writes in 1945 continues the rich legacy of some other extraordinary works that have come before George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. In fact, to begin with, Aesop's Fables, in fact, Aesop's fables today is a part of part and parcel of children's literature, they too have a lot many hidden meanings, layered meanings, therefore, it is an allegory.

So, beginning from there you have an illustrious writer such as Jonathan Swift, especially in *Gulliver's Travels* there is a particular section called Houyhnhnms. So, there it is a radical critique of the contemporary society he lived in using an allegory and created a tale where he critiques in a radical way the then-contemporary British society. So, and from there you have Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, and Jean de La Fontaine's fables.

So, all these works successfully conceal their critique of society using tales concerning animals and bees, birds, and other things. So, this can be said for all fables and political allegories especially since they make use of the technique called defamiliarization that we discussed in the previous class, wherein what happens here when you set the human problems in an animal kingdom you defamiliarize the readers with the contemporary contextual thing.

And once you create that kind of necessary distance readers would be able to look at it from a fresh perspective. So, that is also one of the techniques that are used in the novel. And now generally speaking considering the significant contribution of a writer we use terms such as Shakespearean, Homeric traditions, Shakespearean work, Dickensian, France Kafka based on Kafka we say Kafka's novel that is a kind of an utmost tribute you can pay to a writer.

Because considering the influence of the writer the kind of style that the writer practiced and perfected takes after the writer's name that is why Shakespearean means something extraordinary craftsmanship. Similarly, today we use the word Orwellian it becomes an extraordinary descriptive term for a very gory macabre political future.

So, when we say that this particular society is Orwellian in nature, we mean it is a highly deadly society it is a highly dictatorial society something like that, and his works whether it is *1984*, *Animal Farm*, or some of his other novels they are characterized by very lucid prose, very crystal clear prose and biting social criticism. And of course, the overall standard of the writer is one of staunch opposition to totalitarianism.

Dictatorial policies of a system of a society and he has outspoken support for the democratic socialism as the writer himself has said on several occasions. So, these are some of the characteristic features of Orwellian fiction.

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Now, let us go ahead and discuss the novel. Before that these are some remarkable quotations that I have compiled here written by George Orwell because he is not just a major novelist he is an extraordinary philosopher of society. Now, look what he says. "If liberty means anything at all it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear." In other words, liberty also I mean entails with a sort of courage to speak unpalatable truth to those in power.

Do we have that or do our leaders, when we say our leaders not just leaders in our country, leaders throughout the world are they willing to listen to unpalatable truths when we speak it to them. Or, do they tolerate it, or do they simply push us to prisons and put us behind bars because we said something that they could not digest?

So, the true value of democracy rests on the fact that those in power should be able to accept harsh critique of their governance, that is what Orwell seems to indicate here and of course, look at the other one. The imagination like certain wild animals cannot be bred in captivity in order for society to grow. In fact, we have also discussed how literary works have always acted as torchbearers of the highest democratic values, egalitarian values, and if they are curbed automatically there is no scope for creativity to bloom.

So, for creativity to be in full swing you need an extraordinary society that can tolerate criticism.



And one more thing, threats to freedom of speech, writing, and action though often trivial in isolation are cumulative in their effect and unless checked lead to a general disrespect for the rights of the citizen. Well, if there is a society, if there is a political establishment that is intolerant of an idea that does not encourage free speech, that does not encourage free writing, you may consider it as a trivial sign whereas, they are symptoms of something morbid in that state and later they may lead to something drastic. So, there are indicators of the dangers ahead if there is a curb on freedom of speech and freedom of expression they are indicative of the dangers ahead something like this, these are I mean there are many more like that I just thought you it would do well before we understand *Animal Farm*.

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Animal Farm

- Published in 1945, it is a short novella and one of the finest allegorical satires in English Language
- Animal Farm combines animal fable with political satire critiquing authoritarian regimes
- Orwell ran into numerous difficulties in trying to publish Animal Farm, due to the text's explicit anti-Stalinist stand
- Britain at that time had a lot of Stalin sympathizers who still held on to the ideals of the October Revolution

As we said *Animal Farm* was published in 1945, a very short novel probably about 100 pages or so, a couple of pages here and there, not more than that. While during this publication, of course, he faced a lot of criticism, and in fact, his manuscript was also turned down by many publishers because at that point in time England too was an ally of Russia. And the novel in question is a critique of the policies in Russia and that is the reason why the novel had to face a lot of resistance.

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ANIMAL FARM

- Orwell satirizes the pretensions of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and its prompt corruption by a new, more ruthless power elite than even the Czarist regime under Ivan the Terrible.
- "Absolute power corrupts absolutely"
- It belongs in a line of moral animal fables which goes as far back as Aesop, and which was brought to its most powerful 20th-century form in Kipling's *Jungle Book*.




And of course, in the novel, Orwell satirizes the pretensions of the Russian Revolution. In fact, all of us are briefly familiar with the Russian Revolution the Bolshevik revolution that

overthrew the oppressive government of the Czars and tried to establish a government formed by the proletariat. That is a kind of a dream, the dream of communism found its first political manifestation in Russia.

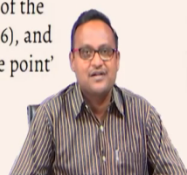

Because especially Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky were all influenced by the ideals of Karl Marx therefore, probably the first political manifestation of Karl Marx's ideas is found in Russia, unfortunately, that model did not sustain. It is for a very unfortunate reason the revolution though had extraordinary ideas could not sustain when it comes to reality probably the revolution, the ideology could not factor in the harsh realities, anyhow it is a sad story.

So, through this novel, Orwell portrays how power corrupts and absolute power corrupts you. So, using the fable, using the story of animals that happen in a particular form in England, he categorically denounces all authoritarian regimes, all dictatorship, and all these things.

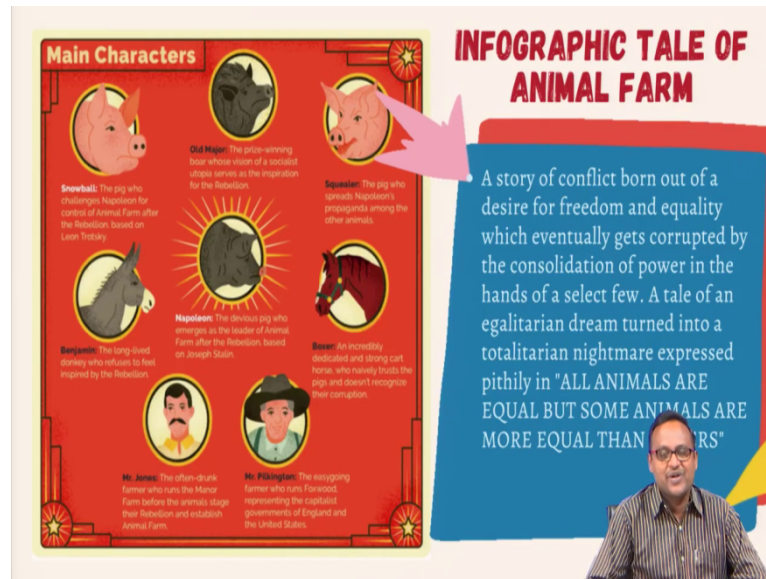
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CRITICAL RECEPTION OF ANIMAL FARM

- George Orwell's *Animal Farm* occupied an extremely contentious place in Literary circles from the beginning of World War 2 till the Cold War
- *Animal Farm* was deemed non-publishable during the Second World War due to its critique of Stalinist Russia which was a crucial ally of Britain against Nazi Germany
- It has been interpreted diversely by critics based on their ideological allegiances — as a 'lighthearted tale' (Christopher Hollis, 1956), 'a cry of despair' (Stephen Greenblatt, 1965), 'a clever satire on the betrayal of the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalin' (Stephen Greenblatt, 1956), and 'a backward work' (Isaac Rosenfeld, 1946) or a fable that 'misses the point' (Northrop Frye, 1946).



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So, this is in general *Animal Farm* of course, we have already discussed its critical reception during its time it was not very well received, it was only in the latter part of the 20th century it came to be called a great work Now, if I can tell you an entire story, the story of this whole novel using pictures, this is something like this, that is why I call this slide infographic tale of *Animal Farm*, infographic tale.

Now you have major characters here you have an old major; it was his dream animalism, the concept of animalism, of course, we are going to discuss that slightly later, is out of the dreams and visions of the old major. Then you have Snowball who is a major character who is a major follower of the old major and you have Napoleon and Squealer who are also part of the ruling elite pigs. And then you have Benjamin who is basically a cynic. In fact, Benjamin the donkey is a cynic; he probably is the only wise guy in the whole novel.

Because he realizes that whether it is life under Mr. Jones or life under the new leader of Napoleon, life for the ordinary people is as miserable as it has always been, so a kind of a wise guy. Then you have Boxer who is an epitome of dexterity who is an epitome of hard work. So, he goes on supporting Napoleon with blind faith he is an honest guy, but his honesty is placed for the wrong guy his honesty is placed for a wrong guy as a result of it his honesty his hard work is been misused by the system.

And two major human characters are Mr. Jones, of course, it is his farm initially it was called the manor farm. And he abused animals there as a result of this all the animals revolted

against him, they shove him out and establish a system of their own that is Mr. Jones. And we have Pilkington another interesting human being who is the owner of a fox wood farm just close by.

So, in a nutshell if somebody asks you what is the story of Animal Farm? All that you can say is it is the story of a conflict born out of a desire for freedom an extraordinary desire noble desire for freedom and equality which eventually gets corrupted by the consolidation of power in the hands of a select few. In other words, it is a tale of an egalitarian dream turned into a totalitarian nightmare.

Now, look at this a dream of egalitarianism turns into a nightmare of totalitarianism. And that particular philosophy is well expressed in the final statement, 'all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.' Today it is come to I mean this particular line alone is sufficient to establish the worth of the writer George Orwell in the canon of great literature something like that.

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CHAPTER 1

- We are introduced to most of the farm animals: -
 - Benjamin, the cynical donkey;
 - Boxer and Clover, two dumb but hard-working horses;
 - Snowball, Napoleon, and Squealer, three dominant pigs;
 - Jessie and Blue Bell, two dogs.
- After Mr. Jones falls asleep in a drunken stupor, all of his animals meet in the big barn at the request of old Major, a 12-year-old pig.

Old Major delivers a rousing political speech - his excellent rhetorical skills on full display! - about the evils inflicted upon them, and their need to rebel against the tyranny of Man

Now, let us take a closer look at the novel and see what happens here may be a chapter-wise analysis, especially for those of you who have not read it. We are introduced to all major characters in the novel right in the very first chapter, all the major like now think of exposition, of course, later if time permits we are going to apply various elements of fiction.

In fact, the plot elements Freytag's pyramid structure that we discussed exposition rising action now see how you can apply all that to the novel that you have read. So, in the first part, all the major characters in the novel are introduced. You have Benjamin, the cynical donkey, Boxer, and Clover, two hard-working horses, but unfortunately very dumb because they place their trust in the hands of the wrong guy.

So, you have a Snowball, Napoleon, and Squealer three dominant pigs. In fact, pigs themselves occupy a major role they form a part of the ruling class here. So, Snowball, Napoleon, Squealer, three dominant pigs you have Jessie, and Blue Bell two dogs; all of them are introduced right in the very first chapter. Now, what happens when the novel begins? Mr. Jones, he is a very irresponsible farm owner.

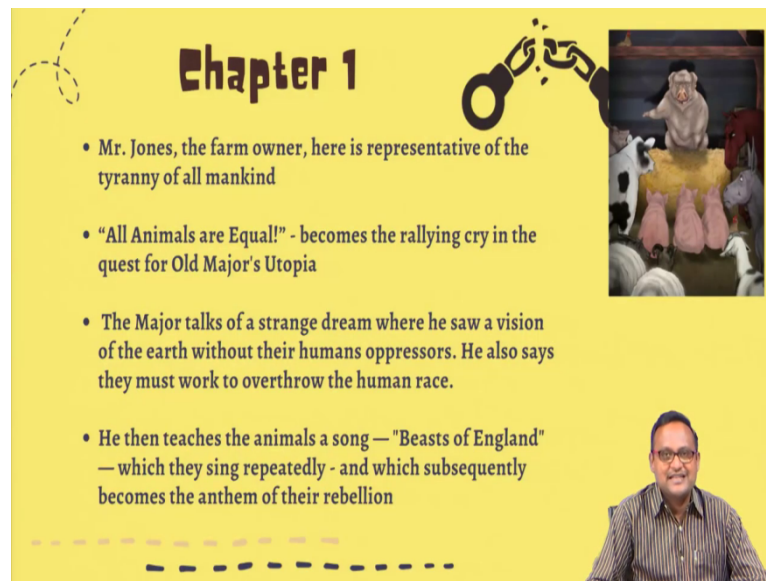
So, he drinks a lot he and then he does not take care of the animals and all the animals are really upset with him because he tortures all the animals, he does not take good care of them therefore, they are not very happy with him. So, the moment he goes to bed on a particular night when the novel begins there is a meeting that is been convened in the old barn.

Where an old major, of course, a major pig; wants to deliver a speech. In fact, he is considered a visionary; all the animals consider him their leader, undisputed leader. So, he has sent a word that the meeting is convened because he wants to share something important there therefore, all of them gather there. So, there, that is brilliant speech.

In fact, for those of you who want to read some brilliant speeches this too comes under that please read the entire speech, it can run into a couple of pages. And in brief, the speech is all about how human beings especially Jones have been continuously torturing animals and how animals have an equal right and they too are entitled to their freedom and all that and they too need to be treated fairly and equally.

And that is the reason why they need to, in order for animals to achieve their dream of equality and being treated in a very fair manner, they need to rebel against this oppression and then form their own rule, create a set of governance wherein they run their own society something like this is the dream that he has.

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Chapter 1

- Mr. Jones, the farm owner, here is representative of the tyranny of all mankind
- "All Animals are Equal!" - becomes the rallying cry in the quest for Old Major's Utopia
- The Major talks of a strange dream where he saw a vision of the earth without their humans oppressors. He also says they must work to overthrow the human race.
- He then teaches the animals a song — "Beasts of England" — which they sing repeatedly - and which subsequently becomes the anthem of their rebellion

And as this is a part of the old major's utopia, of course, you can think of Karl Marx's vision here because the old major symbolizes Karl Marx or you can even symbolize Lenin's idealism and all these things. So, now all the animals are impressed, now in the meeting they also come up with Beasts of England which are later adopted as some kind of a national anthem or the farm anthem.

And the major is simply called Old Major; he also shares a strange dream or a vision wherein he sees the earth without any human beings because that is their ultimate vision. Because human beings here come to represent tyranny, they come to represent oppression, they come to represent totalitarianism therefore, how about the world where human beings are not there at all. Therefore, he sows the seeds of rebellion during his speech. This is precisely what happens in Chapter 1.

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Beasts of England!

Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland
Beasts of every land and clime
Hearken to my joyful tidings
Of the golden future time

Soon or late the day is coming
Tyrant Man shall be o'erthrown
And the fruitful fields of England
Shall be trod by beasts alone

Rings shall vanish from our noses
And the harness from our back
Bit and spur shall rust forever
Cruel whips no more shall crack

Riches more than mind can picture
Wheat and barley, oats and hay
Clover, beans, and mangel-wurzels
Shall be ours upon that day

Bright will shine the fields of England
Purer shall its waters be
Sweeter yet shall blow its breezes
On the day that sets us free

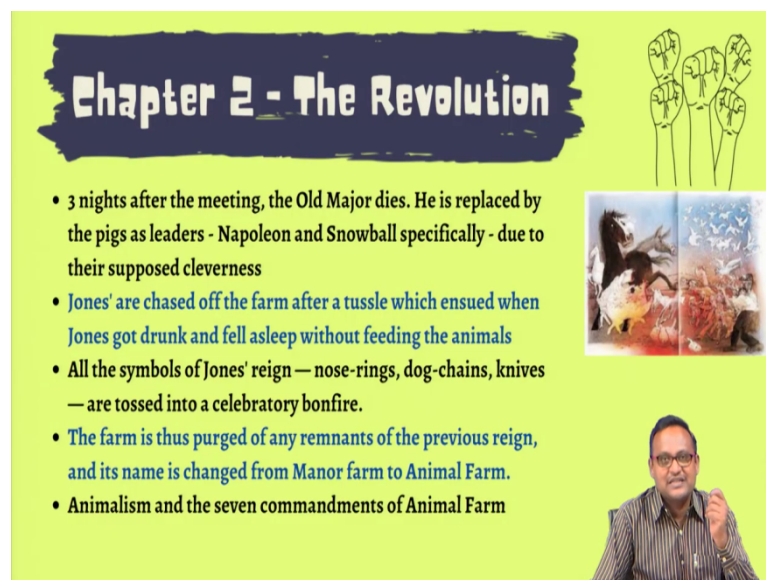
For that day we all must labour
Though we die before it break
Cows and horses, geese and turkeys
All must toil for freedom's sake

Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland
Beasts of every land and clime
Hearken well and spread my
Of the golden future time

The slide features a central graphic of three musical notes and a presenter in the bottom right corner.

Now, this is the anthem beasts of England you can go through that later and how it talks of idealism, how the song encapsulates all the ideological stuff that old major delivers in his speech you can please take a look at it later.

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Chapter 2 - The Revolution

- 3 nights after the meeting, the Old Major dies. He is replaced by the pigs as leaders - Napoleon and Snowball specifically - due to their supposed cleverness
- Jones' are chased off the farm after a tussle which ensued when Jones got drunk and fell asleep without feeding the animals
- All the symbols of Jones' reign — nose-rings, dog-chains, knives — are tossed into a celebratory bonfire.
- The farm is thus purged of any remnants of the previous reign, and its name is changed from Manor farm to Animal Farm.
- Animalism and the seven commandments of Animal Farm

The slide includes illustrations of raised fists, a scene of animals fighting, and a presenter in the bottom right corner.

Now, in chapter 2 what happens? In fact, you begin tracing the rising action here because there is a conflict here. What is the conflict? Of course, now in all the animals, the seed of rebellion is growing in them, just a couple of days after a speech the old major dies, and now for the next few months all the animals are under the leadership of pigs, now they are

preparing the ground for a revolution. In the meanwhile, they gather around, keep chanting the beasts of England, the National Anthem and keep repeating: all animals are equal. Keep recalling the dream of the old major.

So, the ground is being paid for the creation of a rebellion and one day it so, happens, of course, revolution comes without actually there knowing it one day. In his drunken stupor Mr. Jones forgets to feed the animal after day's hard work, he forgets to feed the animal and goes to sleep. And this is too much. All the animals now break into the barn because they know that Jones has stored all food there.

So, they break into the barn and they are eating that is when Jones gets up and now he comes with a whip and he wants to punish animals for this act, he considers it a difference whereas, it is a simple act of eating food because they are hungry. So, that is when all of them come together and successfully drive Jones away from the farm. So, without actually there realizing it, revolution has happened.

And they have succeeded in driving away Jones and this is when animalism, the doctrine, the central doctrine that old major had taught comes into effect and animalism and with its seven commandments now occupies the wall of the old barn.

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ANIMALISM
Seven COMMANDMENTS

- Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy
- Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend
- No animal shall wear clothes
- No animal shall sleep in a bed
- No animal shall drink alcohol
- No animal shall kill any other animal
- All animals are equal

So, what is this animalism and what are these seven commandments? So, here are the seven commandments. Like the ideals of communism that you have talked of ideas of Marxism. So,

this is animalism of course, you must have already found the similarities there. Now, these are the seven noble commandments, whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy whatever goes upon four legs or has wings is a friend. Second one, No animal shall wear clothes, no animal shall sleep in a bed and no animal shall drink alcohol.

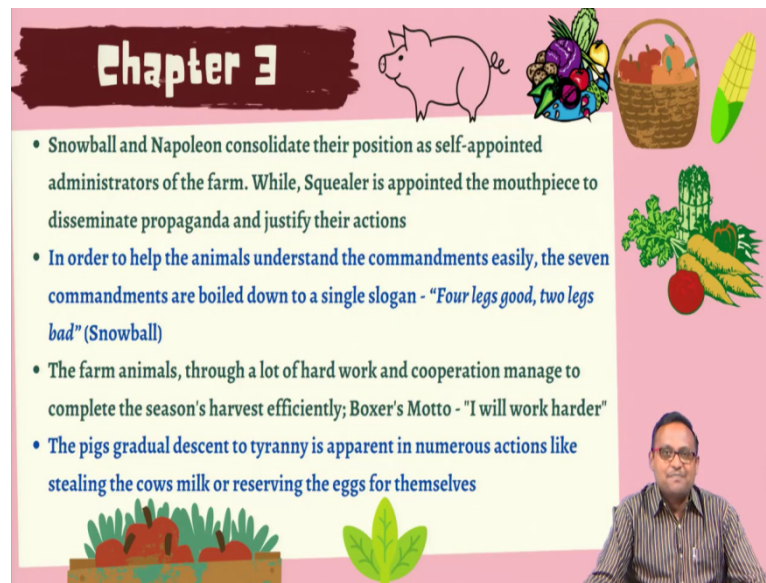
No animal shall kill any other animal because they represent the voices of human beings; that is the reason why they are all taboos. And finally, all animals are equal this is an extraordinary seven commandments they chalk up and there is also something like a constitution, the animals chalk out their constitution.

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So, if you ask a question supposing there is a question what do you mean by Animalism? You can simply say that Animalism is a doctrine; it is philosophy based on the ideals of the old major that all animals are equal and have the right to freedom from the tyranny, Snowball, Napoleon, Squealer, and develop the leadership of pigs. They develop a philosophy or doctrine into a political ideology and simply call it Animalism. The tenets of these doctrines are expressed beautifully and pithily in the 7 commandments painted on a barn wall. So, this is Animalism.

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Chapter 3

- Snowball and Napoleon consolidate their position as self-appointed administrators of the farm. While, Squealer is appointed the mouthpiece to disseminate propaganda and justify their actions
- In order to help the animals understand the commandments easily, the seven commandments are boiled down to a single slogan - "Four legs good, two legs bad" (Snowball)
- The farm animals, through a lot of hard work and cooperation manage to complete the season's harvest efficiently; Boxer's Motto - "I will work harder"
- The pigs gradual descent to tyranny is apparent in numerous actions like stealing the cows milk or reserving the eggs for themselves

Chapter 3 is also very important because now that they have taken over the farm, now it falls under their responsibility because now how will they eat, how will they function. In fact, in the second chapter pigs have begun picking up reading and writing a bit faster than other animals as a result of that they are intellectually superior it is established. So, now, they take up the task of running the farmland, and then providing food for all the animals and establishing some kind of governance because in the absence of that how would everybody eat, how would everybody function.

So, they take up the task. So, especially Snowball and Napoleon emerge as major leaders, and Squealer is appointed as a kind of mouthpiece because whatever the policies that pigs develop under Snowball and Napoleon's leadership Squealer disseminates them among all other animals. So, in other words, Squealer represents the media or especially the print journalism that was there during Stalin's time.

And how Stalin misused even that because by using the journalism, using the print medium he distorted the ideals of Lenin and then, of course, he consolidated power in his hands and of course, journalism played a major role in the corruption of those ideals. So, Squealer represents that and of course, because some animals find it very difficult to remember all the commandments.

Snowball helps in reducing the entire constitution into one simple and single slogan: four legs good, two legs bad. Of course, it is reductivistic in many sense not just philosophically, but

even literally because they are all there and also hens, there are birds there. So, the birds and hens protest because they have two legs then Squealer convinces them do not to worry because your wings act as legs, therefore, you too have four legs something like that.

And now because there is no ruler, all the animals decide, except one or two animals and birds, they decide to work hard. So, they cooperate among themselves and decide to harvest. So, all of them work wonderfully and especially Boxer, Boxer symbolizes hard work perseverance and his personal motto becomes: I will work harder; and he works, he starts doing the work of three horses together something like that.

So, now that pigs have assumed governance, the fall begins in fact, the seeds of the fall, the descent of pigs, the fall of pigs starts from here because now all the harvest is stored at one particular place and the cow's milk and eggs its stored in one particular place. Now, what do these pigs do? Especially, Snowball and Napoleon, very stealthily they start drinking milk .

And without letting other animals enjoy this they start drinking milk. So, now, I mean the corruption, the seeds of corruption have already begun sprouting here; it is very unfortunate, but it begins happening. So, these are some it is a quick recap of what happens in the novel. So, let us take up the remaining chapters in the next class and maybe afterwards we can discuss the novel and see where it goes. See you in the next class.