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Symbols and the Seven Commandments in Animal Farm

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Symbols and the Seven Commandments in Animal Farm

Symbols

Symbols : they are objects, characters, figures, and colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

1. Animal Farm

Animal Farm, known at the beginning and the end of the novel as the Manor Farm, symbolizes Russia and the Soviet Union under Communist Party rule. But more generally, Animal Farm stands for any human society, be it capitalist, socialist, fascist, or communist. It possesses the internal structure of a nation, with a government (the pigs), a police force or army (the dogs), a working class (the other animals), and state holidays and rituals. Its location amid a number of hostile neighboring farms supports its symbolism as a political entity with diplomatic concerns.

2. The Barn

The barn at Animal Farm, on whose outside walls the pigs paint the Seven Commandments and, later, their revisions, represents the collective memory of a modern nation. The many scenes in which the ruling-class pigs alter the principles of Animalism and in which the working-class animals puzzle over but accept these changes represent the way an institution in power can revise a community's concept of history to bolster its control. If the working class believes history to lie on the side of their oppressors, they are less likely to question oppressive practices. Moreover, the oppressors, by revising their nation's conception of its origins and development,

gain control of the nation's very identity, and the oppressed soon come to depend upon the authorities for their communal sense of self.

3. The Windmill

The great windmill symbolizes the pigs' manipulation of the other animals for their own gain. Despite the immediacy of the need for food and warmth, the pigs exploit Boxer and the other common animals by making them undertake backbreaking labor to build the windmill, which will ultimately earn the pigs more money and thus increase their power. The pigs' declaration that Snowball is responsible for the windmill's first collapse constitutes psychological manipulation, as it prevents the common animals from doubting the pigs' abilities and unites them against a supposed enemy. The ultimate conversion of the windmill to commercial use is one more sign of the pigs' betrayal of their fellow animals. From an allegorical point of view, the windmill represents the enormous modernization projects undertaken in Soviet Russia after the Russian Revolution.

4. Political Allegory

Orwell frames his story as a political allegory; every character represents a figure from the Russian Revolution. Mr. Jones, the original human owner of the farm, represents the ineffective and incompetent Czar Nicholas II. The pigs represent key members of Bolshevik leadership: Napoleon represents Joseph Stalin, Snowball represents Leon Trotsky, and Squealer represents Vyacheslav Molotov. Other animals represent the working classes of Russia: initially passionate about revolution eventually manipulated into supporting a regime that was just as incompetent and arguably more brutal than the previous one.

5. Whiskey

Whiskey represents corruption. When Animalism is founded, one of the commandments is 'No animal shall drink alcohol.' Slowly, however, Napoleon and the other pigs come to enjoy whiskey and its effects. The commandment is changed to 'No animal shall drink alcohol to excess' after Napoleon experiences his first hangover and learns how to moderate his whiskey consumption. When Boxer is sold to the Knacker, Napoleon uses the money to purchase whiskey. With this act, Napoleon fully embodies the human qualities that the

animals once revolted against.

6. The Commandments

The Seven Commandments of Animalism, written on the barn wall for all to see, represent the power of propaganda and the malleable nature of history and information when the people are ignorant of the facts. The commandments are altered throughout the novel; each time they are changed indicates that the animals have moved even further away from their original principles.

The Seven Commandments

1-Before

Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.

1-After

Once the pigs start walking on two legs, two legs become better than four.

2-Before

Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.

2-After

The pigs end up thinking any animal who walks on four legs or has wings is inferior.

3-Before

No animal shall wear clothes.

3-After

The pigs all end up wearing clothes.

4-Before

No animal shall sleep in a bed.

4-After

No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets

5-Before

No animal shall drink alcohol.

5-After

No animal shall drink alcohol to excess

6-Before

No animal shall kill any other animal.

6-After

No animal shall kill any other animal without cause

7-Before

All animals are equal.

7-After

All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others