

Intro:

[1] *Introduce the docs:*] excerpt from the first chapter in GO's **famous fable**, in which a pig tries to convince his fellow animals ("comrades") to rebel against injustice & dependence on men; an excerpt from Chomsky's prolific output, and a deconstruction of, he argues, the **bad faith and half truths (at best) of propaganda**; & a famous painting by NR, one of four in a **patriotic series** – "The Four Freedoms" – which NR painted in 1943, and is based on Roosevelt's Jan. 6, 1941 address to the U.S. Congress.

[2] *Indicate what the general theme of these documents is:*] An inquiry into the value & truth behind propaganda, an analysis of how human societies work.

[3] *Indicate what your angle of approach will be:*] I will stress the **ambiguous nature of power**, the potential risk associated with any social organization; and the deceptiveness of what a society calls its "values." [4] *Indicate the plan you'll follow – slowly, clearly, fully.*]

1) *The ambiguous nature of simplicity.*

- Chomsky argues that the best way to convince others / win people over is through (gross) simplification and delusion. **He analyzes 3 types of lies:** Meaningless questions (2), deceptive slogans ("support our troops," 6), and fallacious concepts ("Americanism and harmony," 20-1). The idea behind simplicity and the use of a limited number of words is that basic truths and genuine sincerity hide behind them.

- This is visible in Old Major's speech. Cf. **paradoxical idea that it has taken him a lifetime to come to self-evident conclusions** which he introduces as "summed up in a single word – Man," "crystal clear" (39), "the only real enemy," "Only get rid of Man" (14-5, 40) All his speech is composed of oversimplifications: Man's uselessness (17-8) does leave a few human good qualities aside (!), he uses a **simplistic we ≠ they dialectic** which he actually denies by telling the gathered crowd that he is one of the happy few (31-2).

- But Chomsky argues **simplicity is a lure, and the result of hours of research** & efforts made by the "public relations industry." (28) → paradoxically, **good propaganda = bad faith** → we need people like Chomsky to see through these lies.

- This does NOT concern intellectuals only: the average person *is* able to sense those lies (Cf. example of the potato couch who senses that what's on TV is not the whole truth, 43). This idea of **the average man's capacity to speak out for himself** (& stand up against fallacious democracy, Chomsky would argue) is illustrated in Rockwell's painting. **Analyze the situation:** citizens have assembled to react to a municipal (annual) report. We see 3 copies of this report. The speaker is **not an orator:** more like a middle-class man in his 40s → the youngest it seems of the men around him, NOT wearing a tie (open collar), plain street clothes → NOT an intellectual, just a man speaking his mind. Looks as if this were a trial scene & his rather coarse hands – is he a manual worker? – were clutching the wooden part of a **witness dock**. Hence, picture in praise of (American-style) democracy.

Transition: Yet though Old Major *is* honest & sincere, the road to hell is paved with good intentions: This is only Ch. 1 in Orwell's novella, which shows the limitations of idealization / utopia.

2) *Utopias can turn into dystopias.*

- We perfectly understand the **painter's codes & symbolism: Low-angle shot** makes the citizen look heroic / like a giant / impressive (this pic is reminiscent of Rockwell's painting of Lincoln and the "Almanack Trial," 1962) + everyone is looking up at him (= admiring him) + his own gaze seems to be going upward (because of the low angle) → noble figure. Also insistence on ears (Cf. bottom left corner) → optimistic idea that listening to one another can solve everything, that **Truth naturally prevails** when they hear it: **Absolutely NO tension in the pic, no heated debate, no argument.**

- Not so with the novella excerpt, which is a **call to action, maybe even a call to arms**. Stress is laid on what's wrong with the way animals live (poverty, overwork, short lifespan, hunger, no freedom, no dignity, no possessions) + on the **economic exploitation of animals** (7-9, 40-1) + on men's violence (4-5, 32-8), especially **useless / unjustifiable cruelty** (Jones drowns old dogs, 38) → "Rebellion" and struggle needed till the animals are victorious → inevitable shedding of blood + in this fable, the animals' rebellion represents what when wrong with Stalinism & the **pernicious effects of any totalitarian regime**.

- In this respect, the two texts tend to disagree with each other. Chomsky, who is a sympathizer of **anarcho-syndicalism** [theory as to how an Anarchist society should be organized through unions or syndicates], stresses the **importance of "form[s] of organization"** (35, 46). For him, individuals that are alone (37, 44) are weak. They see themselves as *crazy* if they don't adhere to mainstream ideas (Cf. **diktat of the majority**) + **Marxist conception of society** as classes struggling against each other (masters / specialized class serving them / rest of the population, 31-3) ≠ Orwell's demonstration [in the whole novella] that even well-meaning organizations go awry when "comrades" [a communist term] turn against each other.

- This is illustrated in the fact that Old Major will soon die → nothing guarantees that his successors will be as pure-hearted as *he* is... → idea that **any form of power is dubious & risky** (an idea that Chomsky would approve of, actually) & that **"absolute power corrupts absolutely."**

- This is exactly what Chomsky's words about **conditioning / brainwashing** prove. The phrase: "having drilled into their heads the message" (37-8) even reminds us of Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and Orwell's own *1984* (1949), & their analysis of conditioning through language. Cf. *1984*'s "Newspeak" & slogans like "War is Peace; Freedom is Slavery; Ignorance is Strength."

Conclusion: [1] *Summarize:*] Even the most alluring system can hide vicious motives & rob citizens of their rights (Chomsky, 24) → always beware of systems which glorify themselves (the painting) & of marvellous-sounding promises (novella) → **always "keep a weather eye open"!**

[2] *Branch out:*] The idea of a "perfect unity" (Orwell, 51) & of **showing a united front** obviously sounds appealing, but can only work for a time. What happens when you have done away with all the "enemies"? Isn't the habit of a simplistic we ≠ they dichotomy dangerous in its very essence? **Checks and balances** are precious.

B) Noam Chomsky

1) A few interesting book titles by Chomsky

- Secrets, Lies and Democracy. 1994.
- Keeping the Rabble in Line. 1994.
- The Prosperous Few and the Restless Many. 1993.
- Year 501. 1993.
- What Uncle Sam Really Wants. 1992.
- Deterring Democracy. 1992.
- Necessary Illusions. 1989.
- "Human Rights" and American Foreign Policy. 1978.
- Counter-Revolutionary Violence. 1973.

2) Biographical details

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noam_Chomsky

(Born December 7, 1928) An American linguist, philosopher, political activist, author, and lecturer. He is an Institute Professor and professor emeritus of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Chomsky is credited with the creation of the theory of generative grammar, considered to be one of the most significant contributions to the field of linguistics made in the 20th century.

Generative grammar : In theoretical linguistics, generative grammar refers to a particular approach to the study of syntax. A generative grammar of a language attempts to give a set of rules that will correctly predict which combinations of words will form grammatical sentences. In most approaches to generative grammar, the rules will also predict the morphology of a sentence. Noam Chomsky has argued that many of the properties of a generative grammar arise from an "innate" Universal grammar, which is common to all languages. Proponents of generative grammar have argued that most grammar is not the result of communicative function and is not simply learned from the environment. In this respect, generative grammar takes a point of view different from functional and behaviourist theories.

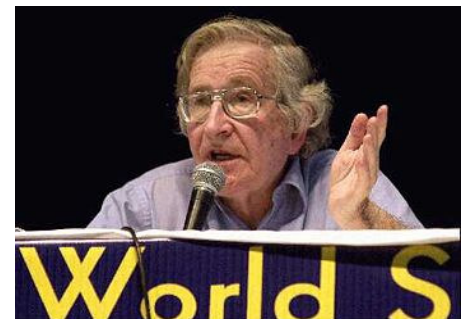
He also helped spark the cognitive revolution in psychology through his review of B. F. Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*, in which he challenged the behaviorist approach to the study of behavior and language dominant in the 1950s. His naturalistic approach to the study of language has affected the philosophy of language and mind. He is also credited with the establishment of the Chomsky hierarchy, a classification of formal languages in terms of their generative power. Beginning with his critique of the Vietnam War in the 1960s, Chomsky has become more widely known for his media criticism and political activism, and for his criticism of the foreign policy of the United States and other governments.

According to the Arts and Humanities Citation Index in 1992, Chomsky was cited as a source more often than any other living scholar during the 1980–1992 time period, and was the eighth most-cited scholar in any time period.

3) Political views

Chomsky at the World Social Forum (Porto Alegre) in 2003.

Chomsky has stated that his "personal visions are fairly traditional anarchist ones, with origins in The Enlightenment and classical liberalism" and he has praised libertarian socialism. He is a sympathizer of anarcho-syndicalism and a member of the IWW union [Industrial Workers of the World]. He has published a book on anarchism titled, "Chomsky on Anarchism", which was published by the anarchist book collective, AK Press, in 2006.



Noam Chomsky has been engaged in political activism all of his adult life and expressed opinions on politics and world events which are widely cited, publicized and discussed. Chomsky has in turn argued that his views are those which the powerful do not want to hear, and for this reason he is considered an American political dissident. Some highlights of his political views:

- **Power, unless justified, is inherently illegitimate.** The burden of proof is on those in authority to demonstrate why their elevated position is justified. If this burden can't be met, the authority in question should be dismantled. **Authority for its own sake is inherently unjustified. An example of a legitimate authority is that exerted by an adult to prevent a young child from wandering into traffic.**
- That **there isn't much difference between slavery, and renting one's self to an owner, or "wage slavery."** He feels that it is an attack on personal integrity that destroys and undermines our freedoms. He holds that **those that work in the mills should run them,** a view held (as he notes) by the Lowell Mill Girls.
- Very strong criticisms of the foreign policy of the United States. Specifically, he claims double standards (which he labels "single standard") in a foreign policy preaching democracy and freedom for all, while promoting, supporting and allying itself with non-democratic and repressive organizations and states such as Chile under Augusto Pinochet, and argues that this results in massive human rights violations. He often argues that America's intervention in foreign nations, including the secret aid given to the Contras in Nicaragua, an event of which he has been very critical, fits any standard description of terrorism.
- **He has argued that the mass media in the United States largely serve as a propaganda arm and "bought priesthood" of the U.S. government and U.S. corporations, with the three parties all largely intertwined through common interests.** In a famous reference to Walter Lippmann, Chomsky along with his coauthor, Edward S. Herman has written that the American media manufactures consent among the public.
- He has opposed the U.S. global "war on drugs", claiming its language to be misleading, and referring to it as "the war on certain drugs." **He favors education and prevention rather than military or police action as a means of reducing drug use.** In an interview in 1999, Chomsky argued that, whereas crops such as tobacco receive no mention in governmental exposition, other non-profitable crops, such as marijuana, are specifically targeted due to the effect achieved by persecuting the poor.

"US domestic drug policy does not carry out its stated goals, and policymakers are well aware of that. If it isn't about reducing substance abuse, what is it about? It is reasonably clear, both from current actions and the historical record, that substances tend to be criminalized when they are associated with the so-called dangerous classes, that the criminalization of certain substances is a technique of social control."^[41]

- **Critical of the American capitalist system and big business, he describes himself as a libertarian socialist who sympathizes with anarcho-syndicalism and is also critical of Leninist branches of socialism.** He also believes that libertarian socialist values exemplify the rational and morally consistent extension of original unreconstructed classical liberal and radical humanist ideas to an industrial context. Specifically he believes that **society should be highly organized and based on democratic control of communities and work places.** He believes that the radical humanist ideas of **his two major influences, Bertrand Russell and John Dewey,** were "rooted in the Enlightenment and classical liberalism, and retain their revolutionary character."
- **Chomsky has stated that he believes the United States remains the "greatest country in the world",** a comment that he later clarified by saying, "Evaluating countries is senseless and I would never put things in those terms, but that **some of America's advances, particularly in the area of free speech, that have been achieved by centuries of popular struggle, are to be admired.**" He has also said "In many respects, the United States is the freest country in the world. I don't just mean in terms of limits on state coercion, though that's true too, but also in terms of individual relations. **The United States comes closer to classlessness in terms of interpersonal relations than virtually any society.**"
- According to Chomsky: "I'm a boring speaker and I like it that way.... I doubt that people are attracted to whatever the persona is.... People are interested in the issues, and they're interested in the issues because they are important." "We don't want to be swayed by superficial eloquence, by emotion and so on."
- He holds views that can be summarized as **anti-war but not strictly pacifist.** He prominently opposed the Vietnam War and most other wars in his lifetime. **However, he maintains that U.S. involvement in World War II was probably justified, but that a preferable outcome would have been to end or prevent the war through earlier diplomacy.** In particular, he believes that the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were "among the most unspeakable crimes in history".
- He has **a broad view of free-speech rights, especially in the mass media; he opposes censorship and refuses to take legal action against those who may have libeled him.**

Chomsky has frequently stated that there is no connection between his work in linguistics and his political views, and is generally critical of the idea that competent discussion of political topics requires expert knowledge in academic fields. In a 1969 interview, he said regarding the connection between his politics and his work in linguistics:

I still feel myself that there is a kind of tenuous connection. I would not want to overstate it but I think it means something to me at least. I think that anyone's political ideas or their ideas of social organization must be rooted ultimately in some concept of human nature and human needs. (*New Left Review*, 57, Sept. – Oct. 1969, p. 21)

C) George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945): Characters & Significance

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_Farm

Animal Farm is a novella by George Orwell, and is the most famous satirical allegory of Soviet totalitarianism. Published in 1945, the book reflects events leading up to and during the Stalin era. Orwell, a democratic socialist, and a member of the Independent Labour Party for many years, was a critic of Joseph Stalin, and was suspicious of Moscow-directed Stalinism after his experiences with the NKVD during the Spanish Civil War.

Overview

The short novel is an allegory in which animals play the roles of the Bolshevik revolutionaries and overthrow and oust the human owners of the farm, setting it up as a commune in which, at first, all animals are equal; class and status disparities soon emerge, however, between the different animal species. The novel describes how a society's ideologies can be manipulated and twisted by individuals in positions of social and political power, including how a utopian society is made impossible by the corrupting nature of the very power necessary to create it.

Characters

Pigs

Old Major is the inspiration which fuels the Revolution and the book. According to one interpretation, he could be based upon both Karl Marx and Lenin. As a socialist, George Orwell may have agreed with much of Marx, and even respected aspects of Lenin. According to this interpretation, the satire in *Animal Farm* is not of Marxism, or of Lenin's revolution, but of the corruption that occurred later although very similar to it. However, according to Christopher Hitchens: the book "the aims and principles of the Russian Revolution are given face-value credit throughout; this is a revolution betrayed, not a revolution that is monstrous from its inception."

[Also: **Napoleon**, a Berkshire boar, is the main tyrant of *Animal Farm* and is based upon Joseph Stalin. Napoleon begins to gradually build up his power, using puppies he took from mother dogs Jessie and Bluebell, which he raised to be vicious dogs as his secret police. After driving Snowball off the farm, Napoleon usurps full power, using false propaganda from Squealer and threats and intimidation from the dogs to keep the other animals in line. Among other things, he gradually changes the Commandments to allow himself privileges and justify his dictatorial rule. By the end of the book, Napoleon and his fellow pigs have learned to walk upright and started to behave similar to humans. Orwell modelled him after Joseph Stalin, who set up a dictatorship whose repression and despotism was far worse than that of the Imperial Russian government supplanted by the Bolsheviks. (In the French version of *Animal Farm*, Napoleon is called César, the French spelling of Caesar.)]

Humans

Mr. Jones represents Nicholas II of Russia, the deposed Czar, who had been facing severe financial difficulties in the days leading up to the 1917 Revolution. The character is also a nod towards Louis XVI. There are also several implications that he represents an autocratic but ineffective capitalist, incapable of running the farm and looking after the animals properly. Jones is a very heavy drinker and the animals' revolt on him after he drinks so much that he does not feed or take care of them. Ironically, Napoleon himself becomes almost obsessed with drinking and eventually changes the commandments to suit his needs.

Horses

There are three horses: **Clover, Mollie, and Boxer**

Boxer is one of the main characters. He is the tragic avatar of the working class, or proletariat: loyal, kind, dedicated, and the most physically strong animal on the farm, but naive and slow. His ignorance and blind trust towards his leaders led to his death and their profit. In particular, his heroic physical work represents the

Stakhanovite movement. His maxim of "I will work harder" is reminiscent of Jurgis Rudkus from the Upton Sinclair novel *The Jungle*. His second maxim, "Napoleon is always right" is an example of the propaganda used by Squealer to control the animals. It was not adopted until later in the book.

Clover is Boxer's friend and a fellow draft horse. She helps and cares for Boxer when he splits his hoof. She blames herself for forgetting the original Seven Commandments when Squealer had actually revised them. Clover is compassionate, as is shown when she protects the baby ducklings during Major's speech; albeit made out to be somewhat vain in the opening of the novel by the narrator, who remarks that she never "recovered" her figure after giving birth to her fourth foal. She is also upset when animals are executed by the dogs, and is held in great respect by three younger horses who ultimately replace Boxer.

Mollie is a self-centred and vain white mare who likes wearing ribbons in her mane, eating sugar cubes (which represent luxury) and being pampered and groomed by humans. She represents upper-class people, the bourgeoisie and nobility who fled to the West after the Russian Revolution and effectively dominated the Russian diaspora. Accordingly, she quickly leaves for another farm and is only once mentioned again.

Significance

The allegory that the book employs allows for reader interpretation on a number of levels:

George Orwell wrote the book following his experiences during the Spanish Civil War, which are described in another one of his books, *Homage to Catalonia*. He intended it to be a strong condemnation of what he saw as the Stalinist corruption of the original socialist ideals. For the preface of a Ukrainian edition he prepared in 1947, Orwell described what gave him the idea of setting the book on a farm:

...I saw a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge carthorse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat.

This Ukrainian edition was an early propaganda use of the book. It was printed to be distributed among the Soviet citizens of Ukraine who were some of the many millions of displaced persons throughout Europe at the end of the Second World War. The American occupation forces considered the edition to be propaganda printed on illegal presses, and handed 1,500 confiscated copies of *Animal Farm* over to the Soviet authorities. The politics in the book also affected Britain, with Orwell reporting that Ernest Bevin was "terrified" that it may cause embarrassment if published before the 1945 general election.

In recent years, the book has been used to compare new movements that overthrow heads of a corrupt and undemocratic government or organisation, only to eventually become corrupt and oppressive themselves as they succumb to the trappings of power and begin using violent and dictatorial methods to keep it. Such analogies have been used for many former African colonies such as Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo, whose succeeding African-born rulers were accused of being as corrupt as, or worse than, the European colonists they supplanted.

The book also clearly ponders whether a focus of power in one person is healthy for a society. The book leaves the ending slightly ambiguous in this regard.

Perhaps the largest overriding theme in "Animal Farm" is the famous quote by Lord Acton, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Other source: <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/animalfarm/section1.html>

Animal Farm, Chapter I

Summary

As the novella opens, Mr. Jones, the proprietor and overseer of the Manor Farm, has just stumbled drunkenly to bed after forgetting to secure his farm buildings properly. As soon as his bedroom light goes out, all of the farm animals except Moses, Mr. Jones's tame raven, convene in the big barn to hear a speech by Old Major, a prize boar and pillar of the animal community. Sensing that his long life is about to come to an end, Major wishes to impart to the rest of the farm animals a distillation of the wisdom that he has acquired during his lifetime.

As the animals listen raptly, Old Major delivers up the fruits of his years of quiet contemplation in his stall. The plain truth, he says, is that the lives of his fellow animals are "miserable, laborious, and short." Animals are born into the world as slaves, worked incessantly from the time they can walk, fed only enough to keep breath in their bodies, and then slaughtered mercilessly when they are no longer useful. He notes that the land upon which the animals live possesses enough resources to support many times the present population in luxury; there is no natural reason for the animals' poverty and misery. Major blames the animals' suffering solely on their human oppressors.

Mr. Jones and his ilk have been exploiting animals for ages, Major says, taking all of the products of their labor—eggs, milk, dung, foals—for themselves and producing nothing of value to offer the animals in return. Old Major relates a dream that he had the previous night, of a world in which animals live without the tyranny of men: they are free, happy, well fed, and treated with dignity. He urges the animals to do everything they can to make this dream a reality and exhorts them to overthrow the humans who purport to own them. The animals can succeed in their rebellion only if they first achieve a complete solidarity or “perfect comradeship” of all of the animals against the humans, and if they resist the false notion spread by humans that animals and humans share common interests. A brief conversation arises in which the animals debate the status of rats as comrades. Major then provides a precept that will allow the animals to determine who their comrades are: creatures that walk on two legs are enemies; those with four legs or with wings are allies. He reminds his audience that the ways of man are completely corrupt: once the humans have been defeated, the animals must never adopt any of their habits; they must not live in a house, sleep in a bed, wear clothes, drink alcohol, smoke tobacco, touch money, engage in trade, or tyrannize another animal. He teaches the animals a song called “Beasts of England,” which paints a dramatic picture of the utopian, or ideal, animal community of Major’s dream. The animals sing several inspired choruses of “Beasts of England” with one voice—until Mr. Jones, thinking that the commotion bespeaks the entry of a fox into the yard, fires a shot into the side of the barn. The animals go to sleep, and the Manor Farm again sinks into quietude.

Analysis

Although Orwell aims his satire at totalitarianism in all of its guises—communist, fascist, and capitalist—Animal Farm owes its structure largely to the events of the Russian Revolution as they unfolded between 1917 and 1944, when Orwell was writing the novella. Much of what happens in the novella symbolically parallels specific developments in the history of Russian communism, and several of the animal characters are based on either real participants in the Russian Revolution or amalgamations thereof. Due to the universal relevance of the novella’s themes, we don’t need to possess an encyclopedic knowledge of Marxist Leninism or Russian history in order to appreciate Orwell’s satire of them. An acquaintance with certain facts from Russia’s past, however, can help us recognize the particularly biting quality of Orwell’s criticism (see Historical Background).

Because of Animal Farm’s parallels with the Russian Revolution, many readers have assumed that the novella’s central importance lies in its exposure and critique of a particular political philosophy and practice, Stalinism. In fact, however, Orwell intended to critique Stalinism as merely one instance of the broader social phenomenon of totalitarianism, which he saw at work throughout the world: in fascist Germany (under Adolf Hitler) and Spain (under Francisco Franco), in capitalist America, and in his native England, as well as in the Soviet Union. The broader applicability of the story manifests itself in details such as the plot’s setting—England. Other details refer to political movements in other countries as well. The animals’ song “Beasts of England,” for example, parodies the Internationale, the communist anthem written by the Paris Commune of 1871.

In order to lift his story out of the particularities of its Russian model and give it the universality befitting the importance of its message, Orwell turned to the two ancient and overlapping traditions of political fable and animal fable. Writers including Aesop (Fables), Jonathan Swift (especially in the Houyhnhnm section of *Gulliver’s Travels*), Bernard Mandeville (*The Fable of the Bees*), and Jean de La Fontaine (Fables) have long cloaked their analyses of contemporary society in such parables in order to portray the ills of society in more effective ways. Because of their indirect approach, fables have a strong tradition in societies that censor openly critical works: the writers of fables could often claim that their works were mere fantasies and thus attract audiences that they might not have reached otherwise. Moreover, by setting human problems in the animal kingdom, a writer can achieve the distance necessary to see the absurdity in much of human behavior—he or she can abstract a human situation into a clearly interpretable tale. By treating the development of totalitarian communism as a story taking place on a small scale, reducing the vast and complex history of the Russian Revolution to a short work describing talking animals on a single farm, Orwell is able to portray his subject in extremely simple symbolic terms, presenting the moral lessons of the story with maximum clarity, objectivity, concision, and force.

Old Major’s dream presents the animals with a vision of utopia, an ideal world. The “golden future time” that the song “Beasts of England” prophesies is one in which animals will no longer be subject to man’s cruel domination and will finally be able to enjoy the fruits of their labors. The optimism of such lyrics as “Tyrant Man shall be overthrown” and “Riches more than mind can picture” galvanizes the animals’ agitation, but unwavering belief in this lofty rhetoric, as soon becomes clear, prevents the common animals from realizing the gap between reality and their envisioned utopia.