

## IRONY IN ANIMAL FARM BY GEORGE ORWELL

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### Abstract

*This study discusses the use of irony in George Orwell's Animal Farm, illustrating how Orwell engages various forms of irony to critique politics and human nature. Through three types of irony, specifically verbal, dramatic, and situational irony. The novel exposes the hypocrisy and corruption of the pigs, particularly in their manipulation of language and principles. Verbal irony that shows the exaggerated praises that showered the pigs. Also, the transformation of the pigs into a tyrant is shown as a powerful example of situational irony, while the animal's blind acceptance of the pigs leadership deepens the dramatic irony, as the reader understands the truth behind the facade. This study also explores how the novel uses irony to critique the cynical nature of power and oppression. The research method of this study is a descriptive qualitative method. This data was obtained from the novel as the main source and research journals as supporting theories for this research.*

**Keywords:** Irony, Animal Farm, Verbal Irony, Dramatic Irony, Situational Irony

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini membahas penggunaan ironi dalam novel Animal Farm karya George Orwell, yang menggambarkan bagaimana Orwell menggunakan berbagai bentuk ironi untuk mengkritik politik dan sifat manusia. Melalui tiga jenis ironi, khususnya ironi verbal, dramatis, dan situasional. Novel ini mengekspos kemunafikan dan korupsi para babi, terutama dalam manipulasi bahasa dan prinsip-prinsip mereka. Ironi verbal yang menunjukkan pujian berlebihan yang diberikan kepada para babi. Selain itu, transformasi babi menjadi seorang tirani ditampilkan sebagai contoh kuat dari ironi situasional, sementara penerimaan yang membabi buta terhadap kepemimpinan babi memperdalam ironi dramatis, karena pembaca dapat memahami kebenaran di balik kedok tersebut. Penelitian ini juga mengeksplorasi bagaimana novel ini menggunakan ironi untuk mengkritik sifat sinis dari kekuasaan dan penindasan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif deskriptif. Data penelitian ini diperoleh dari novel sebagai sumber utama dan*

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*jurnal-jurnal penelitian sebagai teori pendukung penelitian ini.*

***Kata kunci:*** Ironi, Animal Farm, Ironi Verbal, Ironi Dramatis, Ironi Situasional

## INTRODUCTION

Animal farm is a canonical satirical novella written by George Orwell published in England on 17 August 1945. In this novel, Orwell explores themes such as political power and control. This novel was one of his canonical works for being an allegory for the Russian Revolution of 1917 and a betrayal of its supporters by Joseph Stalin. It tells the story of a group of farm animals who rebel against their human farmer, hoping to create a society where the animals can be equal, free, and happy. Ultimately, the rebellion is betrayed, and under the dictatorship of a pig named Napoleon, the farm ends up in a state far worse than before. Orwell uses symbolism to indirectly criticize the Russian Revolution and the Russian leaders who destroyed the hope for a better future for the Russian society.

All the characters and the events are represented by real historical figures and events that reflect the Russian Revolution and the Stalin era in the Soviet Union. Kabulova (2023) in his thesis stated that the pigs represent the corrupt leaders of the Soviet Union, while the other animals symbolize the proletariat. For more detail, according to Shilin Xiao (2022), Napoleon, the pig leader, represented as Joseph Stalin who propagandized and took control of the Soviet Union, Snowball represented as Leon Trotsky who was expelled by Stalin, Squealer represents the Russian media who supported Stalin, and Boxer represents a hard worker and poor Russian man who believes in Stalin. Additionally, for the events, The Battle of Cowshed represents the Russian Civil War and The Battle of Windmill represents The Battle of Stalingrad.

Since it is a satirical novel, Orwell uses a lot of irony in almost every scene in this book. Apart from the story criticizing Russian politics, Orwell's ironic writing styles make this novel very fascinating. Irony in Animal Farm has a broader role that extends far beyond historical criticism.

Irony is a literary device that highlights the difference between someone's expectation for a situation and a reality. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, irony is defined as "the use of words to express something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning." The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines 'irony' as "the use of words that say the opposite of what you really mean, often as a joke and with a tone of voice that shows this." As a literary device, irony is utilized by Orwell to build tension, strengthen the narrative, and provide an immersive reading experience.

Irony can be used by the authors for a variety of purposes in a number of forms (Tavadze, 2019). Specifically, irony has its function, as Ahmed, S (2004) said, irony can have three functions: (1) comic, (2) pathetic and (3) moral or satiric. Comic irony is used to create a comedic effect when the story shows a dark or difficult scene. Meanwhile, pathetic fallacy is a technique that gives human emotions and traits to inanimate objects or nature. The last one is moral or satiric, which negatively evaluates the possibility of an action by assuming a norm that the action violates. Despite the function, irony is also divided into three types (Ravshanovna, 2022). There are verbal irony, dramatic irony, and situational irony.

A classic example of irony in this novel is the slogan "All animals are equal than others," which satirizes not only the political situation but also reflects the internal contradictions in the narrative itself. This study will focus on exploring the use of irony in Animal Farm.

## METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative methods to analyze irony in George Orwell's novel 'Animal Farm.' Holloway and Wheeler (2002:30) defined qualitative research as a type of

social science that focuses on how individuals perceive and comprehend their experiences and the environment they live in. In this research, the entire contents of the novel itself would be the primary source. The data of the research are words, sentences, or statements that involve literary devices, which is ironic. All of the data was analyzed by researchers through reading, scanning, and identifying elements of irony in this novel.

In the book *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan R&D*, Sugiyono (2013:19) stated that qualitative research is divided into multiple phases. (1) The description stage, in this stage the researcher explained their observations. Here, the researcher read George Orwell's *Animal Farm* novel. (2) The reduction stage, in which the researcher gathered or filtered the data in order to concentrate the analysis on the subjects of irony in the *Animal Farm* novel. (3) The last stage is the selection phase, in this phase the researcher focused more intently on a pre-identified issue. In order to investigate themes of irony that Orwell uses to criticize the Russian Revolution and the Russian leaders, this process entails a thorough analysis of the issue.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Irony are literary devices that Orwell mostly uses, it can be seen throughout the whole chapters. He uses a variety of ironic types including the use of verbal, situation, and dramatic irony. Orwell's use of irony not only makes the narrative more engaging but also helps readers understand important themes like power, manipulation, and how easily the truth can be changed.

### *Verbal Irony*

This is a statement in which the speaker means something very different from what he or she is saying (Ravshanovna, 2022). Verbal irony occurs when a narrator or a character says something different from the reality or something that is opposite of what they actually mean. A character will also believe or say one thing that will happen, but then it turns out to be exactly the opposite from what they said as the story unfolds. Verbal irony cannot be accidental. It depends on the speaker's intent. This kind of irony serves various purposes in literature, authors can create a comedic situation through injecting humor into a narrative by stating something opposite to what is expected. Authors also use verbal irony to emphasize key themes or ideas within their work, and introduce suspense or foreshadow events to reveal the contradictions in character's behavior or beliefs. With all these elements, this literary device draws readers into narrative by making them feel like they know the inside joke between the characters. There are three types of verbal irony: sarcasm, understatement, and hyperbole. Sarcasm involves the use of language to mean something other than its literal meaning, but sarcasm always has an intention to criticize or mock someone or something. Generally considered a nasty, mean-spirited or just relatively negative form of verbal irony, used on occasion to enhance the negativity expressed relative to direct, non figurative criticism (Herbert L. Colston, 2017, p. 16). *Animal Farm* shows a lot of sarcasm, for instance:

#### a. Squealer Manipulation

Squealer, the Napoleon spokesperson said in chapter five page 48, "...One false step, and our enemies would be upon us. Surely, comrades, **you do not want Jones back?**" However, squealer did not mean that, the actual meaning is "**You do not want to speak up against us pigs.**" Squealer said that statement because Napoleon wanted to rule the farm longer and this can be seen as propaganda.

#### b. Boxer's Slogan

Boxer, the hardworking horse, often says positive things about Napoleon, which can be seen in chapter 9 page 112, "*Comrade Napoleon is always right.*" This statement is ironic because Napoleon is an actual tyrant leader who always betrays the other animals. Yet, despite

Napoleon's great exploitation of other animals, Boxer constantly trusts him. It creates a tragic sarcasm in the story.

Second type of verbal irony is understatement. Understatement is a rhetorical and literary tool that is the point of exaggeration, and the point is to make someone or something weaker, inferior or inferior to themselves or to express them (Zahra Jamshidi & Seyed Mohamad Arta, 2004). Understatement is when the speaker says something that downplays a situation in order to emphasize the difference between each other. This literary device can also be described as, when the character intentionally makes something seem less serious than it is. In *Animal Farm*, these understatements serve to keep the other animals unaware of the pigs' exploitation in several scenes.

a. Squealer's explanation of the rations reduction

On chapter 9 page 93, "...certainly, it had been found necessary to make a readjustment of rations (squealer always said it is a *"Readjustment,"* never as a *"Reduction"*).." The word choice readjustment instead of reduction indicates that Squealer downplayed what is happening in reality to make it sound like a slight adjustment, when in actual fact it is a serious problem that the pigs and the dogs are taking their food rations due to the winter.

b. Boxer death

After Boxer, the hardworking horse, is taken away to the slaughterhouse, Squealer tells the other animals that Boxer died peacefully at the hospital and that his final words were encouraging the other animal to keep their loyalty to Napoleon. It shows on chapter 9, page 103;

*"Squealer came to announce the news to the others. He had, he said, been present during Boxer's last hours. "It was the most affecting sight I have ever seen!" said Squealer, lifting his trotter and wiping away a tear. "I was at his bedside at the very last...." . 'Forward in the name of the Rebellion. Long live Animal Farm! Long live Comrade Napoleon! Napoleon is always right.' Those were his very last words, comrades."*

The Squealer's calm and dramatic downplayed version of boxer's death, meant to cover up the brutal truth that Boxer was actually given to the butcher.

The last one is hyperbole. Hyperbole is a deliberate exaggeration. Burgers (2016) defined hyperbole as "an expression that is more extreme than justified given its ontological referent." It's when the character exaggerates something to the point that it is clearly untrue, usually in order to make a point. *Animal Farm* also uses hyperbole, but it serves mainly as propaganda to control the animals and elevate the pigs' leadership. These are examples of hyperbole in *Animal Farm*:

a. Squealer's exaggerated praise of Napoleon

Squealer often exaggerates when talking about Napoleon, declaring that he is the only reason the farm is successful. For instance, he declares that Napoleon is responsible for every good thing that happens to the farm shows in chapter eight, page 78;

*'It had become usual to give Napoleon the credit for every successful achievement and every stroke of good fortune. You would often hear one hen remark to another, "Under the guidance of our Leader, Comrade Napoleon, I have laid five eggs in six days"; or two cows, enjoying a drink at the pool, would exclaim, "Thanks to the leadership of Comrade Napoleon, how excellent this water tastes!"'*

Also, when the animals won a war between Frederick and the windmill that has been built for two years was destroyed, in chapter eight-page 88 squealer says;

*"What matter? We will build another windmill. We will build six windmills if we feel like it. You do not appreciate, comrade, the mighty thing that we have done. The enemy was*

in occupation of this very ground that we stand upon. And now—thanks to the leadership of Comrade Napoleon—we have won every inch of it back again!”

b. The claims about Snowball

Napoleon and Squealer often grossly exaggerate Snowball's betrayal, turning Snowball into a villain who is responsible for every problem on the farm. For example, when the windmill was destroyed, Chapter six page 60, Napoleon said, *“do you know who is responsible for this? Do you know the enemy who has come in the night and overthrown our windmill? SNOWBALL!”*

They often claim that Snowball was a traitor from the beginning and even they suspect he was in working with the humans, painting him as a far greater threat than he really was. This hyperbole is used to justify Napoleon's absolute rule and to discredit Snowball completely.

### *Dramatic Irony*

Also known as tragic irony, this is when a writer lets their reader know something that a character does not (Ravshanovna, 2022). Dramatic irony occurs when the readers know more about something in the narrative than the characters themselves. The narrator usually reveals the information to the readers only, so the characters have no idea about what is exactly happening. Dramatic irony builds tensions and suspense for the readers, they wait anxiously for the reaction of the characters who will find out what exactly happened. In animal farm, it depicts on various actions such as:

a. Snowball's expulsion and slander

Snowball is one of the animals that had an important role in the rebellion and organized the farm, also believed to be the true leader. But Napoleon threw him away, followed by the shift of power control. He spread rumors that Snowball was a traitor and an enemy, he was bad character and bad influence, he also conspired with Jones. Squealer, acting as Napoleon's spokesperson, manipulates information to convince the other animals that Snowball is responsible for all the problems on the farm. All of this is shown in chapter 7, page 67-69;

*“....Snowball was in league with Jones from the very start! He was Jones's secret agent all the time. It has all been proved by documents which he left behind him and which we have only just discovered....”*

*‘The animals were stupefied. This was a wickedness far outdoing Snowball's destruction of the windmill.’*

*“Now when Squealer described the scene so graphically, it seemed to the animals that they did remember it. At any rate, they remembered that at the critical moment of the battle Snowball had turned to flee.”*

*“Our Leader, Comrade Napoleon,” announced Squealer, speaking very slowly and firmly, “has stated categorically-categorically, comrade-that Snowball was Jones's agent from the very beginning-yes, and from long before the Rebellion was ever thought of.”*

*“Ah, that is different!” said Boxer. “If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right.”*

The animals are unaware and unquestioned their doubts continuously, because they are successfully manipulated by Napoleon and Squealer. However, the readers know the realities about Snowball.

b. Boxer's fate

Boxer is a hard worker horse, he is one of the loyalist animals. His motto is “I will work harder,” reflects his commitment to the ideals of animalism. But the pigs betrayed him when he got injured. Other animals believe Squealer that Boxer was sent to a hospital and had died there after receiving some treatments, it shows in chapter 9, page 104;

*'The animals were enormously relieved to hear this. And when Squealer went on to give further graphic details of Boxer's death-bed, the admirable care he had received, and the expensive medicines for which Napoleon had paid without a thought as to the cost, their last doubts disappeared and the sorrow that they felt for their comrade's death was tempered by the thought that at least he had died happy.'*

But the readers know the fact that he was sold to a slaughterhouse, not even went to a hospital. It amplified on the days later, the pigs bought another case of whiskey.

c. Commandments' amendments

All the commandments had been revised to benefit the pigs themselves. Starts from the first amendments that state 'no animal shall sleep in a bed *with sheets*,' Clover, the female horse, noticed that the commandments are not like that, but Squealer manipulated her by saying that a bed is a place to sleep in, the same as a pile of straw, but sheets are created by humans, so the pigs are against the sheets, not the bed. In contrast, the readers know that the animal was manipulated by the pigs; the right commandment is 'no animal shall sleep in a bed.'

*'Curiously enough, Clover had not remembered that the Fourth Commandment mentioned sheets; but as it was there on the wall, it must have done so. And Squealer, who happened to be passing at this moment, attended by two or three dogs, was able to put the whole matter in its proper perspective.'* (Orwell, 1945, chapter 6, p-58)

Besides that, the commandment that has changed includes; from 'All animals are equal' to 'All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others,' from 'No animal shall drink alcohol' to 'No animal shall drink alcohol to excess,' and from 'No animal shall kill any other animal' to 'No animal shall kill any other animal without cause,' and there are also commandments that are indirectly violated by the pigs, it shows in chapter 10 how they wore cloth, smoked, and be friends with humans.

The most contradicting change is the last revision where of all the seven commandments is changed into a single commandment that states 'All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others,' most of the animal had forgotten the exact seven commandments, but Clover slightly remembered that there was seven commandments, also Benjamin, a donkey, but he is keep silent even though he remembers all of the true situations is, it shows on chapter 10, page 112-113;

*'For once Benjamin consented to break his rule, and he read out to her what was written on the wall. There was nothing there now except a single Commandment. It ran: ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS.'*

*'After that it did not seem strange when the next day the pigs who were supervising the work of the farm all carried whips in their trotters. It did not seem strange to learn that the pigs had bought themselves a wireless set, were arranging to install a telephone, and had taken out subscriptions to John Bull, TitBits, and the Daily Mirror. It did not seem strange when Napoleon was seen strolling in the farmhouse garden with a pipe in his mouth-no, not even when the pigs took Mr. Jones's clothes out of the wardrobes and put them on, Napoleon himself appearing in a black coat, ratcatcher breeches, and leather leggings, while his favourite sow appeared in the watered silk dress which Mrs. Jones had been used to wear on Sundays.'*

d. The farm's conditions

In the beginning of narratives, it was told that the rebellion is to take their rights as animals. In reality, what the animals felt was more miserable under the pigs

commands. But, again, the pigs manipulated them by saying that they were fine. The peak of this irony is when animals cannot tell the difference between pigs and humans, because their traits are the same. It shows in chapter 10 page 118;

*'The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.'*

While the readers are aware of the truth and see clearly that the distinction between pigs and humans has completely disappeared, the animal still considers the pigs as their leader, they remain ignorant and unaware that the pig has adopted the same tyrannical traits they rejected during the revolution.

## ***Situational Irony***

It is the contrast between what happens and what was expected (or what would seem appropriate) (Ravshanovna, 2022). Situational irony is a relationship of the contrast between what an audience is led to expect during a particular situation within the story's plot unfolds and a situation that ends up actually resulting later on. The audience believes that a thing is going to happen, they try to predict it, but then the exact opposite event occurs instead. In this novel, situational irony is used to point out the hypocrisy and selfishness the pigs are.

Situational irony is shown in *Animal Farm* when the pigs initially attempt to stop Moses, the crow, from discussing sugar candy mountains, giving the audience the impression that the animals will no longer tolerate a similar discussion. After all, Napoleon permits Moses to return and tell the other animals about the sugar candy mountain once more on page 98 of chapter nine. This is Napoleon's method of controlling and influencing the animals to keep them from thinking about the awful circumstances on the farm.

*'They all declared contemptuously that his stories about Sugar Candy Mountain were lies, and yet they allowed him to remain on the farm, not working, with an allowance of a gill of beer a day.'*

Another example is when the audience thinks that since the farm had an animal rule, they will have a utopian life. However, later in the story, the pigs who have a utopian life and become dominant while the other animals suffer from misery.

## **CONCLUSION**

Through this novel, Orwell uses various forms of irony to show how abuse of power and manipulation that was presented by Napoleon can make situations worse. It can be seen in verbal irony how the pigs control the animals through their languages. Dramatic irony allows the readers to be aware of what happened in the farm's reality, while the animals remain ignorant and unaware that the pigs have adopted the same tyrannical traits as humans. The situational irony shows the hypocrisy and selfishness the pigs are. The irony not only adds depth to the narrative but also emphasizes significant themes such as the distortion of truth and the betrayal of the revolution's ideals.

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