



Where Are the Sows?

A Feminist Reading of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*

Andre Persson

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Author

Andre Persson

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Supervisor

Maria Freij

Abstract

This essay argues that the patriarchy is pervasive throughout George Orwell's novella *Animal Farm*. By providing examples of narrative events and character actions, the essay aims to make evident the ways in which the patriarchy is represented throughout the novella. The concept of patriarchy is defined, and characters and events that take place within the narrative of *Animal Farm* are analyzed through the lens of traditional gender roles and toxic masculinity. Both male and female characters are included to present the ways in which society in *Animal Farm* is patriarchal and the essay argues that the presence of the patriarchy pervades the narrative. The presence of patriarchal structures can be seen throughout the narrative, including characters, character's actions and how events are portrayed. To conclude, discussing the novella from a feminist theoretical perspective is good for understanding the work in a way that is different from most other analyses in academia and this essay argues that the patriarchy indeed is present throughout the narrative of *Animal Farm*.

Key words

George Orwell, *Animal Farm*, patriarchy, traditional gender roles, toxic masculinity.

George Orwell's novella *Animal Farm* was published in 1945. *Animal Farm* is an allegorical narrative and is commonly interpreted as an allegory for the Bolshevik Revolution and the early years of the Soviet Union. Stewart Cole describes the novella as a "barnyard allegory" and states that Orwell "chose to allegorize Russian Communism through animals" (335). David Dwan argues that it can be read as a criticism of other political ideologies as well, including liberalism and democracy (656), but according to most interpretations the story is an allegory for Soviet Communism. The novella was also used as propaganda, particularly by different intelligence agencies in Britain and America to promote an anti-Soviet and anti-communist agenda (Senn 150). According to John Rodden and John P. Rossi, Orwell himself supported democratic socialism, the British Labour Party, but he was anti-communist and he disliked "the idea of empire" after experiences he had in Burma with the Indian Imperial Police (2-3). One aspect that is not commonly discussed regarding Orwell's *Animal Farm* is the way gender is portrayed and plays into the novella's narrative. This essay analyzes *Animal Farm* from a feminist theoretical perspective, primarily focusing on traditional gender roles, toxic masculinity and patriarchal structures and norms. This essay argues that the patriarchy is pervasive throughout *Animal Farm*.

Orwell died in 1950 at age forty-six. To put that into context, Orwell lived through both World Wars, the Great Depression and the early-postwar period after the Second World War ended. At home in England Orwell supported the British Labour Party. He was well understood on the London literary scene as a democratic socialist, while opposing communism, in particular the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Rodden & Rossi 3). Rodden and Rossi argue that Orwell's politics were commonly misconstrued, American conservatives often using his anti-Soviet stance as a reason to defend capitalism and disavow all forms of socialism (3). Orwell's intention with *Animal Farm* was to criticize totalitarianism in general, aiming to criticize both capitalists and communists, but that was certainly not how American capitalists, and intelligence agencies in the U.K. and USA, interpreted the novella (Senn 150). *Animal Farm* was unsurprisingly adapted into other forms of media, including cartoon strips and film, and the CIA pushed to make the film even more anti-Soviet than the source material, "[insisting] on several changes in order to make the message explicitly clear" (Senn 151). Some of the changes included making Snowball a less sympathetic character, drawing clear contrasts between good and bad farmers, and making changes to the ending that reshapes the narrative in a consequential way (Senn 151-152).

A lesser analyzed aspect of the novella in academia is how gender is portrayed. In her essay “Political Fiction and Patriarchal Fantasy,” Daphne Patai argues that the “messy business of gender hierarchy” is “carefully reproduced” in *Animal Farm* (7). This is a statement that this essay agrees with, but while Patai places a focus on Orwell’s political views and his weaknesses as a writer, this essay will shift the focus onto the novella itself, and thoroughly analyze the entirety of the novella and provide examples of the presence of the patriarchy throughout the narrative. This essay will do this by analyzing characters and events that take place throughout the novella. Characters that will be analyzed includes the sows, or rather the lack of sows, the boar Old Major, Napoleon, who is the main antagonist and also the one who assumes leadership on the farm, and an event that takes place where the hens rebel against Napoleon’s leadership. The horses Mollie, Clover and Boxer will also be analyzed, all of which exhibit characteristics that make them fit into the traditional gender roles of the patriarchy.

The patriarchy and traditional gender roles are concepts that will constitute the primary focus of this essay. Lois Tyson defines patriarchy as “any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles” (81). There are other ways to define patriarchy, such as the one given by Toril Moi in *The Feminist Reader*, saying that the patriarchy is “the way in which male domina[te] over females” (104), but this essay will be using the definition given by Tyson because of how closely the essay ties the concept of traditional gender roles to the patriarchy.

Traditional gender roles are the way in which society places men and women into separate categories of what men and women are traditionally supposed to be like. Men are supposedly “rational, strong, protective, and decisive” (Tyson 81) according to traditional gender roles. These are all viewed as male traits, and in a patriarchal society a man is not a man at all if he does not adhere to these traits. On the other hand, women are supposedly “emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive” (Tyson 81). According to Tyson, these traits being attributed to women has “been used very successfully to justify inequities” in society, including limiting women’s ability to access leadership roles and positions within the decision-making processes, both within the family and in their working lives, including academia, politics, and the corporate world (81). This essay will discuss and analyze how different characters, including Old Major, Clover, Boxer, Mollie, and Napoleon, fit into their traditional gender roles and the way in which said characters exemplify different aspects of their traditional gender roles. At this point it is important to discuss the fact that *Animal Farm* is an allegorical narrative, and therefore certain characters must fit into specific gender roles. The

characters represent historical figures, most being specific persons or groups that played important roles during the early portion of the existence of the Soviet Union. While this is important to be aware of, this essay will discuss these characters regardless, and show how they fit into patriarchal norms and gender roles throughout the narrative.

Traditional gender roles are not innate, instead they are a consequence of socially constructed gender categories, a view on gender that is an example of what has become known as social constructionism (Tyson 82). According to Tyson, gender is the way in which men and women are culturally programmed as masculine and feminine. Additionally, Tyson states that feminists have observed that to “maintain the male monopoly of positions of economic, political, and social power” society has used “[t]he belief that men are superior to women” (82). This social construction is negative for women and a woman’s ability to achieve success, particularly in business and politics. But society’s social construction can also be negative for men. A man who does not adhere to patriarchal norms is often ridiculed, seen as “weak and unmanly,” suggesting that the “only way to be a man [is] to be a patriarchal man” (Tyson 82). Men are further pressured to be their family’s primary provider, and “[f]ailure to provide adequate economic support for one’s family is considered the most humiliating failure a man can experience” because then a man has “failed at what’ patriarchal society “[considers] his biological role as provider” (Tyson 83). The idea of men failing to live up to their role as provider that is established by patriarchal structures can be linked to the concept of toxic masculinity.

Toxic masculinity is a concept that will be discussed in this essay in relation to the male characters in *Animal Farm*, including their actions and motivations throughout the novella. Terry Kupers defines toxic masculinity as “the need to aggressively compete and dominate others and encompasses the most problematic proclivities in men” (713). These tendencies to “aggressively compete” and “dominate others” will be a focus in the analysis when discussing Napoleon’s character, particularly in relation to the dynamics between Napoleon and Snowball. Another character who will be analyzed and discussed in relation to the concept of toxic masculinity is Boxer, and how toxic masculinity may relate to Boxer’s actions and his motto saying that he will work harder. His character is not directly tied to the willingness to compete and dominate others, but he is rather affected by toxic masculinity when it comes to other characters’ suggestions, particularly the boars who, who suggest that he is not to show sentimentality and merely value Boxer for his work.

Carol Harrington suggests that toxic masculinity is not a term that should be used “as an analytical concept” (346), but further suggests that the term has seen a popular rise in usage in academia, and because of its increased usage, this essay chooses to use toxic masculinity as a component of analysis. The term was coined in the late 20th Century (Harrington 345) and thereby the term for this concept did not exist until decades after the writing of *Animal Farm*. The term being a newer one leaves an opportunity to analyze Orwell’s work from a perspective that could not have been done in the first few decades immediately after its publication.

Another aspect of the novella that will be analyzed includes the hierarchical nature of which the pigs organize themselves, and the actual lack of a presence when it comes to female representation among the pigs. Where are the sows, and why are they barely present throughout the narrative? Patai argues that the events that take place during the animals’ revolution at Manor Farm closely follow the history of other socialist revolutions; they overthrow the father-figure, or the patriarch, of the farm, only to enter a dispute among the revolutionaries about who will take over the role as the farm’s patriarch (10). The people, or, in this case, animals, who jockey for positions of power are exclusively male. They are “each eager to occupy the father slot and eliminate his competitor,” making it “explicit that the struggle goes on between the only two boars among the pigs” (Patai 10). Patai further notes that the castrated pigs on the farm “are not contenders for the father role” (10). The father role being the role as the farm’s leader, or patriarch. This places an importance on manly reproduction as a prerequisite for being the leader.

The representation of the castrated pigs as having no chance to take over the leadership role on the farm may lend credence to Cole’s claim that Orwell’s politics are driven by carnophallogocentrism (349). Carnophallogocentrism is a term that refers to a worldview where one believes that authority resides in a masculine, meat-eating, language-driven rationality (Cole 349). While this essay will not discuss the latter two, meat eating or language-driven rationality, the idea that Orwell’s political views are based on men and the masculine being in positions of authority is arguably a central component of this essay’s argument. Understanding Orwell’s politics and worldview could be important factors to consider when reading any of Orwell’s works, in this case *Animal Farm*. The focus in this essay, however, will be to analyze the characters and events that take place within the narrative.

Animal Farm tells the story of a group of animals who overthrow their human ruler. They live on Manor Farm, and one day a boar named Old Major holds a speech suggesting that

a day will come when the animals rebel against the humans and that they will eventually run their own farm. Shortly after Old Major's death, the prophesized rebellion takes place and the animals run the humans out and take over the farm themselves. One of the most prominent pigs, Napoleon, ends up successively becoming more human in his behavior, and at the end of the novel he is fraternizing with humans and the other animals find it impossible to distinguish Napoleon and the pigs from the other humans in the room.

Animal Farm begins with Mr. Jones, the owner of Manor Farm, drunkenly heading to bed one night. On that same night, Old Major, "the prize Middle White boar, had had a strange dream" and he wanted to "communicate it to the other animals" (Orwell 1). As Patai writes, Old Major is "described in terms that establish him as patriarch of this world" (7). Old Major's dream concerns his vision of a rebellion, a rebellion in which the animals will overthrow mankind. He proposes a vision of all animals as equals, declaring that "all animals are comrades" (Orwell 6). Major himself is a boar, male and strong, viewed by the other animals on the farm as a leader among them. He fits the prototype of what a patriarchal man should be. Old Major is strong, male, he is a leader, and he has, as Patai also points out, fathered many children, "stressing paternity as if the actual labor of reproduction were done by males" (7). From a feminist perspective, the import placed on Old Major as a paternal figure in this world is a problematic representation of the portrayal of men and women, and what constitutes a leader. None of the other leadership figures portrayed throughout the novella are female. Females are instead placed in roles where they have no chance of reaching positions of leadership.

The horse Clover represents an ideal female citizen of the patriarchy; she acquiesces to the male decision-makers around her, she is a maternal figure, portrayed in the novella as sympathetic and caring, displaying the ideal nurturing trait that is sought after in the patriarchal female. Clover is commonly portrayed as a protector and the one animal on the farm with whom other animals can find comfort as a secondary mother to them. When she is introduced, she is presented as "a state motherly mare" (Orwell 2) which immediately puts focus on her personality as a maternal figure. The first action Clover takes as a character also emphasizes her motherly personality; Clover and Boxer lay down in the barn before Old Major's speech and they "had just lain down when a brood of ducklings which had lost their mother filed into the barn" and the ducklings were "wandering from side to side to find some place where they would not be trodden on. Clover made a sort of wall round them with her great foreleg, and the

ducklings nestled down inside it and promptly fell asleep” (Orwell 2). This sequence introducing Clover sets the tone for her character as a caring, motherly figure on the farm. As Patai also points out, Clover is a hard-working horse who works alongside Boxer, who is the hardest working animal on the farm, but Clover is most admired “for her caring role as protector of the weaker animals” (7). While Boxer and Clover are similar in what they add to the farm in terms of labor, the writing in *Animal Farm* makes clear that Boxer is admired because of his immense strength and determination, but Clover, who also appears to be a hard-working laborer on the farm, is most admired for her maternal traits.

Throughout the novel, Clover’s maternal traits are what she is most admired for; in the novella’s final chapter it is said that the newer horses on the farm “accepted everything that they were told about the Rebellion and the principles of Animalism, especially from Clover, for whom they had an almost filial respect” (Orwell 86). These unnamed horses on the farm having a “filial respect” for Clover again brings up the fact that she is admired, and in this case respected, for her role as a maternal figure. In this instance it is a bit different; Clover is presented in a way that makes her appear as one of the smartest animals on the farm, but because she is a female some form of justification is needed for that fact, and instead her intelligence can be justified because she is teaching the new horses these ideas as if she were their mother, like a mother teaching their children life lessons. It is in her role as a maternal figure that Clover’s intelligence is justified.

Boxer, in contrast from Clover, does not exhibit parental instincts. Boxer instead stands out among the animals for his strength, endurance, and hard labor. His hard-working nature is an inspiration to the other animals. One winter on the farm was particularly difficult for the animals, and many lost hope. “They were always cold, and usually hungry as well. Only Boxer and Clover never lost heart. Squealer made excellent speeches on the joy of service and the dignity of labour, but the other animals found inspiration in Boxer’s strength and his never-failing cry of ‘I will work harder!’ (Orwell 49). Clover and Boxer are here mentioned in the same way initially, both keeping their spirits up during the winter, but the patriarchy of the farm is evident when the other animals find inspiration in Boxer specifically, with Clover not being mentioned in the same vein. There is little reason why Boxer would be the only one to inspire the rest of the animals; Clover also kept her spirits high through the difficult winter, but it is only said that Boxer is the one who inspires the others. Because her labor in this instance is not associated with motherhood or other ideal female traits, Clover is not noticed for putting in

hard work on the farm. It is instead Boxer who is the main inspiration, and the reason why he gets recognized in this manner instead of Clover is likely because he is a male character, and by virtue of that fact he holds a more privileged position in society than Clover does, despite them being part of the same social class. Being a male character, Boxer is supposed to be strong according to traditional gender roles, and Clover putting in hard work in a similar way is not recognized to the same degree because strength is not a trait that is traditional associated with women.

Boxer is a rather unintelligent character, not learning more than the first four letters of the alphabet. He “could not get beyond the letter D” but “[o]n several occasions [...] he did learn E, F, G, H, but by the time he knew them it was always discovered that he had forgotten A, B, C and D” (Orwell 21). Boxer is unable to use intelligence and thereby unable to use the traditionally male trait of being rational, instead he focuses on other male traits like being strong and decisive. He is also a protector of the farm in a way as he is portrayed as a warrior who is instrumental in the animals’ attempts to beat back human efforts to recapture the farm.

Boxer leans into the strong and decisive traits, and he is also pressured by characters around him. During “the Battle of the Cowshed,” (Orwell 29) Boxer thinks he kills a man. “‘He is dead,’ said Boxer sorrowfully. ‘I had no intention of doing that. I forgot that I was wearing iron shoes. Who will believe that I did not do this on purpose?’” (Orwell 28). This sequence indicates that Boxer has a softer and more submissive side to his character, but Snowball immediately responds to Boxer that there is “[n]o sentimentality, comrade” and proclaiming “[w]ar is war. The only good human being is a dead one” (Orwell 28). Snowball encouraging Boxer to suppress any sentimentality may have a link to Boxer later in the narrative only admitting to a select few that he is in pain. He split his hoof in a battle against humans: “In the evenings he would admit privately to Clover that the hoof troubled him a great deal. Clover treated the hoof with poultices of herbs which she prepared by chewing them, and both she and Benjamin urged Boxer to work less hard” (Orwell 74). It is worth noting that Clover’s caring nature is present again, but focusing on Boxer, he continues to work hard despite suffering through an injury. While his hard work is valuable to the farm, the amount of effort he puts in without admitting openly to being hurt is toxic in its nature. The concept of toxic masculinity applies in the case of Boxer because of his unwillingness to be open about his condition. He consistently is portrayed as strong, and not wanting to be viewed in any other way, Boxer keeps up that outward persona of wanting to appear strong. This being embodied by his personal

motto “I will work harder,” (Orwell 41) which he repeats on many occasions, often when something goes wrong on the farm. While Boxer is shown to have an emotional side, it is one that he mostly suppresses, and by being admired for his strength and endurance, he is not encouraged to show his more emotional persona.

Another horse who is featured prominently in the novella is Mollie. She is described as a “foolish, pretty white mare” (Orwell 2) when the reader is introduced to the character. In this allegorical narrative, her character is a representative of the stereotypical portrayal of an unintelligent woman who is only appreciated in society for her appearance. Regarding questions from the animals about how to handle the business of running the farm, the narrator explains that “[t]he stupidest of all were asked by Mollie” but she is a victim of patriarchal structures as she was never taught to think for herself, and was never expected to be smart. She is Mr. Jones’ pretty horse. Despite never being mentioned in the novella, Mollie is likely some form of show horse for competitions, maybe in dressage or other events where the appearance of the horse is crucial. At least that is what the frequently mentioned ribbons indicate.

Mollie is never able to adapt to life after the rebellion and eventually leaves the farm for good. Mollie is trapped in patriarchal structures throughout the narrative; under Mr. Jones she is reduced to a role where she is merely a horse put on display for her appearance, but after the rebellion, under the leadership of the pigs, Mollie is ridiculed for who she is. Mollie enjoys being a show horse, it would appear, and she enjoys being put on display as the pretty horse on the farm, but the new leaders of the farm, Napoleon and Snowball, will not allow her to be who she wants to be. Snowball says that ribbons “should be considered as clothes, which are the mark of a human being. All animals should go naked” (Orwell 13). Throughout centuries men have been making decisions about what women can and cannot do, what they can and cannot wear, and this example from *Animal Farm* is another such instance. Snowball, a male character, is telling Mollie, a female character, what she is not allowed to wear. While Snowball’s argument makes sense from the animals’ perspective, they have been oppressed by the rule of human beings for a long time, this is an instance of where the patriarchy, and one of the patriarchs at this point in the narrative, Snowball, is declaratively stating what a female character is not allowed to wear. Further, the narrator describes Mollie as “troublesome” and that she was “late for work every morning and excused herself by saying that she had overslept, and she complained of mysterious pains” (Orwell 30). Clover, the model female citizen in *Animal Farm*’s narrative, criticizes Mollie because she allowed a man from a neighboring farm

to stroke her nose. Clover questions Mollie, saying “I was a long way away, but I am almost certain I saw this – he was talking to and you were allowing him to stroke your nose. What does that mean, Mollie?” (Orwell 30) Female citizens like Clover, who buy into the patriarchal narrative, are often problematic when it comes to free will and free expression of other females in society. If the highly respected women in society are patriarchal women who further the ideals of the patriarchy, then they are supporting the male leaders, who also work to entrench the patriarchy, and in the end they are potentially disadvantaging themselves and other females to reach positions of power in society.

The character who is in power and runs the farm at the start of the narrative is Mr. Jones, who is featured prominently throughout the novella. He is introduced as the owner of Manor Farm. After the animals’ rebellion and the expulsion of Mr. Jones, Jones’ name is used by the leading pigs as a bogeyman for much of the time after the rebellion; to shut down resistance and debate they invoke Jones’ name to scare the other animals to go along with any reforms that the pigs propose, including ones that benefit the pigs exclusively. Mr. Jones himself is a rather minor character in the novella, but the use of his name is frequent as it is a way for the pigs to keep hold of and increase the power that they amass for themselves. Mr. Jones himself may have been affected by the pressure society puts on men. The narrator explains that “Mr. Jones [...] had been a capable farmer, but of late he had fallen on evil days. He had become much disheartened after losing money in a lawsuit, and had taken to drinking more than was good for him” (Orwell 11). In the patriarchy, it is the role of the man to be the family’s primary provider, and the lost lawsuit was perhaps seen by Mr. Jones himself as a failure on his end at being the provider for his family, and thus making him feel like he was a failure as a man. This is the pressure put on men in patriarchy and taking the route to start drinking in excess like Mr. Jones does is perhaps an effort to forget about what is possibly seen as him being a failure as a man.

Mrs. Jones, in contrast to Mr. Jones, is sparsely mentioned in the novella. She is merely a companion to Mr. Jones. The first mention of Mrs. Jones is during the animal rebellion; she “looked out of the bedroom window, saw what was happening, hurriedly flung a few possessions into a carpet bag and slipped out of the farm by another way” (Orwell 12). This is the one occasion where Mrs. Jones is mentioned in reference to her taking some form of action, and that is her fleeing the farm in a hurry. The only other times she is mentioned is in reference to her personal belongings, including near the end of the narrative when Napoleon’s “favourite

sow appeared in the watered silk dress which Mrs. Jones had been used to wear on Sundays” (Orwell 90). Mrs. Jones may not have been meant to be an important character, but her seeming lack of presence throughout the narrative makes it appear as though Mr. Jones is the only important human on the farm before the rebellion. It appears that Mr. Jones has a group of men working for him on the farm, and that may explain the lack of presence from Mrs. Jones because if Mr. Jones has other men working for him then Mrs. Jones is not needed for the day-to-day running of Manor Farm. Women have often been essentially written out of history, and Mrs. Jones follows this pattern as well. She is married to the Farmer Mr. Jones, but it appears as though she is utterly uninvolved in the operations of the farm, or it is not made clear in the novella if she is involved or not, and she most likely only exists within the narrative for the Jones couple to appear as a traditional, patriarchal couple.

Like Mrs. Jones, the sows in the novella are rarely mentioned and, in addition, none of their characters are named. They are probably included when the pigs in general are referenced, but the sows themselves are only mentioned three times. At no time throughout the narrative do the sows display any form of action or decision-making, they only follow the lead of the male pigs, most notably Napoleon, the only boar left on the farm after Snowball is chased off the farm by the dogs in chapter five. The first mention of sows is when Old Major is giving his speech in the first chapter; he says that his “mother and the other sows used to sing an old song of which they knew only the tune and the first three words” (Orwell 7); the second time sows are mentioned is when it is said that “four sows had littered about simultaneously, producing thirty-one young pigs between them” (Orwell 75); the third mention of sows is the quote from the previous paragraph where Napoleon’s “favourite sow” is mentioned.

In the first of the instances where sows are mentioned, one can argue that the sows are taking some form of action, maybe not in a political sense, but they are singing a song, but it is in reference to raising a child, because Old Major does mention that the sows singing this song was from when he “was a little pig” (Orwell 7). This indicates that the sows in this world, like females in human patriarchal societies, are meant to be mothers first. While the song becomes a battle cry for the animals’ revolution, and therefore the sows here do take action that leads to something meaningful later on by singing parts of it to Old Major as a young pig, most of the song is credited to Old Major, and he can produce words to the song that the sows of his youth did not, indicating that Old Major, as one of the patriarchs of this society, has knowledge that the sows of his youth did not. The sows’ value to society is as mothers to the younger

generation, not as individuals in their own right. The second mention of sows also relates motherhood, saying that the sows had given birth. Other than that they had given birth, these sows are not spoken of again. The final mention of sows is only in relation to that she is wearing clothes and the fact that she is Napoleon's favorite, implying that this sow is almost like property to Napoleon. The sow's lack of lines, actions or even a name implies that she exists only in her relation to Napoleon and not as a character in her own right.

Napoleon, on the other hand, is his own character. He is introduced as being one of two boars who are "[p]reeminent among the pigs" and he is described as "a large, rather fierce-looking Berkshire boar, the only Berkshire on the farm, not much of a talker but with a reputation for getting his own way" (Orwell 9). This description sets the tone for Napoleon's entire character; he is stoic and intimidating for the other animals, and to have the ability to get his own way without speaking much indicates that he earns some form of respect due to his aura and through fear. As one of only two boars on the farm, he is one of two contenders for the role as the farm's patriarch. Napoleon seems to be driven by a need to dominate the other animals on the farm politically and economically. In order to secure power, Napoleon takes away nine puppies from their mother, "saying that he would make himself responsible for their education" (Orwell 22).

The dogs that Napoleon takes away reappear when Napoleon drives Snowball, his only rival for the role as leader, off the farm to seize control. In the aftermath of the rebellion, Napoleon and Snowball are consistently arguing over issues about how the farm is to be run, and, during one of their disputes, they discuss if they are to build a windmill on the farm; Napoleon says remarkably little during the meeting where the issue is to be decided, only saying "that the windmill was nonsense and that he advised nobody to vote for it" (Orwell 35). Snowball offered "a passionate appeal in favour of the windmill" (Orwell 35) and it was all but guaranteed that Snowball's idea was going to win out. Napoleon "uttered a high-pitched whimper" (Orwell 35) and the dogs discussed above come running into the barn, and after an extended chase sequence, Snowball is driven off the farm for good. This is how Napoleon chases away his only competitor for the role as leader on the farm. The reason why Napoleon does this can be explained that, because he is raised in a patriarchal society, he sees it as a need to dominate over others. Taking control over the farm by driving out his only competitor and establishing himself as the patriarch is a way for Napoleon to prove his masculinity, and it is reasonable to claim that this is a display of a toxic masculinity, fitting Kupers' definition of

“the need to aggressively compete and dominate others” (713). Snowball is established as Napoleon’s only competition for the leadership role, and by driving him out of the farm Napoleon successfully drives out the competition and establishes himself as the patriarch, a position where he can dominate others.

After driving Snowball away from the farm, Napoleon maintains total control over it throughout the rest of the narrative. The other characters rarely question Napoleon’s decision-making or opinions. Boxer questions the way in which Napoleon and Squealer portray Snowball as someone who was a traitor to the revolutionary animals the entire time; Benjamin, the donkey, who is portrayed as intelligent, but never gives his own opinions, finally speaks up in trying to stop Boxer from being sent to the slaughterhouse. Boxer ultimately does get sent to the slaughterhouse, but Napoleon and Squealer explain it away as Boxer dying while trying to be saved. Acts of protests against Napoleon’s leadership is uncommon throughout the novella, especially among the female characters.

A rare act where female characters in *Animal Farm* do display a form of self-determination, where they make an active decision in which no male characters take part, is when the hens rebel against Napoleon after he signed a contract to sell four hundred eggs per week.

When the hens heard this they raised a terrible outcry. They had been warned earlier that this sacrifice might be necessary, but had not believed that it would really happen.

They were just getting their clutches ready for the spring sitting, and they protested that to take the eggs away now was murder. For the first time since the expulsion of Jones there was something resembling a rebellion. (Orwell 51)

Their attempt at a rebellion is thwarted immediately, and Napoleon delivers the four hundred eggs per week as planned without the other animals on the farm or anyone from outside the farm finding out what had happened to the hens. Nine of the hens die in the rebellion, but that is explained away by saying that they died due to coccidiosis. The problematic aspect of this sequence is the motive behind which these female characters take action; they are protecting what may turn out to be their future children. This protection of their future children presents females as mothers first. It is as if the only motivation the hens could have for objecting to Napoleon’s rule would be if the lives of their children or future children were in danger. There are plenty of potential reasons why the other animals could rebel against Napoleon, but the narrative relies on a patriarchal framework that views females as mothers first; it is as if their

maternal instincts are the only reason why females would object to the male decision-maker. After their failed rebellion, the hens are again submissive and compliant to the oppressive and patriarchal rule of Napoleon.

The hens are brought up again shortly after their attempted rebellion; “the ringleaders in the attempted rebellion [...] now came forward and stated that Snowball had appeared to them in a dream and incited them to disobey Napoleon’s orders” (Orwell 56). The idea that the hens might have only attempted to rebel because of what a male character allegedly told them to do undermines the fact that these female characters did take action to try to strike down an injustice. This indicates that it is only because of the encouragement from a male character that these female characters would attempt to make a change in their own situation, when in fact this is an injustice that the hens could recognize themselves and act upon without the appearance of Snowball in a dream, or any other male character for that matter.

The three hens who lead the unsuccessful rebellion are executed immediately after saying that it was Snowball who “incited them to disobey Napoleon’s orders” (Orwell 56) and a later appearance of the hens indicates that they have forgotten about the rebellion and they are completely obedient of Napoleon and even credit him for their own work and accomplishments: “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’” (Orwell 62). To say that laying eggs is an accomplishment for the hens might be an overstatement, but in the world of *Animal Farm* laying eggs is their job and it is what they produce for the farm. When the hens give credit to Napoleon, they distort what they themselves have worked for. It is the hens who laid those eggs, not Napoleon, and giving credit to the patriarch for something that he cannot affect undermines their own supposed accomplishment.

There are not many academic texts discussing *Animal Farm* from the perspective of feminism and gender, and perhaps it could be argued that the lack of research and discussion about these topics in relation to *Animal Farm* is an indication that the novella is unsuitable for such an analysis. There are clear gender divisions within the novella, and analyzing those gender divisions is something that has largely been neglected, and, as Patai states as well, Orwell’s idea was to write a story that satirizes the Russian Revolution and dictatorships more broadly, but in his creation of the animal-based narrative, “Orwell does not address the vertical division of society,” the division that divides men and women by sex (7). Patai is likely the first critic to have discussed *Animal Farm* from a feminist perspective, she herself stating that “no

critic has thought it worth a comment that the pigs who betray the revolution, like the pig who starts it, are not just pigs but boars, that is uncastrated male pigs kept for breeding purposes” (7). This means that, while it is possible that other aspects of gender may have been discussed by other critics, others have not discussed this particular aspect of the pigs being potent males, and it is rather unlikely then that other critics will have done any other deeper analysis of feminism and gender in relation to *Animal Farm*, particularly none which ultimately portray the opposite argument that would rebut the feminist argument made in this essay or the ones made in Patai’s essay.

Perhaps the strongest way to argue against this essay’s argument would be to agree that the farm is a patriarchy, but that it is intentionally made that way. Because Orwell decided “to allegorize Russian Communism through animals” (Cole 335), the idea is for *Animal Farm* to reproduce the structures that existed in the early stages of the Soviet Union. Further, some of the animals represent specific figures from the Russian revolution, including Mr. Jones as Tsar Nicholas II, Old Major as Karl Marx, and Napoleon as Joseph Stalin (Senn 150). These specific characters are male, which is understandable so that they can represent different men from history, but that does not fundamentally undermine the argument because even an argument that can be viewed as obvious in certain aspects can still be a valuable and valid argument. Additionally, the characters who do not represent specific historical figures are not required to fit into the same structure as the previously mentioned ones. The contrasts between Clover and Boxer, where Clover is mostly viewed as a maternal figure, and Boxer is the hard worker who is strong, determined and admired by all animals on the farm, are not necessary other than to make them fit into traditional gender roles. Similarly, Mollie does not need to be a female horse, but to fit into the stereotype of being pretty and foolish, the character is made to be female. The rebellion of the hens is another aspect of the narrative where the motivations for their actions are patriarchal in nature, rebelling only to defend their potential offspring, even though there are ample reasons for rebelling other than on the basis of their roles as mothers.

Another argument that can be used against this essay concerns one of the concepts that has been used. Carol Harrington suggests that the term toxic masculinity should not be used “as an analytical concept” (346). Harrington claims that the term is “often left under-defined” (345), but on her own account, the usage of the term has increased dramatically in academic circles in recent years, and perhaps the reason Harrington argues that the concept is “under-defined” is because the term has only made its way into feminist academia recently. Applying a

newer concept like toxic masculinity, according to Harrington it was coined originally late in the 20th Century (347), to an older work such as *Animal Farm*, which existed before the term toxic masculinity, can be necessary to find new angles to approach an analysis of the novella. It is a concept that could be applied to other older works as well; it can give a new perspective to classic works, and since the concept did not exist at the time of publication for older works of literature, it is a new concept that could be used to give different perspectives in which to read these works.

This essay is limited in its scope, and some further research that could be conducted in relation to *Animal Farm* and the feminist theoretical perspective includes doing more in-depth analyses of specific characters in the story. Every character in the novella represents either a specific figure in history, or characters who are supposed to represent a group or groups of people in society. Analyzing a specific character and tying their presence in the narrative to a societal or historical context and analyzing that relationship could make for interesting discussions. In contrast, this essay analyzes the ways in which the novella displays patriarchal structures throughout the narrative. A more focused analysis unto a specific or a few specific characters could be made. Another way to conduct further research could be to include elements of race, combined with the feminist narrative, and analyze the differences in how the characters are treated and portrayed depending on their race and gender. Perhaps the most famous line from *Animal Farm* is “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others” (Orwell 90), a line that Dwan describes as a “paradox” and “a timeless statement about the gap between principle and practice” (655). Using this “paradox” as a basis for comparing the unequal treatment of the animals at the farm, it would be possible to analyze the novella by comparing or contrasting the ways in which the animals are unequally treated, both in terms of race and gender.

In conclusion, this essay has analyzed George Orwell’s novella *Animal Farm* from a feminist theoretical perspective, investigating the ways in which patriarchy structures and norms are present throughout the narrative. The essay argues that patriarchal structures are pervasive throughout the novella by analyzing characters, characters’ actions, and events that take place over the course of the narrative. One of the primary concepts referred to in this essay includes traditional gender roles, which explains the way in which men and women are supposed to act in patriarchal societies. Traditional gender roles were used to explain how characters fit within the patriarchal structure. The most prominent concept in this essay,

however, is arguably patriarchy itself. Without defining the concept of patriarchy, the argument of this essay could not have been made. Toxic masculinity was also defined and is incorporated into the text. Toxic masculinity is discussed in relation to the characters of Napoleon and Boxer, arguing that toxic masculinity may have been a driving force for some the decisions those characters make, and the actions that they take. Further, the analysis focuses on several characters, primarily analyzing how their attributes and actions fit into traditional gender roles, which, in extension, furthers the argument that the patriarchy is pervasive throughout the narrative. Included in the analysis are an analysis of Old Major's speech, Clover, primarily focusing on Clover's maternal instincts, the "foolish" horse Mollie, the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Jones, the lack of a characterization and presence of sows, the actions taken and characterization of Napoleon as the patriarch, the hens' rebellion, and the aftermath of the hens' rebellion. This essay finds that patriarchal norms and structures are present throughout the novella. Most of the principal characters fit into traditional gender roles, and even though the allegorical story structure makes it so that some characters must fit into certain gender roles to represent historical figures, several characters do not represent specific people from history and thus do not need to fit into traditional gender roles, but they do so regardless. Lastly, this essay discussed some of its potential weaknesses and some arguments that could be made against it, including the lack of scholarship that discusses the topic of feminism in relation to animal farm, and the choice of using toxic masculinity as an analytical tool. Finally, after analyzing characters' actions and events that take place, this essay argues that the patriarchy is present throughout the narrative of *Animal Farm*.

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