

chapter two standards focus symbolism animal farm

Published: September 27, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Chapter Two Standards Focus Symbolism in Animal Farm

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is a masterclass in allegory, using a farm and its animal inhabitants to mirror the rise of totalitarian regimes and the corruption of revolutionary ideals. While every chapter is packed with meaning, Chapter Two is a pivotal moment where the foundations of the rebellion are laid, the standards of animal life are redefined, and powerful symbols take shape. This article delves into the standards focus of Chapter Two, explores the rich symbolism embedded in the narrative, and connects these insights to the broader themes of the novel. By the end, you will have a deeper appreciation of how Orwell's careful craftsmanship turns a simple story into a timeless political parable.

1. The Significance of Chapter Two in the Narrative Arc

After the dramatic upheaval of Chapter One, the animals on Manor Farm are left in a state of disbelief and exhilaration. Chapter Two is the bridge that transitions from the abstract dream of freedom to the concrete steps of establishing a new society. It is in this chapter that the animals, under Old Major's guidance and later under Snowball's leadership, begin to draft the principles that will govern their future. These principles are famously captured in the "Seven Commandments," which become the moral compass for the entire novel.

From a structural perspective, Chapter Two is the first full exposition of the ideological framework that will later be subverted. It introduces the idea that the animals can create a self-sustaining, egalitarian community. The chapter's focus on standards—both ethical and practical—sets the stage for the tension that will unfold as the pigs gradually assume power.

2. Standards Focus: Establishing the Rules of the New Farm

In Chapter Two, the animals collectively decide to abolish the human's hierarchical structure. The standards they establish are both symbolic gestures and practical directives:

- **The Seven Commandments:** These are written on a barn wall and serve as the supreme law. They emphasize equality, prohibition of theft, and the prohibition of animals sleeping in beds.
- **Shared Labor:** The animals agree to work together for the common good, reflecting a socialist ideal.
- **Collective Decision Making:** Snowball proposes that all important decisions be made by the whole animal community, not by a single individual.
- **Rejection of Human Practices:** The pigs refuse to engage in human behaviors such as drinking alcohol, which underscores the commitment to a new standard of purity.

These standards are not merely rules; they are the ideological bedrock that legitimizes the animals' rebellion. They represent a new moral order that the animals hope will be immune to exploitation. However, as the novel progresses, we see how these standards become tools for manipulation.

3. Symbolism in Chapter Two: The Barn Wall, the Slogans, and the Rebellion's Ideals

Orwell uses a range of symbols in Chapter Two to convey deeper meanings about power, ideology, and human nature. Here are some of the most potent symbols:

The barn wall where the Seven Commandments are carved becomes a living monument. Its very presence

symbolizes the permanence of the animals' ideals. Yet, as the story unfolds, the wall also becomes a battleground for political power, with the commandments being altered to justify pig authority.

These slogans are more than mottos; they are the embodiment of the revolution's promise. The phrase "All Animals Are Equal" becomes a rallying cry that transcends the farm, while the prohibition of sleeping in beds symbolizes the rejection of human comforts that could create class distinctions.

Old Major's speech is a mythic tale of a better world, echoing religious or prophetic visions. His role as a prophetic figure establishes the farm's ideological myth, which the pigs later manipulate.

The small spark of rebellion that starts in the farmhouse is a potent symbol of hope. It ignites the animals' collective imagination and demonstrates the power of a shared vision to mobilize action.

The collective memory of the human's abuse serves as a unifying symbol. It is the shared trauma that justifies the rebellion and creates a sense of solidarity among the animals.

4. The Seven Commandments: A Deeper Symbolic Analysis

Each of the Seven Commandments carries symbolic weight. Let's break them down:

1. No Animal Shall Work More Than He Has Capacity For: Symbolizes the promise of a just labor system, free from exploitation.
2. No Animal Shall Take Anything That Is Not His Own: Represents property rights and the prohibition of theft.
3. No Animal Shall Sleep in a Bed: Rejects human comforts that could create class divisions.
4. No Animal Shall Sleep on the Stairs: Further emphasizes equality and the rejection of hierarchical spaces.
5. No Animal Shall Wear Clothes: Symbolizes the rejection of human identity markers.
6. No Animal Shall Drink Alcohol: Represents the rejection of indulgence and the maintenance of rationality.
7. No Animal Shall Kill Another Animal: The ultimate promise of peace and mutual respect.

These commandments are initially seen as moral absolutes. However, they become a tool for the pigs to rationalize their actions. For instance, the pigs justify sleeping in beds by redefining "own" to mean "their own beds." This subtle shift underscores the manipulation of language as a means of control.

5. The Role of Language and Rhetoric in Establishing Standards

Orwell masterfully demonstrates how language can shape reality. In Chapter Two, the animals' collective language—slogans, commandments, and speeches—serves as a mechanism for establishing new standards. The pigs, as the most literate animals, control the narrative by editing the commandments and redefining terms. This manipulation shows how propaganda can be used to legitimize power.

Key rhetorical techniques used by the pigs include:

- Repetition: The slogans are repeated to embed them into the animals' consciousness.
- Metaphor: The barn wall is a metaphor for the immutable law.
- Reframing: The pigs reframe the commandments to suit their needs.
- Emotional Appeal: Old Major's speech evokes fear of the human oppressor and hope for liberation.

6. Comparative Analysis: Chapter Two vs. Later Chapters

When we compare Chapter Two with later chapters, the contrast becomes stark:

- Ideal vs. Reality: Chapter Two presents an idealistic vision, whereas later chapters show the erosion of those ideals.
- Equality vs. Hierarchy: The initial promise of equality is subverted by the pigs' gradual assumption of power.

- **Collective vs. Individual:** The animals' collective decision making is replaced by Snowball's and Napoleon's autocratic rule.
- **Symbolic Integrity vs. Symbolic Corruption:** Symbols like the Seven Commandments are corrupted to justify oppression.

This comparative lens highlights the cyclical nature of power and the fragility of revolutionary ideals.

7. Critical Perspectives: What Scholars Say About Chapter Two

Academic discussions of Chapter Two often focus on its symbolic potency and the way it sets the novel's thematic trajectory. Some scholars argue that:

1. Chapter Two is the “catalyst” that transforms the farm into a microcosm of a totalitarian state.
2. The pig's control of language reflects the real-world manipulation of media by authoritarian regimes.
3. The Seven Commandments are an allegory for the way laws can be twisted to serve those in power.
4. Old Major's prophetic speech is reminiscent of revolutionary rhetoric used by leaders like Lenin or Mao.

These interpretations reinforce the idea that Chapter Two is not just a narrative pivot but a philosophical statement about power, ideology, and human nature.

8. Practical Application: How Readers Can Use These Insights

While the novel is a work of fiction, the lessons from Chapter Two are applicable to contemporary society. Here are some actionable takeaways:

- **Critical Literacy:** Always question the language used by those in power. Are they redefining terms to suit their agenda?
- **Collective Decision Making:** Encourage inclusive processes to prevent the concentration of power.
- **Symbolic Vigilance:** Watch for how symbols (flags, slogans, laws) are used to unify or divide.
- **Historical Awareness:** Recognize patterns of revolutionary rhetoric that often precede authoritarian rule.
- **Ethical Standards:** Establish clear ethical guidelines that are resistant to manipulation.

By applying these insights, readers can better navigate the political and social landscapes of their own communities.

9. Conclusion: The Enduring Relevance of Chapter Two

Chapter Two of *Animal Farm* is a masterful blend of narrative and symbolism. It establishes the standards that will govern the farm, sets up the ideological framework that will later be corrupted, and introduces powerful symbols that resonate across time. The chapter reminds us that the foundations of a society—its laws, its rhetoric, and its symbols—are as vulnerable to manipulation as they are essential to its identity.

As we reflect on the chapter's lessons, we recognize the importance of vigilance in preserving the integrity of our own societal standards. In an era where information can be weaponized and symbols can be co-opted, the story of the animals on Manor Farm remains a cautionary tale. It urges us to guard against the erosion of ideals, to question the narratives that shape our world, and to ensure that the pursuit of equality does not become a tool for new forms of oppression.

Tags: #chapter #standards #focus #symbolism #animal #farm

