

Animal Farm: Some are more equal than others

During the course of the novel Animal Farm by George Orwell, Napoleon the pig manages to change the basic rules of the farm to read, 'All animals are created equal, but some are more equal than others.' That certainly seems to be the dominant ideology in the United States, where all people are considered equal, but those in the upper classes seem to feel they are somehow 'more equal than others' in terms of what they deserve or privileges to which they are entitled. There are several ways to look at this statement making it difficult for me to indicate completely and emphatically whether I agree with it or not.

In one sense, the statement seems to be indicating that all animals, or all people, are equally capable of accomplishing the same things. As was the case on the farm, so is the case in terms of the human population, not all animals are equally equipped to accomplish the same tasks. For example, the pigs were decidedly the most intelligent creatures on the farm while the horses were the best equipped to pull the heavy loads. People follow these same patterns to greater or lesser degrees. Some are better able to conceive of the numbers and figures associated with accounting while others are more able to manipulate words to their advantage and still others excel at working with their hands to produce beautiful or functional objects. Intelligence and ability vary, making it difficult to quantify a state in which we are all equal.

However, the statement issued by Napoleon also carries a connotation that because of these differences in abilities, one set of talents deserves greater distinction, opportunity or privilege than the others – perhaps divided according to which talents contribute the most perceived value to the society, which is found in the book and often

in society to be the most corrupt or willing to subjugate others. It is here that I find myself in strong disagreement with the statement. The accountant cannot complete his task without the chair, desk, office and calculator created by the one who is good with his hands just as the layperson for whom the accountant is working cannot understand what is happening in the books without the translation created by the one who has a talent for words. We each need each other to survive and all talents contribute something to the general pool. While all talents may not contribute equally, they are all necessary for the comfort and style of living we wish to pursue. In addition, individuals each have their own combination and degree of talents that can be developed or allowed to stagnate. For many, the choice is made for them under the current system of 'we are all equal.' Instead, perhaps the focus should remain on 'we all have the equal right and responsibility to develop those talents and abilities that make us happy' as this approach enables greater personal development which ultimately leads to greater societal development.