



## **ANIMAL FARM: A Personality Analysis**



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### **Introduction:**

George Orwell (1) published the Animal Farm in 1945 under the auspices of Secker and Warburg, London, titled “Animal Farm: A Fairy Story”. It is an admirable piece of satire encompassing several themes, chiefly revolution, corruption, and totalitarian ruling. Orwell proved his mettle with a group of talking animals on an idyllic farm in England in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most reviews of Animal Farm have focused on the political analysis conveyed through the parable. However, this allegorical work is also a good indicator of various personality types as embodied by the behaviour of the different animals and the few humans that make up this small yet influential work. Though most of the action centres around animals, they represent humans in their dealings and behaviours. The humans themselves are the least important characters in the novel. The author makes his preferences clear in the words of Old Major “Man is the only real enemy we

have, the only creature that consumes without producing.”

### **Book summary:**

The story takes place on Manor Farm, owned by Mr. Jones, where the animals are discontented under the tyranny of a slovenly master. Urged first by the white boar Old Major and later by the younger Napoleon and Snowball, the animals’ revolt and take control of the farm. The leaders initially propagate animalism where animals now work for themselves and for a while, reign in peace and prosperity. Gradually, the pigs gain power. Under the dictatorial rule of Napoleon, the pigs ascertain their supremacy over other animals. The spirit of animalism is finally broken when the core commandment “All animals are equal” is changed to “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others”. The pigs start to resemble humans in their mannerisms, desires, and greed, so much so that the animals find it difficult to distinguish between the two.

The chief characters in the book play out this tragicomic affair with the help of several minor supporting characters. Personality and its types: Personality is a universal phenomenon, yet unique to a person. According to the DSM 5(2), Personality traits are “enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself that are exhibited in a wide range of social and personal contexts. Only when personality traits are inflexible and maladaptive and cause significant functional impairment or subjective distress do they constitute personality disorders”.

One of the first personality types to be described was the introvert and extrovert dimensions in 1923 by Carl Jung. Extroverts like to interact with the world while introverts reflect more and are probably more thoughtful and insightful. The *16 Personality* model described four broad groups of personality types: *The Analysts*, *The Diplomats*, *The Sentinels*, and *the Explorers*. William Herbert Sheldon in the 1940's made an association between body types and human temperament and called them somatotypes: **Endomorphic (Viscerotonic)** individuals are round, with a love for food, affection and are intensely good humoured. **Ectomorphic** people have a thin body, are quiet but intense and anxious in social situations. **Mesomorphic** individuals have a perfect body and are brave, adventurous, and assertive. In 1976, cardiologists Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman, described four types based on analysis of their patients: **Type A Personality** (The Overachiever) had traits that include being ambitious, competitive, stubborn, driven by success and a tendency to be natural leaders. **Type B Personality** (Socializer or Peacemaker) individuals are casual, relaxed, love company and have no wish to lead. **Type C Personality** (The Thinker) is like Type A but more introverted, focused, dependable and logical. **Type D Personality** (Supporter or Philosopher) people are like Type B but conventional and seem to feel life's joys and sorrows more intensely than others. In the 1980s, Ernest Tupes and Raymond Christal's (1961) five major personality traits of **Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism, Openness, Extroversion** was brought out of historical oblivion by Lewis Goldberg and colleagues, different combinations of these leading to different personality types. Since 1968, The concept of personality disorders has been incorporated in the modern classificatory systems. The DSM V divides them into three clusters (3): Cluster A (Paranoid, Schizoid, Schizotypal), Cluster B

(Antisocial, Borderline, Histrionic, Narcissistic), Cluster C (Avoidant, Dependent, Obsessive Compulsive). The ICD 11(4) gives importance to the severity of the disorder and allows inclusion of one or more trait domain specifiers, namely negative affectivity, detachment, disinhibition, dissociality, anankastia and borderline. Tyrer and Seivewright (1988) divided the personality disorders into two groups: immature PD's that improve over time (antisocial, borderline, histrionic, dependent, narcissistic) and mature PD's that tend to persist (anankastic, anxious, schizoid, paranoid)

### Personality assessment of the characters in the book:

Old Major: The old Major is the one who begins it all. He was a prize Middle white boar, an excellent orator and with his poem "Beasts of England, Beasts of Ireland", he entices all the other animals to rebellion. He probably was a mesomorph in his heyday but has mellowed down now and seems more a Diplomat. He also appears to be conscientious, open, and agreeable.

Napoleon: The book describes Napoleon as a large, fierce looking taciturn boar used to getting his own way. His mesomorphic body build goes with his character of being ambitious, risk taking and ruthless in achieving his goals. The fact that success drives him, and he plans well ahead to achieve this is evident in several instances. His Type A traits are glaringly obvious as well. He is an introvert, yet a Commander. He considers all other animals stupid, apathetic and in need of his able leadership to lead their lives. His narcissistic traits prompt him to give himself flamboyant titles like the "Terror of mankind", he also confers on himself "the order of Green banner" and "animal hero, first and second class". In keeping with the nature of the Cluster B group, his histrionic traits are evident in his social appearance only with a retinue of dogs and a black cockerel to

act as trumpeter before he deigns to speak to the lesser mortals.

**Snowball:** Snowball as per the book is “more vivacious, quicker in speech but with less depth of character” than Napoleon. He seems to have been an extrovert with good oratorical skills and an ability to “snowball” others into his enthusiastic ideas. He clearly seems to have been an intelligent animal, with his detailed plans for the windmill and attempts to make the animals literate. His Type C traits make him focused, logical and detail oriented. However, he is no match for Napoleon’s cunning and becomes an outcaste for most of the book.

**Squealer:** Napoleon’s biggest advocate Squealer is described as fat and small, with round cheeks and eyes that twinkle, nimble movements, and a shrill penetrating voice. He is the medium of communication between the leader and the other animals. He is a brilliant talker and tends to punctuate his arguments with a side by side skipping movement and tail whisking. His tactical use of words and excellent speeches on the joy of service and dignity of labour nips many a rebellion in the bud. The animals quip that he can “turn black to white”. He is a typical endomorph with his unfailing good humour and persuasive cheerfulness. He clearly knows which side his bread is buttered on and puts into force all his histrionic talents in his interactions with others. He talks of Napoleon’s goodness with tears rolling down his cheeks and gives a very affecting recital of the scene at the cart horse Boxer’s death bed. There are Type B traits in him as well which make him always gravitate towards self-protection. He is unaccountably absent during all the fighting that happens at the farm. He is an extrovert and an entertainer, and quick to follow the leader.

**Boxer:** The cart horse Boxer is the epitome of strength. He has powerful haunches, a white stripe down his face and is capable

of tremendous work; “more like three horses than one”. His intelligence, however, is not first rate. He was unable to learn the alphabets beyond letter D, though his optimism is unlimited. Boxer has a mesomorphic build but the character of an ectomorph. His steadiness of character, sticking to his maxims “I will work harder, and Napoleon is always right” and obsessive workaholic nature point to his Type A traits. His panacea to all setbacks is to work harder than ever, which is surely an indication that he has a nature high in conscientiousness. Though an introvert without any aspirations to leadership, he becomes the role model for several other animals on the farm who admire his will power and optimism.

**Clover:** She is pictured as a gentle, motherly mare who becomes rather stout in old age with rheumy eyes and stiff joints. Clover is enthusiastic to work and learn new things, however, her intelligence is limited. She manages to learn the whole alphabet but is unable to string them into words, hence doesn’t master the skill of reading or writing. She is very loyal to her ideals. However, she accepts the changed commandments just as easily and is self-deprecating about her faulty memory. She is probably an ectomorph, low in neuroticism, high in conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness. Her Type D traits are evident in her love and concern for others.

**Mollie:** She is a white mare, pretty but rather empty headed and spends hours admiring her own reflection. She likes to dress up in ribbons and her loyalty is ever changing to those who pet her, offer her sugar and ribbons. She is a shirker at work, describing several somatic complaints but retaining an excellent appetite. She probably has a mix of histrionic, emotionally unstable impulsive and narcissistic traits and is not above lying to meet her needs.

Benjamin: Benjamin the donkey is a bad-tempered introvert, who is never known to have laughed. His fits of temper manifest themselves in cynicism and cryptic answers like “Donkeys live for a long time”. He seems to have had an ectomorphic build with a superior level of intelligence and wisdom. He could read and write as well as any pig but with characteristic obstinacy, he refuses to make use of this faculty claiming that there was nothing worth reading. He is a realist with a good abstract thinking and refuses to take sides in any argument. His anankastic traits make him slow and steady, unchanging, doing the work allotted to him but never shirking or volunteering to do more. His Type C traits make him an analyst and a thinker.

Moses: Moses is the tame raven who is the pet of Mr and Mrs. Jones. He is described as a spy and tell-tale and the animals despise him. His tall tales of sugar candy mountain where it is Sunday seven days a week and lump sugar grows on hedges are worthy of Baron Von Munchausen. His narcissism also makes him claim that he has been there during one of his higher flights.

The Cat: The cat shows all the characters of the feline. The first and foremost priority is her own comfort. The cat is never found when there is work to be done, however the sense of self love and self-protection is so strong that she turns up promptly at mealtimes with a lot of histrionic display of affection and disarming arguments that the animals find it impossible to not believe her good intentions. She disappears mysteriously from the farm before the mass animal slaughter planned by Napoleon, which shows that she probably was not above eavesdropping to further her gains.

The Sheep: are mentioned as a collective body rather than as individual members. They preferred to remain in a flock, are not

clever and have limited understanding of the devious tactics employed by Napoleon. They are weak and easily swayed by others’ opinions. Most of them probably have strong dependent traits.

### **Conclusion:**

Orwell’s Animal Farm has been hailed as a classic in several genres. His brilliance lies in using animal as protagonists and making them play human roles. Most of the animals in the story conform to several personality types or have strong traits of the same. They devise or foil plans, laugh and cry, makes friends and enemies, work hard or are lazy and are intelligent or dull. In fact, the whole book is a subtly executed personality depiction of human beings.

*\*Cover painting of the article: Title Natural beauty by Dr. Anita Mariet Thomas (MS-ENT), Senior ENT Consultant, Department of ENT and Head and Neck Surgery, Bangalore Baptist Hospital. Hebbal, Bangalore*

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