

Western and Secular Concept of Socialism as Depicted in *the Animal Farm* by George Orwell

DOI:10.5281/zenodo.7293993



*Hafiz Javed ur Rehman

**Liaqat Ali

Abstract

Animal Farm is a well-known satirical allegorical novella by George Orwell. It depicts the story of a group of farm animals who rebel against their human farmer named Mr. Jones. The farm animals want to make a society where they can be equal, free of charge, and blissful. At the end, the rebellion is betrayed, and the farm ends up in a state as worst as it was before, under the dictatorship of a pig named Napoleon. Socialism is found in the beginning of the story when the revolution takes place in the farm. The most noteworthy commandment is that all animals are equal which is based on socialism and the way the farm is run after revolution is clear signal of socialism. According to Orwell, the fable reflects events which lead to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and then into the Stalinist era of the Soviet Union. Orwell was a democratic socialist and he was a critic of Joseph Stalin and antagonistic towards Moscow-directed Stalinism. Therefore, it is a bitter critique of the rhetoric of the Russian Revolution and the story of the emergence and development of Soviet Communism is described in the form of an animal allegory and it allegorizes ascend to power of the dictator named Joseph Stalin.

Key words: satirical allegorical novella, George Orwell, Joseph Stalin, Stalinism, Napoleon

Introduction:

Animal Farm is a prominent short story allegorical novella which is published in England on 17 August 1945. It is famous in the western world as socialism is depicted and it is a bitter critique of the history and rhetoric of the Russian Revolution. Socialism is found in the start of the story in *Animal Farm* when the revolution takes place in the farm. The most significant commandment is that all animals are equal based on socialism and the way the farm is run after revolution is apparent sign of socialism. The story of the emergence and development of Soviet Communism have portrayed in the form of an animal allegory and it allegorizes ascend to power of the dictator named Joseph Stalin. In the fable, the defeat of the human oppressor named Mr. Jones by a democratic alliance of animals swiftly gives way to the consolidation of power among the pigs. After that, the pigs establish themselves as the ruling class in the new society.

Although, Orwell believes strongly in socialist principles and he feels that the Soviet Union confines these principles in a complex and inflexible form. His novella

* Lecturer Department of English, The University of Agriculture, Peshawar

** M. Phil Scholar, Department of English, Qurtuba University of Science and Technology, Peshawar

makes its most influential ironies in the moments in which Orwell depicts the corruption of Animalist ideals by those in power. The steady breakdown and twisting of the Seven Commandments have shown this hypocrisy as Squealer does elaborate philosophical justifications for the pigs' unprincipled actions. Therefore, this novella criticizes the violence of the Stalinist's regime against the human beings of his reign and it also portrays the Soviet communism's violence against human logic, language, and ideals.

In a nutshell, Orwell chooses the fable to stand for his support of socialism. As we can see in the novella that the animals are happy and peaceful when the farm is a socialist place but we can see the animals' lives slowly humiliating and their spirit slowly fading away when the farm is started to become a fascist place. He uses the events in the novella to show that socialism is a good ideology and that everyone can benefit from it. Even though, a man cannot do everything for himself but working together and getting the same distribution of resources is a perk and can make everyone's life blissful and peaceful.

Research Questions:

- How socialism is depicted in this novella?
- How Russian Revolution is reflected?
- Why socialism is better than communism?

Methodology: This paper is qualitative in nature and as a result it uses exploratory method for its character analysis. This study analyzes various characters in the light of this method. I use novella as a primary source and use articles, magazines and other novels as secondary sources. Therefore, this paper searches various characters, actions, dialogues and events of *Animal Farm* regarding socialism.

Discussion: *Animal Farm* is a novella which is based on a society of animals which are living in *Animal Farm*. The novella's title represents that it is merely regarding animals but the story of the novella is a thorough analysis of the human nature and behavior. In this novella, the animals have symbolized as puppets to demonstrate how humans have controlled, how propaganda has used by early powerful leaders such as Stalin, and the effect of this kind of leadership on the behavior of the people. Orwell illustrates if animals become aware of their strength; we should have no power to overcome them. Similarly, men exploit animals in the same way as the affluent people exploit the proletariat class.

Socialism happens in the beginning of the story in *Animal Farm* when the revolution takes place in the farm. One night, all the animals at Mr. Jones' Manor Farm get together in a shelter to hear a pig, Old Major. The pig describes a dream which he has about a world where all animals live free from the totalitarianism of their human masters. The pig dies soon after the meeting but the animals have been encouraged by his philosophy of Animalism and they have started a rebellion against Jones. When Jones forgets to feed the animals therefore the revolution occurs, Jones and his men are run off from the farm. Manor Farm is renamed by Animal Farm and the Seven Commandments of Animalism are painted on the barn wall. The most significant commandment is that all

animals are equal as the animals are apparent sign of socialism. Similarly, the way the farm is run after revolution and the animals are pleased and overconfident in amalgamation.

Likewise, Orwell believes that socialism is a model and it cannot be effectively adopted due to out of control sins of human nature as human is by nature greedy. For instance, the main character of the novella named Napoleon who looks like a good leader at the start of the story but he finally triumphs over by greed and power-hunger and he soon becomes greedy and power-hungry. Initially, the rebellion is a success as the animals complete the harvest and meet every Sunday to debate farm policy. Due to their intelligence, the pigs become the supervisors of the farm. However, Napoleon proves to be a power-hungry leader who steals the cows' milk and a number of apples to feed him and the other pigs. He also makes the services of Squealer, a pig with the capability to influence the other animals that the pigs are always moral and correct in their decisions. So, Orwell attempts to disclose how those in power such as Napoleon and his fellow pigs have distorted the democratic promise of the revolution and socialism.

In the same way, the catharsis creates from the author's depiction of those common animals who carelessly work to run the system of the farm by which they are mercilessly exploited. A point to ponder is that of Boxer, one of the cart horses which are the pigs' most faithful follower. The horse has never thought of himself but always has accepted the order of the pigs as their teachers. He claims everything what he has been told and has forwarded to the other animals whether it has harvesting hay or fetching stones from the quarry. He works harder than any other animals and still he adopts the motto "I will work harder." So, selfless is there in his services and definitely he works in every thick and thin in the farm house. In spite of his services, Napoleon sends him to the hospital, sells him to the slaughterhouse and then spends the money from his dead body on whiskey for the pigs.

Orwell, an advocate of Socialism and loves Socialism but due the actions of the Russian Communists so he hates how Europe and America romanticized the Russian revolution. He did not talk against socialism but rather against Stalin's interpretation of the socialist ideas. Socialism is a system in which the people as a whole rather than private individual own all property and operate all businesses. In socialism, everyone in the community is equal. The community works together cooperatively to produce the things necessary for it to run, the products are shared equally amongst the community members, everyone has to contribute. All animals are equal (the last commandment). In the *Animal Farm*, this is seen when the animals share in the decision making, work willingly, and work for the benefits of one another.

Besides it, the novella allegorizes the story of the emergence and development of Soviet communism in the form of an animal allegory and a bitter critique of the history and rhetoric of the Russian Revolution. It allegorizes ascend to power of the dictator named Joseph Stalin. In the novella, the defeat of the human oppressor named Mr. Jones by a democratic alliance of animals swiftly gives way to the consolidation of power among the pigs. After that, the pigs establish themselves as the ruling class in the new society and The Seven Commandments are reduced to a single law: "All Animals Are Equal but Some

Are More Equal than Others." The novel ends with Pilkington sharing drinks with the pigs in Jones' house. Napoleon changes the name of the farm back to Manor Farm and quarrels with Pilkington during a card game in which both of them try to play the ace of spades. As other animals watch the scene from outside the window, they cannot tell the pigs from the humans.

The novella begins with Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin figured in the characters of Old Major, Snowball, and Napoleon respectively. The pigs on a farm where animals are bred to produce like the hens, to labor like the cart horses, and to be built up for slaughter like the pigs. Old Major rouses the animals to rebel against the tyranny of man, and the Russian Revolution is satirized as a scrap between Mr. Jones and his animals. The victorious animals captured the farm so with a newborn sense of distinction set everyday tasks such as harvesting hay. The pigs have posted the "seven commandments of Animalism," including the principle that "all animals are equal," when they opt out of the hard labor and they set suitable comfort zones in the farmhouse. The termination of Napoleon's dictatorship dreadfully reflects the lives of the common animals, who continue to work hard in the belief that they are forging Old Major's republic.

The Russian Revolution is a collective term for a series of revolution in Russia in 1917. The tsarist autocracy has destroyed and the Bolsheviks (communist) government has come into power, and led to the creation of the Soviet Union. Orwell tells a story of animal farm, shows revolutionary leaders Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and Stalin as pigs, which along with other common farm animals such as horses and hens have rebelled against the tyranny of tsar-like farmer Mr. Jones. Similarly, the great efforts for supremacy between Leon Trotsky and Stalin have portrayed in the rivalry between the pigs, Snowball and Napoleon in the novella. In both the historical and fictional cases, the idealistic but politically less powerful figures such as Trotsky and Snowball is expelled from the revolutionary state by the nasty and vicious powerful figures such as Stalin and Napoleon. Likewise, Stalin has eliminated his enemies and set his strong political base during Russian Revolution. His totalitarian rule and ultimate rejection of the founding principles of the Russian Revolution are symbolized by the pigs which have turned into a vicious government and Napoleon has collapsed the windmill in *Animal Farm* due to the false confessions and executions of animals.

Likewise, the Russian Communist Party recast the previous empire as a federation of republics with governments informed by the socialist principles of German philosopher named Karl Marx (1818–83). At the start, Soviet Russia entered a period of reconstruction under the leadership of Lenin, during which it privatized all aspects of the economy and attempted to curb any form of dissent to its Marxist-Leninist goals. After Lenin's death, Stalin affected a revolution from within the Communist Party, making a dogma of Marxist-Leninism; he turned the party into a properly totalitarian apparatus. Millions of enemies of the state were executed or sent to forced-labor camps during this revolution. To modernize the peasant agriculture, it brought severe famine. Similarly, *Animal Farm* retells this historical revolution metaphorically in the clever plotting of the pig, Napoleon because the pig wanted to get rid of his rivals and take control of the farm

.The pig forced the animals to build an electricity-generating windmill which left no time for food production; and his purges of suspected traitors to the animals' revolution against Mr. Jones.

An active scholar named John Molyneux has said about *Animal Farm* as “probably the most popular and influential piece of literary propaganda produced in English, perhaps in any language, this century.” Molyneux has claimed it was “likely that far more people have learned what they know of the fate of the Russian Revolution from here than from any other source.” Besides it, an essayist and a critic named Christopher Hitchens (1949–2011) in his introduction to a 2003 edition of the novel (with *Nineteen Eighty-Four*), has confirmed *Animal Farm*'s distinction as “the twentieth century's most successful satire.” Although, the novel appealed to younger readers with little knowledge of Soviet history, the book's legacy rests on its political force critics in the early twenty-first century has been attentive to Orwell's politics so there has been a greater tendency to acknowledge the novel as a work of politically informed art rather than of mere propaganda book of the twentieth century.

In the same way, *Animal Farm* has considerable resemblance with *Bunt* (1924) by a Polish novelist named Wladyslaw Stanislaw Reymont. Although, it is not clear whether Orwell has knew of the work. The novel allegorizes the same revolution with a story of farmyard animals rebelling against their human masters in a struggle for equality that ends in terror and oppression. After *Animal Farm*, next novel of Orwell named *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), offers a comparably symbolic and more realistic vision of everyday life bankrupted culturally and politically by a Stalinesque regime. The fearful preoccupation with Stalinism also informs Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), a nonfiction account of his experience in the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) fighting for a leftist militia..

Apart from it, Socialism is better than Communism as it is less controlling and more effective. Socialism is well-matched with democracy and liberty, whereas Communism involves creating an equal society through an authoritarian state, which denies basic liberties. Socialism has emerged in response to the extreme economic and social changes caused by the Industrial Revolution, and mainly the struggles of workers. Many workers grew increasingly poor even as factory owners and other industrialists increase massive wealth. While, Communism is a political and economic ideology closely associated with the state Communism of the Soviet Union and China. Socialism is all about equality, it is based on that society should work together in cooperation to provide resources and such to support the community as a whole. Everyone has to contribute to earn something. There is a sort of private ownership in this ideology unlike communism but limited to basic necessities like a home, food, water, but everything is shared amongst the community.

Karl Marx, the German political philosopher and economist who would become one of the most prominent socialist thinkers in history. He and his colleague Friedrich Engels published “*The Communist Manifesto*” in 1848, which included a chapter criticizing those earlier socialist models as absolutely unrealistic utopian dreams.

Sometimes Communism referred to as revolutionary socialism, also originated as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, and came to be defined by Marx's theories—taken to their extreme end. In fact, Marxists often refer to socialism as the first necessary phase on the way from capitalism to communism. Marx and Engels themselves didn't consistently or clearly differentiate communism from socialism, which helped ensure lasting confusion between the two terms. Marx argued that all history was a history of class struggles, and that the proletariat would inevitably triumph over the capital class and win control over the means of production, forever erasing all classes.

In a nutshell, Orwell has used the events in the novella to show that socialism is a good ideology than communism and that everyone can benefit from it. Even though, we cannot have everything to ourselves but working together and getting the same distribution of resources is a advantage and can make everyone lives blissful and better. He chooses this to represent his support for socialism because we can feel in the book that the animals were happy at first when the farm was still a socialist place but when the farm started to become more and more fascist, we can see the animals' lives slowly degrading and their spirit slowly fading away

Conclusion: *Animal Farm* is an eminent short story fable. Socialism is well depicted in it and it is a bitter critique of the history and rhetoric of the Russian Revolution. It represents also the story of the emergence and development of Soviet communism in the form of an animal allegory. Orwell chooses this novella to express his support for socialism as we can see in the novella that the animals are happy and peaceful when the farm is a socialist place. The novella's title symbolizes that it is only regarding animals but the story of the novella is a comprehensive analysis of the human nature and behavior. Therefore, the animals have utilized in this novella as puppets to demonstrate how humans have curbed, how propaganda has used by early powerful leaders such as Stalin and the effect of this kind of leadership on the behavior and nature of the people.

References:

- "Animal Farm: An Overview." (2015).Gale Essential Overviews: Scholarly Gale.
- Griffin, John, & Orwell, George. *Animal Farm*, George Orwell. Harlow: Longman,1989. Print.
- Hitchens, Christopher. *Animal Farm and 1984*. New York: Harcourt. 2003. Print.
- Marx, K., Engels, F., Moore, S., & McLellan, D. *The Communist manifesto*. Oxford: 1992. Oxford University Press.
- Molyneux, John. *Animal Farm Revisited: International Socialism Journal* . 1989. Print.