

The Thematic and Symbolic Potluck at the Animal Farm

Christina Charan

Research Scholar

CSJM University

Kanpur (UP) India

Abstract

Animal farm by George Orwell published in 1945 seems to be a plainly written tale at a cursory glance but it with an in depth study we could fathom the scope of it. Animal farm is rich at diverse flavours all well mixed to give the perfect taste for sensibilities and intellect. Richness of literary techniques, multidimensional narratives, characters and symbolic delicacies is offered by animal farm. The literary richness is exhibited in a simple allegorical form which represents perfect craftsmanship. This paper will discuss the various vital aspects of the novel including its multidimensional themes, felicitous characters, diverse narratives and precise symbols along with the well established techniques of social settlements.

George Orwell the writer had an intimate experience of the brutal dealings during World War II, as he corresponded for BBC. He was instigated by the communism at USSR and his desire to bring to light the factual conditions and real reasons which gave birth to the novella Animal Farm. The variety of themes strikes the correct chord of thought. The novella is written in a form of political allegory based on the political and social fervour; where the characters replicate the leaders, common populace, bureaucrats and enterprise-grade at USSR during and after the Russian revolution of 1917.

Keywords: - multi-dimensional theme, symbols, representative characters, utopian communalism, inevitable totalitarianism.

The novel deals with the corruption of ideals which once laid the foundation of equality, liberty and fraternity; latter being manipulated against the same which it lauded to protect. Mr Jones the owner of the farm misuses his position and exploits the animals, he was a drunkard who abused the animals for his own ends and did not provide for the animals. The power held by Jones served his own purpose and was used against the animals; this corruption of power by their master provoked the animals to rebel against their master. The character of Mr Jones is the portrayal of Tsar Nicholas II, the king of Russia. The old major representing Vladimir Lenin, the day before his death he lessoned all the animals on equality of all animals. The propagated the idea of revolt against their non productive exploiter- the man and listed down the commandments to be followed by all animals and warned the animals of the farm not to in anyway, anywhere and anytime to imitate man's behaviour or mannerisms

Animals were enormously influenced by the speech of old major and his sudden death deepened the impact. The animals overthrew Jones and his human comrades, and they made them flew away from the farm and renamed the farm as the *Animal Farm*. All animals

worked diligently to provide for their living and manage their own affairs but the spirit of ideals like equality and liberty could not persist for long. The ideals were corrupted by a few to please themselves and equality existed nowhere. Once again the hierarchy of powerful and the working class was clearly evident, the total totalitarian system prevailed over the animal farm. Napoleon and Snowball became the leaders and later Snowball had to run away from the farm in order to save his life as Napoleon with the help of Squealer wanted all authority for himself alone. Napoleon became the ultimate dictator over others the ruling few changed the commandments to their own desire which rebounded into inequality and exploitation of the working class. The utopian communist manifesto was brutally floored by selfish ambitions to power.

Theme of deception and playing upon the memory is acutely clear in this work. The character of Squealer is the foremost proponent of it along with the characters creating deception. Squealer represents the propagandist Joseph Goebbels who is an impressive public speaker and the mouth piece of the fascist regime. He was adjutant to Napoleon to manipulate and influence the animals for his dictatorial ambitions. He challenges the memory of the animals in fooling them with skewed facts. Squealer imposes new meanings to the old ideals by playing upon the intelligence of the knave beings.

The idea of power of language being curbed and controlled to persuade is depicted truly well in this work. It has numerous slogans, songs, speeches and life changing information throughout. The revolt is instigated by the speech of Old Major to the animals that get influenced in a way to turn over their human master and rule the farm by themselves. They sing the commandment song full breathed in zeal and unison Napoleon and Squealer rewrite and use history for their own ends. Squealer creates propaganda with his speech to win the support of animals and make Snowball runaway from the farm in fear of his life. The manipulative speeches of Squealer make all the animals believe on what he says, forgetting about their own experience and memory.

The theme of deception and elaborate lies is simultaneously dealt in this novella. The revolt against Mr Jones was the result of his wayward and exploitative ways towards the animals but they end up with the same cruel dictatorship under the rule of Snowball. They fought for the ideals of equality among all animals but finished at "*all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others*" by the end of the story. We the pigs dressed as human walking on two-feet, smoking and drinking; all of which was strictly warned against by the Old Major.

These animals were educated yet their intelligence was tricked in the absence of proper backup plan of action. Skills of reading handwriting are of no use until it is coupled with practical wisdom. The central doctrine of rules is also tampered by the dictators, and history was manipulated. Animals representing the working class could not understand the cunningness of the pigs instead they wholeheartedly followed the orders and provided for each other.

Animal farm also satirises the utopian communist idealism, the dreams of equality are formed by invoking the legends of animal bravery. Equality among animals and liberty from the cruel master ship of Mr Jones was the goal of rebellion but it fails as the animals again were unequal and absolutely mastered by Snowball and Squealer. They not only dictated the animals but also became torturous to them. They misused their power in exploiting other

animals physically and mentally. Animals were thoughtlessly exploited by them to meet their monetary and luxurious ends.

This novella is thronged with symbols; these symbols denote viable ideas and support the story in terms of impact and interest. There is a variety of symbols not only in things but in characters, places and events. The names of the animals reflect their characters and the personality they do not.

Napoleon, the pig is a brutal tyrant who staunchly makes his followers abide by the rules and represents Joseph Stalin. Napoleon's counter character is Snowball who is excellently intelligent, popular charismatic and a great asset to the animals he represents Leon Trotsky who can be an able leader but had to fly away to save his life.

Squealer is a competent public speaker who is the reflection of the propagandist Joseph Goebbels. He is the mouthpiece for the fascist regime who skewed facts, tarnishes historical events and manipulates them to his own use. He is the key to open the park and dictatorship for Napoleon.

The horse named Boxer is representative of hard-working dedicated strong and simple common working class people- the proletariat. They work hard throughout their lives but due to lack of intelligence and discretion they are miserably used and are destroyed in the end.

The old major was the founder of animalism and represents Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. He reflects on the plight of animals and obnoxious rule of Mr Jones. He devises a theory wherein the animals will have to revolt against the rigorous dictatorship and fight for the high ideals of liberty equality and fraternity. He laid down the commandments for the animals but after his death the pigs Napoleon and Squealer manipulate it to their own benefit.

Another animal Benjamin, the donkey is representative of the educated class he could read and write but he did not participate in the rebellion he represents the will of educated class who has a cynical attitude and thinks that nothing will ever change, in this way does not actively contributes to other animals.

The products used in this novella like the rifle, windmill, whiskey and other things are aptly used to present the ongoing of story and relate to the events. The rifle of Mr Jones is symbolic of power and rule, which is oppressive; it makes animals that are under the authority of Mr Jones fear for their lives. Whisky and alcohol consumed by the humans represents corruption and malicious works of humans both of which are strictly prohibited by the commandments of animalism but in the party scene the pigs are dressed as humans and are taking whisky denotes transference of corruption and slackening of ideas in animals as well.

The windmill is symbolic of the attempt to modernize but it is also distorted and wrongly presented by corruption of the dictator and capitalists. The seven commandments show the malleable nature of history, when people are ignorant and forgetful of facts.

Animal farm is in fact a potluck of thematic and symbolic varieties it very interesting. It deals with themes of the contemporary society by the means of concretely apt symbols, themes and characters at this potluck, the readers enjoy the vast variety being at ease and leisure.

Citations:

O'Neill, Terry, ed. Readings on Animal Farm. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1998.

Orwell, George. Animal Farm: A Fairy Story. Orlando: Signet Classics, 1996.

Service, Robert. A History of Modern Russia. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005.

Collins, S. (2008). Animal Satire In Animal Farm. The Orwell Reader. Retrieved April 7, 2013,