

An Analysis of Political Allegory in *Animal Farm*: from the Perspective of Animal Metaphor

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ABSTRACT

Animals were the main characters in the famous Satirical English novel *Animal farm*. Using animal metaphors, George Orwell showed the post-revolutionary Soviet Union as a sham democracy under Stalin and the tragic fate of the benighted masses who blindly followed the government. This paper classified the main characters in the novel, and interpreted the true meaning of animal farm through the specific analysis of each character and the corresponding realistic representative.

Key Words: *Animal Farm, Animal Metaphor, George Orwell*

1. INTRODUCTION

Animal Farm is a typical dystopian novel written by George Orwell. "Animal Farm was the first book in which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole (Orwell,1946)", Orwell once declared. The author's purpose of writing *Animal Farm* was to dispel the myth of Soviet socialism. For Orwell, the Socialist revolution in the Soviet Union was like a farce of animals on the farm. This absurdity ran through the whole text, and animals' behaviors were used to compare the state, which was vivid, humorous as well as extremely ironic.

Most of the current researches on *Animal Farm* focused on the themes of "dystopia" and "totalitarianism". For example, Ndubuisi H. Onyemelukwe, Catherine O. Ogbechie and Jemimah O. Ekechi had cooperated *Imperatives of Political Leadership with Reference to George Orwell's Animal Farm*, Zhang Zhe and Huang Xiaoyan had written *Postmodern Humanism in English Dystopian Novels: From Animal Farm to Fahrenheit 451 and Animal Farm-A Conceptual Metaphor on the Destructive Power of Totalitarianism and the Ultimate Corruption of This Power* by Trendeline Haliti. There also existed previous studies on the metaphorical perspective, such as *Animal Images and Metaphors in Animal Farm* by Ping Sun and *Character Metaphors in George Orwell's Animal Farm* by Fajrina D.

Animal metaphors is a technique used in many works, "No other realm affords such vivid expression of symbolic concepts; symbolizing through use of animals is preeminent, widespread, and enduring(Lawrence,1993)". This paper will be divide the animals in the novel into three categories according to the lineup: leadership, civilian and the third party. Trying to analyze the representative roles of each category, this paper will connect the characters' behaviors with the metaphorical objects in reality, and study the role of animal metaphor in

the expression of Orwell's central idea. The first part centers on Napoleon, Snowball and Squealer, who were the main characters leading the farm. Secondly, it's about Boxer, Clover and Mollie, Hens and Sheep. These animals were comprised in the majority of the farm. The third part focuses on Benjamin and Moses, who were separated from others in some respects. Lastly, conclusion will be made based on the former parts.

2. LEADERSHIP

As plumwood Val, a literary zoologist, once mentioned that dualism is the process by which contrasting concepts formed by domination and subordination, are constructed as oppositional and exclusive. These dualism form western culture. Whether in the reality or the fiction, there must exist opposition. As a political satire novel, there is an obvious class of leadership in animal farm which was consisted of pigs.

2.1. Napoleon

Napoleon was one of the leaders of the animal farm revolution. "Napoleon was a large, rather fierce-looking Berkshire boar, the only Berkshire on the farm, not much of a talker, but with a reputation for getting his own way(Orwell, p16)." This is the description of Napoleon by George Orwell. He was elected to be one of the leaders in the animal revolution. Alongside snowball, they respected the old major's last wishes, and expelled the owner Mr. Jones from the manor farm, which was the former name of the animal farm, and they finally established an equal society. However, after Snowball showed that he was more capable than Napoleon, Napoleon changed his mind. He secretly raised a pack of dogs and ordered them to drive Snowball off the animal farm when Snowball was having a speech. From then on, Napoleon gradually began his dictatorship on the animal farm, which can be revealed in

the following chapters--- “in future all questions relating to the working of the farm would be settled by a special committee of pigs, presided over by himself...but there would be no more debates.” It used to be that the animals held regular weekly meetings on time, and everything related to the farm was discussed together at the meetings. However, Napoleon announced that the regular meetings would be canceled and all decisions would be made by the pigs, especially by him. At the time he made this comment--- “Napoleon, with the dogs followed him, now mounted on the raised portion of the floor where major had previously stood to deliver his speech.” With the threat of dogs, no animal dared to disobey his words, which is a remarkable symbol of Napoleon’s dictatorship.

Napoleon's dictatorship also manifested itself in his control of the sheep. While Napoleon and snowball still stood opposite each other, Napoleon had already taken the largest and silliest group, sheep, under his wing. “He was especially successful with the sheep. Of late the sheep had taken to bleating ‘four legs good, two legs bad’ both in and out of season, and they often interrupted the meeting with this. It was noticed that they were especially liable to break into ‘four legs good, two legs bad’ at crucial moments in snowball’s speeches.” In animal farm, speech is the only way to encourage animals to join the decisions. Orwell didn’t describe it so obvious, but flanked Napoleon’s ambition by the overreaction of the sheep during the speech of snowball. As we could see, “He has already had a long-term plan for his tyranny at the very beginning”(Liu, 2019).

After Napoleon wielding the sceptre, his evil face was completely exposed. Firstly, he began to slander Snowball. He acclaimed that all the bad things should be attributed to the disrupt furtively, which was in the charge of Snowball. He made a careful tour of inspection of the farm with his dogs following, stopped to sniff every place he went to because he said he could tell Snowball’s smell. He smelt the traces of snowball almost everywhere, as depicted in the novel, “he would put his snout to the ground, give several deep sniffs, and exclaim in a terrible voice, ‘snowball! He has been here! I can smell him distinctly!’ And at the word ‘snowball’ all the dogs let out blood-curdling growls and showed their side teeth.”

In addition, Napoleon had privately tampered with the seven commandments as he wished. At the beginning of the uprising, pigs laid out a blueprint for a happy life for the animals on the farm, where the animals could enjoy plenty of food without overwork. Even, they could achieve their dream to retire in time, which they called it animalism. Nevertheless, after Napoleon came to power, he had denounced such ideas as a contrast to the spirit of animalism. The truest happiness, he said, “lay in working hard and living frugally(Orwell,P129).”

In reality, the pig named Napoleon is actually a metaphor for Stalin. There are similarities between what Napoleon did on the animal farm and what Stalin did in real society. For example, Stalin unilaterally developed heavy industry and neglected agriculture and light industry, which resulted in the market goods insufficient circulation. What’s more, he appreciated the cult of individuals and took too much

power, which caused the Great Purge. The emergence of the Great Purge was the inevitable result of Stalin’s theory that the struggle of socialist class was becoming more and more acute. At least 3 million people were persecuted in the movement, and socialist democracy and legal system were trampled on, which caused serious damage to the socialist cause of the Soviet Union and the international communist movement. Orwell’s portrayal of Napoleon reveals the true side of Stalin’s regime. “Napoleon’s raw dictatorial administration as a replacement for Jones’ serves to aptly caution against revolution and revolutionists in a totalitarian or pseudo-democratic state. By that construction, Orwell sharply alerts the citizenry of such a state to beware of emergent revolutionists, because they are never better than the government in power. They are at best as absolute as the government in power. That is, revolution is no solution for oppressive political leadership, but radical psychic transformation and ideological re-engineering.(Ndubuisi H. O, Catherine O. O & Jemimah O. E,2014)”

2.2. Snowball

Snowball is also one of the leaders of the animal farm. “Snowball was a more vivacious pig than Napoleon, quicker in speech and more inventive, but was not considered to have the same depth of character.(Orwell,P16)” After Old Major’s death, Snowball, one of the leaders of Animal Farm, governed the farm along with Napoleon. He was intelligent, brave, and above all, he acted as a staunch animalist seeker. He contributed greatly to the birth of Animal Farm. In the first confrontation with human beings, he fought courageously and showed great talents for leadership. In the novel, Orwell describes him in this way, “Snowball, who had studied an old book of Julius Caesar’s campaigns which he had found in the farmhouse, was in charge of the defensive operations. He gave his orders quickly, and in a couple of minutes every animal was at his post.(Orwell,P40)” He had not only a mind for war, but also a great charisma and action.

Snowball also devoted his time and energy to improving the lives of his fellow animals by teaching them to read and write and envisioning windmill plans so that it could generate electricity for the farm and earned income to feed them. Everything Snowball did is aimed at making Animal Farm like what Old Major. fantasized it would be -----equal for each animal.

Compared with the social phenomenon at that time, it can be safely concluded that snowball represents Leon Trotsky, the main Bolshevik leader. Trotsky played a crucial role in the October Revolution. The fanatical Stalinist Jacques Chatur, who also evaluated Trotsky was dominated in the October uprising, was the steel of the uprising Soul. Trotsky made a most remarkable contribution not only in the revolt but also in the defence and consolidation of the proletarian regime and in the conduct of the international communist revolution. However, Trotsky was eventually marginalized by Stalin. Stalin forced Trotsky to flee Russia,

ignoring and even slandering his contributions, much like in the novel when Snowball was driven out by Napoleon from animal farm and slandered after that. "Snowball does not have the name of any historical figure but has a metaphorical meaning. It suggests a process that starts from an initial state of small significance and builds upon itself becoming larger and larger. However, it brings us a feeling of softness and fragility. Snowball, becoming larger and stronger gradually, was easily to be destroyed. Consequently, he is beaten by Napoleon's power at the end.(Sun,2015)"

2.3. Squealer

Squealer was a loyal supporter of Napoleon and a good talker. "The best known among them was a small fat pig named Squealer, with very round cheeks, twinkling eyes, nimble movements, and a shrill voice. He was a brilliant talker, and when he was arguing some difficult point he had a way of skipping from side to side and whisking his tail which was somehow very persuasive. The other said of Squealer that he could turn black into white.(Orwell,P16)" As Orwell describes in the novel, Squealer has a strong talent for turning black and white upside down. He gave Napoleon credit for building the windmill, in order to tell the other animals that Napoleon had constructed the blueprint for the windmill first and that Snowball had plagiarized the his plan. He pretended to oppose the windmill plan while in fact he was trying to expose Snowball's bad behavior.

Squealer was good at using words to persuade others, which was especially evident when he tried to stir up enmity. When the other animals questioned Napoleon's actions, this is according to what Squealer said, "Are you certain that this is not something that you have dreamed, comrades? Have you any record of such a resolution? Is it written down anywhere?(Orwell,P64)"

Squealer's second major job was to tamper with the "Seven Commandments" for Napoleon. The "Seven Commandments" are the seven rules of animalism, based on the will of Old Major, which was formulated by Snowball, Napoleon and Squealer together. The seven commandments were written on the wall, while after Napoleon took control, the animals noticed some changes in the content of the seven commandments. Although it is not directly stated in the novel who changed these commandments, there is a description of Squealer in the novel: "Squealer, temporarily stunned, was sprawling beside it, and near at hand there lay a lantern, a paintbrush, and an overturned pot of white paint.(Orwell,P108)"

Situating in the historical context, Squealer stood for Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich Molotov, a close comrade and staunch supporter of Stalin. He was Stalin's main spokesman and adviser in international negotiations, who risked his life on many occasions to fly over enemy war zones to mediate with Western leaders. Known as a diplomatic genius for his eloquence, he was adept at using diplomacy to defend Soviet interests. Orwell used the role of Squealer to attack the Stalinist government, represented

by Molotov, so as to criticize them for distorting history, falsify data, and use racism and nationalism to suppress those who held different opinions.

Orwell used pig as the representative of the leadership of Soviet, it was a kind of innuendo. Pigs didn't have the ability to work, but they took the lead on the farm. Orwell was an Englishman who believed in socialism. After witnessing the colonial war, imperialist aggression and ideological confrontation, Orwell began to mercilessly expose and criticize totalitarianism in his works. Orwell used this fable to tell people: a post-revolutionary regime, if there was no democratic supervision, no rule of law, must be alienated, must go to its opposite. Animal Farm had gone from the rule of Jones to the rule of pigs, and any regime that excluded the minority was bound to be authoritarian. As the book said at the end, "The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.(Orwell,P141)"

3.CIVILIAN

3.1. Boxer

Boxer was a horse with a strong labor force on an animal farm. "Boxer was an enormous beast, nearly eighteen hands high, and so strong as any two ordinary horses put together. A white stripe down his nose gave him somewhat stupid appearance, and in fact he was not of first-rate intelligence, but he was universally respected for his steadiness of character and tremendous powers of work.(Orwell,P4-5)" He was not highly intelligent, but he was a firm follower of the animalistic philosophy, extremely loyal to the leaderships of pigs, especially to Napoleon, even to the point of blindness. In the novel, Orwell described him in this way: "Boxer who had now had time to think things over, voiced the general feeling by saying: 'If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right.' And from then on he adopted the maxim, 'Napoleon is always right,' in addition to his private motto of 'I will work harder.'" As long as Napoleon said something, Boxer definitely followed. However, his firm obedience of Napoleon did not earn him the trust of Napoleon.

In addition to his blind devotion to Napoleon, Boxer's another characteristic was to work hard. He made it as his personal motto. In order to build the windmill, he got up an hour or even two hours earlier than the other animals, and he had no rest time, except to sleep and work . Until he was wounded by carrying stones, his hard life was not recognized by Napoleon. Once he was unable to work, Napoleon sold him to a horse slaughterer. "From Boxer's perspective, the passage of time, as well as the change of overseer, brings few lasting benefits, and in fact he finds himself clearly worse off as his daily allocation decreases and his productive capital stock depreciates without replacement.(William, A. Hamlen, Jr, 2000)"

Unlike pigs, Boxer is not a representative of a particular person, but of a group. The Boxer symbolizes the broad proletariat. They were willing to remain ignorant and enslaved. "The working-class were oppressed and exploited, ground down both at work and at home, the victims of a system of privilege and of the most gross, indeed positively obscene, social inequality(Newsinger J,2018)". Incapable of questioning, they believed in the orders of their leaders, and it was they who formed the backbone of the entire centralized society. Orwell used the character of Boxer to satirize the ignorance and blindness of the general population at large, and the leader's utilizing of the people reinforced the despicable act of centralized rule.

3.2. Clover VS Mollie

Though Clover and Mollie were both mares, they represented quite different images. Clover was hardworking, kind, and helpful. "She was a stout motherly mare approaching middle life. When a brood of ducklings, which had lost their mother, filed into the barn... Clover made a sort of wall round them with her great foreleg, and the ducklings nestled down inside it and promptly fell asleep.(Orwell,P5)" Clover's enthusiasm is also apparent in her concern for Boxer. After Boxer's injury, Clover cared for him lovingly. Clover was as devoted a follower of animalism as Boxer. In the novel, Orwell depicted like this, "Their most faithful disciples were the two cart-horses, Boxer and Clover. These two had great difficulty in thinking anything out for themselves, but having once accepted the pigs as their teachers, they absorbed everything that they were told, and passed it on to the other animals by simple arguments.(Orwell,P18)" Clover was more tolerant of animalism than any other farm animal, and her belief in animalism was as firm as Boxer's.

On the contrary, Mollie was vain, stupid, and materialistic. She only cared about her own interests with no sense of collective responsibility. When the rebellion came to an end, what she only focused on was "Will there still be sugar after the Rebellion(Orwell,P17)". What was worse, she never took group work seriously. "Mollie, it was true, was not good at getting up in the mornings, and had a way of leaving work early on the ground that there was a stone in her hoof.(Orwell,P29-30)" The pleasure-seeking Mollie was bound to be incapable to endure the rough life on the animal farm, so she finally escaped from the farm to head for a new place to live a new life which she loved as a mount.

The Clover, like the Boxer, embodied the broad proletarian masses. But she was not as blind as Boxer, who still retained the ability to question. However, after Squealer's sophistry and the dogs' deterrence, she was also powerless to do anything about the status quo, and could only continue to be oppressed by the pigs - that was, the government headed by Stalin. Mollie, therefore, represented the reactionary people of the Russian middle class and petty bourgeoisie. After the revolution, they were still nostalgic for the days when they had been colonized by capitalist countries and did not feel a sense of belonging

to post-revolutionary Russia, but rather looked forward to being able to back to the life that once was.

3.3. Hens and Sheep

The hens and the sheep did not have separate roles in the novel, but appeared as a group. The author compared these two groups together because they represented two different attitudes among the plebeian class. The hens were the farm's breadwinner---they produced eggs, which were sold by the pigs to humans in exchange for the resources needed by the farm. When Napoleon demanded that the hens should provide four hundred eggs a week, the hens fought back. "Led by three young Black Minorca pullets, the hens made a determined effort to thwart Napoleon's wishes. Their method was to fly up to the rafters and there lay their eggs, which smashed to pieces on the floor.(Orwell,P76)" While the protest didn't change the outcome, they at least made an attempt and fought for their fate.

However, the sheep were quite different. Sheep were stupid and ignorant, who acted as good pawns for Napoleon. They just kept repeating the same phrase over and over again, and this was why Napoleon used them to drive out the opposite side. "The sheep were the greatest devotees of the Spontaneous Demonstration, and if anyone complained that they wasted time and meant a lot of standing about in the cold, the sheep were sure to silence him with a tremendous bleating of 'Four legs good, two legs bad!'(Orwell,P116)" The sheep's voice always burst out at subtle times, blocking all questioning voices in such an intrusive way. Hen symbolizes the peasants who rebelled on a large scale during the collectivization of agriculture. They were food producers who rose up when their interests were violated, but unfortunately their meagre power could do little to shake up the leadership class, and even led to a harsher repression. Sheep represented the stupid masses who blindly followed Stalin without any ability to think. They were the instruments of public opinion of Stalin's government, constraining all voices that oppose its rule.

As the main body of the farm, these animals had two things in common: the first was that they were productive or labor force, and the second was that they were ignorant and uneducated. They believed that the pigs' leading would lead them to the bright future described by the Old Major, even the situation was worse than the Jones' time, they were still dreaming of it. In the Soviet government, people were just like these animals, tame and unrebelling, silence seemed to be their only way to survive. They looked forward to the life of the people as masters of the country after the revolution, but in fact it was not fundamentally different from before the revolution, or even worse than before.

4. THE THIRD PARTY

4.1. Benjamin

Benjamin was an eccentric donkey. He was the longest living animal on the farm and always said things that were incomprehensible. This was how Orwell introduced him: “he seldom talked, and when he did, it was usually to make some cynical remark—for instance, he would say that God had given him a tail to keep the flies off, but that he would sooner have had no tail and no flies. Alone among the animals on the farm he never laughed. If asked why, he would say that he saw nothing to laugh at.(Orwell,P5)” Compared with the joy of the other animals, Benjamin was indifferent to Jones' departure. He was still doing the same job as before, no more and no less. When other animals asked him if he was happy with the success of Rebellion, he just answer, “Donkeys live a long time. None of you have ever seen a dead donkey.(Orwell,P30)”

Benjamin was smart. Squealer fell under the wall of The Seven Commandments while the other animals were still in a daze, he had already seen the signs. But he didn't want to get into this mess. He knew that under Napoleon's high-handed policy, it was dangerous to take the initiative. The only way to keep his head above water was to play dumb. Just like what Orwell wrote in the novel, “Only old Benjamin professed to remember every detail of his long life and to know that things never had been, nor ever could be much better or much worse—hunger, hardship, and disappointment being, so he said, the unalterable law of life.(Orwell,P130)” Benjamin seemed to know everything; he was the most sober man in the whole animal farm, but he chose to play dumb.

Benjamin actually symbolized the author Orwell himself and the intellectuals who also knew the truth as well as Orwell did. They saw through the deception under democracy, but they couldn't free people from their self-delusion. They had pierced the truth of the revolution, but they were powerless to pierce the ignorance that enveloped this age. The oppression of political power has forced them to keep their mouths shut. Although they could choose to expose the decadent darkness through words, it was likely to take their lives. Thus most intellectuals chose to remain silent, like Benjamin, to see the unspoken, so as to retain their livelihood.

4.2. Moses

Moses was a crow who always preaches the beauty of the world after death. “Moses, who was Mr. Jones's especial pet, was a spy and a talebearer, but he was also a clever talker.” As a raven, Moses always appeared with telling the story of a wonderful place named Sugarcandy Mountain. He claimed that when animals died, they could

go to this place beyond cloud where they could have a dream life. As Jones' pet, Moses fled with him when Jones was evicted from the farm, and he later returned to the farm to continue promoting his Sugarcandy Mountain. Pigs didn't like him, so did other animals. “The animals hated Moses because he told tales and did no work, but some of the believed in Sugarcandy Mountain, and the pigs had to argue very hard to persuade them that there was no such place.(Orwell,P18)” However, pigs' attitude towards Moses was subtle when Napoleon came to power. “A thing that was difficult to determine was the attitude of the pigs towards Moses. They all declared contemptuously that his stories about Sugarcandy Mountain were lies, and yet they allowed him to remain on the farm, not working, with an allowance of a gill of beer a day.(Orwell,P118)” Moses, once criticized, now appeared to be allowed on animal farms to promote what he called Sugarcandy Mountain to other animals.

Moses represented the Orthodox Church. First of all, the name Moses came from the Bible. And the Sugarcandy Mountain that Moses promoted was actually the paradise that the church portrayed. As a religion brought by the capitalist states, the post-revolutionary Soviet government was against and critical of it. But after Hitler violating the Nazi-Soviet pact, Stalin had to reopened the church as a government council. And in return for the cessions of Stalin, the church supported the Soviet policies. “The church was called upon to consolidate its influence over the Orthodox churches in the Eastern European countries, which were then falling under Soviet control. After 1948, a new field presented itself in which the state could continue to make use of the church: the promotion of the concept of peace as a peculiarly Soviet aim in the postwar world. (Walters P, 1986) ”

5. CONCLUSION

Orwell's *Animal Farm* is one of today's must-reads for dystopian and totalitarian studies. Orwell's use of animal metaphors made clear the hell of totalitarian rule and the real dark side of democracy. The fate of the characters and the images of animals in the novel had a very subtle coincidence with the reality. Pigs were clever and resourceful, but they preferred ease and toil. They put all their wisdom into getting a profit by squeezing other animals. Horses, like Boxer, devoted their lives to animalism and ended up in a terrible situation. The donkey was perverse in character, passive and secluded from the world. He obviously had the same wisdom as the pig, but he chose to remain silent after witnessing all kinds of centralized behaviors of the pig. In addition, the blind and docile sheep, the vain and lazy mare, the hens without social status, could all find their counterparts in Russia. Orwell's selection of the corresponding animal had been carefully arranged, through the animal characteristics to reflect the human, so that the readers were easier to identify with, so that each character had distinct characteristics.

In *Animal Farm*, animals were used as metaphors for human beings, and "animals and humans cannot be distinguished" was directly pointed out at the end, which constituted the distinctive literary characteristics of satirical allegory novels. Animal image represented the image of man, the behavior of the animal represented the people's behavior. Orwell used animals to satirize people and totalitarian society, such a profound image and implication, so that *Animal Farm* had been recognized as the most outstanding political fable novel since its publication, and had a very important position in the history of modern literature.

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