

# George Orwell's Animal Farm : A Political Satire on Totalitarianism

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**Abstract :** George Orwell has been regarded as the most outstanding satirist of modern age. Unlike Swift his satire is not marked by invective or burlesque. But he keeps a fine blending between satire and humour. His satire shows that he was a revolutionary who wished to wash off the shortcomings from the society. He aimed at the causes of the social and the political problems of the society. He was haunted by the class distinction, oppression and poverty of the society. Though his works are remarkable for the autobiographical touch, as a satirist his approach is absolutely objective and analytic.

Orwell possessed a great political awareness. He strongly believed that socialism was the only system in man's life. He was also of the opinion that the two world wars were the result of the conflict between two ideologies. He opposed all those policies which did not contribute to the progress of the poor. He dreamed of a free and just society, a society in which all the poor may prosper.

**Key words :** Satire, Distinction, Oppressions, Objective, Conflict.

## INTRODUCTION

George Orwell is one of the leading novelists of modern age. His novels express a powerful satire on the political and social hypocrisy. Through his powerful writing, he has achieved international fame and recognition. In his evolution as a novelist, he moved from simple narration to symbolic expression. As a modern writer Orwell deals with modern politics, sociology and literature. He is mainly concerned with the squalor and dirt, poverty and loss of individuality. His novels are a warning to the world that if totalitarian ideas are put into practice, we shall be living in a world of fear. His novels summarize his views on the importance of individual liberty.

George Orwell possessed a great political awareness. He has discussed the problems created by the capitalists in his various essays and novels. He strongly believed that socialism was the only system in man's life. He was also of the opinion that both the world wars were the result of the conflict between two ideologies. He opposed all those policies which did not contribute to the progress of the poor. He realized that money is the urgent need of a common man. To him, number of the rich is very small while the poor were in great numbers. Therefore, if a common man's problems, that were related to money only, were not seriously taken care of, he might have become the victim of exploitation at the hands of the rich. According to him, socialism was the only way by which a common man could develop his life. He believed that all the systems were worthless and full of despair. He thought that socialism should be separated from Utopianism because people who were confused about socialism and Utopianism attacked socialism. According to him socialism believed in reality while Utopianism aimed at imagination. Utopians might have declared that they could make a perfect world but a socialist would never say such thing. He would like to minimize the

distance between the rich and the poor. He would prove that this distance caused many sufferings to the poor. Orwell was an anti-communist. He believed that in 1930 the people of Russia were the best-fed, the most advanced and the happiest in the world. During that period the problems of the Russians were much more than those of the other people in the world. But in 1941 due to Stalin's foreign policy, Russia's relations with other nations declined. In short, Orwell believed that Stalin's policy was mere opportunistic and it did not care for the welfare of common people. But later on communism came to stay in Russia and the author began to believe that the experiment of communism in Russia could never contribute to the progress of the country because it was a lost revolution. In 1948, after the second world war, the theory of socialism was accepted by many nations. Orwell found that many countries started to act under the influence of socialism. Yet he realised that society was not free from many problems. Society which the socialists had imagined, was still far away from its goal. He was of the opinion that the political parties that acted as governments were not purely socialists.

Orwell was of the view that individual development made the general development. Neither he desired that the poor should become rich nor he thought that the rich should give up their prosperity. But he expected a harmony between the rich and the poor. He wanted to see a change in the mentality of common men. He laid emphasis on the fact that money is not greater than the virtues of a man. He was of the opinion that this fact could make man free from money problems.

Orwell opposed totalitarianism. Totalitarianism stands for that society which is ruled by a dictator or a group of dictators. All human liberties and rights are taken away. Fascism, communism and socialism in their worst forms are the examples of totalitarianism. Thus totalitarian state owes no justice to the society. Orwell hated the society which is dominated by totalitarianism. He pointed out, "Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written directly or indirectly against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it. It seems to me nonsense, in a period like our own, to think that one can avoid writing of such subjects." 'Animal Farm' presents the evils of totalitarianism as he found that the modern world was "moving into an age of totalitarianism - dictatorship."

Orwell aimed at the presentation of the Soviet myth in 'Animal Farm'. The thoughts of Karl Marx influenced the people of Russia and these thoughts gave birth to communism. The followers of Karl Marx declared that their chief aim was to bring equality to the society. First of all, communists started running the country, Russia, under the leadership of Stalin and Trotsky. Later on Trotsky had to leave Russia though the reasons of his departure were not very clear. Outwardly, it was said by the communists that they were about to reach their goal but inwardly they were not providing the poor with any creative aid. The rest of the world was aware of this fact. That is why, the ups and downs at political level became the subject of satire for the writers. Orwell, too, could not shut his eyes from these upheavals.

Orwell never misses his real goal of attacking the policies of communism in his novel 'Animal Farm'. Stalin who had been a ruler of Russia in those days, declared that he was going to establish socialism in Russia. Orwell, very humorously, proves that Stalin's policies were not influenced by corruption. The socialist experiment at which Stalin aimed was nothing but a way to impress the people of Russia. The novelist does not say that Stalin did not follow the principles of communism but he tries to prove that if

Stalin had been a true follower of communism, it would never have been the harbinger of socialism. In other words, the writer seems to be an anti-communist and he seems to prove that communism is not socialism. Many characters and the story of the novel resemble the happenings of the Russian Revolution though Orwell does not criticize the revolution. Mr. Jones, who stands for the tyranny in the story, is not an ideal character. The author strictly condemns the tyrannical policies of capitalism. That is why, in his opinion Russian Revolution contained great ideals. But after the revolution these ideals were given up by the revolutionaries. The novelist criticizes the situation that was brought after the revolution. At the end of the novel he concludes that most of the revolutions which are inspired by great ideals end in equally great failure. In this case, 'Animal Farm' may be regarded as an elegy written on the death of such great ideals. According to the novelist power corrupts the ruler. Stalin who once decided to be a blind follower of those principles which could bring prosperity to the common man, became a corrupt man like the former rulers. He also started exploiting the common people. During that period no improvement in the condition of the poverty-stricken people was marked. The novelist strictly condemned the ways of Stalin.

The novelist puts forth that power corrupts the ruler. Exploitation is possible only where common people are unaware of their rights. When they realize their rights, the spirit of revolution begins to burn in them. Revolution takes place and with the great valour of revolutionaries, it succeeds. Then starts the struggle and the conflict between two forces to rule that unruled state. One of them defeats another and the victorious enjoys the power. Instead of establishing those ideals which were the foundation of revolution, the new ruler follows the traditional path of enjoying the luxuries and later on, it becomes more corrupt than the former rulers. It is the biography of every country, of every society which has revolved around the exploitation. 'Animal Farm' aims at the same story. Old Major, an old boar, makes other animals aware of their rights and also of their exploitation at the hands of Mr. Jones, a human being. Revolution takes place and Jones is expelled from the farm. After this we observe a conflict between Napoleon and Snowball to overpower the farm. The latter is defeated and Napoleon becomes the ruler. Then starts the vicious circle of the tyranny of Napoleon who becomes Mr. Jones at the end of the novel. The novelist does not deal with any particular revolution in this case but he seems to be concerned with the general fact of a revolutionary country. Orwell convinces that power corrupts the ruler and all the ideals that make revolution possible, become effective for such rulers.

'Animal Farm' is the most effective political satire written by Orwell. He wrote this story of animals to present the evils of Soviet political method. The satire of 'Animal Farm' is of great importance because of a fine blending of humour and wit. Even the tragic incidents occur in comic atmosphere. The author exposes the faults and drawbacks of the society in a comic manner. He laughs at the faults of society in a comic manner. He laughs at the faults of society but his laughing is very meaningful.

Orwell is basically a political writer. All his best works present social and political problems. It is also obvious through his novel that he spent a lot of time in seeking a political theory that may enrich the society with ideal thoughts. He believed in that socialism which stands for justice and liberty. But he did not like socialist propaganda. He also opposed Fascism because of its tyrannical nature. He also did not agree with Marxist theory which always mixed up class-distinction and bloody revolution. 'Animal Farm' is, thus,

a protest against totalitarianism. In fact, it is a mocking satire on the views of a socialist at the expense of Soviet experience.

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