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George Orwell's Animal Farm: Power Hunger leading to Depravation

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Abstract:

George Orwell's novella Animal Farm, published in 1945, is a masterpiece of political satires. The book is a fable which sets in the animal farm of Mr. Jones of England. The book is symbolic as it targets the socialism in Russia under Stalin's leadership. The animals of the Manor Farm inspired by the words of Old Major the oldest boar, revolt against the tyranny of Mr. Jones and expel him out of the farm. After the rebellion, the hold of farm comes in the hands of two senior boars Snowball and Napoleon. Snowball is a vivacious, quicker in speech and more inventive while Napoleon is large, fierce-looking and with habit of getting his own way. Napoleon being more ambitious rears puppies secretly. At every point he shows his disagreement with Snowball. In the matter of windmill, the hostility reaches on the highest point when Napoleon lets his dogs to attack over Snowball and compels him to leave the farm forever. With the help of Squealer and dogs, Napoleon becomes the dictator. He including other pigs enjoys luxury and distorts all the commandments that were established just after rebellion. Thus, the power that was at first in the hands of one tyrant i.e., human being now transfers into the hands of another tyrannical dictator i.e., Napoleon, the boar. The paper analyses how power hunger leads to the depravation and subjugation of fellow beings.

Keywords: Animal farm, power, corruption, depravation, socialism, politics.

INTRODUCTION

George Orwell's masterpiece Animal Farm was published in 1945. It was a fable satirizing the political events of socialist Russia during the regime of Stalin. The book is highly symbolic as it represents the events as well as the characters also. From the very beginning to the end, novella deals with the theme of power. Generally, the word 'power' is applied in many ways depending on the context. But in the novel the word 'power' has been used in political reference. In common, political power is the ability to control the behavior of people through the passage, approval and implementation

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of laws and regulations. (Sullivan) But it is not so immaculate because it 'may comprise anything that establishes and maintains control of man over man (and it) covers all social relationship which serve that end, from physical violence to the most subtle psychological ties by which one mind controls another.' (Morgenthau, 9) The fact is that 'the most primitive yet prevailing concept of power is preserve the powerful by 'domination' or 'power over' those with less power or the powerless.'(Shokri) Schleicher, in his book on international relation wrote, "power relationship is marked clearly by the occurrence of threats," (Schleicher, 252-53) All these views on political power display a similarity that it is availed using any tact either right or wrong. Different kinds of power like physical, psychological and economic are used in attaining the political power and these are exercised through persuasion, rewards, punishment and force. (Schleicher) About the theme of power and corruption once George Orwell himself quoted British historian Lord Acton's phrase, " All power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."(Moreell)

At the Manor Farm of Mr. Jones, Old Major, the prize Middle White boar held a meeting of animals of the farm to tell his dream which he had seen last night. He desired to transfer his wisdom, acquired in his long life, before his death. He addressed his fellow animal of the farm, "Now, comrades what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: our lives are miserable, laborious, and short. We are born, we are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies, The life of an animal is a misery and slavery: this is the plain truth."(Orwell, 28) Further he added, "nearly the whole produces of our labour is stolen from us by human beings. There, comrades, is the answer to all our problems. It is summed up in a single word——Man. Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished forever."(Orwell, 28-29) He drew attention of all animals to their past exploitations and suggested, " only get rid of Man, and the produce of our labour would be our own.... That is my message to you, comrades: Rebellion! I do not know when that rebellion will come, it might be in a week or in a hundred years, but I know, as surely as I see this straw beneath my feet, that sooner or later justice will be done."(Orwell, 30) He asked other animals to carry on the resolution of struggle from generation to generation until succeed. He advised them to think' "All men are enemies. All animals are comrades."(Orwell, 31) Old major established some rules for all animals, "Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend... No animal must ever live in a house, or sleep in a bed, or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or touch money, or engage in a trade. All the habits of Man are evil. And, above all, no animal must ever tyrannize over his own kind. Weak or strong, clever or simple, we are all brothers. No animal must ever kill any other animal. All animals are equal."(Orwell, 31-32) Then he spoke about his dream of song Beast of England. Three nights after that event, old major died but he had already ignited the fire for rebellion.

Some months passed peacefully yet the activities for rebellion were going on secretly and two boars of the farm--Snowball and Napoleon took the responsibility of leadership. Snowball, Napoleon and Squealer elaborated the teachings of Old Major in a systematic form. It was not easy for the pigs to convince all the animals especially Mollie, the white mare, and those animals that were under the influence of Moses, the tame raven of Mr. Jones. The two cart-horses Boxer and Clover were easiest

to be convinced. Three months passed but on a Saturday evening Jones didn't give food to the animals and kept them unfed until Sunday evening. When hungry animals began to eat themselves from the bins, Jones with his four men started to beat them. It being unbearable for them, animals butted and kicked all the five men and compelled them to run away. (Orwell, 39) Thus without any intention they made their rebellion complete. Then they removed all the traces of Mr. Jones' cruelty. They recited seven times Beasts of England; the song taught by Old Major. In the next morning, having gazed around they found everything their own which surged their excitement. They decided to keep the farmhouse as museum. At that juncture, pigs disclosed about their learning of reading and writing and therefore they painted the name of Manor Farm to Animal Farm and at the wall of the barn the Seven Commandments to be followed by animals as rules: -

1. whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.
2. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.
3. No animal shall wear clothes.
4. No animal shall sleep in a bed.
5. No animal shall drink alcohol.
6. No animal shall kill any other animal.
7. All animals are equal. (Orwell, 43)

Animals were ordered for harvesting, while pigs 'with their superior knowledge it was natural that they should assume the leadership.' (Orwell, 45) Every animal contributed in the works assigned to them. On every Sunday, they observed ceremony, flag hoisting, meeting and planning for the next week. All the meetings ended with the recitation of Beasts of England. It was the climax of animal freedom and happiness.

But as a fact 'a community without power is chaos. Chaos is not merely the absence of power but the absence of political power and political rights is merely the absence of order. Mostly, the chaotic situations lead to the emergence of the dictators and tyrants.' (Morell) In the novella, chaotic situations began with the squabbles between Snowball and Napoleon. Snowball having more vivacity formed many committees that failed excluding his effort for education of animals which succeeded to some extent as pigs and Muriel, the goat learnt reading. When nine puppies born, Napoleon took the responsibility of their education and kept them aloof. Meantime it came in the knowledge of animals that the milk was mashed only in the food of pigs and apples were allotted only to pigs, some animals murmured but Squealer hushed them up with his arguments that pigs did more brainwork and whether they wanted Mr. Jones to come back.

After six months, Mr. Jones with six men attacked the farm. Animals had prepared themselves already, they counterattacked so forcefully that all the men had to take their heels. One sheep died and

Snowball got wounded. The incident was named as the Battle of Cowshed. Boxer and Snowball were honored with military decoration of Animal Hero, First Class and the dead sheep with Animal Hero, Second Class. It was decided that the gun left by Mr. Jones would be fired two times in a year on the anniversary of rebellion and battle. In fact, it was the beginning of power worship.

'It had come to be accepted that the pigs, who were manifestly cleverer than the other animals, shall decide all questions of farm policy.' (Orwell, 62) Snowball proposed many schemes but Napoleon who proposed none, objected to all the schemes. Both the leading pigs disagreed in all the matters only to establish their authority. The worst of the matter happened in the case of Windmill proposal. Snowball drew the complete plan of windmill. Napoleon who was against the proposal from the very beginning, visited once and looked closely the detail then out of hate urinated and walked away. He advocated for the increase in food production rather than mechanization favored by Snowball. Napoleon asked to collect weapons to defend human beings which were contrary to Snowball's scheme for spreading spirit of rebellion all over the England. When all the animals were about to vote in favor of windmill, Napoleon whimpered and nine dogs appeared who dashed Snowball until he run out of the farm. The incident frightened all the animals and in this way Napoleon got the full hold on the farm. With his nine dogs Napoleon put forward as a dictator. He announced the ending of all Sunday morning meetings and set up committees of pigs presided by himself. Whenever any animal tried to protest, Squealer, another pig came forward and silenced everyone with his sly arguments.

Just after three weeks of Snowball's expulsion, Napoleon decided to construct Windmill and asked for more labor. When animal objected, dogs growled over them. Napoleon started trade with human beings to obtain necessary materials and for that he asked hens for more eggs. When they objected, their supply of food was stopped. Other animals reminded the resolution of not having relation with human being, Squealer contented that there was no written proof of it. Pigs started living in the farmhouse and sleeping in beds. When animals said it breaking of the commandment, Squealer explained brain need relaxed atmosphere and the commandment is about to sleeping in bed with sheet, not without sheet.

The first effort of constructing windmill failed due to weak foundation. Taking benefit, Napoleon blamed Snowball for it and got more control over animals psychologically. For trade, hens were asked to produce four hundred eggs a week. When they protested, their ration was stopped and nine hens died. Suddenly some wickedness was realized on the farm. Snowball was declared responsible for all. A meeting was called, in which Napoleon emerged 'wearing both his medals...with his nine huge dogs frisking round him and uttering growls that sent shivers down all the animals' spines.' (Orwell, 91) At his command dogs dragged four pigs that were blamed for spying for Snowball and afterward slaughtered those four pigs, and other three hens, a goose and three sheep. All the animals horrified so much that they found themselves unable to think over anything. 'This was not what they had aimed.' (Orwell, 95) That was the most terrifying scene that clarifies 'the pigs, dominated by Napoleon, their chief, become corrupted by power and a new tyranny replaces the old.' (Drabble)

Animals were commanded to stop singing Beasts of England. Three or four days after slaughter, when animal recollected their sense, they found sixth commandment differently written "No animal shall kill any other animal without cause."(Orwell, 98) News of conspiracy about Napoleon's murder was spread, consequently four dogs were put to watch him all the time and a pig was given the charge of testing his food. Napoleon sold a pile of timber to neighboring farm owner Frederick who handed him forged notes. Next day assisted by fifteen men, Frederick attacked the farm, killed many animals and destroyed windmill but when animals counterattacked, they had to run away. Napoleon named it the battle of windmill and conferred upon himself 'The Order of Green Banners.'

Few days later, pigs got whisky out of cellars which they drank. Afterward the fifth commandment was found changed to 'No animal shall drink alcohol to excess.' (Orwell,113) When pigs were enjoying luxury, other animals were not given enough ration yet they rely on Squealer who argued, 'in those days (Jones time) they had been slaves and now they were free.'(Orwell,116) On Napoleon's order a new Spontaneous demonstration was started to be celebrated. As it is prevalent 'usurpers often seizing power, have often tried to strengthen their positions by giving their governments a legitimate form'(Sparknotes), farm house was declared a Republic whose elected president was none other than Napoleon himself.

When Boxer, the most industrious horse fell down, pigs sent him slaughter house ruthlessly. Years passed, only some animal of rebellion time remained alive. New generation only heard about rebellion without knowing much. Though animals had to work harder with less food yet they considered themselves superior to other animals as no human being governed them. 'Pig did not actually work, but directed and supervised others.'(Orwell,45) One day animals saw Squealer walking on his hind legs following him a file of pigs also. Clover the mare, found the seventh commandment changed to,

'All animals are equal

But some are more equal.

Like human beings, Napoleon started smoking pipes, wearing clothes. One evening some neighbors arrived on the farm and indulged in merrymaking with pigs. Other animals watching them through window heard Napoleon announcing to ban the word 'comrade' and removal of 'horns and hoofs' from the green flag and restoration of the name 'Manor Farm.' Now they found no difference between and human being and pigs. One tyrant replaced another. For common animals, the ass Benjamin's word appeared suitable,"hunger, hardship, and disappointment being (so he said) the unalterable law of life.(Orwell, 130)

Conclusion-

George Orwell's allegory Animal Farm targets especially Communism in Stalin's Russia but it has universal significance. Systems are originated with Utopian ideals, but ambition, selfishness, self-righteousness and mismanagement spoil the objectives. In the novella, Old Major, the boar, dreams

for an ideal society in which every animal will have less work, sufficient food, liberty and equality. After his death, taking the benefit of his species other pigs Snowball, Napoleon and Squealer assert their leadership. Leaders of animal farms do not possess the qualities of the leader. A leader helps his followers in obtaining their goals and completing their tasks what cannot be obtain without his guidance. But in Animal Farm neither Snowball nor Napoleon wants to help their follower animals. Both of them promote their own goals and desires. 'The pigs use rhetoric and propaganda to establish themselves in power and take control of the farm.'(Bitesize) Their hunger for Power makes them so cruel that they assassinate no other animals only but they wrangle their species also. With absolute power Napoleon becomes the dictator. The allegory represents the truth vividly that having achieved absolute power most of the ruler become dictator and they depraved their own brothers and society. Their power override, dominate and subjugate the rights of others. 'Animal Farm offers commentary on the development of class tyranny and the human tendency to maintain and reestablish class structures even in societies that allegedly stand for total equality.'(Sparknotes) The following hegemony cannot remain without the impact of its preceding one.

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