

Orwell's "Animal farm" as an allegorical-political novel"

Asst. Lecturer. Mushtaq Awad Jabbar

University of Al-Muthanna / College of Education for humanities

English Department

mushtaq.awad@mu.edu.iq

DOI: 10.56201/ijelcs.vol.10.no1.2025.pg116.122

Abstract

This study depicts the meaning of allegory and the significance of this literary device in English literature, and proves how this literary device assists the writers to deliver their messages to the readers in easy and smooth way, and to keep the writer who wants to criticize any social issues or leaders out of danger specially if the author is writing a literary work that deals a political prospective.

Animal Farm is a fable novel, Orwell used allegory and symbolism throughout the characters and inanimate to give a hints regarding issues in that times, and most of these issues related to the politics due to the affectation of the first world war and the second one on the life of the people in different countries.

One of the goals to George Orwell was to portray the Russian revolution that occurred in 1917. He used allegory to give better explanation to the events and the circumstances at this revolution, and how this revolution led to oppressive government. George Orwell used that literary device for a satirical purposes and to criticize politicians and leaders and faulty political and social systems.

Key words: Allegory, satire, Mr. John, Old Major, Animal Farm.

Introduction

Orwell has been considered as one of the famous novelists in English literature that showed a political aspects in his writings during the modern age, he was born on 25th of June 1905 in the eastern side of India. He got his education in England. This novel has been written to criticize the principles of Russian revolution in 1917 and the top leading individuals of this revolution at that time.

His novel "Animal farm" was written during the time of the WWII. It is a modern fable allegorical and satirical novel against the modern regimes, Orwell has revealed the main events during Stalin's period of rule. Orwell started his novel by giving an allegorical title to his novel, also he presented his characters during the events of this novel as an animals to avoid any trouble with a tyrant regime at that time.

He presented his geniality in literary writings to the world through his novel "*Animal Farm*". This novel has been published in 1945, as it was one of the modernist novels, "*Animal farms*" stimulated and to criticize the forms of reality and to deal with political problems at that time. Orwell was a famous Novelist who revealed the reality of Soviet communists. When he travelled to Spain in 1936, he fought with the republicans and supported them against the communists, for that reason he has been forced to flee a way to save his life.

George Orwell through his novel has condemned the idea of false leaders and how these types of leaders will be destructive to their countries through the misuse of the power and authority. He was so successful to get the attention of the readers to purpose of writing this novel by using allegory and giving hints through his tale regarding the corrupted systems and leaders.

Many reasons that caused *Animal Farm* as very famous and popular novel in the modern age, the first one is the events of this novel are matching the reality of many political systems, and the other reason is the technique of writing to this novel, George Orwell wrote his fable novel and let the animals to teach the readers a moral lessons.

1. The meaning of "Allegory" in English literature:

Allegory is a literary device of writing, comes from Latin word "**Allegoria**" and it means "when someone speaks something to imply something else". It was popularized in the fourteenth century in France, the word "**Allegoria**" and means "the hidden meaning".

To clarify the difference between allegory and symbolism, we need to define both of these devices, symbolism is a literary device of writing that use an objects, words or things to represent an abstracted meaning or idea and gives you meaning beyond the literary meaning, while allegory is a literary device that use symbolism in all the aspects of the story or the novel and could be extend the whole book of any story.

Within the definition of allegory as an literary device, it is so important to reveal the ambiguity to distinguish between allegory and symbolism as both of these literary devices have the same purpose in meaning.

Simply, allegory is a story or a poem that might be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning that serves a political or moral purposes, while symbolism is sign, mark or character that represent an object, function or process. Allegory as a story, is a work that uses symbols to reveal a hidden meaning. The writers are using allegory to convey social, political or moral messages as it is so clear in Orwell's "*Animal Farm*" that he criticized the Soviet union in that time by using an animal characters to communicate with each other as a human.

This paper examines many aspects in the novel "*Animal farm*" to analyze some characters, objects and the title of the novel as well to debate what they stand for.

2. Why did Orwell use "Allegory" in Writing "Animal Farm"?

In Orwell's *Animal Farm*, he used allegory to have a great emotional impact on the reader by sending his message through a fable story. the author did not use a direct way of narration in this novel, but he used allegory to point out his views regarding some political revolutions like the Bolshevik revolution in Russia at 1917 due to his fears from that dictatorial regime.

The aim of Orwell's novel *Animal Farm* was not only to criticize the political side, but it has been directed to criticize how religion has been manipulated by some leaders in this novel, and that was so clear throughout some characters like Moses and Raven when they mocked the church and the religious people in Russia by creating fake stories regarding the God and how the second life after death will be.

During the life of George Orwell, he had a lot of horrors from unfair system of government, so he used allegory to support his idea about corruption of the governments at that time, he used animals as a characters and used a names of humans to give the readers a hints about what he was trying to say through his novel.

George Orwell used allegory for a satirical purposes when he presented a cynical images about some politicians, when he used the animals to stand for characters ,that was obviously representing some corrupted leaders in that time, and to expose the issues of injustice and inequality within the society at their period of rule. He wrote this novel as a response to what he witnessed and experienced with the Russian revolution and how the people were manipulated over the matter of their freedom.

Also, Orwell tried to use the term of Manipulation within the characters of his novel, he criticized the politicians in that time and he addressed them as a manipulated individuals, he used the pigs named as Napoleon and Snowball to fulfill this purpose, when the pigs tried to use the slogan of their rebellion against the human as " All animals are equal" but by the time, pigs acted as superiors and higher level more than the other animals.

The writer of this novel tried to warn and to send a message to his readers that power and authority can corrupt individuals. (Collected Essays. 1968).

3. How did Orwell use allegory as a literary device in his novel?

Animal farm is an allegorical novel that narrates a political-moral story by using kinds of animals to stand for a characters in this novel, the purpose of using allegory in this novel is to criticize some politicians and their policies in Europe at that time. Some writers were using this technique to avoid the troubles and to save their lives. By using the allegory, authors granted some freedom to deliver some messages.

Orwell was so successful of choosing pigs to represent the corruption of the politicians, as the pigs has been considered as the dirtiest kind of animals, which is so decent example to clarify

and to explain the corruption and tyranny of Stalin and his identical politicians from other countries

3.1 . Allegory within the characters

In process of writing any literary allegorical work, characters can serve a multiple purposes through their names or the character could be an abstract to an idea about some famous real figures. Authors use metaphor to illustrate a complex idea and deliver it in a simple methods. By using metaphor, authors can present their ideas regarding a social and political issues or any human experiences. At this point, this paper will take some allegorical characters in Orwell's "*The animal farm*" to clarify the significance of using this literary device to present author's ideas.

3.1.1 Old major

Old major is the boar who represents the core of the plot. This character represents Carl Marx, the founder of communism. Old major inspired the majority of the animals by sharing his dream with them, his dream is how to free himself and the others from the human's slavery towards all the animals and how the human is abusing them when old major explained to all the animals the way of how the men have been taking the advantage for many years by abusing all the animals in the fields and the farm as well, and it's the right time to end this.

The words of "Old Major" represent the same words of "Carl Marx " and "Frederick Engels" in The Communist Manifesto (published in 1848). George Orwell wrote this novel to be as a reaction against the capitalist economical system. according to the events of this novel, the workers never gain benefits of their products or their outcomes because of the capitalism, and the one who is owning the means of the products will be the one who is getting the benefits.

According to Orwell's Animal Farm, the character of "Old Major" is the core of the animal's revolution against the tyranny of the human. He gave the hope to the animals to have a better life. (Bloom, Harold. 2007. P: 19).

3.1.2 Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones is an allusion in "*Animals Farm*", This character represents **Tsar of Russia** in that time. This Tsar was well known as untouchable by any word of the Russian people, also he involved Russia in the WW1 and he mismanaged the sources of the country, he caused many troubles to his people by following bad policies, like shortage in food and followed by famine in Russia.

Mr. Jones is the top better example regarding the ignorant leader who neglects his people, He represents not only Stalin, but he is the spitting image of many leaders in nations all over the world. Stalin and the ones who matching his personality are able to provide the needs to their people. Unfortunately, their people suffer a lot because of the greediness of the leaders.

Also, this character could represent George III to the American people, this character embodies the tyranny against people's will and benefits. For what he has done to his people in Russia,

people began to do unorganized strikes and protests, he tried to send his military to handle the situation, but the workers were out of the control.(George, Orwell. 1964).

3.1.3 Napoleon

Napoleon is one of the significant characters in this novel, by using the name of historical leader, this character refers to the dictatorship through all the period of times and societies in all the world, *Animal Farm* is not just criticizing the Soviet Union's political system, but it does criticize all similar systems that steal the efforts of the people.

Napoleon represent Josef Stalin and his role to steal the efforts of the others when he changed the idea of Old Major to rebel against the tyrant human into "Animalism", Napoleon became a leader to the animals in "*Animal Farm*" after the death of Old Major, and this is very identical to what's happened when Josef Stalin took over the role instead of Vladimir Lenin in 1924. During that time, Soviet Union got famine and fear, people were suffering a lot in that time and many of them died starving and the ones who stood against Stalin were in prisons or assassinated.

Napoleon is not counted as a communist leader, but his character is so close to the character of the general Napoleon Bonaparte in France who betrayed the principles of the French revolution for his domination and seeking for power at that time.(William, A. 2000).

3.2 Allegory within the title of Orwell's novel "*Animal Farm*".

Manor Farm as it is called later "*Animal Farm*" represented the place of the animal's revolution, that place was located in the countryside of England, and was controlled by the capitalist " Mr. Jones" and then turned to be under the control of the animals. The title referred to the Russian revolution in spite of the setting of the novel referred to English place at the countryside, this place was a mythical setting in "*Animal Farm*" and referring to Russia, while the other farms in the neighborhood of Manor farm like Pilkington and Fredrick farms were representing the Capitalism and they might be referring to England, America and Germany.

Within the events of Orwell's novel, Manor Farm as a place that represent Russia was rolled once by capitalists, then it has been turned to be ruled by the communists. Also ,the author wants to address his hints to the British readers that the affectation of the corruption and bloodshed of Stalin could be identical in their homeland in Great Britain. Through this novel, the author tries to criticize the dictatorship of Stalin and at the same time to warn his own people of such regime could be so close to threaten their societies in Britain and Europe as well. (Orwell. 1956. P: 23)

3.3 Allegory in inanimate

Orwell's "*Animal Farm*" employs a lot of symbols within the events of this novel. It is a typical allegorical novel that consists of many categories that refer to the concept of paper. At this point of the this study, things like windmill and the barn will be fine examples to explain this type of allegory.

3.3.1 Windmill

Windmill represents one of the infrastructure project by the Soviet leaders to modernize the country. In Animal Farm, animals were working so hard to accomplish this project to flourish their life.

Windmill is one of the symbols that refers to the manipulation of the leaders, and how hard they do to up use the animals and to steal their effort. Just to compare what's happened in the events of the novel between Snowball and Napoleon, and to compare with the real historical conflict between Stalin and Trotsky, when Stalin worked hard to paste all the deeds of the Soviet revolution into his achievements.

The purpose of the windmill is to provide the electricity to the farm, put this project has started with many problems. The one who decided to build up this project is Snowball, he tried to finish the construction of this project without complete understanding to the mechanism and the requirements of the windmill.

Stalin established many project in the first five years to modernize the Soviet union, the result of these projects had spread the famine in this country and the benefits went right a way to the leader instead of the people of that country. (Collected Essays. 1968).

3.3.2 The Barn

The barn represents the core of the ideology in the Animal Farm. The barn is a place for the animals that symbolized the society and the place that used by the animal to launch their revolution towards their freedom, also it represents the place of power when the pigs draw the seven commandments on its wall to be later the first spark of their revolution to regain their rights from the human. Its referring to the society in the Soviet Union.

The Manor farm is a place in rural England, Orwell did a maneuver during writing his novel by using English settings in his fable story to criticize the Soviet Union, its indirect way to criticize and speak freely, and to avoid troubles as much as possible by giving hints to the readers about the one or the thing that the writer wants to write about. (Marx,Karl.1976. P: 25).

Conclusion

Orwell's Animal Farm is one of the most important allegorical novel concerning with the political issues in the modern era, and telling us the story of revolution of characters to demand for their rights but this revolution turns to dictatorship and misuse of leadership.

As this paper discuss the Allegory as literary device within the novel "Animal Farm", Orwell used this writing technique to criticize some political systems in Europe but he focused on Russian revolution and what's came to at the end.

Orwell tried to point out through his novel that such a revolution often loses its value because it never meant to serve people due to the leaders of this revolution have ignored the benefits of the others and focused on their own business. The central problem to the people around the world is related with the tyrants and dictators who are greedy and concentrate to achieve their benefits. All the systems in the world could serve the nations, but the most important thing is

way of practicing the principles of any system to help the people and provide to them a better life.

The importance of "animals Farm" as an allegorical novel comes from that the novel revolutionized the concept of the novel, it discussed the concept of what the real revolution must be. Also the matching between this fable story and what's the people were suffering from, made this novel had a great impact on the readers for its reality.

References

- George Orwell's Animal Farm[J]. Canadian Center of Science and Education,2014
- Liu A X. The Allegory of Rule: Animal Images in the Works of Lu Xun and George Orwell'[J]. Beijing Foreign Studies University,2019.
- Orwell G. Animal Farm. New York: Signet Classics,1956.
- William A, Hamlen, Jr. The Economics of Animal Farm[J]. Southern Economic Journal, 2000.
- Marx, Karl. (1976). Capital. London: Penguin Books. Kindle AZW file.
- Bloom, Harold ed. George Orwell. New York: InfoBase Publishing, 2007.
- Orwell, George. Animal Farm. London: Longman Group Limited, 1964.
- Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters. Eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus. 3 vols. Boston: Nonpareil, 1968.