POWER AND SOCIETY IN GEORGE ORWELL’S ANIMAL FARM.

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Abstract

Centuries ago people lived in societies enjoying their lives one another. As a respective society can’t exist without certain norms, life in society requires the respect towards the others. Thus, appears the idea of government and governed people representing by the power and society. We notice that the society is sometimes victimized by the power. It results then the necessity of the existence of harmony between the government and the people. In this regard, it is compulsory to come out to the issue that some misunderstandings should be avoided in order to establish a peaceful atmosphere by exercising the power without abusing it. It is the bad governance, the question of embezzlement, the accumulation of wealth in the hand of the minority without sharing it with the whole population at any possible level which constitute the problematic of our work. The power often relies on the police at his disposal to influence or to deter anybody who attempts to have negative thought of the power. Instead of the police being at the service of the entire population, it is kept in the hands of the politics who use it at their ease to rag the people whenever necessary. This leads to the accumulation of frustration which paves the way to revolt. In fact, Animal Farm documents the trials and tribulations of a cycle of dictatorship under which the animals work. This form of government in Animal Farm is known as the totalitarianism ruling having control over the others. Therefore, there is abuse of power as the world has seen for decades. All these behaviours constitute fundamental problems inside and outside a given country thus creating great impacts on political, economical, social and cultural domains. In order to come out to this issue, I use historic method to explore the problematic of power and society. In writing this work, we expect that the politics should be aware that the society is expecting welfare so as to earn their living. To sum up there should have in a well functioning society a trust between both the government and their people. In this regard our main interest in writing this article is to focus on the problematic of power and society in Animal Farm from the general point of view.

Introduction:—

Most of the ancient societies lived under governments which have as policy the virtues and when it appears to be in its force, things have been done as seen them more today and that afraid human beings. As such, the problematic of abuse due to the search of good position of people in the society by carrying external symbols such as large office, big staff, preferential seating and so on and so forth. We could understand then that the power is tied to position. This process of remaining long time at the high level or at the social top of the society was the characteristics of human since the creation of the earth. This has spread in the behaviours and beliefs of people and consequently leads to a revolt. These issues won’t be reached if some practices such as the police who are supposed to implement the
law are not the ones who condemn, the nepotism, the embezzlement all these results to the use of violent methods by members of a community. All over the world and particularly in a ruling system, the society or people are discriminated against, are the victims of power’s superiority complex. Many literary works never exist without focusing on the question of power and society. They both express a large scale class distinction which are pictured accordingly by some writers. It is the case of Animal Farm.

If we define the term power as the right or authority of a person or group to do something, also as a country with a lot of influence in world affairs, with great military strength then Animal Farm offers a rather subjective conception of the ruling system in one way or another. In this regard Thomas Hobbes’s view of power is right when he states as a man’s present means to obtain some future apparent good whereas Friedrich Nietzsche defines it as the domination of other humans as much as the exercise of control over one’s environment. In the work of Michel Foucault, power constitutes one of the three axes constitutive of subjection, the other two being ethics and truth. For Foucault, power implies knowledge, even while knowledge is concomitantly, constitutive of power: knowledge, discourses and so on as valid or invalid, truthful or untruthful. Power serves in the world both knowable and controllable. The power is what makes people govern over the rest. The power acts through a man around whom everybody sustain despite the way he rules. This way of ruling system may be accepted or not. Nevertheless he is at the head and all the glory, the respect, the security make him powerful.

2- Thomas Hobbes, Leviatan, ch 10

Power can be viewed at different levels: from the head to the different subdivisions, each of these included persons, plays an important role, but once this power is granted to such people the latter uses it at his ease and makes profits mostly closer people to him. In the Animal Farm things are running like this, this justifies the way the ruling system is established from Mr Jones and his men to the working class the animals. This leads us to have a look to a given government once appointed, they move to one place to another on behalf of the head of State, animals are then submitted to their lord I mean Mr Jones, it appears that they don’t have a will to do whatever they want in other words they are able to be trustful to the head or not depending on the interest they aim.

Animal Farm, the book under consideration here is the story of a political satire on communism (especially the Russian) with animals under which are hidden some political figures to show us the allusion shown in the minor farm, the way animals attitude or system of ruling are quite a resemblance with those west leaders. Thus, Jones in the novel is referred to the Tsarist regime, in Old Major’s attitude seems to look like both Marx and Lenine, The Animal Farm is Soviet Union or the Tsarist Russia, Napoleon as Stalin and Snowball as Trotsky, and Moses stands for the Russian church; Staline (Napoleon) abuses of power. We are embedded in an ideology which leads us to admit the world as it is presented. We are submitted to a given order. And this order here appears to fall us into a kind of regime by the government who gives order on the one hand and the society who is submitted to on the other. These are some criteria which admit that a group necessary gives orders and another to be the submission to such orders. What causes problem is the fear that abuse is the target point of the former. The purpose of this article is to show that both power and society constitute the cornerstones of a given country which good or bad ruling depends on; nevertheless they don’t coexist without showing negative aspects on a development of a given country. Our thought in writing this article will be sustained by both sociocritical and intertextual approaches. As regard to the analysis itself, it will first and foremost to explore the political aspects by making emphasis on the police or army, economic and social power as described by George Orwell in his work Animal Farm; then it will focus on the society itself in Animal Farm, victims of betrayal and the rebellion which is the source of long period of frustration in Animal Farm.

The Power can be seen at three particular aspects: political, economic and social.

The problem of power and the political dimensions:-

Political level:-
There are many things which can be observed as far as political dimensions are mentioned wherever the problem of power arises.

It is observed clearly that, groups of parties are the fundamental cornerstones of the real means of appointing a head of State. When the party (candidate) whom campaign win reaches the power, he automatically attempts to appoint the members (or the leaders) of the parties to some strategic offices or ministries. These ministers also continue
appointing theirs at some posts so as to reinforce the equilibrium and sustain the main successful man who has reached the presidency with the majority of the vote because the population or the society trusts in him through his society project. It means that before let being convinced by the majority of the society to reach the presidency, you have to be skillful and to find the appropriate ways and means to please the society as most of the candidates of every nation were used to doing it, they make themselves be attracted by their people.

All this seems to be very important but can one imagine what he endures depending on the sort of the ruling system which is established. The power can be based on some regimes that are for instance democratic, authoritarianism, totalitarianism.

Europe in general had known long time ago more or less these kinds of regimes which had made the head more or less popular. But the society in which this paper is focused on shows us a society in which the power is fully exercised through some characters.

The only aspect of a government exercising the power is the view of making profit. Even the superpowers among themselves create a climate of tensions all other the world. This is happening because of self interest, perhaps the wealth of a given country is what justifies the main purpose of an uproar; or superpowers are misunderstood one another may be because of the raw materials of colonies so as to make their countries more rich than they were. This is what demonstrates Andrew Pierre when he said in addition much depended on the other side of the equation, the direction of the comparable trend in the West. It was gloom in this regard that made the shift in the Soviet direction credible.

3- Audrey Pierre, America down, Russia up: The changing political of military power. Foreign Policy 4, Fall 1971 p163-87

Nepotism is also a fact of trouble in a given government because the members of a government are then in search of permanent self interest by forgetting the interest of the whole community. Such a concept of nepotism is clearly understood and is appropriately applied to the word of power. In such a regard, the Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines the concept nepotism as giving unfair advantages to your own family if you are in position of power, especially by giving them jobs.

As it is mentioned in the novel Animal Farm, Man is profiting from animals, and the animals are obliged to state it as follows in order to express the exploitation of the Man over them. Man then influences them through the degree of power granted to him:

Man is the only creature that consume without producing. He doesn’t give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plow, he can not run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is Lord of all animals (Animal Farm 9).

Consequently, this way appears to demonstrate the powerful manner of directing or ruling compared to a system which leads the other animals the ability of reacting de facto by expressing in one way or another their disenchantment. Meanwhile, in a regime where the head doesn’t worry about what will happen when he does whatever he desires because he has the control of the police or army forces (considered as the chief of army forces) as what is shown in the 1984 – the police called The Thought Police we notice a restriction of the expression of speech; recognize that a ruling system in which it is difficult to express the will of speech is falling considerably into a totalitarianism which has no reward than revolt.

The organ of regulation: the police:-

With this organ power constitutes the main problem because instead of using this organ to establish peace in a country, the police is sometimes used to deter the society and furthermore to victimize them. What happened in Animal Farm seems to appear like the different troubles that the West had known before. What is different in the way things had gone is the use by Western people of new technologies in the nineteenth century- in secession war, the french revolutions of 1917 – 1930 – 1940, the world wars (I & II), the cold war and so one and so forth.

To sum up, we come out to the issue that the early nineteenth century and the twentieth century are very rich with technological inventions which must serve entirely in industries but instead of this, these inventions had mainly been used to destabilize, to victimize, to destroy – this, situation created then many human and material damages in many countries all over the world even the colonies were affected. Therefore, it is noticeable that the troubles observed here and there were the results of the misuse of those technological inventions. For example the launching of atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagazaki respectively on August 6th and 9th 1945; the destruction of The World Trade Center by Al quaida group causing great hurts and weeps among the population of the USA. the different wars in the continents even in Africa involve us deeply in the negative way of utilizing technologies invented by human themselves at the service of their own destruction. All these are possible in that period owing to the modernization of new machines invented accordingly. These new inventions are used by the power to show not only the ability of ruling but also their eager to face with whatever troubles or threat of enemies. To this regard, much money is allotted to the buying and sale of war equipments, in other words this trade is secretly organized among States in order to facilitate the entrance of such materials in different countries. Yet army or police have the duties to control their countries, so wherever are appropriate tools or instruments to face the enemies of a power these military services will be used or supplied by other superpowers who are allies. In this perspective, Dmitri Simes at the end of the 1970s observed that

quite often Moscou managed to translate its military potential into sizable political benefits …it is hard to ignore the simple fact that a Global power that puts a disproportionate emphasis on military power because it lacks, other adequate policy tools cannot be as Effective in specific needs as it would be if it had more varied and finely timed instrument\(^5\)

The police play an important role in a State or a ruling system. Their role is to regulate the Republic, to play the role of surveillance, to assure the security not only that of the chief but also the whole society. Meanwhile, over such a role of the police, there may be a total submission, an attachment to the head. Such a deep relationship between the government and the police leads sometimes the latter views singularly the protection of the government forgetting their double role of surveillance of both government and population – society. It can be asked to fire the society or people in the pretext that this society doesn’t obey the regulation or are considered as the authors of troubles in a Republic.


It is however compulsory to accept that the police are very strong, armed. They work for the order maintaining in a State. The head of State relies on them and trusts them and to confirm we can say that there is a kind of confidence between they both. Although the Head of State is head of government, head of armed forces, it can happen that a kind of misunderstanding divides them and such a situation can merely lead to “a coup d’Etat”. This “coup d’Etat” can automatically be mastered if the head of State creates a climate of dialogue, a melting – pot of negotiation so as to re-direct a coming uproar. In other words, it is an opened way to troubles in a republic or a nation. “ Trop de pouvoir tue le pouvoir” – “ too much power kills the power”\(^6\) as it is commonly said, this is illustrated in the novel 1984 when people in the novel are not free to express their thought for fear of being victimized because everywhere they are, people are controlled by the telescreen, the microphone are hidden here and there:

The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously- Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as commanded, he could be seen as well as heard\(^7\)

In Animal Farm there is no place for the police. Animals then fear one another through the hidden European leaders and their names respectively – the novel being a social and political fable, the influence of power is deeply used for ultimate good or absolute evil. The absence of the police doesn’t make a stop to the will of a category of animals moving forward in their process of reaching their goal. At the beginning of the animals, power was used to achieve great things; it brought all members of Manor Farm together under a unique and united cause which could allow them gain their freedom from oppression. After this initial positive influence of power, however it began to destroy the community that had worked together. It is as such that power struggles, emerges and serves to divide rather than unify the animals of the farm.
Instead of having the Thought Police like in a government or as it is described in 1984, the apparition of the four large rats and the dog while Major was speaking is a significant means of acts of security. They appear as guards for the other animals; this occurs at the moment a tremendous uproar happened. In the sense of the two categories of animals; the one who goes upon two legs and the one who goes upon four legs or has wings have been classified as in words of Old Major:

6- French proverb (My own translation)

All men are enemies, all animals are comrades

Therefore we can see that through what has happened, Mr. Jones appears like a police for the animals. He deters all the animals by seizing his gun and shooting into the donkeys to end the uproar of the animals through their song entitled “Beasts of England” in unison; what leads quickly the animals to cool down and join their habitats.

The economic aspect:-
In the main purpose of the power to have control on the wealth of a given society, this power makes profit minority of people not far from him in many circumstances. As so, the economic aspect is affected. Even there is sufficient money or shares to face the need of a republic in accordance with this minority group especially members of a government the whole population is served words such as money lacks and it is compulsory to produce to create the wealth.

At such a level it is roughly noticed that a machine of embezzlement is settled down to swallow the wealth produced by the population who in turn has nothing as reward. Let’s also note that if in a given nation the members of ministers are numerous this allows the power to spend more than he is obliged to do once their charges are reduced.

At the social level:-
Seen how the government is presented in Animal Farm, it results that the social group I mean the society will come to the conclusion that revolt would lead them free them from these diversities of situations.

Exploitation especially prevails in the novel, the slavery and discrimination are predominant in the novel Animal Farm. The positions of animals are diverse levels, they demonstrate dominant and dominated or rather superior and inferior aspects of lives.

If discrimination is viewed as the practice of treating somebody or a particular group in society less fairly than others, slavery as far as it is concerned is the state of being a slave as we know that the latter is related to the person who is legally owned by another person and is forced to work for them. For longer period animals are victims of these discrimination – slavery in other words, of exploitation.

One thing to recognize is that animals are educationless. This aspect makes them be totally classified to the second class, which renders them inferior to their leaders.


But Napoleon is taken himself responsible to give them education. Then, he insures the education of these animals to enlighten his point of view, we can read in this part of the novel:

Napoleon took them away from their mothers, saying that he would make himself responsible for their education. He took them up into a loft which could only be reached by a ladder from the harness-room, and there kept them in such seclusion that the rest of the farm soon forgot their existence.

Animals are discriminated against. Discrimination constitutes real threats which negatively impact the social development and the cultural blossoming of people in globalization process.

Taking into account the sociocriticism the text we are dealing with is fundamentally based on the social. We realize that the social life of the characters is based on the principle of the chief or leader’s power over the animals. We conclude for instance that the power is important depending on the value of the ruler. This aspect leads us to explore
the case of discrimination at the level of education which implies the education of animals as proposed by Napoleon in the novel. In this perspective, we can read in the first two commandments whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy, whatever goes upon four legs or has wings, is a friend.

As a result to discrimination, exploitation, slavery, revolt comes out to the issue. Revolt as far as it is concerned, is a protest against authority, especially that of a government often involving violence. In Animal Farm, revolt is what end after the animals being submitted to the order of the ruler. Animals are called to unite themselves to get rid of the Man (Old Major) because they have realized that:

Animals work night and day body and soul, for the overthrow of the human.

This is done without recognition and regard to this fact through an uproar animal attempts to break down this hard moment and aware themselves to:

Remember, comrades, your resolution must never falter. No argument must lead you astray. Never listen when they tell you Man and the animals have a common interest, that the prosperity of the one is the prosperity of the others. It is all lies. Man serves the interests of no creature except himself. And among us animals let there be perfect unity, perfect comradeship in the struggle. All men are enemies. All animals are comrades.


The Society in Animal Farm:-
The society who are victims of a system seem disenchanted, what the people expected hasn’t been realized. They become hopeless. Leaders used them, call them to vote for them, ask them help so as to be appointed as head in order to ameliorate their living conditions with a long list of promises without being reached. It is during the elections that the power is solicitated and they have nothing in turn as reward.

Animals, victims of betrayal:-
Just after the death of Old Major, the powerful animal among the animals, the respective one, pigs attempt to continue the generation. As such, Snowball, Napoleon, Squealer with their respective ability try their best. Owing to them a kind of secret meeting is made to teach to the others a system of thought called “Animalism”. But a fourth person called Moses a pet or a spy of Mr Jones tries himself to teach rubbish to the mind of Mollie the pretty white whom earth and sky are promised to by the Moses lies; at this level Snowball with its reputation, ability in speech and more inventive convinces Moses and keeps Mollie from nonsense. This is the aspects of betrayal in a ruling system in which we can observe categories of persons with distinct purposes. Their speech is directed according to their interest. As in Animal Farm, the society in a real government is also faced with such confusions at any level of government way. We can have people who the leaders just to complicate, to create problem to the power by telling the chief lies I mean the contrary of what they have noticed or seen whereas the other sides are very ready to make prosperous the amount of years a power has to spend to work for the welfare of its population.

Apart from the above mentioned ideas, the leader himself may be the source of problems of disillusion depending on the ideas he carries and his ambition for his population.

The society in Animal farm has fallen into a totalitarian system, what sooner changes the order of the established government.

Moses is an example of a disturbing outsider who creates a great confusion on the mind of a woman so as to re-direct her idea or will, her strength negatively and to make her have a bad sight of the rest of the animals. All seems to appear like in a political organization structured in one way or another in the novel as we can realize that the leader doesn’t rule in a permanent harmony with the others representing the animals in the farm.
The value of a leader rests on solid performances, once we see through the novel the hierarchy is well structured with the fact that age is respected but the achievement is revered. Consequently, members of such a society are often likely to use violent methods to reach their objectives, because their frustration has increased as years had passed.

The society ought to be considered as the same as their leader. In other words governed people should have the conditions of life treatment better instead of being taken as inferior being regardless of the universal declaration of Human rights dated December 10th 1948 stating in its first article that all human being are born free and equal in rights and dignity … and have to act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.  

13- Universal declaration of human right (extracted from Encarta; 2006, p2 my own translation)

**The Rebellion, source of long period of frustration in Animal Farm:**

Animals in the novels united together, formed a strong team to hold down their so called Chief Mr Jones who had enjoyed his time on the back of those animals. The animals come to the conclusion the better they send away by force, Mr Jones and his men, the better they will feel free from the slavery conditions they are attached to. Then animals succeed in reaching their objectives. This leads them to confirm that:

Jones and his men suddenly found themselves being butted and kicked from all sides. The situation was quite out of their control. They have never seen animals behave like this before, and this sudden uprising of creatures whom they were used to thrasting and maltreating just as they close, frighten them almost out of their wits.

Such a situation leads us to emphasize on the manner the population is disappointed just after they had participated to elect a head. Therefore, considered as the one who has the rights to favour the life to the society, he is the one who renders the life very difficult to these people. Those people are submitted to whatever situation he makes them endure. When they see that they are no more able to undergo such atrocities, hard conditions, they manifest them as the animals have shown it in the novel.

Most of our leaders once satisfied never think about how things had gone, this result to a frustration or trouble which mostly can not be measured when it arrive.

The song:

**Beasts of England,**
beasts of Ireland,
Beasts of every land and climate
Hearken to my joyful tiding,
of the golden future time.

This song constitutes the first verse that Old Major hears in his dream, then he teaches to the rest of the animals during the fateful meeting in the barn. It is a song which stirs the emotions of the animals and enlighten their revolutionary idealism fires. Through this song Beasts of England, beast of Ireland, animals were both encouraged and solaced on many occasions when this has spread across the region. As a song sometimes appears as a fact o laugh at somebody, this song also seems to have the same sense or point of view not only to express the expiration of somebody patience but also to show the degree of a way a person is very or totally angry with another; in order to have a better future in their struggle, animals give themselves courage and admiration to face the situation without being warn out. I would like to emphasise attention of the readers that such events haven’t happened solely among the characters of the Animal Farm I mean in west countries which studies is based on according to the references we have gathered from the novel the kind of regime which is analysed in such an extent. Like the international communist anthem based on Beasts of England, I would like to point out countries which have known a change in regime; what strike is the case of Benin Republic years ago which had known a revolutionary regime under the PRPB with the slogan:

For the revolution, ready
For the revolution, ready
Ready for the revolution
And the struggle continues
This slogan gave courage for the nation forces to move forward to their will so that this allowed them to reach their objectives; fortunately this comes to be realized. Either in Animal Farm or in this case of PRPB (Benin Popular Renaissance Party), people at both sides are kept focused on the rebellion’s goals.

Is the rebellion the best way to achieve the goal? This is the real question. To such a question we could imagine that the population as far as they are concerned in the case they don’t have nobody or nothing to rely on decide to take this way to make themselves heard and to make the situation known to the public. In the Animal Farm, animals have been since long time submitted to their head Mr Jones who treated the animals badly by paying them hard living conditions.

It is compulsory to underline that influence, violence, intimidation are in one way or another important to come out to the issue. Napoleon therefore just after he has cemented his control over the farm, the song’s revolutionary nature becomes a liability. Violence also prevails in the Farm, the example of the description of Napoleon’s violent expulsion of Snowball from Animal Farm which parallels the falling-out between Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky. Napoleon, who is clearly losing the contest for the hearts and minds of the lower animals to his rival Snowball, turns to his private police force of dogs to enforce his supremacy. As Stalin did, Napoleon prefers to work behind the scenes to build his power by secrecy and deception, while Snowball, as Trotsky did, devotes himself to winning popular support through his ideas and eloquence. Napoleon’s use of the attack dogs in this fifth paragraph provides a blant example of his differences with Snowball and points beyond the story to criticize real leaders for their use of such authoritarian tactics. Generally, Animal Farm is the first of many in which political positioning of the rebellion’s early days gives way to overt violence, openly subverting the democratic principles of Animal Farm; it signals the deterioration of Animal Farm from a society based on equal rights to a society in which those who are powerful determine who gets what rights.

**Conclusion:**

When we take George Orwell, we realize that it is the recurrent problems of power and society which are emphasized on in order to be aware of such situations in every nation in the world, that situations convey meanings based on the numerous experiences of the manner power behave toward their society. In their long search of well done things, power even if they think that they sacrifice themselves to the society, it will remain aspects which would not be taken into account in the point of view of the society. It can be seen that they encroach each other; what implies frustration, misunderstandings, violence.

14- Roger Fowler, Literature As a social Discourse, the practice of Linguistic Criticism, Indiana University press, Bloomington, 1981

Our study tends to demonstrate that power at any level can not be power whether they use the complex of superiority which frighten people in the society or use influence and violence to reach their goals, to terrorize, to victimize their people cause they don’t have right to express their thought. It results that the social atmosphere is affected and once the revolt appears as a tool or consequence of contestation, which damage the relationship existing between power and society what leads power to a kind of ruling system especially to totalitarianism as in George Orwell’s Animal Farm where animals react hardly against the animalism way of their ruler to govern them. Such aspect of fact cannot contribute to a good climate among the members of the power nor contributes to the mental, moral, and social stability of people mainly when it concerns the society. A general survey of George Orwell’s book has permitted us to come to the point that ideology on the one hand as regard to leaders in these circumstances are the actors or instigators of these evils (frustration, discrimination, nepotism, revolt or violence) against the population representing the society which power normally must depend on as we realize that there is no power without a society. In the Animal Farm, the society appears as the second-class. In the sense that class is a limit factor, it arises thus every sorts of complexity in the respective relations which don’t guaranty an expected stability.

In intertextuality, the text is seen as a process of production of meaning. To such an extent, Animal Farm through an objective description of events conveys a message. The intertext in which we are in this novel give us the opportunity to have a view on how things run in the society; in this regard what we perceive by going through this novel is to think about, apart the criticism of the society, the probable changes which could occur to ameliorate or to prevent from falling into the worse that society will be able to undergo. This throws us in a deep idea that there is no society without ruler or leader to rule or to govern a nation. As so George Orwell aware the whole world about the atrocities known by society and call on people of every nation live in a permanent surveillance to the respect of the
human beings. Therefore society is important in the development of a nation as in the words of Chinua Achebe, the world or the nation cannot develop unless the masses are involved in the building of a political and moral consciousness necessary for its development15


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