



INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA

2395-2636 (Print):2321-3108 (online)

## AN ALLEGORICAL SATIRE ON STALINISM: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ORWELL'S ANIMAL FARM AND SOLZHENITSYN'S "ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH"

HIMANI SHARMA

Assistant Professor, Department of English

Patel Memorial National College, Rajpura-140401



Article Received:30/04/2020

Article Accepted: 29/05/2020

Published online: 04/06/2020

DOI: [10.33329/rjelal.8.2.171](https://doi.org/10.33329/rjelal.8.2.171)

### Abstract

George Orwell has been acclaimed as one of the most renowned novelists and serious visionary of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Though he didn't consider himself a novelist but he wrote masterpieces named 'Animal Farm' an allegorical novella and dystopian work 'Nineteen Eighty Four'. Eric Arthur Blair, pen-named George Orwell's writings present the vivid picture of social criticism and are written in opposition to totalitarianism. His writings certainly are the exposition of bitter truth, picture of something unsaid. He himself has admitted this fact. Being a writer of political era, he has undergone political challenges. While Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a true follower of Fyodor Dostoevsky, seems to present the picture of Gulag System of U.S.S.R throughout his writings. He was a notable novelist, philosopher, historian and short story writer. Having faced the cruelty under Soviet labour Camps, he was aware of Stalin's rule. He remained a political prisoner, therefore was well known about the hard life inside the camp. He helped to raise global awareness of Gulag Labour Camp system since he was an outspoken critic of Soviet Union and Communism. The main aim of the study is intended to analyse thoroughly how Stalin played the crucial role in Russian Revolution and how he tortured masses in the name of communism and totalitarianism which has been exposed through two novellas named Orwell's Animal Farm and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in The Life of Ivan Denisovich*.

**Keywords:** totalitarianism, satire, allegory, stalinism, communism, dictatorship, starvation.

George Orwell has played a significant role in the development of 20<sup>th</sup> century literature.

He really disliked the philosophy of totalitarianism, he himself has been admitting in one of his works. George Orwell has played a significant role in the development of 20<sup>th</sup> century literature.

"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" (Orwell,G: 2014)

Apart from his remarkable novels, he came out with other revolutionary works as 'Homage to Catalonia', 'Down and Out in Paris and London', 'Politics and the English language'. Since Animal Farm is a political novel, it found a difficult time in finding a publisher, Anyhow it got published in 1945.

"Conveying a strong message to the readers through the strongest tool- pen is the most powerful way- artistically, And, for real, George Orwell's Animal Farm is aimless work that reminds us all the time that

totalitarianism could be harmful to one society" ( Fazrina, D : 2016)

Novella Animal Farm is a kind of fable where animals present the dominant characters. Thomas More has found the term Utopia- A totalitarian society where all are economically equal or will be equal. Being equal in every way, they will prosper and will develop. Mahatma Gandhi has had the same dream, similarly, father of communism Karl Marx dreamt it for the goodness of Russian society. It is undeniable that Animal farm has been based on Russian Revolution since many of the major events and characters of novella symbolise the real incidents and figures of Russia. In Animal Farm, Old Major represents Lenin, Napoleon stands for Stalin, Snowball for Trotsky, As old major dreamt equality and totalitarian society, the same idea was adopted by Lenin. Another dominant figure who worked for good was Trotsky who was having wonderful ideas for welfare of common folk, similarly idea of building windmill was suggested by Snowball. As Stalin never liked new ideas and debates, same is reflected in Napoleon. Stalin took the charge of Russia and declared himself a dictator, Napoleon too has had the pride of leadership. Not only figures but major events are the imitation of reality. As Old major was responsible for turning Manor Farm into Animal Farm, Lenin was for making U.S.S.R from Russia. As Stalin prepared five years Plans for upright future of Russia, Napoleon gave the orders for building Windmill. Seven Commandments were declared, to be followed by every animal.

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, G : 2017)

Later on, Napoleon made some editions in these commandments to his personal benefit.

George Orwell here seems making us aware about Stalin's corrupt ways. The biggest addition is in the seventh commandment that all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others. Stalin was working as propagandist, showing himself an idealist as Napoleon used to employ Squealer for this purpose. He made every animal's life hard with exception of pigs since pigs symbolise his own gang. Animals were working hard and eating less, facing terrible circumstances. Squealer who was himself a pig like Napoleon states,

"Comrades, I trust that every animal here appreciates the sacrifices that comrade Napoleon has made in taking this extra labour upon himself. Do not imagine Comrades, that leadership is a Pleasure, on the contrary, it is a deep and heavy responsibility. No one believes more firmly than comrade Napoleon that all animals are equal. He would be only too happy to let you make your decisions for yourselves. But sometimes you might make the wrong decisions comrades and then where should we be?" (Orwell, G : 2017)

He always managed to brainwash the other animals with his persuasive behaviour.

"As is indicated in Squealer the word, Squealer the pig is a big-mouthed talker. He is always eloquent and plausible that all the animals are talked to peace by him. So he become Napoleon's mouthpiece. It may represent the propaganda department that works to support Stalin's image" (Sun, P : 2015)

Therefore, Russia was undergoing through starvation, cruelty in the name of communism and totalitarianism as is reflected through this novella named Animal Farm which is obviously a satire on Stalinism.

On the other hand, another prominent figure of 20<sup>th</sup> century was Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn whose works have been greatly praised and was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1970. His works- 'The Gulag Archipalego', 'In the First Circle', "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich", 'Cancer

Ward' gained esteem. Being a disciple of Dostoevsky, he was outspoken critic. He was highly against Stalin and his rule on Russia. Having written the derogatory comments against Stalin in one of his articles, he faced imprisonment of eight years. He had been an eye witness to the terrible circumstances inside the Labour Camps. The present novel got immediate popularity which he wrote after imprisonment. Taking the advantage of his dictatorship, he made people's life hard in every way. Solzhenitsyn's life in camp was the crucial experience of his life.

"During his imprisonment, he experienced prisons into which human beings are crammed to the point of suffocation, the labour camps of the North where the common laws reign supreme, and where inhuman regulations and starvation rations leave a man almost without defence against the rigours of the climate". (Clement: 1976)

Under Stalin's rule not only prisoners but people outside the prison were suffering too. They were deprived of every right since every work was Govt. controlled, hence they lost their freedom. Even prisoners are put into the prison for no strong reason at all. Ivan was mistaken a spy but he was just mistaken, hence was given ten years' imprisonment. Tyurin's mere crime was to take birth in *Kulak* family and he became jobless and homeless in no time. Fetyukov, Tsezar, Alyoshka were possessing no identity at all. They were considered mere commodities who had been counted for number of times, were punished for a tiny mistake. They never felt satisfied with the food which was served to them, hence remained half- fed. Inhumanity was in its prime there. In "As Breathing Consciousness Return" he writes,

"Our present system [the U.S.S.R in 1973] is unique in world history, because over and above its physical and economic constraints, its demand of is total surrender of our souls, continuous and active participation in the general conscious lie. To this putrefaction of the soul, this spiritual enslavement, human beings who wish to be human cannot consent" ( Solzhenitsyn.A : 1975) *old man whiskers*

is undoubtedly a comment which shows their hatred for Stalin, they have no hope of mercy. One inmate has been advising another,

"D' you mean to say you think Old Whiskers will take pity on you? Why he wouldn't trust his own brother you haven't a chance you weed" (Solzhenitsyn. A : 1963)

### Conclusion

Both the texts are remarkable and notable for their use of allegory, satire and metaphors, offering final examples of Stalin's dictatorship. Both the fictions have their political and artistic value. Through the novels, we came across that how mankind was being tortured in the name of communism. Conveying a strong message to the readers through the strongest tool, reality has been exposed. And, for real, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and Solzhenitsyn's *One Day In the Life of Ivan Denisovich* are timeless works.

### Works Cited

1. Orwell, G. *Why I Write*, London, Penguin Books, 2014.
2. Fajrina, D. "Characters Metaphors in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*". *Studies in English Language and Education*, Vol 3, No.1, University of Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh, Indonesia, 2016.
3. Orwell, G. *Animal Farm*, Pirates Enhanced Classics, India, 2017.
4. Ibid, pp.48.
5. Sun, P. "Journal of arts and Humanities: Animal Images and Metaphors in *Animal Farm*". *Teaching Department of the ideological and Political Theory*, North China Electric Power University, Beijing, 102206. P.R. China, 2015.
6. Clement, Olivier. *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, New York: Barnes and Nobel Books, 1976.
7. Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. "As breathing and Consciousness Return". *From Under the Rubble*, Trans. A. M, Brock, et al. Ed. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Boston; Little, Brown and Co., 1975.
8. Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich". *Trans. Ralph Parker*, Penguin Books, England, 1963.