

Dystopian in Animal Farm

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Abstract: Animal Farm is one of the most representative dystopian works of the British writer George Orwell. It is an allegorical work integrating political and artistic creation. Combined with the development of Utopia and dystopian literature, this paper deeply discusses the dystopian colour in Animal Farm from three levels of thought, economy, and politics, and criticizes the root of mistakes in Utopian society and a series of problems caused by it, and analyzes its practical significance.

Keywords: Animal Farm; Dystopian; Dictatorship; Totalitarianism

Animal Farm, widely recognized as a dystopian political allegorical fable, tells the story of a group of farm animals who made a successful “revolution” to drive their human owners out of the farm and establish an equal animal society. However, the animal leaders, the clever pigs, eventually usurped the fruits of the revolution and became more authoritarian and totalitarian rulers than the human owners. In a humorous expression, the animal world compares and simulates human society, the virtual world, reflects the strong irony of idealism, and implicitly expresses the dystopian colour.

1. Utopian Literature and Dystopian Literature

1.1 Utopian Literature——The Perfect Description of Heaven

It is well known that “Utopia” was intended as a “Ukrainian land”. In 1516, Thomas More, the founder of Utopian socialism in England, wrote his book, *Utopia*. Describes an island nation with “the most perfect state system”. The author specifically describes everything about the new Utopian island to beauty in the 16th century. In this country, property is shared, men and women are equal, and everyone believes in free. From then on, a new, unique literature —— Utopian literature has emerged in the history of Western literature. The word “Utopia” also began to be used to represent an ideal society where people are equal in economic, political status, rights, and other aspects.

From ancient times, due to people’s dissatisfaction with reality, people have never stopped longing for the ideal society. For the first time, Utopian literature gave this specific outline of vision and aroused the endless pursuit of the perfect world for generations. The Garden of Eden in the Bible, the “Shangri-La” in the *Lost Horizon*, the past paradise in *Paradise Lost*, the beautiful world outlined by these literary works has long become a spiritual paradise for people to escape worldly disasters.

Tao Yuanming’s domestic masterpiece, the land of Peach Blossom, depicts a secluded and contented Utopia. And the Qing Dynasty novel, *The Marriage of Flowers in the Mirror*, can be regarded as a feminist Utopia.

With the changes of the times, the human concept of Utopia has been changing, but the desire to pursue a “perfect society” has never stopped. Just like a kind of instinct, the common agreement is that there is always a Utopia that is the end of happiness. But the fact that a perfect society is expected to be found elsewhere is itself a source of dissatisfaction with the real human life and existence.

1.2 Dystopian Literature——A Hell Full of Hideousness and Misfortune

Dystopia is not invented by writers to replace Utopia. It appeared entirely because of the Utopia itself——a Utopian society simply does not exist. In the 20th century, an era of human faith was in a full-scale crisis.” The West has experienced the beginning of the First World War and the Cold War in thirty decades. In that world, dictatorship has been and is undermining liberty and freedom of all mankind. The two world wars bring terrible disasters to human society. Completely contrary to the perfect world described by Utopian literature, the world of human existence is full of blood, and the ideal society brings by innocent Utopian idealism has never

existed. Continuous war and suffering, the prevailing dictatorship, shatters the fantasy of a better world.

Relying on such a social background, dystopian literature comes into being and almost replace traditional Utopian literature in Britain. dystopian literature is full of writing about totalitarianism, personality repression, and human destruction. Deeply satirize and accuse the darkness, hypocrisy, and evil of the real world, completely presenting the negative and denial of human attitude towards the future life.

In 1895, Wells, the British “father of science fiction”, published “ The Time Machine, which was regarded as the first work of dystopian literature. Take this book as an example, the Eloi live in magnificent palaces dressed in gorgeous costumes, and the world is peaceful.

But just as the old saying goes, “ Hardships, died comfortably”. The Eloi suffers from intellectual and physical degradation to varying degrees, and they gradually became the captive food of the Morlocks living underground and living with machines.

The essence of dystopian literature is a desperate future of abandoning idealization, an extremely harsh ultimate form of society. This society seems to be full of peace, but actually all kinds of uncontrollable ills. Totalitarianism is rampant. In this state of survival, the masses are ignorant, moral decline, hierarchy is rampant, and suicide persecution emerges in one stream.

1.3 The Evolution of Utopian Literature to Dystopian Literature: Heaven to Hell

The emergence of dystopian literature overthrew the perfect world portrayed by predecessors, drawing fantasy back to reality and faces the empty spiritual world masked by rotten material life. But dystopian literature is just seemingly hell, but not real hell. If people indulge in the fantasy of the perfect Utopian society to escape from reality and enrich the empty spiritual world, it is the real arrival to hell.

The contrast between heaven to hell is mainly reflected in two places. One is the contrast between the beginning of the new regime and the return of the dictator of the revolution, the other is the dictatorship gradually infiltrated but not being recognized by the people. One is realistic hell, the other is spiritual hell.

2. Dystopian Colour in Animal Farm

2.1 Ideological Dystopian Colour

In Animal Farm, Orwell depicts thought control: the rulers constantly not only rewrite the history of the farm and confuse the memories of the animals, but also cheat the animals with cunning words, letting them forget the past and facts. As a result, animal’s ability to think and judge independently is eliminated. They gradually lose subjective critical thinking and become stupid. The compliance is even greater than before the uprising. Instead of being free, the animals were once again a vassal of the power of the ruler and as a victim of the process of achieving totalitarian rule.

Burton points out: “ The language is the most powerful, because it is the basis of the power of building states, tribes, and even all people”. Language has no control, but it is not only a tool to display power, but also the key to master power. In Animal Farm, discourse is an important tool to control ideas and acquire power. The rulers on the farm often used the power of discourse to instill the idea of absolute obedience in other animals.

At first, all the other animals knew how to vote, but never wanted to present a resolution personally. The ignorance and weakness of thought are the root causes of their being easily deceived by language, which also laid the foundation for the subsequent totalitarian rule. Napoleon and Squealer are the masters of the voice, Napoleon is responsible for decision-making, and Squealer instill the other animals mentally, they can reverse black and white, and confuse right and wrong, so that the animals question their own memories. And whenever she changes decisions or changes history, Squealer leads the animals to shout slogans of obedience.

Pigs always seem to do their best to carefully plan and develop farm development policies. In fact, they secretly cut off all the old ties and implanted new class ideas.

In Windmill events, for example, Napoleon had to drive snow and against the windmill project, but after their rules, immediately ordered to build windmill, ironic, well embodies the rulers tried to use words to confuse and persuade animals, let them all believe from the heart these fabricated and beautify the “facts”. In short, the misleading function of language contains the thinking of the language audience one-way, subjectively and implicitly, and firmly controls the voice of ideology, so that any opposition cannot be launched, thus maintaining the power of the strong group.

The ruler falsified the written records and destroyed all the evidence against him, making the facts of the past impossible to prove,

and turning himself into the truth itself. When the animals raised their doubts, Squealer argued that there was no transcript to prove them, convincing the animals that they were wrong. The resolution passed at the first animal meeting — Never trade with people, never trade with people, never touch money. Over time, the rulers have completely ignored these regulations. To reassure the animals, Squealer deceived them with words, saying that there was no written record of any such a resolution.

Napoleon constantly modified the seven precepts to satisfy his selfish desires. He began trading with humans, moving to farm-houses, dressing up, drinking beer, and moving on to electing a president and killing the rebels. All this is to satisfy selfish desires and achieve the purpose of totalitarian rule. And the seven quit is constantly modified, and only one remains: all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.

In this society full of Utopian lies, “history” and the people favor the rulers. History becomes a glorious history that is arbitrarily modified, while the people become a tool to support and consolidate their rules. The ruler also created the imaginary enemy and spies, and turned the main contradiction into the foreign war, covering up the fact of exploitation and oppression within the farm, and further enhancing the cohesion of power on the farm. Napoleon made up the imaginary enemy “Snowball” and put all the mistakes on Snowball. Not only that, but Napoleon also made up the “spies” to deceive the animals, making them doubt each other and lose their trust. In this way, the animals lose cohesion, are unable to form groups, are easier to control, and are unable to fight against the rulers.

In this way, the rulers created a very strong illusion: the right decision was the only hope of the animals. Just as Orwell himself said: “Without foreign hatred, the people will not live in terror, do not survive in terror, and naturally do not need the protection of totalitarianism.”

Therefore, the rulers through the thought control, broke the beautiful Utopian Utopia fantasy, reflecting the dystopian colour. In the end, the animals lose their subjective judgment and their ideological freedom, and become robots that can only obey.

2.2 Economic Dystopia Colour

The economic characteristics of Utopia include public property ownership, voluntary labor, material enrichment, distribution according to demand, democratic elections, and freedom of belief. According to More, “anywhere where there is private ownership, all people measure all things by their cash value, then a country cannot have justice and prosperity. So the only way to universal happiness is equal enjoyment, equal distribution of products, and equal obligations.” If private ownership is abolished, then urban happiness is personal happiness, and personal happiness is urban happiness.

But this orderly arrangement implies no choice. Lack of freedom is the lifeblood of all Utopias. Without personal property, with no free choice, the promised life of prosperity will become boring within a few days. Because of its isolation and lack of incentives, economic bankruptcy is a matter of time.

In dystopian literature, all the attempts at public ownership failed due to the selfish desires of the social members, and the social economy inevitably developed in the direction of capitalist private ownership, thus causing economic and political inequality. Similarly, in *Animal Farm*, “public ownership” is a complete lie.

At the beginning of the story of *Animal Farm*, the venerable old Major points out to all animals that the reason why animal life is so bad is that almost all the fruits of the labor are stolen by humans. Humans only consume and do not produce, driving the animals to work for them, but only give the animals very little food, and leave everything left to them for themselves. After a series of ideological revolutions, the animals firmly believe that after the implementation of public ownership, they can share all the fruits of labor equally, and live an equal, rich and happy life. Thus, the animal uprising is on the trigger. After driving away the farmer Jones, the animals thought they cleared the biggest obstacle on the road to public ownership.

In the first collective labor, they did not waste anything, and the chickens and the ducks gathered the last straw with their keen eyes. No animal on the estate was eaten, even for a small bite. In their view, the fruits of the labor should be shared by all the animals. Little did they know that Napoleon’s desires are quiet, and the balance of public ownership will eventually be broken. Since pigs came to power, food quotas have been reduced, work quotas have increased, and the fruits of labor have gradually been concentrated in the privileged pig class rather than being shared by all animals equally.

Public ownership required that all the fruits of labor be divided equally, but milk and apples were secretly mixed into pig feed. Later, the rulers even published a clear rule stating that all the windblown fruits should be collected and sent to the farm tool room for the pigs to eat. Pigs stress that they need to increase their nutrition entirely because of their mental work, rather than for their selfishness and privilege. Public ownership requires that all animals should not have private property, and everything on the farm is common, so the animals can not dispose of any objects without permission. But as the power of the ruler expands, the ruler can

dispose of all the property at will, and even deprive the animals of the fruits of their labor, making the life of the animals poorer and poorer.

At this point, the lies of public ownership have been revealed. The existence of public ownership does not improve the lives of animals, but facilitates the rulers to steal the fruits of their labor to satisfy their selfish desires. But the animals cannot break the game, still immersed in the Utopian fantasy, but did not find themselves to have already been the object of exploitation.

It can be seen that in dystopian literature, private ownership has been abolished, and the realization of public ownership is the mainstream. But in fact, this is only a means for the ruler to oppress the people. There are always a small number of people who beautify their selfish desires and concentrate their property in their own hands rather than enjoy it independently. Public ownership in Utopian society eventually becomes a lie.

2.3 Political Dystopia Colour

In *Animal Farm*, the author describes the oppression of power all the time, and the most strongest dystopian colour is also reflected in the political issues such as democracy and power. Most of them are reflected through contradictions: 1. Animals unite against farmers in pursuit of “democracy” and “equality”. In the end, the pig was elected as the spiritual leader, and all his words became the truth and the spiritual symbol. Thus, the equality of the animals is broken. 2. “Democratic” society requires the animals to speak one by one, but with the uneven levels of their intelligence, most of them simply do not understand the true meaning of “democratic decision-making”. The majority are just blindly for or against. In the end, “democracy” became a blind belief in the ruler’s decision-making. 3. The animals got the opposite of what the rulers promised. The animals worked together to build the estate, but the previous promise of milk and grain and the electric light and hot and cold water rooms was never realized. Even so, the animals still blindly believe in the promise and encouragement of the rulers.

These three contradictions show that democracy on the farm only exists in form, not democracy in the real sense. In the process of the ruling class represented by Napoleon gradually controlling the farm affairs, the essence of power oppression gradually emerged. In addition, it is worth mentioning that the ruler of the right-hand man — hound. As the ruler’s weapon, the hound killed the wrong animal and killed all the voices of resistance. The animal gate was threatened by the rulers and their weapons, giving up its democratic rights and submitting to totalitarian rule. In other words, the power at this time had been completely controlled by the ruling group with Napoleon as the core. Through organization, communication, and propaganda, they fully controlled and centrally managed all aspects of politics, spiritual life, social life, and economic life, and constantly consolidated their rules.

Ma-Boxer, a loyal supporter, is the victim of this power oppression, working hard all his life and looking forward to a happy life after retirement. After Boxer died, the general public lamented his two maxims, “I will work harder” and “Comrade Napoleon is always right”, while the ruling group secretly sold him to the slaughterhouse and bought whisky to celebrate that night. When he lived, he gave all his labor to the farm, and after death he became a tool for the ruler to consolidate his mind. In fact, Boxer was only one of the victims of the ruling group’s power oppression. The ruling group with Napoleon as the core not only determines the labor time, the share of food, the fruits of labor, and most importantly, the state of mind of the animals, which Jones could not control before. Pigs are no longer ordinary pigs, whether it is electing the president or killing the rebels, which seems to be for the interests of the manor, are essentially the unilateral power oppression and exploitation of the manor animals by the powerful, which is also a very distinct political dystopian colour.

3. Critique of the Utopian Society

3.1 The Root Causes of Errors in a Utopian Society

First of all, human physiological conditions and natural resources conditions are limited. In fact, this is not what philosophical thinking is, scientists have already given the answer. Frandeswar’s *The Politics of the Chimpanzee*, Gerald Diamond’s *The Third Gorilla*, Jonathan Heit’s *The Heart of Justice*, Robert Sarpoky’s *Behavior*, and so on have explained the limits of human beings: 1. From the perspective of brain neuroscience, human cognitive ability is limited. The human brain is not a computer that can be upgraded casually and is not magical. It has various cognitive biases and easy to make mistakes and misunderstandings. It seems to have a fixed program and cannot accept arbitrary settings. 2. In evolutionary psychology, genetics and inheritance limit the ability of human creation. Human is actually a machine with factory settings, an animal with physiological limitations. It is the physical and psychological limits of human beings, coupled with the scarcity and shortage of resources, that determines why our society can only be like this, not as imagined.

Moreover, the theoretical logic of Utopia itself is disordered. In reality, Utopia must be a closed system, which can be a system of its own, but the productivity must hover at a low level, the natural growth rate of the population is zero in a certain period of time, and the social resources in the system can carry a smaller population and a lower level of production development above it. However, the country or society that has entered the bottleneck of development cannot break through under the existing productive forces, and has always been in a low-level cycle. In general, once a country or society enters this resistance cycle, it will accumulate a large number of social contradictions.

However, it is obviously impossible to have zero population growth, so this relatively simple and stable external colonization method of maintaining the population in a certain area makes the Utopian society not weaken the absolute average before the destruction because of the expansion of the population size, without affecting the quality of life of the existing population. If stable external colonization cannot be realized, once the size of cities expands, the number of city-states increases, or the population surges, it will inevitably lead to no legal concern and management.

Therefore, the Utopian society is already unreasonable in the theoretical logic, let alone practice in the unpredictable reality.

3.2 The Social Problems Caused by Utopia

Utopian society can easily become a tool of totalitarian rule. Totalitarian politics holds that the right to stability comes not from the limitation of rights themselves, but from the expansion of unrestricted rights. This comes not from the public recognition of the subject of power, but from the complete control of the people.

In the story of *Animal Farm*, the ruler realizes his totalitarian rule through three aspects: linguistic control, personality cult, and stupid politics. These three elements are inseparable from the blind pursuit of Utopian society. Under the lies of Utopia, the unconscious and fanatical support of the masses has brought the stability and severity of totalitarianism to a very high height. The rulers shouted the slogan of freedom and equality, but in fact, freedom and equality had disappeared when the pig was elected to rule and began making the rules. The fantasy of Utopia among animals, in the very beginning, became a tool for the rulers to realize totalitarian rule.

The second is the ruler's good commitment to the equal distribution of resources. After the hard work, the animals willingly gave all the fruits of their labor to the pigs, and waited for his equal distribution. It is another naked Utopian trap, where Utopian promises make animals unable to realize that rulers with all their resources have been the first to break the state of equality.

Moreover, the animals were revolutionized and counterrevolutionary under an extraordinary democracy, but once again established another totalitarian governance society. By setting up the storylines of revolution, betrayal, and tyranny, the author deeply reveals the cruelty and dangers of totalitarianism. Under the totalitarian rule, the rulers use various means to control all social resources and absorb the hearts of the people, and vigorously promote freedom, equality, democracy and a happy life, and we will enthusiastically pursue it. The essence is to fake lies to achieve its absolute power. In the unique art form of fable, Orwell strongly criticized the ugliness of human nature under the centralized rule of the lying animal manor and the tragedy caused by the centralized tyranny.

In addition, the lack of private ownership in the Utopian society hinders its development. Eliminating private ownership is not feasible. Utopian society tries to unify individual happiness and urban happiness by eliminating private ownership, but it ignores many problems. "No one place is a private property." Then it means that all the property is no specific owner, and the use of houses and farming appliances will not necessarily cherish. Some problems may be solved by the noble morality of the residents, but others cannot be appealed to man. For example, the functions added to strengthen management will only become more bloated. The Utopian society that eliminates private ownership is likely, as Orwell said, that although the animals on the farm drive out the farmers, the pigs that lead the revolution become new farmers.

The root cause of the above problems is "the compulsory elimination of private ownership and the compulsory unification of personal happiness and urban happiness". The elimination of private ownership means the elimination of the free markets (That is why animals are banned from using money or trading with people). The allocation of resources is coordinated entirely by the ruler. In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith has proved that the invisible hand of the market is the most effective way to allocate resources. To eliminate the private ownership while requiring the residents to have a very high moral quality. Meticulous hard work can ensure the abundance of public warehouses. The spirit of "not much taking a public line" is to maintain the continuity of the public warehouse, the production and consumption of both ends of the collective priority, even in the relatively rich material now it is difficult to achieve.

4. The Realistic Implications of the Novel

The end of the novel says: “The creatures outside see people from pigs, see pigs from people; But they cannot tell who is pig and who is people.” After reading the last sentence, what jumped into my mind is Nietzsche’s sentence: When you stare at the abyss, the abyss will gaze back; fight with the dragon, and become a dragon itself.

As a leader and Enlightenment, Old Major advocates an equal ideal society while being supported and followed by all animals. The meaning of his existence is to awaken the masses and spread ideas, so his role is particularly important, even if the enlightenment person is absent but deeply emancipate the mind will be passed on from generation to generation. In the steady stream of history, such great men are often needed to open up a road for us and lead us to move forward.

Besides, a Utopian society requires people to have a high unity of understanding and support of the same thought, but human nature is complex, and human nature cannot completely abandon jealousy and desire. History has shown us that the new poles formed after the revolution are often overturned and distorted under many factors. After the system is behind, it will produce new political forms, the revolution from the brewing to the rise to the final distortion, and the continuous reincarnation.

Orwell uses an easy to understand fable to tell people that once there is equal, the so-called “everyone is equal” is just self-deception, and people are likely to be faced with autocracy and totalitarianism. Today, we are talking about totalitarianism and Utopia. It is not inequality among all people, nor all people are completely equal, but some people are more access to equality than others. We oppose the dictatorship, not saying that it is bad in the end, but we should also see that the dictatorship has a stable structure like a pyramid. We believe that dictatorship can build up great power, but we understand even better that neither dictatorship nor Utopia suits our times.

Perhaps we should try to take another path — “negotiated public interests on the basis of personal interests”. That is, to negotiate public affairs while protecting the legitimate interests of individuals. In history, there are many descriptions of the ideal society of human beings, such as the small country in Tao Te Ching, “the Great Harmony Society”, the land of Peach Blossom, and the city formed by the collective guard and the philosopher king in the Republic. But after all, these are just ideals, and from reality to the ideal requires great efforts, not just to eliminate private ownership and improve human morality. And we also need to be vigilant that the ideal path is correct, because behind the ideal society is not all heaven, but may also be hell on earth.

The novel also warns us not to underestimate the role and power of language. The author reveals how the ruling class achieves the deception and manipulation of people through ideological discourse, thus maintaining and strengthening their dominance. Since this language has long been seen as a tool, it can also simplify the scope of people use language tools. Voice establishes not only personal identity but also public history. This network of relationships woven by language eventually becomes a constructive force in society. Under the influence of discourse, the public and history are themes that can be treated indiscriminately.

5. Conclusion

As a political allegorical novel, *Animal Farm* is more than just a simple animal fable. The author uses simple words to view the internal problems. The dystopian colour between the lines is vague but ubiquitous, and very thought-provoking. Totalitarianism has long been abandoned by history, but if we do not understand its roots correctly, then the so-called democracy will eventually become a tool of totalitarianism. People have the right to pursue and desire for a better life, but the road to a better life is very tortuous, and we should be very cautious about the choice of the road. This article is full of the author’s ardent hope that human beings can overcome their own defects, find countermeasures and avoid the recurrence of historical tragedy. I just make a very simple analysis of the novel here, hoping to evoke everyone’s thinking, after all, the real world is much more complicated than the novel.

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