

LITERATURE AND POLITICS-A REVIEW OF GEORGE ORWELL'S ANIMAL FARM AND CHINUA ACHEBE'S A MAN OF THE PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT: *Philosophical discussion of the topic “the interrelations of literature and politics” can take many forms. For instance, one might be concerned to argue for or against the claim that literature must be understood as a product of the social and political forces that are at work when it is produced. Or, one might be concerned to assess the claim that literature is a form of political critique, perhaps even a preeminent form of it. Or, one might argue that literature can induce political change, that is, can be revolutionary—perhaps that it should be. Further questions involve how political and aesthetic properties interact in works. Does the presence of both sorts of property in a work create difficulty for aesthetic judgment? If one thinks that aesthetic judgment requires separating aesthetic from political properties in some strict way, the presence of political properties in the work will be problematic for aesthetic judgment. The problem might go as well to the heart of artistic production—that is, formalism of various stripes holds that one isn't “really” creating art, if one is creating political “art.” Or one might be concerned that political and aesthetic properties are so intertwined that strongly negative or positive political judgment might spoil aesthetic judgment. Recent cases in the relationships of literature and politics often are drawn from music or cinema, for example, Dady Lumba’s Nana oye winner (A signature tune of the present ruling New Patriotic Party, NPP, a political party in Ghana), and Dee Aja’s Onaapo (A signature tune of the National Democratic Congress, NDC, the main opposition political party in Ghana today). Typically, issues of the political nature of art center on conceptions of artistic content, even where content is considered in relation to aesthetic form. In this paper, we focus instead on the interrelations of literature and politics from the print point of view. More specifically, we investigate claims that literature can criticize and alter political belief by being experienced in terms of its form in Chinua Achebe’s novel A Man of the People and George Orwell’s Animal Farm which are admired by some for their technical innovations and formal composition but reproached for their political content by others. This battle of complementation and condemnation of political satires applies to other standard cases such as Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice, Mark Twain’s The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Luís Bernardo Honwana Who kill mangy dog, and Knut Hamsun’s Hunger, Kwame Nkrumah’s I Speak of Freedom. This study indulges the political satire in George Orwell’s Animal Farm and Chinua Achebe’s A Man of the People.*

KEYWORDS: interrelations, politics, literature, Animal Farm, A man of the People, satire

Research Objective

The study aims at espousing the 'politics' in the literary texts of Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Generally, most political literary writings are a critique of the leadership, economic, social, political or religious ills of society. The two authors in this study are heavy on political critique in the selected novels. The study is thus discursive and cites appropriate information in the novels that satirise politics of their time and beyond.

Theoretical Underpinning

This study is anchored by the theory of Comparative Literature.

The term 'Comparative Literature' is difficult to define for it involves not one but two or even more than two literatures in comparison at the same time. It becomes still more difficult task when the comparatist has to take into consideration the multi-dimensional aspects of comparative literature such as-linguistic, cultural, religious, economic, social and historical factors of different societies.

In order to understand the term "comparative literature" we must analyse its nomenclature. Etymologically, the term comparative literature denotes any literary work or works when compared with any other literary work or works. Hence, comparative literature is the study of inter-relationship between any two or more than two significant literary works or literatures. It is essential that while making comparative study we must take the sources, themes, myths, forms, artistic strategies, social and religious movements and trends into consideration. The comparatist with his critical approach and investigations will find out, the similarities and dissimilarities among various works that he has undertaken for the purpose of comparison and justification lies in the fact that his approach must be unbiased and unprejudiced to reach the ultimate truth. It is only his earnest and sincere approach which will bring forth the naked truth or natural results and this really is the purpose of comparative study.

Taken broadly, comparative literature is a comprehensive term. Its scope encompasses the totality of human experiences into its embrace, and thus all internal human relationships among the various parts of the world are realized, through the critical approach to literatures under comparative study. It helps to vanish narrow national and international boundaries, and in place of that universality of human relationships emerges out. Thus the term comparative literature includes comparative study of regional literatures, national literatures, and international literatures. However, there are many over-lapping terms in this concern such as - Universal literature, General literature, International literature and World literature. Repeatedly, we can mention here that comparative literature includes experiences of human life and behaviour as a whole. In the conception of world literature the works of Homer, Dante,

Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Emerson, Thoreau, Valmiki, Vyas should be taken as one for comparison.

Virgil's Aeneid, Homer's Iliad, Milton's Paradise Lost, Indian Epics-the Ramayana and the Mahabharata can be studied in comparison as world literature.

If taken psychologically, human nature is undoubtedly, the same all over the world. That is why, human expressions in all literary works or literatures are bound to have deep-rooted similarities and affinities. Hence there lies affinities between the masterpieces of different literary works of different nations. Human nature, no doubt, is very complicated, and this complexity in different kinds of literary works makes comparative study a complex phenomenon.

As mentioned above, the comparative study is not different from a critical approach of a particular literature except the fact that here we deal with two or more than two literatures side by side. In this way, the subject matter becomes vaster and perspective wider. Boundaries of comparative literature have to be extended to encompass the entirety of human life and experiences in one's embrace.

The definition of comparative literature given by Bijay Kumar Dass is very simple vivid and understandable: The simple way to define comparative literature is to say that it is a comparison between the two literatures. Comparative literature analyses the similarities and dissimilarities and parallels between two literatures. It further studies themes, modes, conventions and use of folk tales, myths in two different literatures or even more.¹

Tagore refers to comparative literature by the name of 'Vishvasahita'. Broadening the scope of comparative literature he remarks:

"From narrow provincialism we must free ourselves, we must strive to see the works of each author as a whole, that whole as a part of man's universal creativity, and that universal spirit in its manifestation through world literature" (Quoted in Buddhadeva Bose, "Comparative Literature in India, "Contribution to Comparative Literature ; Germany and India, Calcutta, 1973).²

If taken historically, comparative literature has been a result of a reaction against the narrow nationalism of the 19th century scholarship in England. Though it was an occasional tradition, the comparative study of literary works was in vogue, right from the beginning of the Christian era. Romans were the pioneers in the field of comparative study. They out did the Greeks in the development of comparative study. The Romans worked out the tradition of comparing the works of great orators and poets of Greek and Roman and found out many similarities among their studies of literary works. No doubt, Quintillion was the pioneer in this concern, but Longinus endeavoured to set the comparative study in systematized discipline. If he had preceded Quintillion he would have been the pioneer in this field. He brought forth the names of Homer and Plato etc. In Indian comparative approach the Sanskrit critics emerged out during the 6th century A.D. It is clear from the commentaries on Kalidasa's Meghduta and Abhijnanasakutala. After that the critics like Kuntaka and Abhinavagupta with their qualitative approach paved the way for modern comparators.

R.S. Pathak, giving the historical development of the new discipline, comparative literature says:

Mathew Aronold made meaningful efforts in English world and emphasized strongly the significance of the comparative approach to literary works. He wrote in a letter in 1848, "Every critic should try and possess one great literature at least besides his own and more the unlike his own, the better.

Thus, he pioneered the comparative criticism in England and gave inspiration to other critics to work on this new discipline. It is hereby suggested that the comparatist should undertake the master pieces of creative writers, whose works have cosmopolitan status in literary fields. That is why, Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot called for a criticism of poetry on parameters of universal world-poetry, or the works of maximum excellence. This type of approach will direct comparative study of literature towards international level.

In his article, "Comparative Literature and Aesthetics: the search for a significant order" R.S. Pathak has indicated well-known aspects of traditional comparative studies i.e. Folklore, Influence, Genres and Themes.

Animal farm (George Orwell)

Introduction

This study examines George Orwell's Animal Farm as a political satire which was written to criticise totalitarian regimes and particularly Stalin's practices in Russia. It aims to show the

elements of satire in Animal Farm, and to compare characters, events and some elements of Animal Farm and The Russian Revolution. Orwell clearly explains that his main purpose for writing Animal Farm was to write a satire on the Russian Revolution (Shelden, 1991, p.399). Through animal satire, Orwell attacks Stalin's practices in Russia and in a wider scope, on

totalitarian regimes. Taking Bozkurt's (1977) classification into consideration, Animal Farm would be said to be a Juvenial satire. Since, it is clearly shown that Orwell bitterly criticises Russian Communism and Stalin.

Background of Author

The British author George Orwell, with pen name Eric Arthur Blair, was born in Motihari, India, June 25, 1903. His father was an important British civil servant in India, which was then part of the British Empire. A few years after Eric was born, his father retired on a low pension and moved back to England. Though their income was not much enough, the Blair family sent their son to a boarding school which was an exclusive preparatory school, to prepare him for Eton College. Eric later won a scholarship to Eton College. During his education from the age of eight to eighteen, as he wrote in his essay about his school experiences titled "Such, Were the Joys," he experienced many things about the "world where the prime necessities were money, titled relatives, athleticism, tailor-made clothes", inequality, oppression and class distinctions in the schools of England .After his education at Eton College in England, Eric joined the Indian Imperial Police in British-Ruled Burma in

1922. There, he witnessed oppression again, but this time he was looking at things from the top. Having served five years in Burma, he resigned in 1927 and went back to Europe where he lived in Paris for more than a year.

Though he wrote novels and short stories he had no money to get them published and there was no one ready to help him publish them. He worked as a tutor and even as a dishwasher in Paris. During his poor days in Paris, he once more experienced the problems of the oppressed, the helpless and lower class people. In 1933, after having many experiences about the life at the bottom of society, he wrote *Down and Out in Paris and London* and published it under his pen name "George Orwell." After a year, in 1934, he published his novel *Burmese Days*, which reflected his experiences. Then, he published *A Clergyman's Daughter* in 1935, and *Keep the Aspidochelone* in 1936. In 1936, his publisher wanted Orwell to go to the

English coal-mining country and write about it. This was another important experience in his life. He wrote *The Road to Wigan Pier* to reflect what he saw there, the real poverty of people of the Lancashire Town of Wigan, and published it in 1937. 1937 was the year that Orwell, who for some time had been describing himself as "pro-socialist", joined the Republican forces in the Spanish Civil War. When the Communists attempted to eliminate their allies on the far left, Orwell fought against them and was wounded in the fight, and later was forced to flee for his life. His experience in that war was to have the most significant impact on his political thoughts and his later works. In 1938, Orwell wrote *Homage to Catalonia*, which recounts his experiences fighting for the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. One of his best-known books reflecting his life-long distrust of dictatorial government, whether of the left or right, *Animal Farm*, a modern beast-fable attacking Russian Revolution, Stalinism and totalitarianism, was published in 1945, and in 1984, a dystopian novel setting forth his fears of an intrusively bureaucratized state of the future was published in 1949. His first fame was brought by these two novels and they were the only ones which made a profit for him as a writer. Orwell died at the early age of 47 of a neglected lung ailment in London, January 21, 1950.

Satire

There are many different ways to reveal one's perception of life and its reflection by a person. In art for instance, the reflection may be revealed in the form of a sculpture, a song or a picture. Satire is one the ways that the reaction or perception of life is expressed, through writing. Since people look at life from different stand points, as a matter of fact, they naturally perceive it in numerous ways. As a result of the variety in perception, the way of revealing the effects or reflections of these perceptions also shows variety. Originally, the word "satire" comes from the Latin word for medley, "satura". The impression that it is to do with the word "satyr" is a popular delusion" (Abrams, 1986, p.2598). It is a way of revealing the reaction to what is perceived, with a mixture of laughter and outrage. In *The Quarterly Journal of Contemporary Satire*, the description of satire is given as "a work in which vices, follies, stupidities, abuses, etc. are held up to ridicule and contempt." In the preface to *The Battle of the Books*, Jonathan Swift, who claimed that satire is therapeutic, describes satire as "A sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own" (Bozkurt, 1977, p.71). Bozkurt (1977) offers two fundamental types of satire: Horatian and

Juvenalian satire. These types are named for two Roman poets Horace and Juvenal, the most differentiated practitioner of them.

Political satire

As already explained above, satires are critiques of society as perceived by a writer. We critique all aspects of life, including politics. A political satire is therefore a critique of a system of rule or governance. *Animal Farm* for instance was written to criticise totalitarian regimes and particularly Stalin's practices in Russia. It is therefore a very good example of a political satire.

Plot Summary Of *Animal Farm*

One night, all the animals at Mr. Jones' Manor Farm assemble in a barn to hear old Major, a pig, describe a dream he had about a world where all animals live free from the tyranny of their human masters. Old Major dies soon after the meeting, but the animals — inspired by his philosophy of Animalism — plot a rebellion against Jones. Two pigs, Snowball and Napoleon, prove themselves important figures and planners of this dangerous enterprise. When Jones forgets to feed the animals, the revolution occurs, and Jones and his men are chased off the farm. Manor Farm is renamed Animal Farm, and the Seven Commandments of Animalism are painted on the barn wall. Initially, the rebellion is a success. The animals complete the harvest and meet every Sunday to debate farm policy. The pigs, because of their 'intelligence', become the supervisors of the farm. Napoleon, however, proves to be a power-hungry leader who steals the cows' milk and a number of apples to feed himself and the other pigs. He also enlists the services of Squealer, a pig with the ability to persuade the other animals that the pigs are always moral and correct in their decisions.

Later after that fall, Jones and his men return to Animal Farm and attempt to retake it. Thanks to the tactics of Snowball, the animals defeat Jones in what thereafter becomes known as The Battle of the Cowshed. Winter arrives and, Mollie, a vain horse concerned only with ribbons and sugar, is lured off the farm by another human. Snowball begins drawing plans for a windmill, which will provide electricity and thereby give the animals more leisure time, but Napoleon vehemently opposes such a plan on the grounds that building the windmill will allow them less time for producing food. On the Sunday that the pigs offer the windmill to the animals for a vote, Napoleon summons a pack of ferocious dogs, who chase Snowball off the farm forever. Napoleon announces that there will be no further debates; he also tells them that the windmill will be built after all and lies that it was his own idea, stolen by Snowball.

For the rest of the novel, Napoleon uses Snowball as a scapegoat on whom he blames all of the animals' hardships. Much of the next year is spent building the windmill. Boxer, an incredibly strong horse, proves himself to be the most valuable animal in this endeavor. Jones, meanwhile, forsakes the farm and moves to another part of the county. Contrary to the principles of Animalism, Napoleon hires a solicitor and begins trading with neighboring farms. When a storm topples the half-finished windmill, Napoleon predictably blames Snowball and orders the animals to begin rebuilding it. Napoleon's lust for power increases to the point where he becomes a totalitarian dictator, forcing "confessions" from innocent animals and having the dogs kill them in front of the entire farm. He and the pigs move into Jones' house and begin sleeping in beds (which Squealer excuses with his brand of twisted

logic). The animals receive less and less food, while the pigs grow fatter. After the windmill is completed in August, Napoleon sells a pile of timber to Jones; Frederick, a neighboring farmer who pays for it with forged banknotes.

Frederick and his men attack the farm and explode the windmill but are eventually defeated. As more of the Seven Commandments of Animalism are broken by the pigs, the language of the Commandments is revised: For example, after the pigs become drunk one night, the Commandment, "No animals shall drink alcohol" is changed to, "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess." Boxer again offers his strength to help build a new windmill, but when he collapses, exhausted, Napoleon sells the devoted horse to a knacker (a glue-boiler). Squealer tells the indignant animals that Boxer was actually taken to a veterinarian and died a peaceful death in a hospital — a tale the animals believe.

Years pass and Animal Farm expands its boundaries after Napoleon purchases two fields

from another neighboring farmer, Pilkington. Life for all the animals (except the pigs) is harsh. Eventually, the pigs begin walking on their hind legs and take on many other qualities of their former human oppressors. The Seven Commandments are reduced to a single law: "All Animals Are Equal / But Some Are More Equal Than Others." The novel ends with Pilkington sharing drinks with the pigs in Jones' house. Napoleon changes the name of the farm back to Manor Farm and quarrels with Pilkington during a card game in which both of them try to play the ace of spades. As other animals watch the scene from outside the window, they cannot tell the pigs from the humans.

George Orwell And Political Ideology

In his essay "Why I Write", Orwell (1947) says: *I do not think one can assess a writer's motives without knowing something of his early development. His subject matter will be determined by the age he lives in—at least this is true in tumultuous, revolutionary ages like our own.* Taking Orwell's own words into consideration, in order to get a better understanding of his works and particularly of his political satire Animal Farm, we should look at his political convictions, and the historical context which influenced Orwell and inspired him to write.

Very few authors develop essays explaining the motivation behind their writing. Orwell was one of them. Therefore in order to understand his motivations, his essay "Why I Write" would be the most appropriate source to be looked at. Orwell was a political writer and according to him he was 'forced' to be a writer by the circumstances under which he has become aware of his 'political loyalties'. His Burma and Paris days increased his 'natural hatred of authority' and 'made him aware of the existence of the working classes (Orwell, 1947). As mentioned earlier, he described himself as "pro-Socialist." What he was longing for was a society in which there would be no class distinctions, and he named his ideal ideology "democratic socialism".

He says "every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism " (Orwell, 1947). There are two significant events that have great influence on Orwell's political thoughts: The Russian

revolution that took place in the second decade of the 20th century and The Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1939. The Russian Revolution -Bolshevik Revolution- of October 1917 was the first great revolution which aimed to overthrow the owners of the means of production, that is Capitalist Bourgeoisie, and to establish a state to be ruled by the working class, the Proletariat.

The ideological basis of the revolution was taken from the philosophy of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels who believed that the history of the world was the history of a struggle between classes- that is, ruling classes and ruled classes . Marx was very critical of industrial capitalist society in which there are many cruel injustices and men are exploited by men. Out of his analysis of the Capitalist system, he attained a vision of ending these injustices and establishing a society in which there would be no social classes and everybody would be equal. For him, in order to achieve this end the only way was a revolution made by the working class or the Proletariat against the Bourgeoisie. After a revolution, working classes would own the means of production.

Marx called the new order that would be set after revolution "dictatorship of the Proletariat" which was eventually replaced with a classless society. In October 1917, V.I. Lenin, led the socialist (Bolshevik) revolution in Russia. After the revolution was a four-year bloody civil war. During this war, a group known as Red Army of the Revolution, organised and headed by Leon Trotsky, had to fight against both Russians who were loyal to Czar and foreign troops (The Academic American Encyclopaedia, 1995). After Lenin died in 1924, a struggle between Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky started for the leadership of the Communist Party.

Stalin gained priority over Trotsky and; in 1925 Trotsky with several other members were ousted from Politburo (the chief executive and political committee of the Communist Party); in 1927 Trotsky and his followers were expelled from the Party and Stalin took control. Later, Trotsky was exiled and in 1929, he was deported. In 1940, he was assassinated. During this period, Stalin always denounced Trotsky as a traitor . In the following years, Stalin started to arrogate all state authority of Russia to himself. In the 1930's, many people were arrested under the instruction of Stalin.

After public trials, most of the opposing elements were eliminated. Stalin has been accused of being a very cruel dictator. However, Nikita Khrushchev, who ruled USSR between 1958-1964 and who was very critical of Stalin's crimes and non-human practices, said in 1956 that Stalin believed that all his practices were necessary in order to defend the benefits of labourers. He looked at these practices from the view point of the benefit of socialism and labourers. Thus, we cannot define his practices as those of a greedy cruel despot.

Orwell and the Spanish Civil War

David Ball (1984) points out three experiences in the Spanish Civil War that were important for Orwell: atmosphere of Comradeship and respect, what happened to his fellow fighters and what happened when he returned to England and reported what he had seen. After spending very poor days in Paris, Orwell went to Spain to fight for the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. When he arrived in Barcelona, he found an elating "atmosphere of Comradeship and respect". People were friendly and addressing each other "comrade". To Orwell, relations in the militia group he joined were the same and this made him feel that socialism was in

action there. But later on, he was disappointed by what happened to his army friends who were imprisoned and killed by their own "comrades" who were of Communist-dominated elements of the Republican government that they were fighting for. The Communists believed that the communist ideas were betrayed by the militia group that Orwell belonged to. After he was wounded, Orwell went back to England for remedy and was saved from being killed by his "comrades". When he returned to England, he reported what he witnessed in the war, but the Socialists strongly resisted to understand what he told people about the practices of the communists in Spain. The reason was that it was not the right time to publicise all these things while the war was going on and this information would harm the Republican's position in the war. After this bad experience, he started to be more critical of British socialists and of communism. He wrote in his article "The Spanish war and other events in 1936-37 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood." (Orwell, 1947).

Through the questioning of his own experiences in Burma and Spain and communists' practices in USSR, Orwell began to develop a rejection of totalitarian systems. He was also denouncing the acceptance of soviet regime by the left-wing people of other countries and particularly of England without questioning in depth. For Michael Shelden, "the idea for the book" which was to serve Orwell's desire to "make a forceful attack, in an imaginative way, on the sustaining myths of Soviet communism had been in the back of his mind since his return from Spain" (Shelden, 1991, p. 399). Another author Peter Davison points out that, besides Orwell's experience in Spain, *Animal Farm* "originated from the incident that suggested its genre: the little boy driving a huge cart-horse, which could easily overwhelm the child had realised its own strength"(Davison, 1996, p.125). Shortly after he published *Animal Farm*, Orwell (1947) in his essay titled "Why I Write" wrote about his goals in writing his book. "Animal Farm was the first book in which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole. I have not written a novel for seven years, but I hope to write another fairly soon. It is bound to be a failure, every book is a failure, but I do know with some clarity what kind of book I want to write" (Orwell 1947). When Orwell finished writing his book, no one wanted to publish it.

Since, like his efforts to publicise reality after he returned from Spain, for many people, and of course for publishers, it was the very wrong time to attack Soviet myth, particularly when the World War-II was going on and Russia was Britain's ally. Consequently the book was published in Britain on 17 August 1945, after the war was over, and sold more than 25,000 hard copies in five years. When it was published in the United States in 1946, it sold about 590,000 in four years (Shelden, 1991). The book was a satire on totalitarian regime of Stalin in Russia. Many people thought (and still think) that the book reveals Orwell's opposition to the ideology that was prevailing in Russia.

As Michael Shelden states, the book "caught the popular imagination just when the Cold War beginning to make itself felt. For many years 'anti-Communists' enjoyed it as a propaganda weapon in that war" (Shelden, 1991, p.404). But this interpretation of the book was completely opposed to the real intention of the book. As Roger Fowler reports, in his preface to the Ukrainian edition of *Animal Farm*, written in 1947, Orwell writes that his aim with *Animal Farm* was not only to attack and to criticise Soviet Communism, but to attack "Soviet Myth" as received in Britain. To him, this myth was giving harm to the Socialist movement

(Fowler, 1995, p. 163). *Animal Farm* might leave a kind of pessimism on readers who have knowledge of historical background that inspired Orwell to write it.

For instance, one possible pessimistic view that can be derived from *Animal Farm* is the impossibility of establishing a social system in which there would be no inequality between individuals and there would be no individuals or groups of people who apt to make use of power just for their benefits. Another possible pessimistic view of those who rely on socialism or communism would be that: even socialism, which is claimed to be a more egalitarian system, would be turned into a dictatorship by human beings' desire for power. Actually, the point that Orwell intended to give emphasis to is not the ideology itself, but the human nature. As Christopher Hollis (1962) explains, "The lesson of *Animal Farm* is clearly not merely the corrupting effect of power when exercised by Communists, but the corrupting effect of power when exercised by anybody" (Yemenici, 1997). Finally, for a better

understanding of Orwell's intention, it is the best way to consult Orwell himself. Sheldon (1991) quotes Orwell's letter he sent to Dwight Macdonald in America in which he expresses his intentions in writing *Animal Farm*. The letter included his arguments against pessimistic view of his book: Of course I intended it primarily as a satire on the Russian Revolution. But I did mean it to have a wider application in so much that I meant that that kind of revolution (violent conspiratorial revolution, led by unconsciously power-hungry people) can only lead to a change of masters. I meant the moral to be that revolutions only effect a radical improvement when the masses are alert and know how to chuck out their leaders as soon as the latter have done their job. The turning point of the story was supposed to be when the pigs kept the milk for themselves (Orwell 1947). If the other animals had had the sense to put their foot down then, it would have been all right ... what I was trying to say was, 'You can't have a revolution unless you make it for yourself; there is no such thing as a benevolent dictatorship' (Orwell 1947,p.407).

Satirical Dimensions In *Animal Farm*

A satire may roughly and briefly be defined as a humorous or witty exposure of human follies and vices. By means of a satire an author can strip the veil from things, and expose the reality of individuals, communities, groups of people, institutions, etc. A satirist generally employs irony, mockery, ridicule, and sarcasm as his weapons of attack. Swift is regarded as the greatest satirist in prose. His book *Gulliver Travels* is a great satirical work. It is written in the form of a travel-book. Swift adopted the form of a travelogue because travel-books had been very popular for a long time in those days. Swift's purpose in writing this book was to lash all mankind for their follies, vices, absurdities, and evil ways, and to bring about some reform if possible. *Gulliver's Travels* is an allegorical satire because Swift does not attack persons and institutions directly but in a veiled manner. All the persons and institutions and other aspects of life attacked by Swift are presented in this book in disguise.

"*Animal Farm*", an Allegorical Satire

Orwell shows himself as a great satirist in *Animal Farm*. *Animal Farm* is also an allegorical satire. But the scope of *Animal Farm* is very limited by comparison with *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift's book attacks all mankind, but Orwell's book is a political satire which attacks certain political institutions and certain selected political personalities and events. Besides, Orwell's

book is written in the form of an animal fable. Orwell's object in writing this book also was to reform the thinking of those who had been misguided or who had formed wrong judgments about certain political systems and political personalities.

A Satire on Revolutions (and on the Russian Revolution)

Animal Farm is a satire on the course taken by revolutions in general and by the Russian Revolution of October, 1917 in particular. It is a satire on the process by which a revolution is effected and by which it is afterwards betrayed. This book has a particular and pointed reference to the Communist regime in Russia under Stalin who came to power soon after the death in 1924 of Lenin. Orwell had felt much disgusted with the arbitrary and brutal methods which Stalin had been adopting to consolidate his power and with the way in which Stalin had betrayed the ideals of the Russian Revolution to establish a totalitarian regime in the country. Stalin had employed cunning, deceit, fraud, and force to achieve his purposes; and

Orwell wrote Animal Farm to poke fun at Stalin and Stalin's methods and to degrade Stalin in our eyes. His object was to open the eyes of his readers to the truth about Stalin and also about revolutions in general.

A Satire in the Form of an Animal Fable

As already pointed out, the satire here takes the form of an animal fable. The main characters are the animals of whom the pigs are the most important. From among the class of the pigs, three leaders emerge. These leaders are Napoleon, Snowball, and Squealer. The principal targets of satire are Napoleon, who represents Stalin, and Squealer who represents the Communist propaganda machinery, especially the servile Soviet Press. Another target of satire is Moses, the raven, who represents religious institutions like the Roman Catholic Church.

A Satire on the Methods Employed By Stalin

Napoleon is the chief target of satire in Animal Farm. This pig has the reputation for getting things done in accordance with his own wishes. He is contrasted with Snowball who is candid and open in his methods, while Napoleon works in devious ways. Snowball can impress the animals with his eloquent speeches and can sway their judgment. But Napoleon works behind the scenes and is able to canvass support for himself in a secretive manner. Napoleon is especially successful with the sheep who are trained to bleat a slogan "Four legs good, two legs bad" and who interrupt the animals' meetings by their loud bleating whenever Snowball is about to score a point against Napoleon. Napoleon has also secretly reared a number of dogs and trained them to obey his orders. By his cunning and by his use of the fierce-looking dogs, Napoleon is able to drive Snowball away from the farm and to become the sole leader of the animals. All this is Orwell's satirical method of informing us that Stalin had used deceit and the force of his secret police in order to pass an order of banishment against his rival Trotsky. After Trotsky had been sent into exile, Stalin became the sole dictator of Russia. Thus the power-politics rampant in Russia of that time is also satirized here.

The Emergence of a Privileged Class and of Napoleon as a Dictator

The rest of the story shows how Napoleon, once he has got rid of his rival Snowball, consolidates his power on the farm and becomes an autocratic ruler. By having driven away Mr. Jones, the real owner of the farm, the animals had liberated themselves from human tyranny and become their own masters. The animals had now looked forward to a democratic functioning of the farm in the light of the Seven Commandments which had been formulated soon after the expulsion of Mr. Jones. But Napoleon now begins a systematic attempt to shelve the Seven Commandments and to depart from the ideals and principles of the successful rebellion which had been accomplished by the animals against Mr. Jones.

The first decision taken by Napoleon, when Snowball was yet a respected leader on the farm, was that milk and apples would be reserved exclusively for the pigs. This decision was a clear departure from the concept of the equality of all the animals. Even Snowball had on this point agreed with Napoleon. As a result of this departure from one of the Commandments, the pigs emerged as a privileged class. The privileges accorded to the pigs now go on increasing as a result of further announcements made by Napoleon when he has become the sole leader. In course of time Napoleon himself becomes more and more powerful. He abolishes the system of all the animals meeting together to discuss the

affairs of the farm and to take all decisions pertaining to the farm. Now a committee of pigs is formed, with Napoleon as its president, to take all decisions which are then merely announced to the other animals. Thus both the principle of equality and the principle of democracy have been forsaken. A time comes when Napoleon decides that the pigs would begin living in Mr. Jones's farmhouse and sleeping in the beds in which human beings used to sleep. This is another glaring departure from the Seven Commandments. Napoleon then carries out a purge on the farm. All those animals whom he suspects of being his opponents are made to confess certain crimes which actually they have not committed at all, and who are then put to death by Napoleon's fierce dogs under Napoleon's orders. Here is grossly violated yet another Commandment which originally was: "No animal shall kill any other animal," but which now reads: "No animal shall kill any other animal without cause." Subsequently, the pigs, led by Napoleon, begin to drink whisky and to brew beer at the farm. In this way some more privileges have been conferred upon the pigs.

Then comes a time when Napoleon decides that the pigs would walk on their hind legs and hold whips in their trotters in order to supervise the work of the other animals. This is, of course, the height of absurdity, and we are greatly amused by this decision of Napoleon's. Napoleon himself now wears the clothes of human beings, dons a hat, and keeps a tobacco-pipe in his mouth. Here, perhaps, the satire reaches its climax. Napoleon, and with him all the pigs, have bidden good-bye to most of the ideals of the rebellion. But more is yet to come. The Seventh Commandment which promised equality to the animals is now altered to read as follows: "All Animals Are Equal But Some Animals Are More Equal." There is a lot of irony in Napoleon's violations of the Seven Commandments. The irony arises from the contrast between what the animals had looked forward to and what Napoleon has actually done on the farm. Irony, as we know, is one of the chief weapons of satire.

A Satire on Stalin's Betrayal of the Ideals of the Russian Revolution

Napoleon's deviations from and violations of the Seven Commandments are intended by Orwell as satire on Stalin's betrayal of the ideals of the Russian Revolution. The Russian Revolution had promised equality, comradeship, social and economic justice, and the freedom of thought, the freedom of speech, and the freedom of action to the citizens. But, after coming to power, Stalin curbed all the freedoms and soon suppressed them altogether. Stalin, likewise, rejected the concept of equality and economic justice, and allowed a privileged class to emerge in the country and to rule the country under his direct orders. This privileged class in Russia was, of course, the bureaucracy which enjoyed many privileges, while the common people had often to face shortages of food and other commodities.

Stalin had also liquidated his supposed opponents through wholesale executions of the suspects, these suspects were first forced to confess the crimes which they had never committed, and were then sentenced to death. This drastic step was taken by Stalin during 1936-38. The Moscow Trials of these years caused a wave of terror all over the country. The executions of a large number of people tried during these years came to be known as the "Great Purges". Napoleon's absurd method of adding to his dignity also corresponds to Stalin's efforts at self-aggrandisement. In short, all the policies, decisions, and actions of Napoleon, which excite our mirth and laughter, are based on the policies, decisions, and actions of Stalin, though there is certainly an element of horror in the mass executions. The whole portrayal of Napoleon and his emergence as the dictator of Animal Farm shows through mockery and ridicule, Stalin's betrayal of the Revolution and his

emergence as the undisputed and unchallenged dictator of Russia. Stalin re-established totalitarianism in the country within a short period of about twenty years after the overthrow of the totalitarianism represented by Nicholas, the Czar of Russia. But Orwell also implies that most revolutions follow the same course which the Russian Revolution took. Thus Orwell's conclusion is applicable to the French Revolution and also to the Spanish Civil War.

A Satire on the Russian Propaganda Machinery

Squealer amuses us greatly by the manner in which he defends and justifies the policies and decisions of Napoleon. For instance, he amuses us greatly when he tells the animals that there are certain substances in milk and in apples which are essential to the health of the pigs who are the brain-workers on the farm. He amuses us when he tells the animals that, by abolishing the democratic procedure, Napoleon has taken extra labour upon himself, and when he adds that Napoleon still believes in the equality of all animals. Squealer amuses us when he tells the animals that Napoleon's original opposition to the windmill had merely been a matter of "tactics" to get rid of Snowball who was a dangerous character and a bad influence. Squealer repeats the word "tactics" several times, skipping from side to side and whisking his tail as is his habit. Indeed, Squealer abases us every time he tells a brazen lie to support and justify Napoleon. When the rations of the animals have been reduced on account of a food shortage, while maintaining the rations of the pigs and the dogs, Squealer says that a strict equality in rations is contrary to the principles of Animalism. Squealer's perverted logic and his sophisms are one of the chief sources of humour in this book. He carries on his false propaganda against Snowball in a most shameless manner. One of his most amusing lies is that the van, which had taken away the sick Boxer had originally belonged to

a horse-slaughterer but was now the property of a veterinary doctor who had yet to order the rubbing out of the horse-slaughterer's name from the van and the painting of his own name in place of it. As has already been pointed out, the portrayal of Squealer is meant to satirize the Russian Press, represented by the News Agency called "Tass" which always lends its support to official pronouncements and decisions. The press in Russia is servile to the dictator just as Squealer on Animal Farm is servile to his boss Napoleon.

The Use of Religion for Political Purposes, Satirized

The portrayal of Moses is intended to satirize religion and the use of religion for political purposes. Moses is a spy and a tale-bearer and he talks about an animals' paradise called Sugarcandy Mountain. We are indeed very amused by Moses' talk about Suearcandy Mountain because we know that the priests of all religions beguile their audiences by talking to them about the joys of heavenly life which, however, is only a myth. Napoleon's tolerance of Moses on the farm was intended by Orwell to ridicule Stalin's attitude of indulgence towards a Roman Catholic priest through whom Stalin wanted to establish friendly Pope in Rome.

Shirkers, Satirized

There are workers and shirkers in every society. Boxer and Clover in this story represent the honest and conscientious workers, while Mollie represents the shirkers. The portrayal of Mollie is satirical in intention. Mollie avoids doing any work on the farm. She is fond of wearing red ribbons in her white mane and chewing a lump of sugar. She is also vain about her appearance and often stands on the bank of a pool, admiring her own reflection in the water. She is cowardly too, because when a battle has to be fought against Mr. Jones and his men, she runs away into the stable and buries her head in the hay. Boxer's adopting the motto "Napoleon is right", and his meeting a sad fate when he has become useless from Napoleon's point of view, are a satire on the treatment which the common people receive in Russia when they can serve the nation no longer. Boxer's fate symbolically conveys to us the callousness of a dictator like Stalin.

Animal Farm as a Political Satire

Books are a medium through which the author can express his views; whether they concern social injustices, current issues, or in Orwell's case, politics. For centuries, writers have weaved their opinions into their work, conveying to the reader exactly what they intended. "Orwell saw himself as a violent unmasker of published pretentiousness, hypocrisy and self-deceit, telling people what they did not want to hear..." (Crick 1996, pp 244). Orwell accomplishes this unmasking of these facades through his use of rhetorical strategies to relay his views to the reader. Through his books and essays, George Orwell has found a forum in which he can express his opinions, fusing his political beliefs with a satiric quality all on his own.

A piece of literature that illustrates his ability to do this with unmatched skill and unrelenting satire is Animal Farm. Jeffrey Meyers said of Orwell's novel, "In this fable about a barnyard revolt, Orwell created a satire that specifically attacked the consequences of the Russian Revolution while suggesting the reasons for the failure of most revolutionary ideals". In the

book, the reader is given a situation in which the animals are fed up with the over-indulgent, unappreciative human beings that run their farm. They decide a rebellion would cure their woes and so they revolt. However, they soon realize that the uprising was the easy part. Now they must establish a government with leaders and their own rules. The pigs are the self-appointed leaders because they are the smartest and cleverest of all the animals. The two pigs with the most power and persuasion are Snowball and Napoleon. The farm begins to run like a democracy, and all the animals are satisfied until Napoleon runs Snowball out of the farm with a pack of wild dogs. After the exile of Snowball, the animals on the farm increasingly become oppressed and Napoleon slowly starts to resemble a dictator.

Throughout *Animal Farm*, Orwell's main weapon of choice is his stinging satire. In fact, the entire book can be viewed as a one hundred page satiric look at politics and human life. Not only do we see humans being overthrown by pigs and chickens but all the animals can talk and some can even read and write. Naming one of the pigs Napoleon is also significant because as Meyers puts it, "The carefully chosen names are both realistic and highly suggestive of their owners' personalities and roles in the fable" (Orwell 1947,pp353). Later in the story after Napoleon takes over, we see him declaring days of celebration on his birthday and not allowing the other animals to call him Napoleon but rather "our Leader, comrade Napoleon" (*Animal Farm*,pp66). Orwell uses satire here by equating the arrogance of this pig leader to that of the well-known arrogance of the French leader Napoleon. Orwell satirizes the effects alcohol has on people as well. After a night of drunken madness, the pigs are horrified in the morning to learn that their beloved leader Napoleon is, in fact, dying. Because of this tragedy, Napoleon decrees that any animal that drinks alcohol would be punished by

death, even going as far as creating a new commandment. After realizing that he was merely having a hung over, Napoleon celebrates with more drinking, orders a field to be planted with barley, and changes the commandment from "No animal shall drink alcohol" to "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess" (*Animal Farm*,pp77).

Not only does Orwell use satire in *Animal Farm*, he employs this strategy throughout most of his writings. Orwell satirizes the British police in an expertly written and vividly detailed essay called "Shooting an Elephant." An example of this is when Orwell says "In Moulmein, in lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people – the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me" (Orwell 1947,pp 1). Orwell uses satire to lighten up a work of literature and point out in a not so flattering way, the injustices and ironies of society and politics.

"*Animal Farm* was the first book in which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole." This quote from Orwell in his essay "Politics and the English Language" precisely illustrates what Orwell attempted to do and achieved in *Animal Farm*. Jeffrey Meyers said Orwell, "...brilliantly presents a satiric allegory of Communist Russia in which virtually every detail has political significance". The characters of Napoleon and Snowball are representative of Russian communist leaders Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky. Napoleon (Stalin) takes over the farm in much the same way Stalin slyly took over Russia; Snowball (Trotsky) goes from being a powerful leader to being exiled and almost assassinated by Napoleon (Stalin). "Both

characters are drawn fully and accurately, and reflect almost all the dominant characteristics of the historical models.” (Meyers, 353). The struggle between Snowball and Napoleon is a struggle “within the party elite whose final result, whichever had won, would have been the increased consolidation and centralization of power into the hands of the pigs” (Woodcock, 2578). I saw a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge cart-horse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat (Orwell, 70).

This quote from George Orwell provides his reasoning for choosing the farm as the backdrop to his political fable. Orwell uses the animals to portray the poor nature of society. Unlike the pigs who are educated yet lazy, the rest of the animals on the farm are hardworking yet stupid. A character that represents this idea is the diligent Boxer. Boxer is a strong and powerful horse who can only memorize the alphabet until the letter D; yet his maxim is “I will work harder” (Orwell, *Animal Farm* 22). The animals, such as Boxer, are employed by Orwell to make the reader think of the poor and impoverished as the animals in the story, powerful but uneducated. Orwell empathizes with the animals in the book; perhaps it was because he grew up demeaned by his social standings, explaining that his experiences during his school years fostered his extreme sensitivity to social victimization (Meyers, 339). Throughout *Animal*

Farm the reader picks up on Orwell’s immense dislike of the Communist government through the rise and eventual failure of Napoleon. This extreme disgust for the Communist party was most likely because Orwell disapproved of the British becoming allies with the Russians and not recognizing the faults of the Communist government. In theory, Napoleon’s rules and

changes sounded like an incredible idea; but, like Communism, ended up dividing the leaders from the animals even more than when the tyrannical Mr. Jones was the human owner of the farm. Napoleon failed to provide sufficient amounts of food for the animals which were not pigs, as in a Communist country where the rich keep getting richer and the poor keep getting poorer. In the end of the book, the pigs begin walking on their hind legs and taking on other characteristics most commonly attributed to humans, the very ones the animals revolted against and swore they would never resemble. Orwell uses the rise to power of Napoleon to demonstrate the theme that “once in power, the revolutionary becomes as tyrannical as his oppressor” (Meyers, 353). The slow but definite oppression of the animals is clear from the beginning of Napoleon’s rule; yet the only ones to notice this is the reader. The animals don’t realize this until the single commandment Napoleon chooses to rule by is “All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others” (*Animal Farm*, pp 10). The last scene in the book in which Orwell’s political preferences and disgusts are the most distinctive is when the oppressed animals look upon the pigs and humans saying, “The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which” (*Animal Farm*, pp101).

Throughout *Animal Farm*, Orwell employs rhetorical strategies to aid the reader in realizing the political innuendos he simply and carefully wove into the book. Orwell foreshadows the events that are about to take place with subtle hints and clues. Orwell clues

the reader in to the possible Communist-like future of the farm by saying, “All that year the animals worked like slaves. But they were happy in their work; they grudged no effort or sacrifice, well aware that everything they did was for the benefit of themselves and those of the kind who would come after them, and not for a pack of idle, thieving human beings” (Animal farm,pp44). Orwell uses this excerpt to portray to the audience the thoughts of the animals who were “...accepting the fact that no matter what the pigs may do, no animal wants to be ruled again by Farmer Jones or his kind” (Woodcock, 1977). After reading this excerpt and then seeing the slave-like conditions the animals are in by the end of the book, one can infer through Orwell’s use of foreshadowing that the oppression and unjust treatment of the animals was a likely outcome. Orwell also utilizes characterization by attributing human qualities to the animals, giving the impression that we almost nowhere feel that we are in an animal world. Orwell uses Napoleon to represent the dictator, Boxer to represent the over-worked lower classes, and the old goat Benjamin to represent the always skeptical few. Orwell does not fully develop these characters because he uses them to depict character types with easily recognizable character traits . Through his use of these strategies, Orwell achieves his miniscule reproduction of the Russian Revolution in the early 20th Century.

Experiences from one’s life shape and mould the person one is, whether good or bad. The same holds true for Orwell. His mistrust of governments and politics could be traced back to his days as a police officer for the Indian Imperial Police where he was stationed in Burma. There, he encountered the harsh reality of colonial rule and unjust treatment of the lower classes. Disgusted with that life, Orwell left the police force but didn’t forget the things he had witnessed. Recalling the injustices he saw during those past experiences, Orwell enlisted in the British Army and fought Fascism in the Spanish Civil War, fostering his hatred for oppressive governments. Several of Orwell’s novels deal with the kind of victimization he saw in Burma and Spain and even experienced in his own life.

George Orwell effectively conveys what he intended to through a simplistic style of writing that is forceful, to the point, and gives the reader only the impression which he wanted. His use of satire combined with a headstrong political opinion creates for the reader thoughts and questions that were not there when one opened the pages of a book such as

Animal Farm and began the journey chosen for them by Orwell. Orwell is a writer who not only gives the reader entertainment and enjoyment, but is set out to make the reader think and feel what the characters who are being victimized think and feel like. He is on a mission to make the reader ponder the injustices of society and the political regimes that run our countries, our world. George Orwell did not set out to create books that kindly represent everyone, even the tyrants. He set out to create books and literature that may have shocked some readers at first but without a doubt, told the truth. Orwell once said, “Possession of the ‘truth’ is less important than emotional sincerity.” Orwell is unwavering in his commitment to make the masses aware of the injustices, victimizations, and corrupt politics. A writer’s only and best weapon is his words; Orwell chooses his words wisely. They can be bitter or sweet, but they always convey truths about the world ignored by many but seen and written about by Orwell. The persona which Eric Arthur Blair fabricates through George Orwell, meticulously implements a paradoxical set of literary devices throughout his thesis, which has arguably forged him as one of the greatest social commentators of modern history.

Orwell's essays have sparked a plethora of adverse and auxiliary opinions regarding the imperishability of his work, from those who believe that his efforts are archaic, to those who believe that his craftsmanship of language addresses issues which had once been hidden. No matter what side of the social spectrum one categorises themselves into, it is undeniable that Orwell's essays resonate a certain quality of genuine concern for society which is echoed throughout his formulaic journey of writing in "Why I Write", the prophetic piece depicting the influence of politics on a writer's conscience in "Writers and Leviathan" and in Orwell's emphasis on the duality of politics and literature in "Politics and the English Language" which reverberates the transcendental message of his essays which shall be critically studied for years to come.

***A Man of the People* (Chinua Achebe)**

Introduction and Background of the Author

A Man of the People (1966) is the fourth novel by Chinua Achebe. This satirical novel is a story told by the young and educated narrator, Odili, on his conflict with Chief Nanga, his former teacher who enters a career in politics in an unnamed modern African country. Odili represents the changing younger generation; Nanga represents the traditional customs of Nigeria. The book ends with a military coup, similar to the real-life coups of Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu and Yakubu Gowon.[1]

A Man of the People is a first-person account of Odili, a school teacher in a fictional country closely resembling post-colonial Nigeria. Odili receives an invitation from his former teacher, Chief Nanga, who is now the powerful but corrupt Minister of Culture. As Minister, Nanga's job is to protect the traditions of his country especially when he is known as "A Man of the People". Instead, his position is used to increase his personal wealth and power that proves particularly alluring to Odili's girlfriend; she cheats on him with the minister. Seeking revenge, Odili begins to pursue the minister's fiancée.

Odili agrees to lead an opposition party in the face of both bribes and violent threats. Then there is a military coup.

Summary of the Plot of *A Man of the People*

Written in 1966, *A Man of the People* by Chinua Achebe is a story of warlords, mentorship, and even revenge and romance. It begins with the narrator, Odili, who is a teacher in a small African village, central to a corrupt and debased government. Odili receives a letter one day from his mentor and former teacher Mr. Nanga, who has risen in the ranks of government and has become the Minister of Culture in their unnamed African country – he now goes mainly by Chief Nanga. The letter informs Odili of Chief Nanga's arrival to his home village, where they meet, reminisce and Odili is offered a chance to come back with Nanga to the capital city, where Nanga will help him leave the village and study abroad.

Odili agrees to visit Chief Nanga's city, and as they become more friendly, Odili learns more about his mentor's part in the African government. Although he finds himself entranced by his old teacher's charisma, he despises what he stands for politically, and especially loathes the corrupt ways he achieved his status. Odili also learns that despite being a Minister of Culture, Chief Nanga knows nothing about the culture, and is only residing in this position

because of the extravagant living comforts that come with it. As they spend more time together, Odili finds himself enamored with Edna, a woman who travels with Chief Nanga, and is betrothed to be his second wife. This causes Odili to find his own woman, Elise, who he seduces and brings back with him to Nanga's home, to stay with her during the night, however Chief Nanga ends up spending the night with her instead. Odili is both hurt and furious because of this, and sets his sights on Nanga's fiancée, Edna.

Along with pursuing Edna, Odili agrees to join an opposition party against Chief Nanga's organization, despite his hate for politics, however revenge is now more important to him, and begins to work towards taking Chief Nanga's position away from him. To counter his distaste for government, Odili decides on running an honest organization, however he finds it more difficult than he had first thought, as every other official is only after filling their pockets, and the people of this African country are both used to and have accepted corruption as the status quo. This jaded view of the village people also contributes to the fact that Odili is unable to smear the current government, because the people have lost complete faith in the concept as a whole, and he is unable to gain the upper hand. Other issues Odili has to deal with are considering taking a large sum of money to drop out of the political race, trying to prove that the current government is corrupt and taking bribes to the unreceptive people, and having his family and his village threatened as well as being browbeaten into stepping down.

Along with all these political struggles, Odili slowly discovers that his plan to seduce Edna to hurt the chief has backfired, because Odili finds himself in love with her, and he desires her; however, she feels forced to marry Chief Nanga because he had paid her father a great deal of money. Odili, growing more frustrated with his opponent, attends Nanga's campaign party, where is recognized as the rival candidate, and is beaten to an inch of his life, and is forced to spend weeks in the hospital.

During Odili's recovery he remains out of action, causing Chief Nanga's party to gain the electoral victory, which naturally thrills Chief Nanga, however the residents of the African country are livid, and start a military coup in which Nanga's government is overthrown, causing more people to come forward and discuss their hatred for the government that they were under all these years.

The book really pushes the satire by highlighting the types of people in this world – how people are never satisfied and often angered by their own decisions, like how the countrymen voted for Chief Nanga, but then were unhappy when he won, and how no one wanted to step up when it mattered except Odili, and even when he did, he suffered greatly for it. *A Man of the People* had grown in popularity since its publication, mostly because many other authors have hailed it and Chinua Achebe as being a form of premonition, since all the fictional events happened in different African countries under the rule of monstrous dictators.

Near the end, Edna stays by Odili's side the entire time, helping him heal, revealing her love for him, and their families make arrangements and help the couple stay together, and eventually Odili and Edna marry. Odili discovers much loss at the end of the book, like losing the election, having the countrymen resort to chaos and violence to bring down the government that they themselves elected, and having lost many people in the war, including one of his closest friends who was killed by a government official. Despite that, he feels that

at least he had won the heart of the woman he loves, and that now his country lies in ruins, but at least he tried.

A man of the people as a political satire

Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) is a political critique of the Nigerian political situation in the post-independence era. Independence is supposed to be a glorious period in the history of a nation; however, it is presented in this novel as very gloomy. Achebe's first three novels—*Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960), and *Arrow of God* (1964)—can be read as a critique of tribalism and bad traditions as well as a counter writing to the English colonial canon. On the other hand, in this fourth novel the reader encounters a very harsh self-criticism that exposes the wrongs of the intellectual elite, the politicians, and the public. Hence, Achebe's sociopolitical satire is a directed one. In "The Novelist as Teacher," Achebe (2007) confirms his position as an author who uses literature to correct the nation's deeds. He believes that the "beneficent fiction calls into full life ... total range of imaginative faculties and gives ... a heightened sense of ... personal, social and human reality" (p.104).

Therefore, we look into the political implications of Achebe's fiction, namely his novel *A Man of the People*, by way of showing the corrective function of his definitive satire.

Abiodun (2014) exposes the link between the power of politics and the corruption of wealth, on the one hand, and the negative role of people, on the other, arguing that these people endorse such corrupt politicians to gain personal favors. For Abiodun, the novel condemns "the African politicians' negative tendencies" and "the ordinary people in different African societies, for their seeming endorsement of corrupt politicians" (p. 202). This write up focuses more on the interrelationship between literature and politics and unlike Abiodun's, presents a way out of the failures of nationalism depicted in Achebe's novel through highlighting the ameliorative potential of satire as a genre.

In *A Man of the People*, Chief Nanga represents the politicians. According to Appiah (1991, p. 348), Odili is a member of the "comprador intelligentsia" who were well trained in the West and "are known" there "through the Africa they offer". Fanon (1967, p.178) also says that this group of intellectuals, who received Western education and got assimilated into every English-like way of thinking, came to Africa to apply what they have learnt on a newly independent Nigeria. They suffer from divided loyalties as they "can't choose; they must have both. Two worlds: that makes two bewitching ... each day the split widens" (p.17). For Fanon, this split state of the native intellectual's mind between two cultures is called "cultural imposition" (p.139). *A Man of the People* symbolizes the rift between the native intellectuals and the politicians in a politically turbulent Nigeria and in the absence of an engaged public. This national leadership, in Fanonian logic, is neither fully prepared for nor seriously engaged in issues of nationhood.

In the novel Achebe predicts a military coup. Morrison, (2007, p.115) states that Achebe's prediction of a military coup in his novel turned "to be so accurate". On January 14, 1966, Achebe celebrated his novel with "the society of Nigerian Authors" (p.115). The next day,

the coup's leader "demanded that the radical action taken by army officers ... had been a patriotically necessary act" (p. 115). After that, the commander of the Nigerian army survived and arrested the coup's leader, announcing himself the "Nigerian Head of State" (p.114). However, the Nigerian public were absent from the scene. This was the political context that surrounded and followed the publication of *A Man of the People*.

In fact, many critics thought that Achebe's novel was "prophetic" in its prediction of a military coup. However, Bernth Lindfors (1968) believes that it only reads reality so well to the extent that it demands a military coup to settle the whole country down (p.131). The novel is "a devastating satire" which reflects, Lindfors contends, "the developing political crisis" (p.131). Morrison (2007) agrees with Lindfors that the novel is a political satire in the general sense, being "a commentary on the situation of many of the newly independent states in Africa in 1960s" (p.119).

On the other hand, Ngugi wa Thiong'o in his 1966 essay argues that *A Man of the People* is a continuation of the framework of earlier narratives seeking "to look back and try to find out what went wrong" (as cited in Morrison, 2007, p. 119). Morrison agrees with Ngugi that it is the "first time that Achebe turns his back on the colonizers" and that "his anger is directed with full force at his countrymen for their corruption, indifference and cynicism" (p.119). On the other hand, Morrison criticizes Achebe for what he believes to be a superficial treatment of the political situation in the novel. He declares that "in searching for the causes of Nigeria's national crisis", the novel "is ultimately unable to show us anything more than its symptoms" (p.123). After the publication of the novel, three thousand people were killed in the Eastern region of Nigeria where Achebe belongs. What began as fiction has turned to be so personally real for Achebe when his novel was seen to implicate him in the country's military coup. However, we argue that the novel is not an empty satire concerned with its own symptoms of political corruption as has been claimed. There is a worthy sociopolitical vision that needs explication. As a corrective satire, the novel works symbolically though suggesting or hinting at counter/better sociopolitical realities. It is our task as readers to foreground such hints and look at how literature relates perfectly with politics.

The Politician (M. A. Nanga) Chief Nanga is "the most approachable politician in the country" and a former school teacher (Achebe, 1966, pp.1-2). He is lucky enough to become a Minister of the people. It seems that he tries to compensate for the years of poverty that he has lived before. His philosophy is to eat and let the people eat. He brings his people water and other small services to make them superior to their neighbors (p. 91). However, what really happens is that he eats whole cake and gives the people only a bite. The politician plays the role of the patriotic man, misleading people's consciousness. Once, he told Odili that the meaning of "Minister" is "servant" (p. 6). However, he lacks simple political leadership skills such as the ability to give a speech. Max and Odili criticize his underserved position due to his humble educational background. Max tells Odili: "just think of such a cultureless man going abroad and calling himself Minister of Culture. Ridiculous. This is why the outside world laughs at us" (p. 16). To support his position as an "educated" politician and a guardian of culture, Nanga is looking to get an honorary law degree from a small college in U.S without working for it (p.18). For Zapata (1993), "politicians" like Nanga, despite their "apparent social commitment," are basically interested in "the perpetuation of their power, even if this means the persecution of dissenters" (p.215). In this negative model of leadership,

education becomes a means of gaining more political power at the expense of the uneducated masses. Everything is going smoothly for Nanga until the appearance of Odili. Since Nanga is ethically corrupt, he cheats on his wife several times with Odili's knowledge (Achebe, 1966, p.49).

However, Odili turns his back on this fake politician only after he took his own girlfriend. Although Nanga was a man of the people who voted for him, he turns his ugly face to others who chose not to vote for him, as when he tries to kill Odili (p. 94). He antagonizes Odili who calls people to stop voting for the "Honourable Thief" (p. 93). A Man of the People begins by portraying Minister Nanga as a loved public personality. However, Odili leaves Nanga because of a girl. Surprisingly, it turns out to be bigger than it begins. Odili now starts to see the reality of Nanga. Nanga has connections with the black side of Nigeria. He offers to bring Odili six girls to compensate for the girl he has taken from him. He tells Odili who is very angry over the matter: Don't be childish ... After all she is not your wife... She told me there is nothing between you and she... But anyway I am sorry if you are offended; the mistake is mine.... If you like I can bring you six girls this evening. (p. 49)

Achebe continues, through Odili, to expose the scandalous parts of Nanga's political life. The Minister a symbol of the corrupted politician in an underdeveloped country had everything in his hands. He built a very huge house (p.68). Also, he paid the price of a new bride (p.75). Ironically, the corrupted politician himself suffered from bribes and journalists. He tells Odili about the Press that blackmailed him: "if I don't give him [the journalist] something now, tomorrow he will go and write rubbish about me. They say it is the freedom of the Press" (p. 45). This enthusiastic "intellectual" came to apply Western democracy to his Nigeria. He was unaware of the reality of Nigeria after independence, seeing it as the cake that every politician and his followers are looking to taste (p. 97). Real democracy and corruption are necessarily enemies. So, Odili is fought by the ideal teacher who is indeed "Honourable Thief" (p. 93). At first, Nanga tries to seduce Odili with money, but Odili refuses. He bribes him to step down, saying: "take your money and take your scholarship to go and learn more books; the country needs experts like you. And leave the dirty game of politics to us who know how to play it" (p. 81). This was a threat; however, naïve Odili goes to a speech of Nanga thinking that he is in a free country. Unfortunately, he is almost killed and put in hospital under arrest to be prevented from signing the paper that proves him a possible candidate for elections (pp. 94-100). Odili sympathizes with Edna, who was to be Nanga's wife because he has paid her greedy father the bride-price (p. 75). Odili sends her a message informing her of the risk of marrying such a bad person as a second wife (pp. 60-66). A shared self-destructive point in Odili and Nanga is their weakness with women, like Elsie and Edna. Odili falls in love with Edna. Nanga did not miss the opportunity and he politicized it, for he declares to his audience when he caught Odili there: "He even tried to take a girl on whose head I had put full bride-price and many other expenses---and who according to our custom is my wife" (p. 94). Such two models of leadership are essentially weak or incompetent, more personally-centered than national. Bribes, womanizing, and personal grudge, among others, distort the claims of such two representative "leaders" to nationhood. The European educational ideals of such men as well as their personal interests distort their claims to leadership. The Novel's Ending (Neither Politicians nor Intellectuals). The novel ends with a military coup, which is presented in "a positive light" (Morrison, 2007, p.124).

Odili welcomes the coup, for now he is free to marry Edna because Nanga is out of sight (Achebe, 1966, p. 99).

Similarly, in an interview for the Kenyan Sunday Nation in January 1967 Achebe admits his understanding that *A Man of the People* “would be controversial and that its publication might lead to some negative personal consequences” (as cited in Morrison, 2007, p.125). In this interview, Achebe presents his ambivalent attitude towards the coup. He says:

Military takeovers are not always bad in themselves. The Nigerian situation left no political solution. The political machine has been so abused that whatever measures were taken, it could only produce the same results ... I don't think one can say a military takeover is never worth it. (p. 125) Ngugi analyzes the military coup, arguing that it is controversial; but Achebe wants the readers to wonder whether any of the antagonists could find a solution for a corrupted Nigeria without the intervention of the army (as cited in Morrison, 2007, p.120). It is a really harsh criticism of both politicians and intellectuals who turned to be useless when it comes to real future national solutions. Both were good at fighting each other instead of looking for a shared opinion that gives each class its position.

According to Obi (1990), the justification of the uselessness of both politicians and intellectuals is that there was an intra-elite split ... between the political elite and the literati. The handful of nationalistic politicians who articulated the demands for self-government ... joined their not-so-educated colleagues (i.e., the commercial elite as well as traditional rulers) to wield power. This arrangement excluded the writers and the bulk of the intellectual class from the power to direct their societies other than as subservient civil servants. (pp. 404-405) Consequently, intellectuals such as Odili try to find themselves a place from which they can state their opinions about solutions for their Nigeria. Odili and Max established a new party to counter Nanga's. Unfortunately, Max got killed while Odili survived (Achebe, 1966, p.96). Nanga was removed with the military coup and got arrested (p. 99). Commenting on the characters of Nanga and Odili, Morrison (2007) quotes his book *Scandalous Fictions: The Twentieth Century Novel in the Public Sphere* (2006), declaring that the effect of Achebe's text is to present Nanga's corruption as an organic extension of traditional mores into modern national literature, culture and politics. If Nanga is shown as a retrograde figure whose weddedness to the past stifles both political and economic development however, Odili is shown as an equally poor progenitor of change. Vain, pompous, misogynistic and elitist. (p.128)

Nanga was arrested after the fall of the government when he was “trying to escape by canoe dressed like a fisherman” (Achebe, 1966, p. 99). On the other hand, Odili's “dubious seductions of women” were more obvious “than any kind of political or social reflection” in the novel. He was politically “impotent” and “self-regarding” (as cited in Morrison, 2007, p.128). Additionally, Morrison believes that “if Odili and Nanga are, each in their own way, profoundly unsatisfactory agents of national development, then this in itself can be read as one of the challenges Achebe's novel lays down to its readers” (p.127).

Achebe “was identified as a possible conspirator” of the coup in Nigeria after the publication of *A Man of the People* (Morrison, 2007, p. 129). However, he stays committed to his “ego ideals” that appeared “in his fictional and non-fictional works.” He incorporates such corrective ideals in his satirical works as reminders for himself as well as other African

writers (Abussamen & Neimneh, 2016, p. 221). Thus, he continues what he believes to be the kind of responsible and beneficent literature and politics that contributes to raising national awareness. The ideals Achebe fosters, however, function in this satire through analogy with the shortcomings of existing models, like those related to education, politics, and the mob.

According to Obi (1990), *A Man of the People* is a novel that exposes the author's "disillusionment with the fruits of independence" (p. 402). Although Nanga was corrupt, he was a symbol of a stable country which has a parliament. And after Odili, Nigeria is ruled with force because "the country was on the verge of chaos" (p.68). Many thought of coups as good solutions, but it is ironic to use military weapons and soldiers to keep peace. On the

other hand, Nanga, the greedy politician who wants to stay long in power, tries to kill Odili to move him from his way (Achebe, 1966, pp. 94-97). By contrast, wouldn't Odili being a lover of women, money and fame becomes a thief like Nanga if he won? Consequently, Achebe is directing his readers to the importance of real national education through the inadequate examples of political leadership he offers.

As Woodson (1933) memorably states in his study on miseducation, If you can control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do. If you make a man feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status. If you make a man think that he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door, his very nature will demand one. (p. 84)

Woodson has clearly articulated the interrelationship between literature power, politics, and education. For Woodson, the educated "Negro" was taught to despise his people and think like and imitate whites. The educated "Negroes" have failed to make their race progress because of "their estrangement from the masses" (Woodson, p. 88). Hence, Woodson claims that the black race "needs workers, not leaders" (p.118) as good leadership entails service rather than the empty talk of miseducated leaders chosen by whites. Achebe criticizes the former colonials who still intervene in Nigeria through their well-formed intellectual elite.

Fanon (1967) declares that "inside the nationalist parties, the will to break colonialism is linked with another quite different will: that of coming to a friendly agreement with it. Within these parties, the two processes will sometimes continue side by side" (p. 98). Those people inside the nationalist parties are the means of intervening in the newly independent country. Also, Achebe criticizes his fellow Nigerians who are still unable to serve their country and build their nation.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have clearly pointed out how the subject *politics* is discussed and perceived by two authors in their works. The striking comparative feature here is the fact that the two literary works are political satires. We deliberately selected an African and a European author who, by their works under study in this article, are political satirists. Despite the vast differences in terms of setting, diction, structure and other literary features between the two novels, they heavily converge on the same theme, that is, political satirism.

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* has drawn high levels of criticism for over half a century. Some of this criticism has been negative, arguing that the novel is too simple, strays too far away from the truth, and is too broad in its interpretations and critiques of the Soviet revolution in Russia. However, many critics have found *Animal Farm* to be of literary merit. They argue that its simplicity is a well-wielded device to make his satire easier to understand, that diversions from the truth are minimal, and that its critiques hit the mark. Ultimately, the novel's source of literary merit will be its staying power and ability to remain relevant despite having already served its original purpose in helping to destroy Soviet communism. The timelessness of *Animal Farm* will necessarily be measured in the years to come.

The problem of Nigeria in *A Man of the people* is that intellectualism does not stand firmly against the corruption of politicians. Rather, it seeks to establish a politics of itself instead of working hand in hand with the current authority. We have argued for a national consensus that puts a blueprint for the future to uplift the country at the hands of a truly educated class of organic intellectuals and an engaged public. Force generates force, and violence is exactly what has happened in real Nigeria after the coup; a counter coup (Morrison, 2007, p.115).

Unfortunately, the enlarged egoism of the intellectuals and politicians, together with the complacency of the public, has endangered the country. Educating the masses is crucial to change the political situation of a place like Nigeria. As Fanon (1967) declares, to be responsible in an underdeveloped country is to know that everything finally rests on educating the masses, elevating their minds, and on what is too quickly assumed to be political education. Political education means opening up the mind, awakening the mind, and introducing it to the world (p. 138)

Achebe adds that "the most urgent thing today for the intellectual is to build up his nation" (p.199). Nigerians have to control their destiny by having political education. They should produce their organic intellectuals according to their own national standards. The public must be the rulers who choose a man from the people to serve the people, not to exploit them.

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