

An Allegory of Nature, Power, and Resistance: The Ecological Aesthetic Interpretation of Animal Farm

Yuhe Xie

South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China, 510000

ABSTRACT

This work interprets George Orwell's *Animal Manor* from the perspective of ecological aesthetics and explores its ecological consciousness embodied in the levels of natural ecology, spiritual ecology, and group ecology. The article analyzes the metaphor of animal resistance in *Animal Manor*, the alienation of the spiritual ecology of the animal ruler, and the violent reconstruction of the group ecology, revealing the destruction of ecological balance by the abuse of power and the pursuit of desire. People should re-examine the relationship between man and nature, rebuild the humanistic spirit of the new era, return the process of civilization to the source of life, and realize the harmonious coexistence of man and nature.

KEYWORDS

Ecological aesthetics; Animal Farm; Allegory

1 Introduction

In recent years, the global ecological crisis has been aggravated, consumerism and hedonism have accelerated the spread of "modern diseases", and ecological aesthetics has emerged as a new concept of existence that breaks through the shackles of anthropocentrism.

Ecological aesthetics is a view of existence, that mainly studies the aesthetic state of man and nature, man and society, and man himself in ecological balance, emphasizes the dynamic aesthetics of interactive subjectivity as an alternative to the traditional subject-object dichotomy aesthetics, and advocates "ecological equality". (Zeng Fanren, 2002) When human beings have long claimed to be the center of the world, erasing the qualification of non-human life forms as moral subjects (Sun Jiang, 2009) and ignoring their intrinsic value independent of human needs, predatory development becomes inevitable. Admittedly, the pursuit of social progress is a legitimate aspiration of human civilization, but if economic interests are put above nature, it will eventually lead to more serious disasters. The innovation of ecological aesthetics is to break away from the traditional cognitive perspective and re-examine the relationship between human beings and nature, with the fundamental purpose of resonating the natural ecology with the spiritual ecology to achieve a dynamic balance, and to seek to return to nature in order to avoid ecological disasters and human destruction.

Animal Farm is a novella by English author George Orwell, first published in 1945. Once published, the work caused a huge response in the world and is recognized as the most outstanding political allegorical novel of the 20th century. This paper will analyze the ecological consciousness embodied in *Animal Farm* from the perspectives of the dynamic balance of natural ecology and spiritual ecology, to deepen readers' understanding of ecological aesthetics, provide new ideas and inspiration for the construction of ecological civilization, promoting people to pay more attention to ecological protection and ecological balance in practice, and promoting the harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

2 A metaphor for animal resistance

In fables, animal characters often carry a metaphorical function. From the perspective of the "animal's view of man", the animals represent nature in opposition to man. This perspective gives animals the right to speak, and gives them the opportunity to make moral judgments about humans, who dominate everything, and it is easier for them to see the weaknesses of human nature than the common human practice of looking at each other. (Li R.M, 2006)

The animals' first revolt was not by chance. Old Major's public speech planted a seed of enlightenment in the hearts of the animals, and the three pigs' summarization and dissemination of "Animalism" further promoted the idea of revolt in the hearts of the people. However, the real rebellion does not begin with a meticulous plan, but with an accident. Mr. Jones, the owner of the manor, has become increasingly alcoholic, and his employees have been slacking off in their work, leaving the animals in a state of half-starvation and half-feeding. One day, Mr. Jones went to town to drink, and when he came back, he just slept, and his men neglected their duties and didn't feed the animals in order to hunt, so the animals were hungry for the whole day. Driven by hunger, the animals ate in the storage shed. At this time, Mr. Jones woke up and

rushed into the storeroom with his men, beating and driving the animals with whips. The hungry animals finally exploded and the animals fought with Mr. Jones and the others and managed to drive the humans off the property.

Such behavior is undoubtedly a challenge to anthropocentrism. Humans have always considered themselves to be the masters of nature and have scorned the intelligence and capabilities of non-human life. When animals show organizational wisdom and joint will beyond the limitations of their species, their subversiveness lies not only in forceful confrontation, but also in proving the possibility of awakening the community of life. As a circulatory flow system, nature has the ability of elastic repair and can withstand limited disturbance. However, when the ecological imbalance within the system exceeds a certain threshold, the system will rapidly go into decline, and this decline is irreversible.

The change of power in Manna Manor and the catastrophic collapse of natural ecology follow the same logic: when oppression exceeds the limits of living beings, whether animal riots or ecological backlash, it will bring about the end of the old order. Similarly, when human exploitation and exploitation of nature reach a certain level, the local ecosystem will quickly collapse, and this collapse is irreversible.

3 The process of spiritual ecological alienation

In delivering his speech, Old Major had said, "Even if you overcome mankind, don't get into their vices. No animal shall live in a house, sleep in a bed, wear clothes, drink, smoke, touch money or do business." This could be interpreted as a warning not to depart from their natural state of existence. However, the ruling group of pigs led by Napoleon gradually forgot this warning and gradually got lost in the endless pursuit of money and power, showing the destruction of personal spiritual ecology by money supremacy and hedonistic values, and metaphorically the spiritual ecological crisis of modern society.

At first, the pigs had the milk and apples all to themselves, and made a grand excuse for it, which was the beginning of the pig's breaking of the original covenant that "all animals share in the fruits of their labor." Later, the pigs began to trade with other farms, selling licorice, wheat and eggs. Gradually, the pigs moved into the farmhouse, eating in the kitchen, entertaining in the living room, sleeping in the beds, and announcing that they would wake up an hour later than the other animals. In order to rationalize their behavior, the pigs changed the Seven Commandments and reintroduced the excuse "to keep Jones from coming back" to fool the animals.

However, desire is endless, and the pigs, not satisfied with the current benefits, begin to go down the path of violent predation. The pigs began to demand that the hens turn in four hundred eggs a week to pay for their rations. For the hens who protested, Napoleon ordered that their food supply be cut off and that those who supplied themselves would be punished by death. The hens held out for five days, but finally gave in. In the meantime, nine hens died, but the pigs claimed they died of coccidiosis.

After the Great Windmill War, the pig stumbles upon whiskey in the cellar, experiences the joy of drinking, and sets about preparing to grow barley for brewing, expropriating for this purpose the small paddock originally intended for pasture, and at the same time tampering with the Seven Commandments. Drinking - this is also a hobby of Mr. Jones. This was an important inflection point in the process of the pig's alienation into a human being. When wine, which has no nutritional value or even harmful liquid, enters the pig's throat, their purpose of eating is no longer pure. Perhaps the alcohol literally smokes the pigs' brains, and when the most loyal, hardest-working boxer on the estate is injured, he is actually sent to the horse slaughterhouse by the pigs in exchange for a sum of money large enough to buy a case of whisky! What's more, the pigs even praise the Boxer loyalty and hard work, calling on the animals to learn from him the spirit of "Comrade Napoleon is always right" and "I have to work even harder", and squeezing out the last ounce of blood and sweat available to him.

The underlying logic is self-evident - when the boxer is not able to continue to create profit, his life loses its value. Old Major once warned the boxer: "The day your strong muscles run out of strength, Jones will sell you to the horse-slaughterers." It was a prophecy of sorts. From the beginning of the furtive, to the later brazen revision of the law, persecution of compatriots, the pigs step by step into the black vortex of desire. The abuse of power and the pursuit of selfish desires changed their behavior and living habits, presenting a spiritual picture of being eroded by money and power.

4 Violent reconfiguration of group ecology

The pursuit of money is often accompanied by the desire for power, which in turn is linked to violence. In order to seize

benefits, pigs are not afraid to use violent means such as verbal violence and bloody suppression, which seriously destroys the group ecological environment within the animal manor. The animals are not only mentally oppressed, but their living environment is also gradually deteriorating.

Language is a constant intervening force in the social order, reflecting reality from all angles and influencing social processes by reproducing ideology. (Fan Junjun, 2005) Therefore, violence by resorting to language is more insidious and far-reaching than other means of violence.

The simple and crude rhetoric of dichotomy cuts off the natural growth of the language and symbol system and curbs the sustainable development of the spiritual ecology. Snowball summarizes the Seven Commandments as "four legs are good, two legs are bad", and the dyadic sentence style that omits modal verbs disguises value judgments as objective facts, forcing the brain to establish a black-or-white neural circuit, and eliminating the possibility of language growth. However, the pig does not define the specific connotations of "good" and "bad," leaving room for subsequent conceptualization. When the pig starts walking on two legs, the slogan logically becomes "Four legs are good, two legs are better!" The same number of syllables and stress pattern minimized the difference between the two slogans, and only the change from the final word "bad" to "better" made the slogan more palatable to the public. As the animals prepare to protest against everything, the sheep steal the moment by repeating the new slogan over and over again. Language is reduced to a sonic weapon, its content is no longer compelling, the impact of repetition usurps the animals' space to think, and the slogan's mission of reinforcing centralization is accomplished. The most frightening thing about this tactic is its invisibility and legitimacy; the animals are forced to "accept" the implantation of the new idea before they realize what is happening, surrendering their right to think and criticize, without even finding a reason to resist.

Bloody repression, on the other hand, is much more blunt than verbal violence and is intended to create an atmosphere of terror and consolidate domination. Such acts seriously undermine the trust and emotional ties between groups, dividing the group into many isolated individuals, and have a devastating effect on the group ecology within the haciendas.

One evening Napoleon had all the animals assembled in the yard and executed on the spot four pigs, three hens, one goose and three sheep, who had "confessed" to having colluded with Snowball in the commission of a crime, when in fact they had all expressed dissent or dissatisfaction with his orders. This was the first time that bloodshed had occurred within the animal population, and everyone was in a state of fear. After watching the execution scene, the animals gather in silence and look out over the countryside, the beautiful and charming scenery of the estate reminding them of their original ideals. The darkness of authoritarian ideology hangs over the minds of the animals.

Indeed, violence is not only physical harm, but also the murder of ecological relationships. The sustainability of ecosystems depends on the dynamic balance of multiple agents, and an unhealthy model of development in which dictatorships prohibit animals from voicing their objections, stifling the creativity and vitality of the individual and suppressing the developmental potential of the system, will not last.

5 Conclusion

At the end of the novel, Animal Farm is renamed Manor Farm. Pigs and people sit around the restaurant to raise their glasses and laugh, but when Napoleon and Pilkington fling out the ace of spades at the same time in a card game, both sides instantly fall into dispute - which reveals an objective fact: pigs and people can only coexist peacefully when their interests are the same. This kind of transient harmony based on consensus of interests precisely provides a revelation for the symbiosis between human beings and nature.

The decline of nature and the absence of the spirit of humanism are topics that belong to the times and require universal public participation. If human beings want to live in harmony with nature, they should not only seek the greatest common denominator of mutual interests, but also anchor the smallest concentric circles of development and ecological protection, so as to realize sustainable development by maintaining a dynamic balance between the two. People need to re-examine the relationship between human beings and nature, and between human beings and society, and rebuild the humanistic spirit of the new era in line with the ecological law, so as to bring the civilization process back to the origin of life, and to build a new order in which heaven and earth and human beings can live in harmony with each other.

About the Author

Yuhe Xie, South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China, 510000, 2393484676@qq.com

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