

# Otherring in Orwell's Animal Farm

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**Abstract:** The paper focuses on the theoretical concept of "Otherness" as seen in Orwell's novel *Animal Farm*. Post colonialism theory is used to analyze *Animal Farm*. The most quoted line from *Animal Farm*, 'All animals are equal but some are more equal than the others.'- portrays the changes in the lives of animal's lives after they got their freedom from human colonization. The paper looks into the pattern of Otherring which emerges from exclusion and marginalization based on having identities that are different from the ruling elites. The Otherring in *Animal Farm* begins with Old Major's speech talking about the difficulty of their lives under man's rule. He tells his dream to animals and encourages them to rebel against man.

**Keywords:** Colonization, internal colonialism, Post colonialism, Otherring, unequal relationships.

## 1. Introduction

Oxford Reference defines Otherring as, "A process whereby individuals and groups are treated and marked as different and inferior from the dominant social group." This term was coined by Gayatri Spivak for the process by which imperial discourse creates its "others" and is one of the most important concepts in Postcolonial studies. Significantly, the concept draws on an understanding of self which is a generalization of Hegel's master-slave dialectic as developed in *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. By declaring someone "Other," a person tends to stress what makes them dissimilar from or opposite of another, and this carries over into the way they represent others, especially through stereotypical images. It is the "unequal relations of power based on the binary opposition: "Us" and "them." (Jensen, 2011)

*Animal Farm* is a story about a group of animals living on Manor Farm and how they rebelled against their master farmer Jones. The animals overthrew their human oppressor Jones. The animals had hoped that once their own rule is established in Manor Farm their life is going to change for a happier and better future. But trouble brews as the pigs consolidate power and end up exploiting the animals just as Farmer Jones had done. At the end of the novel, the pigs started to behave and dress like humans from whom they wanted their freedom. Historically the novel is seen as an allegory to the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalin and his excesses. However, this paper intends to explore the internal colonialism of Russia and the process of Otherring in *Animal Farm*. The novel opens with Old Major, the prize-winning boar, organizing a meeting of all animals on the farm. He addresses the animals in a way that highlights how

Colonizers exploit the colonized. "Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: Our lives are miserable, laborious, and short. We are born, we are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies, and those of us who are capable of it are forced to work to the last atom of our strength, and the very instant that our usefulness has come to an end we are slaughtered with hideous cruelty. No animal in England knows the meaning of happiness or leisure after he is a year old. No animal in England is free. The life of an animal is misery and slavery that is the plain truth." (Orwell, P9) He highlights the inequality between humans and animals. He paints a picture that establishes Mr. Jones as the colonizer and his relationship with the colonized animals. The relationship is based on inequality, injustice, and cruelty.

Old Major in his address to the animals attempts to assert their Otherness in contrast to the oppressive human interference through a Rebellion. "I merely repeat, remember always your duty of enmity towards Man and all his ways. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend. (Orwell, P13) Here Old Major differentiates between "Us (animals)" and "them (humans)" as two legs creatures versus four legs and winged creatures. Otherring includes identifying the differences and using those differences to separate people from one another.

People have different abilities. Either the differences can be used as an opportunity to learn and enrich ourselves or we can use our perceived differences to categorize and divide ourselves. In the novel animals too have different abilities, while pigs and dogs were good at reading and writing donkeys and horses were physically strong to do tough jobs. "None of the other animals on the farm could get further than the letter A. It was also found that the stupider animals, such as the sheep, hens, and ducks, were unable to learn the Seven Commandments by heart." (Orwell, P37) However, these differing qualities result in a hierarchy in which pigs are at the top and "lower animals" are at the bottom. Nevertheless, the real Otherring begins when animals successfully rebelled against the humans and establish their system, Animalism. The internal colonialism of animals began when pigs ceased power and asserted their superiority over other animals. "The early apples were now ripening, and the grass of the orchard was littered with windfalls. The animals had assumed as a matter of course that these would be shared out equally; one day, however, the order went forth that all the windfalls were to be collected and

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brought to the harness-room for the use of the pigs. At this, some of the other animals murmured, but it was no use. All the pigs were in full agreement on this point, even Snowball and Napoleon. Squealer was sent to make the necessary explanations to the others." (Orwell, P39) The pigs now socially and/or psychologically exclude and thus marginalize the other animals. These formations of prejudices against individuals or groups when scales up result in dehumanization of the entire group of people.

Historically we have seen that it has led to the persecution of the Others. In Nazi Germany, the systematic oppression and murder of six million Jews is the result of othering and its consequences. Nazi Germany divided its citizens into the genetically superior Germanic people (Aryans) versus Jews, along with Slavs, Roma, Sinti, and Blacks whom they considered "inferior races". The creation of this ranking resulted in the genocide of supposedly "lesser than" groups.

At the heart of Othering is the use of propaganda. Nazi government before passing the laws officially, spread propaganda to target Jews. Spreading false and offensive ideas is a kind of social othering that can lead to more violent acts. Propaganda is used in Animal Farm to cheat and betray animals that are meant to serve. Pigs use propaganda to confuse and baffle animals and stop them to think about themselves. They intend to hide the reality of the situation from the animals through lies and half-truths. Napoleon appoints Squealer to do all his propaganda. Every time animals have doubts about the intention of Napoleon, Squealer uses his language skills to turn things and make them look like it's best for animals. He even uses fear and threat to stop animals from questioning Napoleon. "It is for your sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back! Yes, Jones would come back! Surely, comrades," (Orwell, P39)

Today, a more subtle form of Othering is around us that is driven by politicians and media. It is neither based on personal contact nor liking nor disliking someone but is built on the fear

and threat that a certain identified group endangers the favored group. Consciously or unconsciously when we highlight the differences of a person, we expose that person to Othering. Othering is one of the most common causes of all human rights violations. To stop them we need to understand and identify the process of Othering.

## 2. Conclusion

This paper represented an overview of Othering in Orwell's Animal Farm.

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