

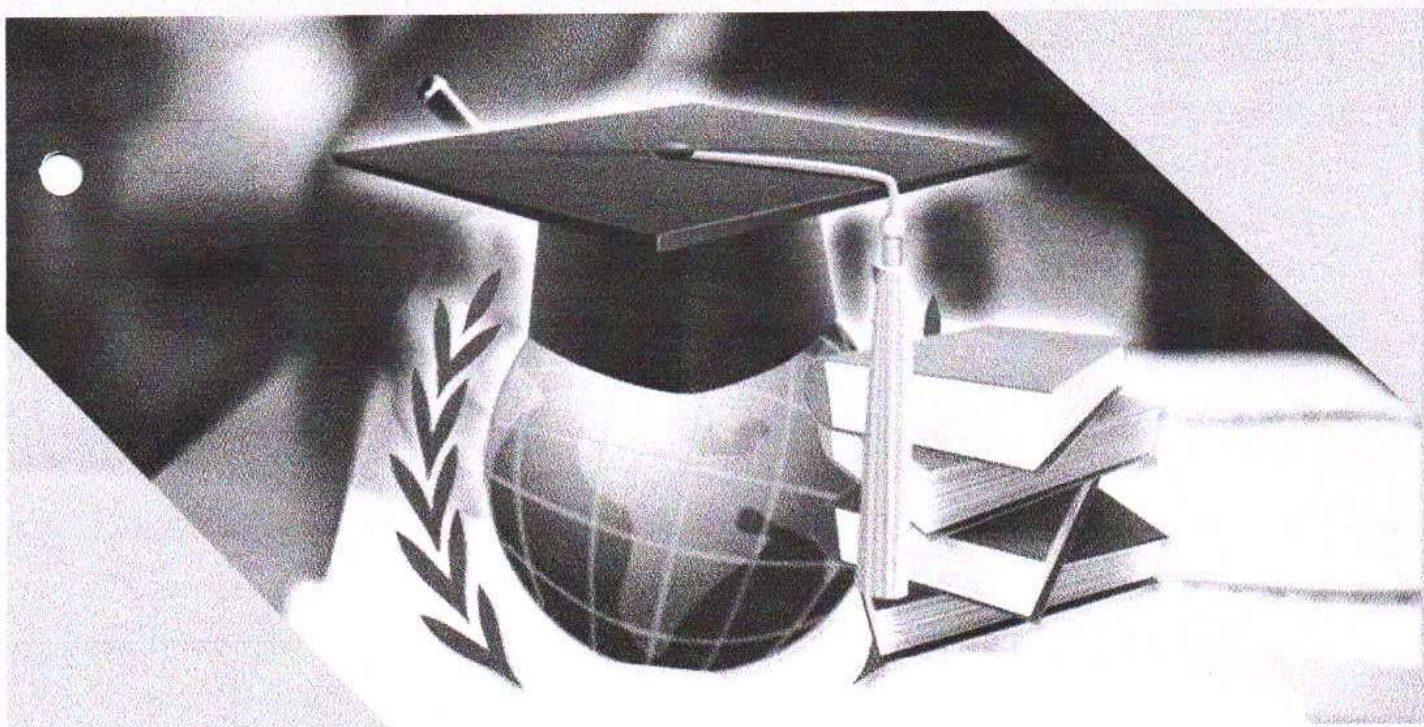
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INDEX

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Page No.
ENGLISH SECTION			
1.	Role of Modern Education Methods in Enriching The Literary Thinking of the Students	Mr. Hamid Khamis Mhammed Al Balushi, Dr. R.S. Zirange	1
2.	The Importance of Literature for Instilling Virtue and Moral Education	Mr. Pouria Mallahi, Iran	5
3	Education Through Social Movements as Reflected in Anita Nair's Novels	Ms Saheleh Kheirabadi, (Iran), Dr. R.S. Zirange	8
4	Critical Analyses of the Neon Demon 'Beyond Feminism' By Nicolas Winding Refn'	Mahsa Moshfegyan,	11
5	Reflection of Teacher-Student Relationship in Manoj Das's "The Sensitive Plant"	Dr. Snehal Ratnakar Hegishte	17
6	Francis Bacon's Essays : A Moral Educative Perspective	Anil Apral	19
7.	Iris Murdoch's Concept of Freedom	Miss Swati V. Mane	22
8.	Women Reformation Through Education and its Literary Reproduction	Dr. Sukhadeo Raghunath Bhosale	26
9.	The Refund: A Critique Of Education System	Dr. Jayant Anant Kulkarni	29
10.	Miss Thorne As A Headmistress in Elizabeth Jolley's Novel <i>Miss Peabody's Inheritance</i>	Dr. Namdev Shamrao Jadhav	32
11.	'Five Point Someone: What Not To Do At I.I.T.S': A Portrayal of Imperfection in Present Education System.	Dr. Kalpana Girish Gangatirkar	35
12	Sherman Alexei's Short Story <i>Indian Education</i> . A Coercion of Native American Children into American Schooling.	Sadashiv C Mane	38
13	Reflection of Colonial Education in Literature	Miss. Rita Banagar, Miss. Shilpa Patil	40
14	Reflection of Educational Administration in R.K. Narayan's <i>Financial Expert</i>	Dr. Uttam Patil	42
15	Socio-Political Protest in John Braine's <i>Room At The Top</i>	Mr. Onkar Dattatray Kulkarni	45
16	Women Reformation in 'Difficult Daughters'	Dr. Anupama Prakash Pol	47
17	Portrayal of the Protest of the Under Privileged in Arvind Adiga's <i>The White Tiger</i>	Shailaja P. Yadav-Patil	50
18	Education A Tool To Add Human Values Reflected In Abraham Lincoln's Poem	Abhishek. A. C.	53
19	Virmati's Quest For Her Self Identity Through Education in Manju Kapur's Novel: <i>Difficult Daughters</i>	Dr. Dattatraya Shahane	55
20	Freedom and Patriotism: A Different Outlook Provided by Tagore's ' <i>Heaven Of Freedom</i> '	Miss K.N.Srilaxmi	57

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Page No.
42	The Reflection of Education in George Orwell's <i>Animal Farm</i>	Dr. Arun Jadhav	121
43	Reflection of Education and the Changing Image of Woman in Indian Women Writers	Mrs. Sunita J. Velhal	124
44	Denial of Space And Marginalization of Woman Reflected in Mahesh Dattani's <i>Tara</i>	Dr. Dilawar Yusuf Jamadar	127
45	Reflection of Education in Chetan Bhagat's <i>Five Point Someone</i>	Dr. Mrs. Patil Manik Shantinath	129
46	Literature is Education	Raghunath .D.Dhamakale	131
47	The Role of Education and Literature in Imparting Ethics in Society	Mrs. Yadav Shubhada Sachin	134
48	Women Reformation through Education in India	Dr. Vijay .B. Desai	137
49	The Instinct Of Education in Kishor Kale's "Against All Odds"	Mr. Kamble Rajiv Bhimrao	140
50	Conflict in Jhumpa Lahiri's <i>The Namesake</i>	Prof. Nilesh Uttamrao Hume Mr. Rajkiran Jotiram Biraje	142
51	Role Of A Teacher In Education: A Study Of Githa Hariharan's " The Ghosts Of Vasu Master"	Dr. Suresh Pandurang Patil	145
52	Ecological Consciousness In The Select Indian English Poems	Mrs. Vaijayanta Vijay Patil	147
53	Sherman Alexei's Short Story Indian Education: A Coercion Of Native American Children Into American Schooling.	Prof. Sadashiv C. Mane	150
54	Reflections Of Racism And Casteism In Education With Reference To Richard Wright And Anna Bhau Sathe	Prof. Avinash S. Lokhande	152
55	Caste Decriminalisation In Education In And It's Reflection In Literature	Chaitra K Basur Neha J Momin	155
56	A Study Of Charlotte Bronte's View On Women Education	Miss. Amruta Sawant	157

MARATHI SECTION

57	'भेटलं मांग फिटलं पांग!': मधील समकालीन शिक्षण	प्रा. डॉ. शरद गायकवाड	159
58	तृतीयरत्न आणि स्थानिकस्वराज्य नाटकांतील शैक्षणिक विचार	प्रा. डॉ. दत्ता पाटील	163
59	'बनगरवाडी व निशानी डावा अंगठा' मधील शिक्षक	डॉ. कांबळे अजित यल्लाप्पा	167
60	शिक्षणामुळे प्रभावित स्त्री सुधारणा आणि मराठी साहित्य	डॉ. वर्षा शिरीष फाटक	169
61	१९ व्या शतकातील समाजसुधारकांच्या लेखनातील स्त्री शिक्षणाचे महत्त्व आणि चित्रण	डॉ. नंदिनी गणपती काळे	172
62	मुक्ता साळवेचा धगधगता हुंकार	प्रा. डॉ. सुनिता श्रीपती कांबळे	175
63	'नामशेष होणारा माणूस' आणि शिक्षण	प्रा. प्रकाश हुलेनवर	178
64	'काहिली' या कादंबरीतील भ्रष्ट शिक्षणव्यवस्थेचे चित्रण	प्रणिता शिवाजी वंगलवार	181
65	शिक्षण व्यवस्थेतील जातीयता व धार्मिकता यांवर भाष्य करणारी 'काजळ्यादिशा'	प्राची जोशी	184
66	'कोसला'तील विद्यार्थी शिक्षक संबंध	प्रो. प्रभाकर भिमराव कांबळे प्रा. प्रमोद गुणवंत चौधरी	187
67	महात्मा फुले यांचे साहित्य आणि शैक्षणिक कार्य	प्रा. डॉ. शिवाजीराव पाटील	190

THE REFLECTION OF EDUCATION IN GEORGE ORWELL'S *ANIMAL FARM*

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Introduction:

Animal Farm is George Orwell's most popular and enduring masterpiece in which he tried to fuse the political, educational and artistic principles into one whole. On a larger scale, the novel is viewed as an allegory for the rise and decline of socialism in the Soviet Union and the emergence of the totalitarian regime of Joseph Stalin. However, Orwell's intention of attacking communism and totalitarianism was not only confined to Stalin but it had the universal appeal. Besides a critique of a particular political philosophy and practice, it can be studied as a critique of the educational system of the day. The present paper aims to focus the manifestation of the contemporary education throughout the novel. The novel depicts the fusion of his ideology about the politics of education and the artistic strength through beast fable.

The novel starts with the meeting of the animals on Manor Farm in which Old Major, an ageing boar, gives a rousing speech urging his fellow animals to get rid of their tyrannical human master and rely on their own efforts to make their lives happy and comfortable. He suggests to rebel against man to get freedom and happiness. As per his advice, the animals revolt against their human master and drive the irresponsible Mr. Jones from the farm and rename it as 'Animal Farm'. After gaining victory over Mr. Jones, the animals look forward to a society where all animals are equal and live without the threat of oppression. Soon, they design the unalterable laws in the form of the seven commandments for their equality, prosperity and happiness. These seven commandments provide the major structural basis for the rest of the fable.

After the revolution, the farm is run under the leadership of two learned pigs, Snowball and Napoleon and all animals live without the threat of oppression. But soon the pigs start to spoil the seven commandments. They suppose themselves more learned and educated than other animals. So instead of working, they only supervise the work of the other animals and begin to assume more power. They adjust the rules to suit their own needs. All the animals except pigs worked hard to produce maximum grain. Every Sunday, the animals hold the democratic meeting and Snowball establishes new policies for the collective good.

Napoleon and Snowball are friends, but they disagree on several issues. In order to get supreme power they struggle and finally Napoleon succeeds to chase Snowball off the farm. In the absence of Snowball, Napoleon declares himself as a leader of the animals and makes several changes in the routine work. He cuts the rations of animals and orders them to work on Sunday afternoons. Due to hard work and less ration the animals suffer greater than they had under Mr. Jones. The pigs impose more control while reserving privileges for themselves. They rewrite history, villainize Snowball and glorify Napoleon. Like Napoleon, other pigs become 'more equal than others'. All the animals except pigs suffer greatly due to lack of education. In the mean time many animals age and die. *Animal Farm*, thus, ends with the majority of the animals in the same position as in the beginning of the story: oppressed under a corrupt and brutal governing system. All their lofty ideas on social equality melt into thin air.

The Politics of Education:

In the novel the pigs play the role of the intelligentsia. They organized and controlled the revolution. In the first chapter of novel, Old Major (an ageing boar) is seen the most intelligent animal on the farm. He rouses his fellow animals to rebel against man. But after

revolution, the pigs seize power because they are the most learned animals. From the beginning, the pigs used learning to read and write to their advantage. They study in secret, and then reveal that they know how to read and write. They also tell the animals that because of this secret education they are able to convey what Old Major knows best. Although the pigs do allow some animals to learn to read, they never get very far. Although the other animals did learn to read some, the pigs made sure that the education was reserved mostly for them. As a result most of the education and the power remain with the pigs. In this way, they are able to control the animals and prevent the farm from belonging to everyone. Here George Orwell directly links the access of power to access of education

Napoleon is the most powerful boar on the farm. He used education to cement his power. He believed that the pigs should be the most educated so that they could keep the other animals subservient. Sometimes the work was hard; but the pigs were so clever that they could think of a way round every difficulty. Orwell quotes: "The pigs did not actually work, but directed and supervised the others. With their superior knowledge, it was natural that they should assume the leadership" (25). Being more educated than other animals they took the maximum benefits. For instance, they used to drink milk and eat apples and propagated:

Our sole object in taking these things is to preserve our health. Milk and apples contains substances absolutely necessary to the well being of a pig. We pigs are brain workers. The whole management and organizations on this farm depends on us. Day and night we were watching over your welfare. It is for your sake we drink that milk and ate those apples. Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back!(32).

Here we find that pigs, as the pigs are educated and intelligent, they are getting maximum benefits of the work of others'. They consider themselves as brain workers and blackmail other animals to get benefits.

Boxer is seen more interested in educating animals. He formed the several committees such as "Egg Production Committee; Reeducation Committee," "Clean Tails League", "Reading and Writing Classes" etc. Due to the Reading and Writing Classes, almost every animal on the farm was literate in some degree. As for the pigs, they could already read and write perfectly. Napoleon took no interest in Snowball's committees. He is seen more interested in educating new animals. His belief that "the education of the young was more important than anything that could be done for those who were already grown up" is just another way of saying that indoctrination of the new generation is the key to building and consolidating power in the future. When he takes possession of the litter of puppies to be "educated," he is in fact training them to be personally loyal to him. Napoleon's interest in education is motivated by self interest and ambition, not by a desire to do well. The only education that really matters to Napoleon is making sure that the sheep are brain washed into being his propaganda, speaking so loudly that they drown out any doubters. He also teaches the puppies to be his security force. His other goal is to teach the animals that he is always right, and he is in charge, and not to mess with him. Soon, the animals are all under his control and there is little difference between the farm under the pigs' rule and the farm under the men.

Orwell makes it clear that education and power are linked in **Animal Farm**. The majority of power resides with the pigs who know how to read and write. The other animals are told that it is not important for them to be educated as the pigs will do the thinking for all of them. In this, Orwell is clearly demonstrating how power can be used to create a setting in which those who have it are able to be in the position of power over others. At the same time, Orwell demonstrates how the lack of education creates a condition of powerlessness amongst the other animals. Consider that Boxer, the strongest on the farm and most respected, keeps striving to want to learn the entire alphabet in his retirement and that Clover, the one animal who is able to

reach out to everyone, is not able to read. In this dynamic, one sees how education is kept away in order to consolidate the power of those who are in the positions of power. Orwell is zealous about the idea that when education is used by the masses, a challenge and threat to the existing power structure is evident. It is for this reason that Orwell constructs education remaining amongst the powerful and elite, to prevent the masses from having it

Conclusion:

Towards the end of the novel, Orwell writes: "All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others" (114). From this single statement we can tell quite a bit about Orwell's views on education which he puts across strongly throughout the novel. This statement makes it clear that everyone has the right to an education but some people were getting a better education than others at the time. Better education makes man powerful where as lesser education enslaves man. When the masses gets less or minimum education, it becomes quite easier to rule them and this is the message that Orwell wants to demonstrate through this beast fable. So the novel *Animal Farm* is regarded as a critique on the education.

