

Rhetoric and the Manipulation of Language in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*

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Abstract-This article examines the rhetorical skills and the manipulation of language in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. The role of language is a considerable political strategy in *Animal Farm*. Orwell is recognized by both the writers and the common people because his novel, *Animal Farm*, is an allegorical story at two levels. On the surface level, it's a story which attracts the attention of the common people to be amused by the animals talking about their difficulties on a farm, and on the other hand, it is a political story with some profound concepts about the human nature and the strategies politicians use to manipulate people. It is well realized that the leader of the animals in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Napoleon, tricks people into believing that he is the best leader by giving them some statistical lies. The leaders, including Napoleon and Snowball, give the animals some false documents that their situation is not that bad. After examining both the rhetorical skills and language as a means for manipulation, one realizes that Orwell intended to mention a fact about the human nature that they are more likely to be ambivalent and also the totalitarian governments in general having an exploitative purpose in using different strategies of which media and propaganda are some means to manipulate the people in order to keep them docile and quiet just to promote their own purposes without paying attention to the miseries of others.

Keywords- Rhetorical skills; Manipulation; Strategies; Totalitarian; Propaganda.

1. Introduction

One of the most influential types of the novel is the historical novel. Orwell's *Animal Farm* is contemplated a historical novel since it refers to the events and characters and historical personages in a certain time in the history. Such novels include both fictional and real characters. The action has happened during a certain specific period before the novel was written. According to Moran, One of Orwell's goals in writing *Animal Farm* was to portray the Russian (or Bolshevik) Revolution of 1917 as one which led to a government more oppressive, totalitarian, and deadly than the one it overthrew. Many of the characters and events of Orwell's novel parallel those of the Russian Revolution: In short, Manor Farm is a model of Russia, and Old Major, Snowball, and Napoleon represent the dominant figures of the Russian Revolution. In addition, Mr. Jones is modeled on Tsar Nicholas II (1868–1918), who was the last Russian emperor. His rule (1894–1917) was marked by his

insisting that he could not be defeated in any war. As he was ruling Russia, people were living in absolute poverty and they were also experiencing sudden changes. In 1905, some social protesters demanded social reform, and they were shot down by the army near Nickolas's palace which is called the Bloody Sunday massacre. In the same way the animals suffer hunger and in need of help under Jones, millions of Russians were living in wretched conditions under Nickolas's reign. Then Russia entered World War I, many people lost their lives in the war and they struck for better changes and mutinies which resulted in the end of the Tsarist movement. Subsequently, Nickolas's generals did not support him anymore. He abdicated his throne to abstain from the probable civil wars, but Bolshevik revolution at last happened when Nickolas, like Jones, was removed from his place of rule and then died shortly thereafter. Old Major also represents V. I. Lenin (1870–1924) who controlled the 1917 revolution. Lenin was inspired by Karl Marx who was against the oppressors. Old

Major dies shortly after he delivers a lecture for the animals to free themselves from the bondage under Jones. Similarly, Lenin died before he could witness the ways his disciples could reform ([8], P. 57).

Animal Farm begins with Old Major as one of the oldest pigs on the farm of Mr. Jones who asks the animals to gather in the barn of the farm delivering a heartfelt lecture on how Mr. Jones abuses and exploits other animals for his own benefits. He numbers many actions Jones does without paying attention to the sufferings the animals are enduring. Soon afterwards, Old major dies and the animals make up their minds to revolt against their human oppressor, Mr. Jones. They could defeat him and the pigs succeeded in being the leaders of the rest of the animals. Napoleon and Snowball take some central roles on the farm. From the very beginning Napoleon robs the wind fallen apples and the milk which was supposed to be mixed in the animals' mash. When animals get to know that, Squealer tells the animals that the pigs are really brainworkers consuming lots of energy to think about the animals' welfare, so they need more food. Napoleon trains some dogs to defend him in danger and he uses them as weapons to frighten any probable protests against him. The pigs oppress the animals and punish those who cause any riots. They change the slogans on behalf of themselves, and they use different strategies to deceive the animals they are right. Squealer takes the responsibility to paint all Napoleon's guiles. First, the animals were all equal according to the rules of animalism, but at the end the animals were all equal but some of them were more equal than others. That is to say, the new regime was much worse than the previous one with the animals having no choice but to obey the rules and regulations set by their new leader who even resembled Mr. Jones in walking on his hind legs, sleeping in bed and drinking alcohol.

Orwell's *Animal Farm* can be viewed from a variety of perspectives: It can be studied from the point of view of politics where a government, namely Russia cease to pay attention to the people's needs and disregarded the nation's interests. They happened to exploit and abuse people for their own benefits. In Bloom's viewpoint, some sixty years have passed debating over the ultimate political meaning of *Animal Farm*, but it owes partly to its use as propaganda ([1], P. 147). George Orwell can also be considered a socialist leader as well as a political leader. This can be seen in his major works. According to Ingle, in his early work Orwell expressed sympathy for and solidarity with the powerless and the oppressed. When war came to Britain but socialism did not, Orwell became increasingly pessimistic and showed the rise of the Soviet communism in the eyes of the Western intelligentsia evoked the brilliant anti-Soviet fable *Animal Farm*. Finally, Orwell wrote his dystopia, *Nineteen Eighty Four* which was apocalyptic based on a future British socialist state ([4], P. 146).

Orwell was inspired to write *Animal Farm* when he happened to see a village boy whipping a cart-horse. At that moment, he could formulate his ideas into *Animal Farm*. In Moran's view, George Orwell himself said that it struck him that if only such animals became aware of their strength they would have no power over them, and that men exploit could no longer exploit the animals as the government in a totalitarian state exploits the common people. Orwell himself mentioned that thought corrupts language, and language can corrupt thought ([8], P. 9). Orwell indirectly referred to the influential role of the language a totalitarian government can use to manipulate and brainwash the proletariat. The leaders of the Russian revolution, especially, Stalin used some means of propaganda to help him promote his cruel purposes and he proved himself even much more despotic than the previous one.

Rodden believes that because *Animal Farm* was written at the height of the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union in 1943 and 1944, the book was turned down by a number of British and American publishers, among them Orwell's own publisher, Victor Gollancz. It was also rejected by some editors, including T. S. Eliot. It was rejected for political reasons. Eliot distrusted Orwell's socialist politics but also thought it was a bad moment to attack the Russians. *Animal Farm* went on to become one of the most widely read books of the twentieth century, selling upwards of twenty million copies. Because it was cast as a fable – brief, effortless to read, and seemingly easy to interpret. It became a favourite text for secondary school, the one literary work that adolescents are almost certain to have studied. But the book's bright clarity and accessibility worked to undermine critical respect ([10], P. 134). Bloom also mentions when *Animal Farm* was put on stage in China, the long uncertainty about its ultimate meaning was removed. It dated back to 1945, when William Empson warned Orwell that, since allegory 'inherently means more than the author means', his book might mean 'very different things to different readers'. English communists also attacked *Animal Farm* as anti-Soviet ([1], P.146).

In this paper, the rhetorical skills and the means for manipulation of the language are practiced to show how the public can be influenced by the words, slogans and propaganda. The public in a totalitarian society will be deceived by the dominant ideology through the effective use of the language in a way that they cannot recognize their being and they forget themselves as real human beings. In this paper, we will witness a world dominated by a totalitarian regime where the reality is blurred and distorted.

2. Discussion

Several characters in Orwell's *Animal farm* play their roles as masters possessing great rhetorical skills: Old Major as the wisest and oldest pig among the animals tries

to persuade them that he has had a long experience throughout his long life dealing with the human beings. He tries to use several strategies to convince the animals that he is totally right! First, he asks a number of rhetorical questions to make his argument forceful. For example, he tells them that man is the only creature that consumes without producing! He asks the cows how many gallons of milk they have been giving during the last year. Then he asks the hen how many eggs they have hatched last year and how many of them have been hatched to chicken. In short, he tries to use many examples of man's tyranny, such as killing the weak, withholding food, and preventing them from owning their own bodies. Second, Old Major uses slogans as well. He tells the animals: "All men are enemies. All animals are comrades." He knows that some animals like Boxer who are very simpleminded will be persuaded easily, and it was considered a masterful persuasion and even it paved the way for Old Major to motivate the animals for a revolt against Mr. Jones, the human master of the Animal Farm. Third, he sings the song of "Beasts of England" to rouse the audience and according to Moran, the use of a song to stir the citizenry is an old political maneuvering and the lyrics of the above mentioned song summarizes Old Major's feelings about man ([8], P. 18).

The second character who acts a leading role to manipulate the animals' mentality and perception throughout the novel is Squealer who is a clever pig. As his name implies he is the mouthpiece of Napoleon, the potential despotic ruler of the Animal Farm. When he dramatizes some difficult point, he skips from side to side in a physical way and talks smoothly in a rhetorical sense: Every time he is faced with a question or objection, he skips around the topic using convoluted logic to prove his own point. In short, he serves as Napoleon's Minister of Propaganda or the present day media. Media, Bounds argues, is one of the main means by which the ruling class disseminates its ideology ([2], P. 63). After Napoleon eats the windfallen apples which were already mixed with the animals' mash, it is the Squealer who serves his role as the media to explain that to the animals that the pigs are the brainworkers and the apples are good for their well beings to serve the rest of the animals. He turns the black into white by telling the animals that the pigs are really sacrificing themselves and he portrays the pigs as near-martyrs who only think of others and never themselves. Squealer tries to persuade the murmuring animals with his pseudo-logic that the pigs are selfless. Squealer's rhetorical question, "Surely there is no one among you who wants to see Jones back?", is intended to show that animals' present situation is much preferable to their previous situation when Jones was their master. Squealer, Moran remarks, rewrites history when he changes the fourth commandment of animalism from "No animal shall sleep in bed." to "No animal shall sleep in bed with sheets." Clover is suspicious of the last two added words, but is so brainwashed by the new system that she thinks she has made a mistake. Squealer explains to the animals that a bed is only a place

for the animals to sleep in, and so a pile of straw can be a bed. He manipulates the language to deceive the animals once more ([8], P. 32). According to Kelso, this is one of the Marxist strategies to use some certain principal rhetorical weapons to seduce the minds of men [6].

Napoleon also uses a number of tactics to get his way: Napoleon spends some time every week training the sheep to bleat "Four legs good and two legs bad." something which is practiced in Snowball's speeches. It is Napoleon who tells Squealer to convince the animals that the windmill has been his project, not Snowball's. Another effective way through which Napoleon tries to use in order to strengthen his role is his politics of sacrifice. Some animals murmur against their being engaged in trade with their neighboring humans for selling the hens' eggs and the timber, but he tells them they need not be worried about the relation with the human beings. He tells them that he takes the responsibility himself to put the burden of that difficulty on his own shoulders, not the animals. He manipulates the language to trick the animals into believing that he is their defender. Concerning the bad effects of the language Orwell in his *Politics and the English Language* explains,

"Underneath this lies the half-conscious belief that language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purposes. Now, it is clear that the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes: it is not due simply to the bad influence of this or that individual writer. But an effect can become a cause, reinforcing the original cause and producing the same effect in an intensified form, and so on indefinitely." [9].

Symbolism plays a paramount role in the novel's progress without which a part of Napoleon's ruling action might prove incomplete. Moran argues that symbols, such as rings in the noses, harnesses, bits, spurs and whips are used to convey liberty that Major hopes will be won one day by all of the animals equally. Once the animals rebel and drive Jones from the farm, they behave as a conquering army retaking its own land and freeing it from the yoke of oppression. All the symbols of Jones' reign, such as nose-rings, dog-chains, knives are tossed into a celebratory bonfire. An action symbolically done to manipulate the animals' beliefs that all about Jones's reign has come to an end. More important is that the animals attempt to create their own sense of history and tradition by preserving Jones' house as a museum. Presumably, future animals will visit the house to learn of the terrible luxury in which humans once lived. Similarly, the renaming of Manor Farm to *Animal Farm* suggests the animals have triumphed over their enemy. By renaming the farm, they assume that they will change the kind of place it has become, which is another example of their optimism and innocence. The windmill itself is a symbol of technological progress

Snowball wants it to be built because he thinks it will bring to the farm a degree of self-sufficiency something which is in accordance with the principles of Animalism. However, Napoleon is not concerned with the windmill; even he urinates on Snowball's plans for it because he is the only one concerned with establishing his totalitarian rule. The scene in which Boxer is taken to his death is notable for its depiction of a powerless and innocent figure caught in the gears of unforgiving tyranny. The important point is that the van's driver wears a bowler hat, a symbol throughout the novel which refers to the cruelty of man. Although Boxer tries to kick his way out of the van, he symbolizes an incredible character whose strength has been abused through days of mindless hard work in the service of his tormentors that he has been reduced to nothing and Squealer manipulates the language this time to tell the animals that he is being taken to the hospital where comrade Napoleon has paid a great amount of money to cure Boxer.

As Napoleon gains control deceiving the animals into believe that he is improving the animals' lives, Joseph Stalin (1879-1953), the Russian leader who succeeded Lenin as head of the communist party and created a totalitarian state by purging all opposition, used a great deal of propaganda, symbolized and allegorized by Squealer in the novel to present himself as an idealist working for change. His plan to build the windmill reflects and symbolizes Stalin's Five Year Plan for revitalizing the nation's industry and agriculture. Stalin's ordering Lenin's body to be placed in the shrine-like Lenin's Tomb parallels Napoleon's unearthing of old Major's skull, and his creation of the Order of the Green Banner parallels Stalin's creation of the Order of Lenin ([8], PP. 18-58). The names used in the *Animal Farm* are allegorical and symbolic used purposefully by the author. According to Rodden, a Marxist critic, Raymond Williams, who tried to show his interest in Orwell, argued that his very use of animals showed how symbols condescended to the common people in whose name the writer spoke ([10], P. 140). Ingle also asserts that in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, the carthorses Boxer and Clover which symbolize the working-class, and early in the story we find an example of their familial status when some orphaned ducklings come to one of the meetings addressed by Major. Clover made a sort of wall round them with her great foreleg, and the ducklings nestled down inside it, and promptly fell asleep. Thereafter, Boxer and Clover became the pigs' most faithful animals; they were considered Napoleon's victims ([4], P. 108).

Furthermore, *Animal Farm* intends to satirize the politicians, specifically their rhetorical ability to manipulate others, and to show their insatiable lust for power. Despite his seemingly altruistic motives, Napoleon is presented as the epitome of an individual hungry for power who masks all of his actions with the excuse telling the animals that they are done in order to better animal conditions on the Farm. He steals the milk and apples explaining by the lie

that these foods have some nutrients essential to pigs, who want to carry on their managerial work. Snowball is run off the farm by Napoleon who tells the animals that he has ever been a traitor, working for Jones; in fact the farm will be better without his presence. Each time Napoleon and the other pigs wish to break one of the Seven Commandments, they legitimize their transgressions by changing the Commandment's original language. Rodden also refers to this aspect of the language where the common people's mentality can be beguiled. Orwell says that these things usually happen in the case of the totalitarian governments. He argues that it *might* if the people were not alert to the way government can be corrupted by those who abused power ([10], P. 9). In addition, whenever the farm suffers a setback or any trivial problem, Napoleon blames Snowball's treachery, which the reader, of course, knows is untrue. He is using propaganda to put the burden of any wrongdoing upon Snowball's shoulder to deviate the animals' attention towards another subject making them unaware of who he really is. Napoleon's walking on two legs, wearing a derby hat, and toasting Pilkington reflect the degree to which he and the other pigs completely disregard the plights and difficulties of the other animals in favor of satisfying their own desire for power. Napoleon here stands for a real capitalist who in Habib's words reduces all human relationships to a cash nexus. The capitalists only pay attention to their own interests and have some egotistical calculation about what they do ([5], P. 528). In this respect we can also refer to Antonio Gramsci's idea on how the proletariat allow to the capitalists to be abused. Bressler asserts that there is a complex relationship between the base and superstructure in any community. He believes the bourgeois maintains its dominance over the proletariat by controlling the dominant ideology, and the shaping of the people's ideology is nothing but the common people's deception in which many people (the animals except for the pigs) forget about their own interests and desires. Instead, they accept the dominant values and privileges as their own ([3], P. 198).

George Orwell's repeatedly insists on a plain and firm language which reflects his confidence in ordinary truth. This can be seen in the language of the narrator in *Animal Farm*, which is characterized by syntactic tidiness and verbal manipulation of the novel. "Mr. Jones, of the Manor Farm, had locked the hen-houses for the night, but was too drunk to remember to shut the pop-holes"; this is how the narrator begins the fable. The circumlocutory language is the theme in the *Animal Farm*: the crassly elitist, manipulative, unintelligible, and circumlocutory discourse of the pigs through which the fictitious replaces factitious creating a new world for the animals. The magical ability of the pigs acts as a form of language distorting the reality watching a blurred picture, not being able to see a clear pane. In this respect, Bloom suggests, language is deranged deliberately by the author and its linguistic exclusiveness shows its usurpation of power which stand out as one of the novel's central thematic concerns. In a sense, the revolution

on the farm is a language-focused enterprise, a product of specifically aggressive linguistic energy, and language, which can effectively control reality, is at the root of the tragic experience rather than merely mirroring it. The animals are the negative other of the pigs. They are overpowered by the linguistic skill of the pigs with their underdeveloped language, a para-language. The beginning of the narrative quickly establishes the primacy of language. The character of old Major, who dominates the scene of this section, is reduced to a mouth. In a lengthy address to the animals, he engages in a verbal creation of what society might become. He is the man on the white horse who steps in with utopian discourse. Major was so highly regarded on the farm that everyone was quite ready to lose an hour's sleep in order to hear what he had to say. Major speaks from above (from a sort of raised platform, perhaps a symbol of the sacred locus of revelation, distance also marks separation from the public) and offers his text in the light of the received major prophecy. Attacks are heaped upon man. With his elocutionary style and the accent of exhortation, Major creates an atmosphere of paternalism ([1], pp. 35-6).

3. Conclusion

In short, what enticed Orwell to write the animal Farm was his meticulous look at the poor conditions and he found the material for his writing via living with the lower classes, including the tramps in the London and Paris. He was fascinated by the lives of the poor and by the fact that a nation as powerful as England could fail to address such shocking poverty, Orwell lived among the lower classes, although he could have stayed in his parents' comfortable home. Dressed in shoddy clothes, Eric would sit on street corners, converse with tramps, and spend time in the various spikes, men's shelters provided by factories around London. In Paris, he took a job as a dishwasher and learned more about the suffering of the poor in another European capital. While in Paris, he contracted pneumonia and spent three weeks in the public ward of the Hospital Cochin, a depressing but enlightening experience that he later recorded in the essay, "How the Poor Die".

Orwell spends the final years of his life securing a posthumous reputation, not through the fulfilled revolution, but through revolution betrayed. *Animal Farm* is a powerful fairy tale; the clarity of its language offers a devastating allegory of the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1941. However, it ends tragically because its heroes, too stupid, naive or stoic, must fail. Just before the *Animal Farm* was published Orwell had written of the semi-anaesthesia in which the British people contrive to live. His animals, having tasted freedom only to lose it to the new tyrants, return to that state. According to Lucas, Richard Rees, Orwell's friend and lifelong defender, confessed, 'What is pathetic in both *Animal Farm* and *1984* is the helpless, inert, and almost imbecile role which Orwell attributes to the common man ([7], P. 30). The political leaders of the totalitarian regime

of the Animal Farm, namely Napoleon, used the rhetoric aspect of the language (a semi-anaesthesia aspect) to keep the animals docile and quiet to get their way deceiving the animals by some convoluted logic to get their own advantage. Through the rhetorical skills and the means for manipulation of the language, such as the words, slogans and propaganda the animals and accordingly people in a totalitarian regime will be tricked into working hard and believing what is not logical and reasonable. The dominant ideology by means of its strong media and propaganda withholds people from noticing their interests, views and thoughts. Therefore, we found that reality will be blurred and distorted by means of the ruling class words and propaganda.

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Vitae



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