



Literature

Elixir Literature 112 (2017) 49415-49419

Elixir
ISSN: 2229-712X

Usage and Influence of Leadership, Power and Authority in Our Society Using Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty Four*

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 01 October 2017;

Received in revised form:

20 November 2017;

Accepted: 30 November 2017;

Keywords

Leadership,

Authority,

Pace setters,

Governance and Society.

ABSTRACT

In the world, different rulers have adopted various ways in carrying out their political functions. The society sees its leaders as pace setters, but it is unfortunate that some of these leaders do not know that they are the role models to the younger generations. Instead of doing the right thing, they rule corruptly thereby sending wrong signals to those who care to be swayed by their political dance. The major aim of a leader should be to carry her citizens along 'thereby avoiding the use of force and eradicating corruption in its system of government. Hence the world needs leaders who are true to their calling in all sincerity thereby promoting a peaceful and corrupt free society.

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Introduction

Power can be said to be the ability to influence or control the behaviour of people. Authority is often used for power perceived as legitimate by the social structure. Power can also be seen from a negative connotation as evil or unjust. The use of power needs to involve force or the threat of force (coercion). In extreme cases, it becomes an influence.

Corruption is the misuse or abuse of bestowed power or position to acquire a selfish purpose. This misuse of power is also used by government for illegitimate private gain. A corrupt dictatorship typically results in many years of general hardship and suffering for the vast majority of citizens as civil society and Rule of Law disintegrates. Corrupt leaders/dictators routinely ignore economic and social challenges in their quest to amass more wealth and power.

Therefore the achievement of power by many leaders or people has contributed immensely to different forms of bad habits or immoral acts in society today. Power is further abused through thuggery, violence, etc. This paper intends to look into the theme of power and corruption in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty Four*

George Orwell has used *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty Four* to relate his view on power and corruption as related to the immediate society. He uses Animals and Big Brother respectively to symbolize leaders that misbehave when they get into power. In *Animal Farm*, it is revolution gone sour: animalism, communism, fascism are all illusions used by the Pigs as a means of satisfying their greed and lust for power, as each animal, through his/her innate abilities attempt to find its role in society.

In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, he portrays the horrible possibilities of totalitarianism. Through the protagonist, Winston, we understand his personal experiences and the features of his society at that time. We get to understand the harsh oppression that totalitarianism has to offer.

As Lord Acton asserts, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (13). *Animal Farm* is a true

depiction of this quotation. The Pigs attain power initially in an attempt to make the life of the animals better but when they exercise the power they get carried away. It is a common idea that every powerful man gets corrupted at some point in his journey to attain power, and corruption becomes inevitable once power gets involved. This ultimatum is depicted in *Animal Farm* as the Pigs exhibit the power they are bestowed with.

Although the beginning was filled with the sincerity to confer freedom to animals from the brutal humans but soon their motives gets tainted with private lust for power. When the pigs were granted a little power they saw that the effect was good of which they got respect from everyone and also had the opportunity to dictate to groups of animals. This action aroused the thirst for more power.

We see Napoleon for instance, who continues to pay lip service to the principles of the revolution through most of the event in the novel, but his actions are far removed from the principles of Animalism. Instead, he and other Pigs claim privileges for themselves after which he uses the Dogs against those who question his authority. In the researcher's view, power brings along brutality, thus corruption begins to eat deep into a system and then the system becomes dependent upon it.

Critical Analysis of *Animal Farm*

One of Orwell's goals in writing *Animal Farm* was to portray the Russian Revolution of 1917 as one that resulted in a government more oppressive, totalitarian and deadlier than the one it overthrew. Many of the characters and events of Orwell's novels are parallel to those of the Russian Revolution. One can say that Manor Farm is a model of Russia and Old Major, Snowball and Napoleon represent the dominant figures of the Russian Revolution. Mr. Jones can be modelled as Tsar Nicholas II (1868 - 1918), the last Russian emperor. His rule was marked by his insistence and that he was the incontestable ruler of the nation.

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During his reign, the people of Russia experienced terrible poverty and was marked with bloody massacre in 1905 when unarmed protesters demanding social reforms were shot down by an army. And when Russia entered World War I they lost more men than any country in previous wars.

Old Major is the animal version of Lenin (1870 - 1924), the leader of the Bolshevik party that seized control in the 1917 revolution. As Old Major outlines the principles of Animalism - a theory holding that all animals are equal and must revolt against their oppressors, Lenin was inspired by Karl Marx's theory of communism which urges the workers of the world to unite against their economic oppressors. As Animalism imagines a world where all animals share in the prosperity of the farm because communism argues that a communal way of life will allow all people to live lives of economic equality.

Old Major is absolute in his hatred of man and is responsible for transforming Manor Farm into Animal Farm. The tool of rebellion is the flag of Animal Farm which features a horn and hoof. Another revolutionist is Snowball; he felt that a wide series of rebellion was necessary to achieve an ultimate aim. Snowball is paralleled to Trotsky of the Russian revolution who was exiled from the U.S.S.R. In the same way, Snowball was also chased off the farm by Napoleon. And as Napoleon gains control under the guise of improving the animals' lives, he uses his dogs (his guards) against any that stands in his way.

Napoleon stands in for Stalin because like Napoleon, Stalin was unconcerned with debates and ideas. Instead, he values power for its own sake and by 1927 had assumed complete control of the communist party through acts of terror and brutality. Napoleon's dogs are also paralleled to be like Stalin's KGB, his secret police that he used to eliminate all oppositions. As Napoleon gains control under the guise of improving the animals' lives, Stalin also used a great deal of propaganda which is symbolized by the "Sequealer" in the novel to present himself as the idealist working for change.

In addition, Napoleon's plan to build the wind mill reflects Stalin's five year plan to revitalize the nations industry and agriculture. Stalin's ordering Lenin's body to be placed in the shrine like Lenin's Tomb also parallels Napoleon's unearthing of Old Major's skull. Numerous events in the novel are based on the ones that occurred during Stalin's rule. The battle of the Cowshed parallels the civil war that occurred after the 1917 revolution. The statement that a novelist (and playwright alike) does go to the underworld to get his material for writing a novel or play but uses the happenings around him is very true of these two novels of George Orwell.

Theme of Power in *Animal Farm*

Animal Farm goes a long way to depict a group of animals who plot to destroy their master, Mr. Jones. The oldest and wisest pig on the farm, Old Major, tells the other animals a story of a revolt called "The Rebellion". The pigs, which were considered to be the most intelligent of all the animals, devised a plan and successfully conquered Manor Farm and change the name of the farm to Animal Farm. The animals run the farm effectively, with the pigs overseeing and constantly developing new ideas. One of the pigs, Napoleon, was seeking only personal success while other pig, Snowball, was in favour of the improvements of the farm. They were both adamant about their view points and often argued. When Snowball introduced a new plan to build a windmill, Napoleon disagrees and convinces the animals that Snowball

had ulterior motives and that he should be banished from Animal Farm. The animals followed Napoleon who later adopted the windmill plan as his own. He slowly takes over the farm by making subtle changes that boosted his rise to power. In the end, the pigs take on the characteristics of men and are regressed into former lifestyles of men.

Animal Farm has mimetic qualities. One of such qualities is demonstrated in the use of symbolism. The animals representing people who overthrow their authority. This is similar to the situation in the Russian Revolution; the people followed Lenin and overthrew Czar, the same as the animals overthrew Mr. Jones. A second mimetic example is in Napoleon's rise to power. He easily took control by making subtle changes and slowly turning all the animals against Snowball.

Animal Farm is didactic in many ways. It teaches that it is easy to be influenced by individuals who do not take a stand for what they believe in. If the animals has been more educated, and had better realized what issues they stood for, they could have stopped Napoleon from perpetuating his wickedness in Animal Farm. The few who realized the danger were unable to convince the other animals because of the strong influence of Napoleon and Squealer.

Another didactic element of *Animal Farm* is the importance of knowing and understanding history. The new generation of animals on the farm did not remember Mr. Jones because they did not know what their ancestors fought for and for this reason they never protested Napoleon's power.

A third didactic quality of *Animal Farm* is the importance of hard work. In the early part of the novel, following the rebellion, the animals worked extremely hard and got the farm in a better shape than it was when in human hands. When greedy Napoleon became the leader, the animals were cheated and the pigs digressed into the former ways of men. This is revealed through Napoleon's changing creed, he went from saying, "All animals are equal" to adding "but some are more equal than others".

George Orwell added many aesthetic qualities to *Animal Farm*. The comparison of this book to the Russian Revolution made it a master piece and Orwell makes clear analyses between the characters and the prominent figures of the revolution. The events that took place in *Animal Farm*, although different in detail, can be paralleled to that of the revolution. The second aesthetic element of *Animal Farm* is in the interaction between the animals. The conversations and descriptions that Orwell presents make *Animal Farm* very entertaining. Thirdly, the novel is aesthetic in the characterization.

George Orwell's novel, *Animal Farm* is almost a direct parallel to the Russian Revolution. By using animals to tell the story, Orwell has succeeded in portraying the revolution in a way that can be easily understood. He uses these animals to symbolize people or groups of people. He uses a pig named Old Major to represent Karl Marx, a pig named Snowball to represent Leon Trotsky and a pig named Napoleon to represent Joseph Stalin.

Theme of Corruption in *Animal Farm*

The corrupting effect of power is one of the central themes of *Animal Farm*. At the beginning of the novel, Old Major describes the oppression that the animals experience and predicts that the day will come when they will overthrow their human masters and build a society where everybody will be equal.

When the animals of Manor Farm succeed in driving off Mr. Jones, it appears that the day has come, but we see that the pigs immediately become corrupted by power.

Napoleon continues to pay lip service to the principles of the revolution throughout most part of the novel, but his actions are far removed from the principles of Animalism. He and the other pigs begin to claim privileges for themselves, and eventually he uses the dogs to purge those who question his authority. Snowball is driven from the farm, and gradually the pigs become more like the human beings they fought to overthrow. The corruption of the principles of the revolution is illustrated by the changing of the seven commandments, which are perverted

Class and Social Stratification in *Animal Farm*

Throughout Orwell's *Animal Farm*, one of the most prominent themes is that of inevitability of class and social stratification and the problems of the working class, especially in terms of their relationship to power structures and this makes it easy to analyze *Animal Farm* from a Marxist perspective. The "lower animals" in *Animal Farm* who comprise of the working class and who are not part of Napoleon's intimate circle are hard workers and they do not complain, even though they seem to realize that something that is not just proper is going on around them. Still, these lower classes in *Animal Farm* do not rise up and one may be forced to say that that is the major reason why the failed utopian social experiment of Animalism never worked.

Throughout the novel, another theme emerges: the idea of inevitable class stratification can be extended somewhat to include the idea that although the animals' lack of realization was genuine and that this was part of their characterization because of the belief that the working class is unable, despite its seeming might, to come out of the repressive leadership. Although, there are a number of issues relating to the power of language, rhetoric and words in the novel, the overwhelming sentiment is that the lower class animals realize far too late what has occurred and thus no real change takes place throughout the novel except for the variance in the faces that represent the leadership. The popular perception of history is based on brainwashing by the mass media, indoctrination by the education system, peer group pressure and self censorship.

Orwell goes further to depict that corruption and power are majorly interwoven.

Big Brother, who controls the state of Oceania, uses "thought police" to ensure that people in the inner and outer party are kept under control. Oceania is at perpetual war with either Eurasia or Eastasia, alliances between these three states change without rational explanation. "Hate weeks" are organized against Goldstein, the leader of an alleged underground opposition to Big Brother, and hate sessions are organized against either Eurasia or Eastasia.

Meanwhile, O' Brien, a member of the inner party pretends to Smith that he is part of the Goldstein conspiracy against Big Brother. He asks Smith what he likes most to drink a toast to, and Smith chooses to drink a toast, not to the death of Big Brother, the confusion of the Thought Police, or Humanity but "to the past". Both Smith and O' Brien the main characters agree that the past is more important. But unknown to Winston, O' Brien was an undercover agent who was in a bid to break him.

The working class in *Animal Farm* is generally sympathetically portrayed as these classes are guilty of being like sheep in terms of following a leader and they rarely use

up or voice dissent despite the growing authority of the pigs. As Pearce notes of *Animal Farm*, George Orwell has many thoughts about the working class and their lack of potentials. According to him, "he (Orwell) often praised the working class for their stoicism and hard work but never for their intelligence or leadership." To him, workers were just ordinary people, whose education had often limited their intellectual horizons, therefore making them mentally inferior (47).

The animals except for the pigs are prone to following what they are told and although they have the might both in strength and numbers, they are incredibly docile to the happenings in the farm and obedient. It is also worth mentioning at this point that despite efforts to teach them to read they were unable to learn and thus were taken advantage of more often. A major example is when a murder on the farm was committed by one animal against another, even if it was to root out a potential traitor. Since there is lack of education among the animals and the sense that they do not need to know anything beyond that which they have been told, they quickly forget that such a crime is an unforgivable offence once they are convinced they misunderstood the law in the first place.

During this event, the reader is reminded in one of the important quotes from the novel, "No animal shall kill any other animal *without a cause*". Somehow, the last three words had been slipped out of the animals' memory. But now that they saw that the commandment had not been violated, for clearly, there was a good reason for killing the traitors who leagued themselves with Snowball. In this case, the working class is ignorant because they cannot read and even more oblivious because they are unwilling to see that it was still a violation, even if it was to root out a possible traitor. As they are so easily manipulated, they are taken advantage of and for this reason the working class constitutes to the downfall of the whole experiment and will cause the crumbling of the experiment in the creation of a Utopia in *Animal Farm*.

Class and Social Stratification in *Nineteen Eighty Four*

The world of *Nineteen Eighty Four* is divided into three main class systems: The Inner Party, The Outer Party and the Proles, and Big Brother is at the top of the pyramid.

Inner Party

They make up 21% of the population and are the party ruler of Oceania. They make policies, decisions and govern. The inner party is commonly known as "The Party" and they are the upper class. They have privileges different than any other such as being able to temporarily turn off their telescreens, living in comfortable homes, have good food and drink (they are not bothered by rations of lower quality supplies that other classes must adhere to, having personal servants and access to helicopters and automobiles. No other class may enter inner party neighbourhood without a good reason.

Despite all this, the party is not immune to the rigid thought and behaviour imposed on it, even though it originates within their own ranks. If an Inner Party member gets out of the line, he is dealt with the same way any other member of society mainly through torture, imprisonment and being erased from history thereby becoming an "unperson".

Outer Party

The Outer Party is given state administrative jobs and is composed of more educated members of society. They are responsible for the direct implementation of the Party's policies but have no say; theirs is just to execute orders.

They are the "artificial middle class" and have strict rules applied to them. They are also allowed "no vice other than cigarettes and victory Gin" and are spied on via telescreens and other means of surveillance, which includes being encouraged to spy on each other for any suspicious activities. Winston washes off a bit of ink on his hands while writing in his diary, knowing that someone could ask why he had ink, if he was writing and why he was writing.

According to history, the middle class is the most dangerous, their intellectual ability with limited power means they are more likely to start a revolution against the upper class. They are also expected to have a constant patriotic frenzy at the party, following blindly every order from them. They live in rundown neighbourhoods and are subjected to rations and an almost state of starvation. They are also required to abstain from sex except it is for procreative purposes.

Proles

There are the lower class of workers that perform the majority of menial tasks and labours. They are in the poorest of conditions but are the most free of any of the classes in that the Party does not spy on them, thinking they are not worth it. The Party keeps them entertained with alcohol, gambling, sports, fabricated novels and pornography (called "prolefeed").

They are kept uneducated and are considered unable to gain any sophisticated views of their lives or the society they live in. They are also considered harmless; nothing more than animals. Some members of the Thought Police wander around the prole neighbourhood to see if any of them is displaying intelligence and if so, they are taken away and vapourized.

Basically, the Proles make up the 85% of the population and this prompts Winston to write in his diary that "If there is any hope, it lies with the Proles". The social classes of Oceania interact very little but sometimes they come together for a few events like going to the cinema. Winston goes to a Prole pub unnoticed by the Upper Party; this is where he meets with O'Brien, an Inner Party man, on the pretext of borrowing the latest edition of the newspeak dictionary.

Nineteen Eighty Four is a political novel written with the purpose of warning readers in the West of the dangers of totalitarian government. Having witnessed the horrific lengths to which totalitarian governments in Spain and Russia would go in order to sustain and increase their power. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* is to sound the alarm in the Western nations in 1949. Then the cold war had not yet escalated, and many American intellectuals supported communism. In the American press, the Soviet Union was often portrayed as a moral experiment. Orwell was disturbed by the cruelties and oppressions he observed in communist countries and was particularly concerned by the role of technology as it enabled oppressive governments monitor and control their citizens.

Orwell portrays the perfect totalitarian society in *Nineteen Eighty Four*, with extreme realization that can be imagined in a modern day government with absolute power. *Nineteen Eighty Four* as a title suggests to the readers in 1949 that the story represents a possible future if totalitarianism was not opposed and it suggested some variations of the world described in the novel which could become possible in thirty-five years.

Orwell creates a state where the government monitors and controls every aspect of human life. In the novel, we see Winston Smith to be timid and rebellious but as the novel

progresses he challenges the limits of the party's power only to discover its ability to enslave and control its subjects far beyond his reach. Through Winston, the reader gets to understand that the party uses different techniques to control its citizens.

Orwell is able to portray a perfect totalitarian society that depicts a modern day government with absolute power. The title of the novel suggests the possibility of totalitarianism in the near future if it was not opposed. He is also able to portray a society where its government monitors and controls every aspect of human life even as far as having a thought against the government becomes a crime that is punishable by law.

Evil of Human Manipulation

Manipulation is greatly used by totalitarian leaders in order to place its subjects under subjugation and it serves as a major weapon. Orwell uses several situations of human manipulation in his works. For instance, they make use of psychological manipulation to limit the psychological freedom of its subject. The telescreens in every citizen's room blast long streams of propaganda designed to make the failures and shortcomings of the party appear as triumphant successes. The telescreens monitor behaviours and everywhere they go, the citizens are constantly reminded that "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU"; this reminds them that they are constantly under scrutiny.

The party goes as far as getting involved in the families; they induct children into being junior spies. This Junior Spies is like an organization that brainwashes and encourages the children to spy on their parents and report any instance of disloyalty to the party. This example can be seen in the children of Mr. and Mrs. Parson. They try to attack Winston when he is invited by their mother to help fix their broken pipe. They also spy on their parents and even eavesdrop on their conversation.

The party also forces individuals to suppress their sexual desires thereby treating sex as a procreative duty which is basically aimed at creating new party members. The party also makes the people vent their anger on its political enemies during the two minutes hate programme.

Conclusion

It can be said without mincing words that *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty Four* depict the extent to which corruption, injustice, inequality and over use of power exist in different forms of government. It is not enough to understand that within Orwell's novels an autocratic regime oppresses its populace, rather the significance of Orwell's implicit and explicit discussions concerning the dystopian abuse of power is fully realized when his literary treatment of basic human will to communicate is analyzed by the reader.

Orwell's novels express the mood of powerlessness and hopelessness of modern man just as the early Utopians expressed, "the mood of self confidence and hope of the post medieval man" (259). Man's dehumanization is as a result of what Orwell perceived to be the fascist antagonism of contemporary ideological dogma.

Outwardly, this notion of power as a multi facet capable of both keeping peace and eliminating human desire is a reminiscent of the imagined suppression of the ultimate source of desire and pride. Orwell's literary expression of this power involves a dystopian totalitarian domination over language evident in his presentation of language suppression which employs relentless brutality and terror that may have

doubted whether he really intended to offer a realistic portrait of a functioning state.

In *Animal Farm*, one of the novel's most impressive accomplishments is its portrayal not just of the figures in power but also of the oppressed people themselves. *Animal Farm* is not told from the perspective of the common animals as a whole, gullible, loyal and hard working. These animals give Orwell a chance to sketch how situations of oppression arise not from the motives and tactics of the oppression but also from the naivety of the oppressed that are not in a position to be educated or informed.

When presented with a dilemma, Boxer prefers not to puzzle out the implications of various possible actions, but instead he repeats to himself "Napoleon is always right". *Animal Farm* demonstrates how the inability or unwillingness to question authority condemns the working class to suffer the full extent of the ruling class oppression.

In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, the party seeks to control everything: the past, present and future. Its effort toward attaining that goal is to control and manipulate every source of information, re-writing and modifying the contents of all historical records and other documentary evidence for its own selfish gain. The party forbids its members to keep written records of their lives and mandates that any photograph or documents be destroyed through "memory holes" placed throughout Oceania. Since memory is unreliable, over time reality becomes whatever the party informs them. Thus, the party manipulates the past in order to control the present; people cannot rely on their memories for a very long time.

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