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Stylistic strategies in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*

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ABSTRACT

This study sets out to examine the stylistic strategies in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. It set out also to look at the concept of 'style' as it is employed by George Orwell to drive home his message. This study set out also to examine using the approaches found relevant by the researchers, especially those that found favour within the systemic functional linguistic circle. This study examines as well, style as linguistic choice as employed by George Orwell in the text *Animal Farm* by making the different characters in the story behaving like human beings who happen to have the same nature as animals. All these will be examined by the researchers

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Introduction

For any piece of language- any text to have meaning at all, it must be placed within a context of situation. The context of situation was first used by Malinowski (cf Firth, 1950, Halliday, 1978). It later developed by Firth and much later by Halliday and other linguists. The importance of context of situation in the explication of any text is very paramount because when the context of situation changes, its meaning –changes too. So, it is only within the context of situation of a text that meaningful statement can be made about the text. On this premise, therefore, we deemed it necessary to carry out a stylistic analysis of the text *Animal Farm*.

Preamble:

A writer's style may be regarded as an individual and utilization of the resources of language which his period, his chosen dialect, his genre and his purpose within it offer (Spencer 1964).

A meaningful discussion of 'stylistics' must be preceded by a discussion of the term 'style' from which stylistics is derived. As we already aware, literature is the art form realizes entirely through language, which varies according to the function it is fulfilling. Coulthard (1977) has said that a detailed analysis of authorial technique and stylistic features can be more successfully achieved within a rigorous linguistic framework. According to him, there are different approaches to the understanding of style, but the point at which all find unification as seen by Uhmuangho (1989), is the fact that style is simply a "a way of saying or putting anything" in the sense that not only what is said is important but also how it is said.

The concept 'style' is a thorny one to deal with. Spencer and Gregory (1964) say that 'style' is a recognizable but elusive phenomenon. It is approached in various ways by different people will most successful attain their goal by adopting approaches which are slightly idiosyncratic.

Stendhal (1964) one of the proponents of the theory of style as shell surrounding a pre-existing core of thought or expression defined in Enkvist (1964) runs thus:

Style consists in adding to a given thought all the circumstances calculated to produce the whole effect that the thought, ought to produce (in Spencer ed, 1946).

This attempt at defining style has been criticized by Enkvist for three reasons:

That it takes for granted the existence of thought before its eventual verbalization;

That the function of style as addition is measured in terms of effect; and

That it is possible to have 'styleless' texts.

It must be emphasized that thought precedes its verbalization. A literary writer or any writer first thinks of what to write before he actually writes. It is rather unusual to have a 'styleless' text, hence every text or writer has at least a style. One can safely talk of 'bad' style or a good one in relation to a text.

Crystal (1987) comments on style as follows:

Style is seen as (conscious and unconscious) selection of a set of linguistic features from all the possibilities in a language (1987). Enkvist (1964) defines style as the aggregate of the contextual probabilities of its linguistic items (in Spencer (ed) 1964). Style as choice presupposes three types of choice:

Grammatical choice which distinguishes between what is possible and what is not;

Stylistic choice which deals with the choice of items that are almost the same in meaning while;

Non-stylistic choice deals with the selection between different meaning.

Warburg (1959) is of the view that generally, the speaker or writer is conveying what he wants to convey, also wants, and as he can to make a good impression on a certain audience on others that is beside himself. It is an indispensable fact that stylistic or linguistic choice can be induced by subject matter or audience. The topic or subject a writer is writing on, to a greater extent, determines the language and the style he uses as does the audience.

In his own attack, Osundare (1982) writes:

... if style is so unique, so individual, why do two writers have 'similar' styles- the prose of Bacon and Spratt, Soyinka and Walcott, Achebe and Amadi?

The view of style as deviation from the norm presupposes that language of literature is aberrant. It sees the language of the text in question as transition from the normal to the abnormal.

Many problems are associated with school of style as deviation from the norm amongst which is determining the norm against which the language of the text is to be determined or measured, as there is invulnerable method of selecting the norm.

According to Adejare (1993) 'The choice of norm is governed by scientific rules'. He goes further to attack the norm and deviation principle when he writes:

Norm and deviation is a prescriptive principle, holding language as to be unvarying, whereas language use varies and even changes. (Adejare 1993).

In this study therefore, the style of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, will be examined using the approaches found relevant by the researchers, especially those that found favour within the systemic functional linguistic circle. For example, cohesion through normal order, S.P.C.A., S.P.A, and cohesion through link are part of our study.

This study would be properly garnished by looking at style as discourse.

Style as Discourse

According to Hungerland (1956), all the modes of meaning, features and functions of everyday language are found in poetry.

In brief, the medium of poetry she opines is living language which is discourse. That language in poetry is more highly structured than language outside poetry.

In his own view, Kenneth Pike (1964) writes beyond the sentence level are grammatical structure available to linguistic analysis describable by technical procedures and usable by the author for generation of literary works through which he reports his observation. This is call discourse level. A text displays unity through linguistic analysis.

Samuel Levin (1962) in his words "any text, poetic or otherwise, may be said to display unity. The unity results from the fact that, grammatical units are linked by agreement."

Style as Linguistic Choice

This is a pure linguistic approach to the study of style from different linguistic frameworks. In the view of Leech Short, this approach is a stylistic pluralism. In line with this, Saporta says that:

The style of a message will be described in terms of the relations of the linguistic features to one another, not in terms of the relations of linguistic features to non-linguistic features, so that questions of truth, intention, etc; will fall on a different areas of literary analysis.

Saporta emphasis here is that style be based on certain pluralistic linguistic tendencies devoid of literary approach to style. Hence, the concepts attempt choice made on different functional levels of language as parameters for measuring style. To the pluralists, any utterance conveys various levels of meaning.

A.I Richards identified four language functions for style, which are sense, feeling, time and intention. Roman Jakobson recognizes six different functions, referential, emotive, conative, phatic, and poetic and metalinguistics. In his view, each has its limits of measurement for style.

M.A.K Halliday in his functional view of language recognizes three important functions of language, namely, ideational,

interpersonal and Textual. He argues that all linguistic choices are both meaningful and stylistic.

Our concern in this analysis therefore, is the stylistics features of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* which will be based on the following areas and characterization, Title of the text.

In *Animal Farm*, the different characters in the story behave according to their nature but Orwell still portrays their behavior just like human beings who happens to have the same nature as animals.

Orwell in his style also portrays *Animal Farm* having all the virtues and intentions of the animals' story, which is a story of a society of birds and animals, each behaving according to nature. Orwell makes the cat so feline, the raven so ravenous and the sheep so sheepish. He makes the animals behave so like humans to seeing carthorse behave so like any willing strong labourers, a young mare behaves like any conceited girl. The various levels of language usage by the characters actually characterize their social, economic, cultural and psychological embodiments arising from the context of situation which animal farm where animals like the pigs are made to be at the helm of affairs.

George Orwell may not have actually had a conscious awareness of the various languages of the characters but he may have adopted a style to achieve his literary goal. In this wise, whether George Orwell is conscious or not, the fact remain that his style in *Animal Farm* after being subjected to a closed linguistic examination will reveal the extent of his consistent consciousness or awareness in his writing of the text. The following objective data from style markers will go a long way to prove his style.

For instance, in characterization, Orwell portrays the following characters as animals, Major otherwise known as the Old major, Snowball, Napoleon, Squealer, Bluebell, Jessie, and Pitcher, Boxer, Clover, Muriel, Benjamin, Mollie, The cat and Moses. In his style, Orwell makes Major the old pig who provides the political philosophy on which *Animal Farm* is founded and the song which becomes their inspiration. Snowball is portrayed as an intelligent leader who succeeds Major.

Napoleon on the other hand is portrayed as wholly committed to seizing and keeping power, and does so in the way of totalitarian leader as seen in Europe. Orwell presents Squealer as 'a small pig' who 'was a brilliant talker' and 'could turn black and white'.

Orwell relentlessly portrays Bluebell, Jessie and Pitcher as the three whose purpose in the story is to produce the nine enormous dogs which are Napoleon's bodyguards.

Boxer is portrayed as the big powerful farm horse whose represents the gullibility of the worker, and so represent the goodness of the common man.

The above view in the representation of Boxer by Orwell brings to mind the approach of Halliday which is hard to reconcile with everyday insight about 'style'. For him, even choices which are clearly dictated by subject matter are part of style. Thus, he further describes Boxer as 'the salt of the earth' who has few brains and he simplifies all problems into the need for working still harder for the cause he believes in. He is the worker of the world, on whom in the end all societies depend. Even choice of proper names of weather such as winter, summer, spring and autumn used by Orwell is a matter of style.

George Orwell employs a descriptive method as a stylistic device in the presentation of his characters. For instance, he describes Benjamin the donkey as wise and silently cynical. More than any other animal he sees through the pigs and realizes

the folly of trying to flight them. He is the intellectual character, who normally rejects fuss and demonstration, but sees what is going on more clearly than most people. Only once does he forsake cynical inaction and that is when his friend Boxer is betrayed and is being taken off to the slaughter-house instead of hospital. He once rushes to save his friend, and inspires the animals to attempts a rescue. It fails, and Benjamin relapses into cynical observation. Benjamin is no donkey in the usual sense. It is in character for Orwell to contradict common error and in these two characters as he draws them, the common idea of a goat or a donkey becomes quite wrong.

It is observed that in the above description of Benjamin that Orwell immediately diverts from descriptive style to narrative style telling us how he once inspired other animals to attempts a rescue of Boxer his friend when he was being taken to the slaughter-house. It is quite obvious that Orwell employs both descriptive and narrative styles to achieve effective aims and objectives of his message.

Orwell also makes use of human characters in the text. This he stylistically does to portray or represent aspect of events in the text. The various human characters at various times described, each performing according to his nature. For instance, Orwell describes Mr. Pilkington, as "The old conservative gentleman who has come round at last to accepting the revolution and his speech is a delicious caricature of political oratory". Orwell makes use of adjectival clause here qualifying the speech of Mr. Pilkington as "a delicious caricature of political oratory". It is also contradictory which can be termed a stylistic variant employed by Orwell.

Meaning of style

Monism, dualism, pluralism, although apparently in conflict with one another, all have something to contribute to comprehensive view of style. It is our objective in this wise to combine the insights from these approaches in multilevel, multifunction view of style which will be applicable to the study of text. The following are a list of points which forms the basis of the use of the term 'style'.

Style is a way in which language is used, i.e. it belongs to parole rather than, to langue;

Therefore, style consists in choice made from the repertoire of the language;

A style is defined in termed of domains of language used (e.g. what choices are made by a particular author, in a particular genre, or in a particular text

Stylistics (or the study) has typically been concerned with literary language;

Literary stylistics is typically concerned with explaining the relation between style and literary or aesthetic function;

Style is relatively transparent or opaque; transparency implies paraphrasibility, opacity implies that a text cannot be adequately paraphrased, and that interpretation of the text depends greatly on the creative imagination of the reader.

Based on the above points on the style therefore, we can safely say that the choice made by Orwell in the text, depended solely on the domain of the language used. His language is based purely on the polished or Queen's type of English intended to serve the needs of overseas students as well as those of English-born users. Below are some few examples of Orwell choice of words:

Pop-hole: small opening cut in the walls of the hen-houses.

Cynical remarks: the kind of comment made by a speaker who has (or think he has) no illusions about life or human behavior.

Paddock: a small field where horses rest and feed.

Their natural span: the number of years they would probably live in the right natural conditions.

Knacker: a man who buys old horses and slaughters them to sell as food for other animals.

Berkshire boar: Orwell knew his pigs and Berkshires are common in his part of Hertfordshire. They are large nearly all black and the aristocrats of pigs world.

Clementine ... La cucaracha: the farm is an old and popular students' song; the later a modern dance-band tune in South American rhythmic style.

Mid summer's Eve: the 23th June in England, on the night of which it was an old custom to take part in intoxicating rites and noisy revels.

Rabbiting: shooting wild animals

News of the world: the Sunday news paper with one of the largest circulation in Britain.

Cockerels: young male fowls.

These words were used by Orwell because in the first instance, he is writing about a farm known as Animal Farm, which is the domain, secondly the language of the environment is purely English (British) and thirdly, he is writing a particular text which determines his choices of words.

We have used style in this context in employing the nature of stylistic value, as a basis for understanding the detailed workings of stylistic effect. What we have done here is that we have given stylistic characterization of the text. In the study, it will be necessary to consider yet another component which is the title of the text.

Another stylistic device employed by Orwell in the text is the use of good title which as we have observed is quite appropriate and ideal for the text. The title Animal Farm agrees with the activities that feature in the text. Orwell makes use of animals at the very beginning of the text as already high-lighted above. Domestic animals such as dogs, hens, cat, goats, rats, cow, horse, sheep were made used of by Orwell.

The use of human characters in the farm is a stylistic device by Orwell as he uses Mr. Whymper as a solicitor who acts as go-between for the pigs in their business transactions with farmers and dealers. Since the man of law is rarely a favourite character in fiction, somebody had to be middleman between pigs and human and Orwell makes him as unpleasant as his shadowy existence allows. In other words, the title of the text is quite in agreement with the events and activities that take place in the text.

Orwell also employs the use of comrade in addressing the animals especially the most active ones like Benjamin, Napoleon and other animals who were regarded as part of the farm. This he does to show that the animals are all comrades in action fighting a common or one course.

Conclusion

It can be safely said that Orwell actually achieved his aim by the employment of a good choice of words to demonstrate the various styles used in the text, Animal Farm.

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