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Character Metaphors in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*

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Abstract

Animal Farm was written by George Orwell in 1944 to criticize the Soviet Union leaders and their administration represented by animal characters. The objective of this study was to find out the resemblances between the character of Soviet Union leaders at the time the novel was written and those depicted in the novel. In analysing the objective of this study, content analysis was used. The data are the dialogues and other information in the novel concerning the metaphors of characters between the Soviet Union leaders of the 20th century and those in *Animal Farm*. The writer finds out that Jones metaphors Nicholas II, the last Tsar of Russian Monarchy, Old Major with his speech metaphors Karl Marx with his Communist Manifesto, Napoleon as Stalin, Snowball as Trotsky, Squealer as Pravda, the Russian Newspaper at that time, Frederick as German and Boxer as the type of gullibility proletariat. Indeed, George Orwell's timeless work reminds us that totalitarianism could be harmful to one society.

Keywords: Animal characters, metaphors, critics.

1. INTRODUCTION

George Orwell, a pen name for Eric Arthur Blair, was a British novelist, essayist and critic. He was born in India in the nineteenth century (1903-1950), and grew up in a war and military atmosphere. His experienced joining the Indian Imperial Police from 1922 to 1927 had changed his character into a rebel in terms of literature and politic. In 1936, Orwell already knew where he stood when he said that, "Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it" (Orwell, 2014, p. 8). He added that, "When I sit down to write a book, I do not say to myself, 'I am going to produce a work of art'. I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention and my initial concern is to get a hearing" (p. 9).

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One of Orwell's most popular novels was *Animal Farm* (Orwell, 1999), first published in 1944. The Russian Revolution in 1917 had inspired him to write the novel. In this novel, he implicitly criticizes Stalin's way of governing by analogizing it with the animal's government in a farm. The characters in *Animal Farm* which arouse under the administration of Jones and the animals' governance in this novel have become an interesting topic for the writer since they were written by the author as the metaphors for the Soviet Union leaders.

Therefore, the writer would like to find out the resemblances of characters of Soviet Union leaders at the beginning of the 20th century to those depicted in *Animal Farm*.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Characters

McGee (2001, p. 5) defines character as "*a "person" in a literary work. Characters have moral and psychological features that make them human in some way or another*". Characters in a story can be human beings, animals or things. The story in which the characters are animals or most of them are animals is called fable. In a fable, the animals are talking as if they were human. The purpose of writing a fable is to deliver moral messages to the readers. In *Animal Farm*, George Orwell presented animal characters with their native environment. Interestingly, those animals form a satire towards human being behaviours.

2.2 Metaphor

The word metaphor comes from the Greek word *metaphoria*, which meant 'to carry'. It is used to compare two different things which have some similarities in common (Fadaee, 2011). Metaphor is defined by Newmark (1988, p. 104) as "*any figurative expression: the transferred sense of a physical word; the personification of an abstraction; the application of a word or collocation to what it does not literally denote. Metaphors may be 'single' (one-word) or 'extended' (a collocation, an idiom, a sentence, a proverb, an allegory, a complete imaginative text)*". The metaphor presented by Orwell in *Animal Farm* is personification which belongs to ontological metaphors (Lakoff & Johnsen, 2003, p. 33). Ontological metaphors are *ways of viewing events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances* (ibid, p. 25). In *Animal Farm*, the whole story is a metaphor for the political situation during the Russian civil war (1917-1922).

2.3 The Background of the Writing of *Animal Farm* by George Orwell

George Orwell is one of many British novelists in the beginning of the 20th century. Living in the war time, he got many hard experiences of life which sometimes later were written in his books and essays. He claimed himself to write because of political purpose (Orwell, 2014). He only wrote when he needed to expose lies as well as to disclose the hidden facts. His most famous work, *Animal Farm*, is a satirical fable criticizing the USSR Governance System. Although he never went to the Soviet Union, he knew what was going on by that time in the country; he knew that the Soviet

Government used the iron policy and undercover police operation to keep its people obeying the country's system. All of these facts pushed Orwell to write *Animal Farm* which was first published in May 1944.

2.4 Type of Governance in Russia in the Early of the 20th Century

This study only focuses on the governances carried out by Nicholas II and Stalin since *Animal Farm* only performs the animals' life under Jones' administration which resembled Nicholas II's governance and Napoleon's administration as a metaphor for Stalin's governance.

Nicholas II (1894-1918), came to power to replace his father, Alexander III. In his period, Nicholas II continued the principles of autocracy in running the governance as his late father did. Nevertheless, his people dislike the policies. They wished that the new Tsar would bring a new bright future for them since they had been living in a misery the whole of their lives previously. Being disappointed, a lot of demonstrations were taken place, demanding social, political and economic improvement. But Tsar refused to grant them. The situation was getting worse, and on March 8, 1917, a revolution happened as a consequence of a great dissatisfaction with the tsarist's regime. The revolution succeeded to force Nicholas II to abdicate (Wade, 2000).

After the tsarist government had ended, Duma-House of Representative-immediately formed the Provisional Government. But still the new government did not satisfy the people. Duma was seen to work too slowly in handling the problems at home as well as abroad. While Duma chose to consider things assumed to be needed before took an action. On the other hand, the government's policy to continue the war against German was arousing insurgency among the people.

In the messy situation, Lenin, Bolshevik's party leader, who just came back from his exile in Switzerland, saw the opportunity to establish resistance movement by offering the people the right to own the land. In October the same year, Lenin and his Bolshevik party successfully ended the Provisional Government and brought Lenin to be the new leader over the country (Hasegawa, 2003). Lenin did not govern too long. In 1922, he suffered a stroke that broke his health, leading to his death in 1924. By that time, the country has been officially called Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). It did not take a long time after Lenin's death, when a power of struggle took place between Trotsky and Stalin. Trotsky was the second man after Lenin in Bolshevik party, while Stalin was the Secretary General of the party in 1922. These two men contended as many followers by putting forward their opinions over the Russian path toward industrialization and the future of the communist revolutionary movement. In the end, Stalin won the election to be the new leader of the party and of course, the new Russian leader. The victory gained by Stalin not because of his intellectual and ability to govern, but because of his political power which laid in his command of bureaucratic and administrative methods (Barrow, 1997).

During the world wide depression in 1929, food shortages occurred. Stalin decided that Russia must industrialize rapidly to reform the country's economy. His first major reform was Five-Years Plan (Kenez, 2006). The program brought rural farms together into larger units for several thousand acres, under the communal proprietorship of peasants. However, the program failed to win the support of the kulaks. Their opposition made them liquidated, either killed or sent to labour camps. During Stalin's time, there were millions of his enemies — the real and imagined ones

— liquidated. Anyone who was suspected to be the opposite with his policies, will be prisoned, expelled, transported to labour camps or executed. Stalin really established a personal dictatorship that lasted until his death in 1953 (Gorlizki & Klevniuk, 2006).

2.5 A Summary of *Animal Farm*

The story of *Animal Farm* begins with a description of a large farm owned by Jones. It introduces the sorrow feeling of every animal living under the totalitarian of two legs (the human beings). They were pushed to do all jobs in the field. In return, they only got some food enough to prevent them from starvation. The conflict rises as Old Major, the Price Middle white boar, the oldest and the wisest animal among others, gathered his comrades one night to tell the about his dream of a peaceful life. There was not any man who controlled power over animals. In the occasion, Old Major began to persuade his animal friends to keep the spirit of animalism and start a preparation on a rebellion against their owner, Jones, and his men. He said:

“What then must we do? Why, work night and day, body and soul, for the overthrow of the human race! That is my message to you, comrades: rebellion! I do not know when that Rebellion will come, it might be in a week or in a hundred years, but I know, as surely as I see this straw beneath my feet, the sooner or later justice will be done”. (Orwell, 1999, p. 10)

A year later, the rebellion finally happened unexpectedly without planned by anyone. It was on Midsummer's Eve, when Jones left for Willington and returned on the other day. He got so tired and forgot to feed the animals. Being starved all day, the animals attacked Jones and his men by kicking and butting them from all sides. Jones and his men flee right away.

The next day, Napoleon and Snowball, two young boars, gathered their comrades. At that time, Manor Farm has been painted as Animal Farm. Napoleon and Snowball became the leaders of the farm. They ordered the other animals to go to the hayfield, began to work and hoped that they could get in the harvest more quickly than Jones and his men could.

On Sundays, no work was done in the field. This day was used to hold meetings which discussed about anything related to the works in the fields. Every policy taken was based on deliberation. But then, Napoleon and Snowball who were never in agreement changed the Sunday meeting into an arena of debate.

“Snowball and Napoleon were by far the most active in the debates. But it was noticed that these two were never in agreement. Whatever suggestion either of them made, the other could be counted on to oppose it.” (Orwell, 1999, p. 28).

While proposing to build a windmill to help the animals work in the field, Snowball was opposed by Napoleon. In this plot, the conflict of the two animals was mounted. The climax was on the voting time. Napoleon showed his power by ordering his nine guard dogs to run after Snowball and bit him. It made Snowball, the one who proposed the windmill and who almost won the vote, to run away from the farm.

The next plot of the story began with Napoleon take over the farm and announced that there were no more Sunday meetings. All policies related to work in the field

would be decided by a special committee of pigs, presided over by Napoleon himself. Under his leadership, Napoleon announced that the windmill would be built. Surprisingly, a brilliant talker, Squealer, convinced the other animals that it was the original idea of Napoleon. After years with human, Jones' totalitarianism, now the farm was experiencing a new type of tyrant, their own species. Napoleon announced his new policy, that from the moment, Animal Farm would cooperate with human beings. Not for any commercial purposes, but only to obtain certain materials the animals needed to build the windmill.

On one hard stormy November night, the animals found a terrible sight, the windmill was ruined. Napoleon claimed that it was done by Snowball. Consequently, the other animals hated Snowball and kept their eyes open in case he came back. Snowball began to become their enemy. Later, it was found out that there were four pigs in league with Snowball. The nine dogs which always followed Napoleon immediately ran over the four pigs, biting and killing them. So did the three hens, a goose and a sheep, all of them were stained on the spot. The other animals who were very shocked to see what just happened in front of their eyes, thought that their life in Jones' time was better than that day, under their own comrade governance. But there was no animal which dare to speak their mind or to give their argument to the new government.

Some days later, Napoleon sold the timber to Mr. Frederick, the one who believed to always try to attack Animal Farm and destroy the windmill. But three days later, Mr. Whimpers, the mediator between Napoleon and human beings, said that the bank-notes Mr. Frederick gave were found to be faked. Napoleon then announced a death sentence upon Mr. Frederick.

In April, Animal Farm was proclaimed a Republic. Now the animals needed to elect a president. There was only one candidate, Napoleon. Then Napoleon was elected unanimously.

In the late of one evening in the summer, Boxer, a respectable cart-horse, got hurt and taken away in a car to get a nursing. Then all of them say goodbye to Boxer. But then, Benjamin, an old donkey, cried out the word "fool" to his comrades. He asked them to read the writing on the car. Muriel tried to spell it. It ran like this, "*Alfred Simmons, horse slaughterer and Glue Boiler, Willington. Dealer in hides and Bone-Meal. Kennels Supplied*" (Orwell, 1999, p. 104).

Hearing this, together the animals shouted at Boxer, asked him to get out of the van quickly. But it was too late; the van was already driven away from them. Three days later, Squealer announced that Boxer had died peacefully in the hospital. And the rumours said that Boxer had been sent to the slaughterer was a misunderstanding. Squealer said:

"The van had previously been the property of the knocker and had been bought by the veterinary surgeon, who had not yet painted the old name out. That was how the mistake had arisen". (Orwell, 1999, p. 106)

This explanation was accepted by the animals. Squealer also said that Boxer's last words were, "*Forward, Comrades! Forwards in the name of rebellion. Long live Animal Farm! Long live comrade Napoleon! Napoleon is always right*" (Orwell, 1999, p. 105).

Years passed but the animals still lived in misery. They still worked hard in the field and built another windmill. But there was still no stall with electric light as well as no hot and cold water as promised before. Napoleon argued by stating that, "*The truest happiness, lay in working hard and living frugally*" (Orwell, 1999, p.109). Anyway, it was in contrary with the pig's way of life; they live in prosperity.

One night, there was a loud singing from the farmhouse. The other animals which were very curious to find out about what was happening inside crept out to peep. They saw half a dozen pigs and half a dozen farmers sat around a long table. They were playing cards and drinking beer. In the occasion, Napoleon announced that from the moment, the name of Animal Farm change back to Manor Farm, because it was the real name.

3. METHODOLOGY

Content analysis as a method of data analysis was applied to this study (Mayring, 2014). The process of analysing data involved three main phases: preparation, organizing and reporting (Elo & Kyngas, 2008, p. 109). In the preparation phase, the writer carefully read the *Animal Farm* to comprehend the content. Next, all units in the book were analysed. She re-read the text to find the subject matter as the aim of study.

To strengthen the data found in the book, the writer also tried to gather the data from other books, e-books, and journals about literature, specifically in metaphors, and Russian government and political system, and Russian history. The next step was to classify the data of principal characters in *Animal Farm*, which were deemed to resemble the leaders of Soviet governance in the early of the 20th century. The last step was to write the draft based on the data obtained.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Character Metaphors in *Animal Farm*

The characters in *Animal Farm* were created by the author as metaphors for the Soviet Union leaders in beginning of the 20th century. Based on the analysis of characters in the story, the writer found the resemblances of characters of the government's leaders at the time to the following animals found in the story.

4.1.1 Jones to Nicholas II

Jones, the owner of Manor Farm, was narrated by Orwell as a cruel master, who applied the autocracy system over his animals. He pushed them to do hard work in the field, let them live in their poor stalls and took all the things they produced. In return, Jones only provided them with little food only enough to prevent them from starving. Jones himself stayed in a nice and comfortable farmhouse and lived in prosperity by enjoying what the animals have produced. Under Jones' authorization, the animals were treated as slaves.

“Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet, he is lord of all the animals. He set them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving and the rest keeps for himself. Our labour till the soil, our dung fertilizes it and yet there is not one of us that owns more than his bare skin”. (Orwell, 1999, p. 9).

The animals' lives were metaphored by Orwell by comparing the storyline to the proletariat's life in the Soviet Union. The proletariat or unskilled labour class were forced to work hard in the fields. While the kulaks (the more prosperous farmer who owned the lands), foreign capitalist and state employees enjoyed their lives over the hard work of the proletariat.

4.1.2 Old Major to Karl Marx

Old Major is depicted as a wise old boar and so highly respected on the Manor Farm. The miserable condition suffered by the animals made Old Major gathered his comrades one night to listen to his speech which motivated the animals to make a preparation for launching a revolution one day against Jones and his men.

Old Major and his speech are a resemblance to Karl Marx with his communist manifesto which said that capitalism would be vanished and substituted by communism (Marx & Engels, 1848).

4.1.3 Snowball to Trotsky and Napoleon to Stalin

After the revolution which succeeded to make Jones expelled from the farm, the animals then, without any elections, were led by two young boars, Snowball and Napoleon. Snowball was described as not only smart, but also a good speaker and able to write and read. On the other hand, Napoleon was depicted as a power hungry boar and not an effective public speaker. The friendship between Napoleon and Snowball did not last very long, because they began to have debates in every Sunday meetings. Until one day, Snowball's suggestion to build a windmill was being to put on vote. As usual, Napoleon was in opposite with Snowball's idea. Then both of them put forward their arguments about building the windmill. At the end, it seemed that the animals' vote would be on Snowball's side, because he was a brilliant talker, which was very good in persuading his comrades to vote for him. Realizing the situation, Napoleon, who laid his power on politics power, uttered a strange sound which suddenly made nine huge dogs run after Snowball, ready to bite and kill him. Snowball, who immediately realized the situation, decided to escape from the farm.

The confrontation between Napoleon and Snowball was a clear metaphor for the confrontation between Stalin and Trotsky. Both of them were leaders in the Bolshevik Party. After Lenin's death, they began to compete to take Lenin's position as the leader of the party and the President of USSR. At the end of the competition, Stalin turned out to be the winner of the intraparty rivals. The victory gained by Stalin, not because of his ability to lead Russia, but because he was a major political manipulator who used *Pravda*, the official party paper, to persuade the people to give their vote to Stalin to be their future leader. After Stalin became the first man in Russia, he exiled Trotsky to Siberia, while those suspected to be in Trotsky's side, were prisoned, exiled or even

killed by Stalin's agents. In the story of *Animal Farm*, only sometimes after Snowball was expelled, there was an animal massacre because they were suspected to be on Snowball's side.

4.1.4 Squealer to Pravda and Boxer to Proletariat

Squealer is a wick, but a brilliant talker porker which was used by Napoleon to convince his comrades that Napoleon's policies were produced for the sake of the farm. Boxer, as a prototype of the proletariat, was used by Napoleon, a wick leader, to convince other proletariats that the policies were for the benefit of the proletariat themselves. It can be seen from how Boxer, a metaphor for the gullibility proletariat, always said, "*If comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right*" (Orwell, 1999, p. 71).

All of Stalin's new policies in Russia were in fact Trotsky's original ideas. But *Pravda*, as the hugest number of printing newspaper in USSR, soon spread those new policies around the country without linking them to Trotsky, and made people believe as they were Stalin's original ideas. Since there were not any television and radio at that time, newspaper then, was the only source of information used by the government as the propaganda to justify the leaders' actions. It was not a really hard task to do since the proletariat or unskilled labour class was the dominant class in the Soviet Union and they were usually in the lowest class of intelligence. It was not difficult to make them think that they have got a good deal through news spread in the newspaper media.

4.1.5 Frederick to German

In 1929, the world wide depression was taking place. At that time, countries were forced to trade with the others in order to fulfil their needs. Soviet Union also engaged in trades. One of them was with German, who then traded unfairly and fraudulently. The situation at that time was described by Orwell in *Animal Farm* by introducing Frederick, a wick human character as a metaphor for a German, who engaged in trade with Napoleon, and was involved in the issue of timber. Napoleon sold wood to Frederick and in return, Frederick gave him a blank note. The unfair trade created conflicts between them. So it can be seen that the parallel is clear.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Character in a prose fiction is the creation of an author to build up an imaginary person as he or she wishes to. Oftentimes, the imaginary characters are the imitation of the real people in the mundane life, whether their behaviours, habits or attitudes. The description of the characters of the Soviet Union leaders in the early of the 20th century is depicted lively by George Orwell by analogizing them with the characters of *Animal Farm*. Based on analysis, the writer found that:

1. Jones, as the owner of the Manor Farm, was a metaphor for Nicholas II, the last Tsar of Russian Monarchy who ran the Russian governance tyrannically.
2. Old Major, a wise old boar who delivered a speech which encouraged his comrades to launch rebellion is a metaphor for Karl Marx and his Communist Manifesto.

3. Snowball, an effective public speaker, is a young boar as a metaphor for Trotsky, one of the Communist Party leaders who were involved in the struggle with Stalin to replace Lenin's position, after his death, as the president of United Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).
4. Napoleon, Snowball's rival in their struggle to be the leader of *Animal Farm*, is a less-intellectual young boar and a type of power hungry leader. He came to power by using politics power. Napoleon is the metaphor for Stalin, the USSR president after the death of Lenin, who won the struggle in replacing Lenin's positions by using politics powers and administrative methods.
5. Squealer, a brilliant talker porker who was used by Napoleon to convince their comrades to believe that Napoleon's policies were always for the sake of the farm. Squealer is a metaphor of *Pravda*, the hugest number of printing newspaper in Russia at that time which was used by the tyrant leader as the media or propaganda to justify the leaders' policies.
6. Boxer is the metaphor of the proletariat (unskilled labour class) in the Soviet Union who easily believed that their leadership policies are stated for the benefit of the country. Boxer was the type of a gullibility proletariat.
7. Frederick is a metaphor for a German who traded unfairly and fraudulently with Russia during the world wide depression.

5.2 Suggestions

Reading a novel is not only for enjoyment, but also to learn about one's life and culture. Understanding characters in a novel is essential as they are usually created by the author to depict the real characters in the ordinary life. In reading a novel, it is important to understand the moral messages delivered by the author, since the author usually writes a novel with a purpose in mind.

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