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The Power of Propaganda Without Education

There has always been a belief that uneducated people are easier to control because they have not learned to think for themselves. George Orwell demonstrates this idea in his novel *Animal Farm*, a tale of animals after the overthrow of humans living with elements of propaganda. Throughout the book the pigs are known to have a higher education than the rest of the animals; consequently, they establish themselves as the leaders of the farm. The pigs use methods of propaganda such as generalization and faulty cause and effect reasoning and use their higher education in order to gain control and special privileges.

The widespread of propaganda in *Animal Farm* was due to the gullibility in the animals. In the midst of debates between Snowball and Napoleon "The animals listened first to Napoleon, then to Snowball, and could not make up their minds which was right; indeed, they always found themselves in agreement with the one who was speaking in the moment" (Orwell 36). This reveals a weak ability to form an opinion within the animals due to their lack of education; subsequently, this element contrasts greatly with their educated pig counterpart. This is important to the spread of propaganda because the animals lack of questioning makes them vulnerable to the pigs and their advancements on their principles of Animalism. The animals lack of questioning is also due to the glorification of Napoleon. Boxer doesn't believe that Snowball had been working against *Animal Farm*, but once Squealer mentions Napoleon's mere name, Boxer's

belief suddenly turns to, "If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right" (Orwell 57). This maxim illustrates how Boxer's internal glorification of Napoleon disables his ability to create opinions different from others. This is vital to the spread of propaganda because the animals look up to Napoleon as a leader and view themselves as inferior; thus, this allows anything the pigs say to be perceived as true. The lack of education received by the animals combined with their glorification of Napoleon allows them to be susceptible to various methods of propaganda.

As a result of the animals' gullibility, Old Major's speech in the beginning of the novel was able to use the propagandistic method of generalization in order to create a sense of rebellion throughout the farm. The superannuated pig's speech starts off with discussing how Old Major has "had a long life. [and] I have had much time for the thought as I lay alone in my stall, and I think I may understand the natured life on this earth as well as any animal now living" (Orwell 5). This illustrates how Old Major would be a credible source as a preacher for the animals to blindly follow. This contributes to the presence of propaganda because the animals will believe that whatever Old Major says is true because of his wise demeanor. In the same speech Old Major's words spark a rebellion that overthrows the general human presence within the novel. Old Major's personal belief is that all suffering stems from "a single word-Man. Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished forever" (Orwell 6). This quote reveals how Old Major uses the propagandistic tactic of generalization to paint all humans as evil tormentors. This is essential to the spread of propaganda because the animals view Old Major in such a high manner, they will take this generalization and apply it to everything, creating an expression of support for his beliefs. Old

Major subtly used generalization and his wise manner in order to manipulate the animals into supporting his preachings.

Old Major's spark of rebellion generated the pigs to adopt faulty cause and effect reasoning in order to incite fear and gain control of Animal Farm. Squealer's reasoning for taking extra rations of milk and apples is because "we pigs are brainworkers. The whole management and organisation of this farm depends on us" (Orwell 25). This quote proves that the pigs, just like Old Major, use faulty cause and effect reasoning to justify their education as an excuse for superiority; furthermore, this causes the animals to not question whatever they say. This is critical to the presence of propaganda because the pigs can do whatever they please and use their preeminent education as a viable reason. This is further shown when the pigs incite fear into the animals of Jones returning, should the animals not believe in the pigs. The animals are groomed to believe that "it is for *your* sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed our duty? Jones would come back" (Orwell 25). This shows that the pigs use the method of faulty cause and effect reasoning once more to justify their extra rations, though the two events have no correlation in reality. This further spreads propaganda because the fear caused by Jones coming back manipulates the animals to support extra rations for the pigs. The pigs are able to use tactics of propaganda in their language in order to gain control of the animals and justify unfair rules.

Animal Farm demonstrates how education can be incorporated with propagandistic methods in order to gain control. The farm animals unquestioning belief that the pigs were benevolent leaders in turn created a weak sense of self. This caused Old Major to use this to his advantage and spark a rebellion by generalizing all human beings. The pigs followed in a similar

fashion, by establishing their superiority and inciting fear by using faulty cause and effect reasoning to justify their totalitarianistic rules. *Animal Farm* serves as a reminder of the importance of one's ability to formulate personal opinions, and of using education for the good of everyone.