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Master's Dissertation/
Trabajo Fin de Máster

**A STORY COME TRUE:
AN ANALYSIS OF GEORGE
ORWELL'S *ANIMAL FARM* (1945)**

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ABSTRACT AND KEY WORDS

Nowadays, we are living in an age in which people are losing their critical thought and are easily influenced by other people. This situation can be connected to George Orwell's eclipsed work *Animal Farm* (1945). This story starred by naïve farm animals seems to provide a lighter criticism on politics than the one offered in Orwell's most famous work *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949). Nevertheless, this Master's Dissertation aims to prove the relevance of this work as a social criticism. With this purpose, this MD will study literature as a social criticism, *Animal Farm's* literary genre, its context, formal aspects and the critical reflections that it displays such as manipulation through language or indoctrination. Additionally, there will be a section devoted to analyse the influence of *Animal Farm* in our modern world: literature, music, cinema, TV and even our current way to approach politics. This work will be ended by drawing some conclusions about the influence of *Animal Farm* and the impact of its criticism.

Key words: *Animal Farm*, George Orwell, Russia, communism, manipulation, social criticism.

RESUMEN Y PALABRAS CLAVE

Actualmente estamos en medio de un periodo en el que la gente está perdiendo su pensamiento crítico y es influenciada fácilmente por otros. Esta situación puede conectarse con el eclipsado trabajo de George Orwell *Animal Farm* (1945). Esta historia protagonizada por inocentes animales de granja parece ofrecer una crítica mucho más sutil a la política que la ofrecida en la obra más famosa de Orwell, *1984* (1949). No obstante, este Trabajo de Fin de Máster tiene como objetivo probar la relevancia de *Animal Farm* como crítica social. Para llevar a cabo este objetivo, en este TFM se estudiará la literatura como crítica social, el género literario de *Animal Farm*, su contexto, sus aspectos formales y las críticas que contiene como la manipulación por medio del lenguaje o el adoctrinamiento. Además, habrá una sección dedicada a analizar la influencia de *Animal Farm* en nuestro mundo en los campos de la literatura, música, cine, televisión e incluso en nuestra forma actual de entender la política. Este trabajo se cerrará ofreciendo algunas conclusiones sobre la influencia de *Animal Farm* y el impacto de sus críticas.

Palabras clave: *Rebelión en la granja*, George Orwell, Rusia, comunismo, manipulación, crítica social.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

George Orwell is considered to be one of the most distinguished political writers of the 19th century due to his views upon British issues as the British Imperialism or the left and right British politics, and also upon global themes such as the Second World War or Stalin's politics. His ideas can be observed in his prolific literary production as journalist, essayist and novelist in which it is necessary to remark works such as *Burmese Days* (1934), *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1935), *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), "Politics and the English Language" (1946), "Why I Write" (1946), *Animal Farm* (1946), and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). The impact that his literary work has had on our society has come up with the publication of articles, books, critical essays and biographies which try to explain the views of the British writer. Notwithstanding, as John Rodden explains:

Given the plethora of Orwell criticism, one could argue that another critical study of Orwell is superfluous and unnecessary. But the fact is that this massive critical literature has not only become extremely specialized, and therefore somewhat inaccessible to the nonscholar, but it has also contributed to and even created misconceptions about the man and writer and his literary legacy (Rodden, 2007:x).

Having this into account, we consider it is still necessary to study Orwell's production in depth in order to clarify some misunderstandings and to provide new approaches. This Master's Dissertation aims to study Orwell's work *Animal Farm*, which was eclipsed by its tale form and the great success of the writer's next novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is true that, as Morris Dickstein explains in his chapter "Animal Farm: History as a Fable" (2007:134-135), both literary works follow the same objective: to offer a criticism on Stalin's totalitarian government. However, they reach it by different means. While *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is seen as an adult novel full of thrilling psychological pressure, *Animal Farm* can be considered as some kind of manual for those people who are not initiated in political literature or as a "beautifully crafted tale only a few cuts above propaganda". Nevertheless, these two works can be seen as complementary ones. *Animal Farm* evokes the young revolutionary idealism of those who believe that the world can be changed and also the way in which this

idealism decayed and moved into a dictatorship, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* shows a hopeless dark world run by a dictatorship which cannot be changed.

This work is based on the hypothesis that George Orwell developed in *Animal Farm* trying to make a social criticism on how the political idealism pursued by some inexperienced minds can be turned into a despicable form of government in which those who are in power will take advantage of people by means of lies, mass control and lack of freedom. For this reason, the British writer used Russian communism as an accurate example of his views because despite the fact that it emerged in a theoretical background full of optimism, in the practice it turned out to be a failure. Additionally, this MD will also analyse the ways in which this social criticism is still valid and can be even applied to our current forms of government.

In order to reach the previously mentioned objectives, this MD will be divided into different sections. It will open with a brief analysis of literature as social criticism in which the main features of this genre will be studied and then compared to the ones presented in *Animal Farm*. The work will then be classified according to its genre taking into account its form, literary devices, and narrative style. After that, a brief summary about 19th century Russia will be drawn, paying special attention to the Fall of the Romanovs, the October Revolution, and Stalinism with the aim to prove that George Orwell based *Animal Farm* on Russian politics. Then, Orwell's *Animal Farm* will be studied with a focus on its structure, narrator, characters, and contents. In this section, topics such as the cult of the personality, the use of language as a means of mass control, and the way in which power can fall into corruption will be considered. This section will be followed by a study of *Animal Farm*'s impact on other artistic fields such as music or cinema. Additionally, some aspects from Orwell's work will be compared with our modern society to prove not only that this writer was a visionary, but also that his social criticism is still relevant in our days. The last part of this dissertation will be devoted to the conclusions.

2. LITERATURE AS SOCIAL CRITICISM.

The classification of literature has always been an aim for scholars. Many of the parameters to categorise literature were drawn up by the Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato. Among the great number of literary criticism schools it is possible to find

Structuralism, Feminist Criticism, Gender and Queer Studies, Ecocriticism, and Marxist Criticism among others. However, I consider interesting to analyse George Orwell's *Animal Farm* from a sociological criticism perspective. This form of literary criticism was mainly introduced in Kenneth Burke's article "Literature as Equipment for Living" (1971). He asserted that this notion is not a new one, but that he would suggest some new elements to form this perspective. Burke analyses the social use of refrains and proverbs to study how we use them to express our feelings towards society, and then takes this idea to literature. He states that "the author may remain realistic as far off the track in his own way. Forgetting that realism is an aspect for foretelling, he may take it as an end in itself (Adams, 1971:596) and thus, the situations described in literature which deal with human relations could be applied at any time in the literary analysis.

In other words, literature can be used as a means to express disillusionment with certain events in our history and society, for this reason, the contextual framework of this kind of works is deeply necessary. An example can be found in Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) in which Dickens depicts a revolution which is not completely achieved due to human necessity of power and its inherent corruption. Another interesting example is the Angry Young Men group which is a term given after John Osborne explained his views about the disillusionment and discontent of those "young men [who] strongly opposed to the social and political mores of the establishment" (Cuddon, 2013:38) in his book *Look Back in Anger* (1957). The term can be used to refer to:

The protagonist of hard-hitting fiction and drama and to their authors, who frequently shared with their character a provincial, working-class background. But while critical of the privileges of the metropolitan elite and the fatuousness of consumer society, these angry young men rarely articulated anything approaching a political vision, and were prone to expression of nihilistic despair and bouts of misogyny (Cuddon, 2013:38-39).

Notwithstanding, George Orwell did use literature as a political weapon. He asserted in his essay "Why I Write" (1946) that "it seems to me nonsense, in a period like our own, to think that one can avoid writing about such subjects. Everyone writes of them in one guise or another. It is simply a question of which side one takes and what approach one follows" (Orwell, 2004:8). To prove that Orwell wrote *Animal Farm* as a

way to use literature to criticise society, the following sections will analyse the form in which Orwell expresses his disillusionment with the corruption of communism in the Soviet Union and with human nature itself.

3. CLASSIFICATION OF *ANIMAL FARM* ACCORDING TO ITS LITERARY GENRE.

Animal Farm has been classified according to different literary genres that seem identical, but include important differences which have to be taken into account. In this section, the most common literary genres that have been applied to *Animal Farm* will be discussed, and after having this analysis into account, a literary genre will be suggested as the most accurate to this literary piece.

The subtitle of this work – “A Fairy Story” – proposes its classification as a fairy tale, however, according to the *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory* this category does not perfectly describe Orwell’s work. The following definition explains the main features of fairy tales:

Fairy tales belong to folk literature and are part of the oral tradition. And yet no one bothered to record them until the brothers Grimm produced their famous collection of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* or *Household Tales* (1812, 1914, 1822). In its written form the fairy tale tends to be narrative in prose about the fortunes and misfortunes of a hero or heroine who, having experienced various adventures of a more or less supernatural kind, lives happily ever after. Magic, charms, disguise and spells are some of the major ingredients of such stories, which are often subtle in the interpretation of human nature and psychology (Cuddon, 2013:266).

Although *Animal Farm* can be considered a narrative in prose form, it does not present a main character that must overpass a series of supernatural challenges. Despite the fact that animals are able to talk, read, and write, this cannot be considered as a kind of magic spell, and what is more, the ending of the work that is being analysed is not a happy ending at all due to the fact that the animal revolution goes wrong and shows how power can be corrupted. Along with the definition proposed, *Animal Farm* could not be classified as a fairy tale, but the fact that the characters are animals leads this

classification to take the term "fable" into account. As stated by Cuddon, a fable is "a short narrative in prose or verse which points a moral. Non-human creatures or inanimate things are normally the characters. The presentation of human beings as animals is the characteristic of the literary fable and is unlike the fable that still flourishes among primitive peoples" (Cuddon, 2013:264). This definition is closer to *Animal Farm* because it points out that it can be a narrative in prose form with a message and this work certainly points to it since it warns readers against firmly believing in all that governors say because they are corrupted by power. In addition to this, this term also includes the fact that animals are presented in a humanized way since they can talk, read, write and even work as human beings.

Together with fables, it is possible to find a quite similar term: beast epic. Beast epic can be delineated as "an allegorical tale, often, but by no means always, long, in which animals are characters and in which the style is pseudo-epic. [...] Goethe used it in his *Reineke Fuchs*¹ (1794). The intention of this form was often satirical." (Cuddon, 2013:68). In relation to this explanation, it can be said that *Animal Farm* is an allegory because as Cuddon points out (2013:21), it is viable to find a secondary but more complex meaning behind the surface one. In this case, the surface meaning would be devoted to the animal revolution which is carried out in order to be free from men, whereas the secondary meaning that is behind is related to the social criticism that Orwell was making about Russian communism and especially about Stalin. Following with the definition, although some human beings such as Mr and Mrs Jones, or the other farmers appear, animals are the main characters in Orwell's piece. Another key feature that is mentioned is that beast epic possesses a pseudo-epic style and on the words of Cuddon (2013:239) "epics are often of national significance in the sense that they embody the history and aspirations of a nation in a lofty or grandiose manner". It should not be forgotten that the prefix pseudo means something that is "not real, but pretending to be real" as the *Macmillan Dictionary* online suggests. It could be argued that the animals from *Animal Farm* are portraying some kind of mock aspirations of the animal kingdom in a proud and magnificent way as they even create their hymn and flag to remark their ambitions. Finally, Cuddon states that the commonest intention of beast epics is the satirical one. It is true that some degree of dark humour appears in Orwell's

¹ This literary work appears in the bibliography in its English version, namely *Reynard the Fox*.

work with the aim of making a deep criticism on Russian communism, but the definition of the term satire provided by Cuddon involves that:

It may be a cooking term in origin or, as Juvenal called it, *ollapodrida*, “mish-mash”, “farrago”. According to Johnson, Swift and Pope, the satirist is a kind of self-appointed guardian of standards, and ideals; of moral as well as aesthetic values. He is a man (women satirists have been very rare) who takes it upon himself to correct and ridicule the follies and vices of society and thus to bring contempt and derision upon aberration from a desirable and civilized norm. [...] In European literature, the 17th c. and the 18th c. is regarded as the golden age of satire. Various reasons are adduced for this. Those commonly put forward are the it was a period of fairly highly developed civilization and culture (at any rate, for a minority) which bred the satirist whose need and purpose was to protect this culture from abuse, aberration and corruption. Thus we find Pope satirizing materialism, excess and bad writing, [and] Swift ferociously attacking hypocrisy, pride, cruelty and political expedience. [...] During the 20th century satire was rare. Two of the main reasons for this lack were it was a period of much instability and violent change, and the humour industry grew to such an extent that the satirist could hardly make himself felt except in the caricature and the cartoon. (Cuddon, 2013:632-633)

Having this explanation in mind, it is possible to identify George Orwell with the figure of the satirist. He is ridiculing Russian communism and its politicians through the book. A crystal clear example of this can be seen in the representation of the main leaders of the revolution as pigs, which are animals usually connected to filth and can even be used as an offensive term as the *Macmillan Dictionary* online suggests in its definition “an insulting word for someone who behaves in an unpleasant way”. Notwithstanding, he not only does he attempt to mock Russian communism, but also to use this satire as some kind of didactic device showing the dangers of not having a well-organised and uncorrupted government. As Orwell used the satire in a similar way to the one used by Pope or Swift, it is possible to state that he was one of the few satirists of the 20th century despite living in such an unstable and violent period.

Once that these similar terms have been explored, it can be said that *Animal Farm* is not a fairy story as its subtitle suggests. However, Orwell might have chosen this subtitle without intending to describe its literary genre, but in order to attack communism again because, for the writer, this political ideology works just as a fairy tale: it sounds like a perfect utopia, but it cannot be achieved in reality. Nevertheless, trying to classify this literary piece according to only one literary genre would be unfair as the classification would not be as accurate as needed. Therefore, I suggest classifying it as a political satire which follows the beast epic tradition as it ridicules a political way of thinking through the creation of humanised animals as characters and with the intention of proving that communism is a failure.

4. POLITICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT.

If *Animal Farm* is read in depth, it is not very difficult to find that George Orwell was inspired by some fundamental events of Russian history. Russian history has always had some kind of mystery halo and, as Robert Service points out, “[the] access to many of the Russian archives is harder [now] than it was in the early 1990s (even though the situation still remains freer than under the communist administration)” (Service, 2015:ix). This section will be devoted to contextualise this literary work in relation to the events that inspired Orwell. First, figures such as Marx, Trotsky, Lenin, Stalin and their views will be explained; and secondly, we will study key events such as the fall of the Romanovs, the October Revolution, and the creation of the Soviet Union.

4.1. Political and Philosophical context: Marx, Trotsky, Lenin and Stalin.

Russian history cannot be fully understood without analysing some key political and philosophical movements, and leaders. One of these major figures is Karl Marx (1818-83) who, according to current online version of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, was a German philosopher, sociologist, and economist. He studied a doctorate in Greek philosophy and was quickly interested in politics, especially in some of Hegel’s ideas such as absolute idealism, alienation, and the master-slave dialectic. He was even considered as a Young Hegelian as he “sought to develop and expand the dialectical spirit of Hegel's philosophy beyond the limitations of Hegel himself”. When Marx travelled to Paris, he met his famous lifelong mate Friedrich Engels and they co-

wrote the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). As *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics* suggests, one of the topics which this widely known political work deals with is the alienation suffered by people since they did not have the freedom to choose key aspects about their lives,

In the slogan [...] communism was a world in which ‘each gave according to his abilities, and received according to his needs’. Since morality had been abolished along with want, the main criteria governing the choice of life projects were aesthetic or scientific; communist society was not expected to be consumerist (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics online*).

It also encourages workers to rebel and go against the bourgeoisie in order to achieve a new social order in which the bourgeoisie will be eventually overthrown by the working classes. However, this theoretical approach was difficult to be put into practice in Russia due to the fact that most of its inhabitants were illiterate and needed to be educated. For this reason, the communist Bolsheviks had some excellent and appealing slogans such as “peace, bread and land” but no programme at all.

One of the most fervent followers of Marx’s ideology was Leon Trotsky (1879 – 1940) who was a political writer and an ardent orator. He developed Karl Marx’s views by adding his personal conclusions as it can be observed in his theory of the permanent revolution. As it is explained in the work *The Permanent Revolution & Results and Prospects* (2010)², governments should be ruled by workers and this must be achieved by a revolution in which both the proletariat and the peasantry create an alliance to rebel against capitalism and its embodiment, the bourgeoisie. When power is eventually taken by the working class, it does not mean the ending of the revolution but its beginning because this theory is supposed to affect the whole world. Thus, this revolution becomes permanent because it is not possible to achieve its goals, therefore it is an utopian proposal (2010: 310-315). Another enthusiastic follower of Marxism and, during some time, a close friend of Leon Trotsky was Vladimir Lenin (1870 – 1924). This revolutionary politician followed the principles of Marxism, but then he argued that the proletariat was unable to demolish capitalism and the bourgeoisie without any help as

² This book edited by Luma Nichol comprises two different works written by Leon Trotsky: *Results and Prospects* which was first published in 1906 and *The Permanent Revolution* which was published in 1930.

most workers were illiterate, so they needed a party of scientific and literate socialists who would lead them in this process (“Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich”, 2016). His views about communism were quickly known as Leninism and among its most important features we have to mention the necessary and constant class struggle, the common ownership of the means of production, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. These ideas can be found in his book *State and Revolution* (1917). Lenin’s activism started in his early youth and he even led the Bolsheviks together with Trotsky to overthrow the Provisional Government and to obtain the post of the Council of People’s Commissar. During his time in power, he experimented with a new form of economy called “War Communism” which, , “destroyed the money economy and stimulated the underground markets that became a chronic feature of the Soviet command economy” (“Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich”, 2016). This economy experiment became the economy model when Stalin was in power. His revolutionary contributions as a leader in the October Revolution, his new economic policies, and his decisions in power were seen as highly positive aspects in Russia. For this reason, after his death, a kind of cult of personality which praised his legacy was established and the Order of Lenin was conceived as one of the maximum honours.

Once that some key features have been drawn upon the figures of Marx, Trotsky and Lenin, it is possible to analyse the figure of Stalin. Joseph Stalin (1878 – 1953) was a revolutionary political leader who became interested in Marxism since his early youth. He was such an ardent revolutionary that was sent in exile to Siberia due to some illegal ways that he used to finance the party (“Stalin, Joseph”, 2004). These events quickly caught Lenin’s attention, and when Stalin came back from his detention after the fall of Tsar Nicholas II, he was appointed Commissar of Nationalities and, then, he was chosen as a member of the Politburo. Although eventually Lenin regretted it, he praised the figure of Stalin so much that he was rapidly promoted in Bolshevik organisation and a quasi-religious cult of personality was built around him. Additionally, he started a campaign against his rival leader Trotsky which was increased when Lenin died and they fought to obtain his position. This battle ended with Trotsky’s assassination by a Stalinist Spanish agent, Ramón Mercader (“Leon Trotsky”, 2016).. In relation to Stalin’s government, it is possible to highlight the theory of “Socialism in One Country” which deals with the fact of building a communist country instead of a communist

world as Trotsky suggested., This form of government was widely known as the “Stalin Revolution” and:

[It] included forcible collectivization of the peasants; rapid expansion of heavy industry pursuant to the Five-Year Plans; and a vast increase in the labor camp system. Stalin repudiated social and artistic experimentation in favor of the propaganda of “socialist realism,” embraced Russian nationalism, and abandoned the Marxian doctrines of egalitarianism and the “withering away of the state.” He persecuted all religions until World War II, when he granted limited toleration to the Russian Orthodox Church in order to gain its patriotic support (“Stalin, Joseph”, 2004)

In relation to these persecutions, it is necessary to add the Great Terror, which, as Robert Service explains in his chapter “Terror upon Terror” (2015: 210-234) was a purge against those who he called “enemies of the people” or “anti-Soviet elements”. Although at the beginning there were three massive trials known as the Moscow trials, there were also purges affecting the army, intellectuals, kulaks³, and any person accused of being a traitor that were carried out without any kind of judgment. This brief analysis of the figure of Stalin cannot be ended without mentioning the innumerable abuses against human rights that he committed not only because he ordered many massive killings, but also due to the use of forced-labour camps widely known as Gulags.

Once that some key features about the figures of Marx, Trotsky, Lenin and Stalin, together with some philosophical thoughts have been explained, it is now possible to approach the historical events that took place around them in Russia.

4.2. Historical Context: From the Fall of the Romanovs to Stalinism.

Since the moment when the Russian Empire expelled Napoleon’s troops from Russia in 1812, Russia was seen as a highly dangerous and fierce country, and not many countries attempted to invade it again.. Nevertheless, Russia had many weaknesses which were rising until the reign of Tsar Nicholas II. One of them was its size.

³ According to what Robert Service states, “kulaks” is a term which in Russian means “fists” and was used to refer to peasants. (Service, 2015:6)

According to Robert Service, “Russia’s very vastness was more a problem than an advantage. Only Britain with her overseas domains had a larger empire; but Britain could lose India without herself being invaded: the same was not true for Russia” (Service, 2015:3). Additionally, this country was socially divided in statements starting from top to bottom in the Tsar’s family, religious men, bourgeoisie, army, and workers. Before 1917, workers had already started feeling that they were the only ones that were working for the country while the other statements were enjoying their gains. This situation was aggravated by the fact that in “April 1912 [...] police fired upon striking miners in the gold-fields near the river Lena in Siberia. Demonstrations took place in sympathy elsewhere” (2015:21). People started thinking that the monarchy was failing the people and the country, and by this time the Great War was in process. Tsar Nicholas II did not show very good skills in ruling and supporting his country, but only in repressing it. “The Marxist deputies to the Duma⁴, including both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks were arrested in November 1914. [...] Most revolutionary leaders were in Siberian exile or Swiss emigration” (2015:29). As Peter Kenez suggests in his book *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End* (2006: 15-16), the February Revolution of 1917 can be easily summarised. Women from textile factories went on strike claiming bread as they knew that there was not enough flour supply. Demonstrations were gaining power and also their slogans which were becoming more and more political. Some days after, on 26th February, the soldiers were told to shoot the demonstrators to death. Although there were larger arrests, many soldiers decided to join the demonstrators creating thus a period of anarchy and senseless killings. This caused that “on 2 March, while travelling by train from Mogliëv to Petrograd, the Emperor abdicated [but] at first he had tried to transfer his powers to his sickly, adolescent son Alexei.[...] The formation of the Provisional Government was announced on 3rd March” (Service, 2015:33). Some months later, the whole Romanov family was assassinated and thus the fall of this monarchy took place.

Although at the beginning, this brought a feeling of unity, crisis and demonstrations continued taking place all over Russia. Eventually, the Provisional Government was overthrown on 25th October 1917 and therefore starting the October Revolution. The Bolsheviks occupied all public buildings including the Winter Palace. Lenin, together with Stalin, quickly got accustomed to this new period and he “believed

⁴ This word is used to refer to the Russian Parliament.

that eventually this state would cover the continent. His objective was the construction of a pan-European socialist state” (Service, 2015:69). Until this time, Bolshevik leaders had been using the terms civil war and class struggle as synonym terms, nevertheless it is possible to speak about a civil war after the October Revolution because two different belligerent groups can be distinguished: the Red Army which was led by Lenin, and the White Army which was led by Alexander Kolchak. This civil war lasted until 1922 and it ended with a large number of casualties, the independence of Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Finland and Lithuania, and the consolidation of the Soviet Union or the USSR⁵. As Lenin was severely ill, Joseph Stalin took the power and he started using the New Economic Policy (NEP) as a replacement of War Communism thanks to Lenin’s advice in order to promote the Soviet economy which was practically destroyed. Notwithstanding, problems such as “the national and religious resurgence, the administrative malaise, poverty, illiteracy, urban unemployment, military insecurity, problems in industrial production, [and] political apathy” (Service, 2015:164) caused the abolishment of this policy in 1928. A series of five-year plans were the substitutes of the NEP, lasting the first until 1932. During this first five-year plan, workers were encouraged to work harder than ever and a great variety of propaganda full of military slogans was used then to motivate the proletariat. Additionally, during this time the first purges against the enemies of the Soviet Union took place and the first gulags were created. This opened the darkest period of the Soviet Union, the Great Terror, which made Stalin feel empowered and feared (Service: 2015:220). By that time, the addenda “Give the dog a dog’s death!” was one of Stalin’s favourites and was used almost as a kind of law by the Cheka, the secret police of the Soviet Union. It also needs to be remarked that Joseph Stalin signed a pact with Adolf Hitler known as the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact (1940) which established a non-belligerence agreement between these two powerful countries. This can be understood by paying attention to the fact that “by the late 1930s the term totalitarianism was being widely used to describe the kind of state and society that Stalin had engineered.[...] Commentators on Soviet Politics, while recognizing contrasts in ideology, saw fascism, nazism and communism as sharing basic features in their methods of rule” (Service, 2015:235). All of this served to build a cult of personality around the figure of Stalin by the use of mass media and slogans.

⁵ This acronym stands for Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The acronym СССР can also be found in this same context as it stands for the same meaning in Russian (Союз Советских Социалистических Республик).

This cult of personality was promoted by the terror that Stalin established with his purges, the forced-labour camps and the Cheka.

After this brief analysis of the main events of the historical context, it is viable to start the study of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as these actions that took place in Russia are the basis of George Orwell's social criticism.

5. ANALYSIS OF GEORGE ORWELL'S *ANIMAL FARM*

This core section aims to examine the literary piece *Animal Farm*⁶ according to its form and content. The first subsection is devoted to analyse most of the formal aspects of this work such as its narrator, characters and structure. After that, the main social critiques that can be found in *Animal Farm* will be explored.

5.1. Narrator, Characters and Structure.

Animal Farm is not told by using a first person narrator as it would have been a great option since this kind of narrator usually makes the reader be in a character's shoes. Instead of this, George Orwell decided to use a third person narrator as it can be observed in the following opening lines:

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. With the ring of light from his lantern dancing from side to side he lurched across the yard, kicked off his boots at the back door, drew himself a last glass of beer from the barrel in the scullery, and made his way up to bed. (Orwell, 2008:1)

The purpose of using this narrator may have two different reasons: the first one is that, as it has been already mentioned in the third section, fables and beast epics tend to use third person narrators; and the second reason is that this narrator allows the reader to be more objective and to avoid identification with the character chosen by the author, and thus the reader is free to choose the characters he wants to identify with.. This

⁶ This analysis will be carried out according to the following version of the book: Orwell, George. (1946) [2008]. *Animal Farm*. London: Penguin Books.

observer narrator has access to the character's thoughts and feelings, as it can be seen in the following quotation: "None of the animals could form any idea as to what this meant, except old Benjamin, who nodded his muzzle with a knowing air, and seemed to understand, but would say nothing" (2008:73). Here, the narrator is able to state which animals understand the pigs' manipulation and which ones are so naïve that cannot create any idea about that, and what is more, the narrator's omniscience allows him to predict the future by saying that Benjamin, despite having understood the plan, is not going to speak.

However, it is important to note that this omniscience is limited and, in some occasions, the narrator does not have access to all the information. For instance, the first time that the pigs milk the cows, the animals ask about its future use and the pigs answer that this is not the important issue, but the harvest. Then, the narrator explains: "So the animals trooped down to the hayfield to begin the harvest, and when they came back in the evening it was noticed that the milk had disappeared" (2008:16). It is not until the third chapter when it is stated that: "The mystery of where the milk went was soon cleared up. It was mixed every day into the pigs' mash" (2008:22). Having these lines into account, it is possible to draw two interpretations. The first one is that the narrator's omniscience is limited, as I have suggested above, and he cannot know who took the milk until it is discovered, or that his omniscience is not limited, but the narrator prefers to give the reader the information at the same time that the animals have it in order to make the reader feel inside the story. Finally, it is also worth noting that *Animal Farm's* narrator is a reliable one due to the fact that he tells the events in a highly objective way, without taking any side namely the one of the farmers, the pigs, or the other animals. It is important to remark that although George Orwell uses this narrator to show his ideas about Russian communism and the decadence of the rebellion, the figures of the author and the narrator must not be mixed up.

Characters in *Animal Farm* play a highly important role as each of them is an allegory of a Russian character or group of them. In order to analyse them in a clear and ordered way, they are going to appear classified in groups and in the same order that they would be in the social structure of the Animal Farm.

Old Major is a twelve year-old white boar with has a majestic and benevolent appearance (2008:1) and which has a dream about a rebellion against humans and creates the bases of Animalism. He is seen as a symbol during the revolution and his

teachings are carried out by the other two boars, Snowball and Napoleon. This white boar evokes a mixture of two different characters: Karl Marx and Lenin. Marx was the writer of the *Communist Manifesto*, the document which influenced people to rebel against the Tsar. On the other side, his death leaves two different leaders with opposed views at the front of the rebellion, namely Trotsky and Stalin. It is also important to note that Old Major's skull is used in all Sunday meetings as a symbol of the revolution which in some degree remembers the way in which the body of Lenin is preserved in a mausoleum in the centre of the Red Square in Moscow. As it has been already mentioned, Snowball and Napoleon parallel with the figures of Trotsky and Stalin respectively as John Rodden suggests in *Understanding Animal Farm* (Rodden, 1999: xix). Snowball is described as a vivacious, inventive and excellent speaker (Orwell, 2008:9) which is highly interested in creating committees such as the Egg Production or the Clean Tails ones to try to give voice to the other animals and improve their lives. Trotsky fits perfectly into these features since he was known to be highly devoted to the communist cause and very good at giving speeches. He also promoted the creation of several committees. Additionally, Snowball proposed the construction of the windmill in order to have electricity in the farm in the same way that Trotsky was in favour of industrialising the Soviet Union. Once that Napoleon reaches the power, Snowball is quickly expelled and demonised as an enemy of the Animal Farm. In the same way, Stalin forced Trotsky to exile himself and ordered the Spanish agent Ramón Mercader to assassinate him. On the other side, Napoleon is a "large, fierce-looking Berkshire boar [...] not much a talker but with a reputation for getting his own way" (2008:9). Although Snowball is in favour of the revolution, he does not see it as a means to achieve the benefit for everybody, but for himself and starts organising the farm to obtain more and more power. In relation to the windmill issue, Napoleon prefers to deal with other issues such as the food production which mirrors the way in which Stalin was more interested in the basic needs than in industrialising the Soviet Union. Additionally, the other animals and Napoleon himself build a cult of personality around him that highly resembles the one that was devoted to Stalin in the Soviet Union. Another important pig is Squealer who is described as a:

Small fat pig [...] with round checks, twinkling eyes, nimble movements and a shrill voice. He was a brilliant talker, and when he was arguing some difficult point he had a way of skipping from side to side and whisking his tail which was

somehow very persuasive. The other said of Squealer that he could turn black into white (2008:9)

This pig is in charge of manipulating the animals in order to make them trust Napoleon. He achieves it by reading false figures of their improvement and by the repetition of maxims. These features lead to find a resemblance with two different entities: the Soviet propaganda and Vyacheslav Molotov. Soviet propaganda was one of the most effective massive control means that was used in the Soviet Union as Peter Kenez explains in *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization* (1985):

Propaganda is nothing more than the attempt to transmit social and political values in the hope of affecting people's thinking, emotions, and thereby behaviour. The intent of influencing others is hardly objectionable. When we think we disapprove of propaganda, it usually turns out that we really object its goals or methods. These methods are frequently repugnant. They include manipulating and distorting information, lying, and preventing others from finding the truth (Kenez, 1985:4).

The task that Squealer carries out throughout the book is highly similar to the one described here. It is also worth noting that propaganda includes radio, newspapers, books, meetings, posters, slogans, cinema and organizations. Besides, if we pay attention to the physical description of Squealer it is viable to find some connections between this character and Molotov, as this protégé of Stalin was a corpulent man with small eyes and he was in charge of the foreign affairs.

Then, the dogs would form the following social class. Although at the beginning of the book there are only three of them, Bluebell, Jessie and Pincher, their offspring is also an important part in Napoleon's government. These dogs are raised by Napoleon to create his own security patrol, so this is a clear reference to the Soviet Cheka which carried out a large number of killings during the Great Terror and the purges. There is a character, Moses the raven, which does not appear a lot in this literary piece but his allegorical meaning is highly important. He is described as a "spy and tale-bearer, but he was also a clever talker. He claimed to know of the existence of a mysterious country called Sugarcandy Mountain, to which all animals went when they died" (Orwell,

2008:10). This bird flies out when Mr Jones is expelled, but it comes back at the end. It is an allegory of the religion and Orwell portrays it:

Embodied in figures doing no useful work, promising the pie in the sky when you die, and faithfully serving whoever happens to be in power. [...] When the Revolutions turns conservative and nationalistic, Napoleon brings the raven back, as Stalin brought back the Russian Orthodox Church (Rodden, 1999:141).

It is possible to move now to the group of horses and donkeys: Boxer, Clover, Benjamin and Mollie. These four represent the different views of the proletariat towards the revolution. Boxer and Clover are the two car-horses “Clover was a stout motherly mare approaching middle life, who had never quite got her figure back after her fourth foal” (Orwell, 2008:2) and Boxer is described as an “enormous beast, nearly eighteen hand high, and as strong as any two ordinary horses put together [...] he was not of first-rate intelligence, but he was universally respected for his steadiness of character and tremendous powers of work” (2008:2). Boxer is continuously repeating the same two mottos: “I will work harder” (2008:18) and “Napoleon is always right” (2008:55). These two horses represent all the workers that put their expectations into the revolution by thinking that they were working for themselves, when in fact they were again working for a different master. Benjamin, the donkey, “was the oldest animal in the farm and worst tempered. He seldom talked, and when he did it was usually to make some cynical remark [...] Alone among the animals on the farm he never laughed” (2008:2). He does not take part in any discussion even when he understands that the pigs are rewriting the Seven Commandments. Having all this into account, it is possible to see some similarities between this character and those workers who remained sceptical during the revolution and despite the fact that they understood that what Stalin was doing was not fair or correct, they did not say anything. Finally, Mollie is portrayed as a “foolish, pretty white mare” (2008:2) who only cares about having ribbons in her hair, being stroked and having sugar. The first winter after the rebellion, she runs out of the farm to go to a nearby one. This mare is the embodiment of those workers who did not support communism as they were more devoted to material things. It also represents those tsarist supporters who left Russia when the Tsar was overthrown by the Bolsheviks.

The rest of the animals, namely the cows, sheep, hens, the cat, and Muriel the goat also represent, in a similar way that Boxer and Clover, those peasants who thought that the revolution was a way to free themselves from the chains of slavery, but then found that these chains were never broken and they had to continue working as hard as they had done.

Finally, it is possible to observe the presence of some human beings: Mr Jones, Mr Frederick, Mr Pilkington, and Mr Whymper. The first of them, Mr Jones, is the owner of the Manor Farm and is described a drunk man who obliges his animals to work hard and although he sometimes treats them well, he usually whips them (2008:58). This character is a clear allegory of Tsar Nicholas II who had to abdicate during the February Revolution, in the same way that Mr Jones had to run out of the farm. Additionally, Mr Jones's drunkenness makes reference to the Tsar's inability to control and run his own country, being responsible for the Russian people's rough living conditions. The second human character, Mr Frederick, is a reference to Nazi Germany and especially to Adolf Hitler. Mr Frederick is one of the owners of the nearby farms, and although he helped Mr Jones to attack the Animal Farm, he also makes some agreements with Napoleon and eventually trades with him using fake money.

This points out to the fear that other leaders felt when the Soviet Union was created as they thought that their workers could also rebel against them. However, Stalin and Hitler signed up the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact in 1940 which was a non-invasion agreement which Hitler did not fulfil, just in the same way that Mr Frederick fools Napoleon. On the other hand, Mr Pilkington has a similar role to Mr Frederick's one: he helps Mr Jones, and when Napoleon is in power he also tries to trade with him. It is only when Mr Frederick fools Napoleon that Mr Pilkington is welcomed in Animal Farm and the agreement between him and Napoleon is completed. This human character is the embodiment of the Allies countries of the Second World War. Stalin started some negotiations with them, but it was not until the Nazi army invaded the USSR that Stalin decided to create an alliance to defeat Hitler. The last human being, Mr Whymper is “a solicitor living in Willingdon [who] had agreed to act as an intermediary between Animal Farm and the outside world” (2008:43). His only role in the book is to take advantage of the situation by establishing some connections between Napoleon and the other farmers. This reminds us of those people who had capitalistic expectations and

worked as a link between the Soviet Union and the rest of European countries not with the aim of helping to establish some connections, but in order to take profit from them and get richer.

Once that *Animal Farm*'s narrator and main character have been studied, we are going to study its structure. *Animal Farm* is divided into ten chapters which show a circular structure, since at the end of the story the animals' conditions do not seem to have changed. The work opens with a prophecy in form of an Old Major's dream and that encourages the animals to go on a rebellion against their owner, Mr Jones, and all humans (Orwell, 2008:3-6). Once that this boar dies, the other animals carry out the revolution led by the boars Snowball and Napoleon, and are able to expel Mr and Mrs Jones from the farm (2008:12). It is curious to note that Moses, the raven, also disappears when they are expelled. These events seem to evoke the rebellion suggested by Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* and the February Revolution which caused Tsar Nicholas II's abdication, which have been previously explained.

The first rules and slogans such as "All animals should go naked" (2008:13) and the Seven Commandments (2008:15) start to appear at the same time that the milk disappears. In addition, the first days after the rebellion resemble an idyllic utopia, but some hints of non-equality are shown: the pigs do not work as the other animals due to the fact that they have to use their special intelligence to rule them (2008:17). Although the pigs try to teach the other animals to read and write, this task does not give the expected results so they summarise the Seven Commandments in a short and new maxim "Four legs good, two legs bad" (2008:22). When the summer ends, the two leader boars send pigeons all over the country to spread their anthem "Beast of England" and thus, let the other animals know about their achievement. This is even heard by the nearby farmers who decide to help Mr Jones to recover his farm, although they are not able to achieve it (2008:24-28). This mirrors the way in which the Russian communists made use of massive propaganda with the aim of creating a whole continent based upon communism, and also the way in which other countries feared the rise and rebellion of their working classes. It is also related to the Civil War which started after the October Revolution and lasted until 1922 and which brought face to face the Red Army, which is represented by the animals, against the White Army, which is embodied by the farmers.

Mollie, the white mare, runs out of the farm after being discovered with sugar and being stroked by a man, showing in that way that she preferred to be a slave but with some comfortable conditions instead of having freedom and no comfort (2008:30). In winter, the first discussions between Snowball and Napoleon start and eventually Snowball's plan of building a windmill is carried out. However, Snowball does not see it because he is expelled from the farm and persecuted by nine fierce dogs that Napoleon had been raising to protect himself. Then, he starts a dismissing campaign towards Snowball and bans the Sunday meetings. This is a clear parallelism to Stalin and Trotsky's bad relationship and Trotsky's expulsion of Russia by Stalin.

The other animals had to work harder than ever, but they did it because they knew that what "they did was for the benefit of themselves and those of their kind who would come after them, and not for a pack of idle thieving human beings" (2008:40). Additionally, with regard to the supplies that the farm cannot produce by itself such as paraffin, oil, nails or iron, Napoleon announces that they are going to start trading hay and eggs with the other farms with the help of a human intermediary (2008:42-43). The animals do not like this new policy and they start questioning the commandments that the pigs are breaking. Nevertheless, Squealer quickly changes the wall of the Seven Commandments and set the animals' minds to believe him (2008:46). When autumn comes again, the windmill is destroyed by some violent winds but Napoleon takes advantage of this situation and states that Snowball has come back to the farm in order to destroy their work (2008:47-48). This can be connected with the fact that the proletariat continued being a slave of the ones that were in power, which were changing the rules in their own benefit. Besides, it is important to note that the pigs are helped by human beings that could be understood as an allegory of the first steps of alliance between the Soviet Union and the Nazi Germany. Another point that should be taken into account is the fact that despite his power, Stalin felt deeply insecure and feared to lose his supremacy. The accident of the windmill is related to this issue, as his control was bigger as he directed the people's hatred towards others, especially towards Trotsky.

Winter comes and the animals keep working harder than ever to rebuild the windmill but they almost have nothing to eat. Napoleon stops his public apparitions, and when he carries out some apparitions he is always surrounded by the fierce dogs (2008:50). Squealer announces that Napoleon has accepted a new agreement and that

the hens must surrender their eggs. This is not well received among the hens, and they start a rebellion. However, Napoleon answers in a quick and ruthless way: he cuts up their rations. For this reason, after some days the hens are unable to continue with their rebellion and capitulate (2008:51). Additionally, Napoleon starts some trade dialogues with the other farms but every time that the agreement seems to be closed, rumours suggest that Snowball is in those farms. Snowball is now considered to be a devilish entity which enters the farm every night to ruin and destroy it. (2008:52-53). However, some animals remember the brave way in which he acted during the battle against the farmers, but as Napoleon states that he is a traitor, all animals believe in his word (2008:55). These events recall the beginning of the first Five-Year plan in which the working class had to work really hard and some famines took place. During this time, the Soviet Union was also having some dialogues with other countries to create alliances and treaties, but these did not seem to be closed up. Furthermore, Stalin continued demoting Trotsky's reputation.

Sometime after that, Napoleon arranges a new meeting in which he whimpers at his ferocious dogs and they attack five animals who had expressed their opinions aloud: Boxer and four pigs. These four pigs quickly confess that they are Snowball's allies and are slaughtered. A chain of confessions starts and it is followed by a large number of executions (2008: 56-57). The other animals get deeply appalled and they sing their anthem "Beast of England" to console themselves, but Squealer announces that this song has been already banned because it "was a song of the Rebellion. But the Rebellion is now completed" (2008:59). For this reason, this song is substituted by another song which says: "Animal Farm, Animal Farm, / Never through me shalt thou come to harm!" (2008:60). Another event that brought Stalin's Five-Year plan was the first purges against the enemies of the State in which people were executed due to false confessions and were used as a weapon to terrify and warn the rest of the people. Moreover, there was a huge campaign of slogans and propaganda which encouraged people to think that the state should always be prior to the individual.

The animals remember that the sixth commandment forbade the killing of animals but, surprisingly, when they go to the wall to read it they see that it runs "No animal shall kill any other animal without cause" (2008:61). Additionally, the animals continue working harder than ever and they start having the feeling that they are in worse conditions that they were with Mr Jones. Nevertheless, Squealer reads long papers in

which it is proved that they are obtaining the best possible results. By that time, Napoleon is hardly ever seen in public but a cult of personality is built around him: his birthday is celebrated; he is usually called as “our Leader, Comrade Napoleon”, “Father of All Animals”, “Terror of Mankind”, Protector of Sheepfold”, and “Ducklings’ Friend” (2008:62); all successful achievements are related to him in a way that makes him look like a supernatural being; and, pictures, songs, and poems are fully devoted to his figure. On his side, Napoleon tries to establish some trade ties with Mr Pilkington and Mr Frederick, and he announces that he does not intend to trade with Mr Frederick and thus, starts a campaign against him by changing the slogan “Death to Humanity” to “Death to Frederick” (2008:65). Notwithstanding, once that the windmill is finished, Napoleon decides to trade with Mr Frederick and the slogan is once more changed to “Death to Pilkington” (2008:66). Once that the trade is completed, the animals discover that the money that Mr Frederick gave to them was false and they have been fooled, so, again they turn against Mr Frederick and create some kind ties with Mr Pilkington. The next day, Mr Frederick and his men enter the farm and attack it. Several animals are killed and most of them are severely wounded (2008:68-70). It is feasible to observe clear similitudes between these events and Russian history. Massive propaganda controlled people by reading statistics of their improvement at the same time that they were bombed with slogans to motivate them in their labours. Additionally, Stalin’s cult of personality was deeply rooted during these years and he was praised as a kind of religious figure. Stalin continued his treaty dialogues with Nazi Germany and the Allies (France, United Kingdom, and Poland) and eventually signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact (1940). Nevertheless, Nazi Germany did not respect this agreement and soon invaded the Soviet Union causing a large number of casualties and injuries in both belligerent fronts.

When the animals are able to expel the humans from the Animal Farm, Squealer fires a gun to celebrate their victory but Boxer does not share this victorious feeling as he has lost friends, the windmill and even himself is hurt (2008:71). On the other side, Napoleon finds Mr Jones’s old whiskey case and drinks it getting deeply intoxicated, and Squealer announces that he is close to death. However, as soon as this hangover passes, Napoleon improves and Squealer states that he needs alcohol to cure their leader in the following times. Muriel decides to go and read the commandments and she finds out that the fifth commandment runs “No animal shall drink alcohol to excess”

(2008:73). Even having seen Squealer stained with white paint and a paintbrush, the animals' naïveté is so huge that they keep thinking that their memories are not exact. Boxer continues working hard, but he starts dreaming about his retirement and the other animals are not able to remember the past, but they firmly believe that they are now in better conditions. Napoleon raises thirty one piglets and puts himself in charge of their education, putting them aside from other animals. Furthermore, he establishes that the pigs will receive beer in a daily basis and the best food, while the other animals' food suffers some readjustments. Processions and speeches are held more often than ever and animals "found it comforting to be reminded that, after all, they were truly their own masters and that the work they did was for their own benefit" (2008:77). Moses, the raven, appears again and at the same time, Boxer's lungs fail and he falls without being able to recover. Squealer informs the animals that Boxer is going to be sent to a hospital in Willingdon, but when the hospital van arrives all animals farewell Boxer. It is in this moment when Benjamin reads the van and he discovers that it runs: "Alfred Simmonds, Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler, Willingdon. Dealer in Hides and Bone-Meal. Kennels Supplied" (2008:82). Squealer calmed them by saying that the van belonged to the knacker, but it was now on the hospital's properties and that Boxer last words before dying in the hospital were: "Forward in the name of the Rebellion. Long live Animal Farm! Long live Comrade Napoleon! Napoleon is always right" (2008:83). This succession of events points out to the fact that Stalin was able to manipulate the working class in order to take advantage of them. By having their trust and by controlling the press, he was able to make them think that their situation was better than in the past years. In relation to this, he used religion in the same way as it was used during the reign of Tsar Nicholas II, to control the population and to make them forget about their situation of misery. Also, Boxer's story resembles the story of the proletarians who worked harder than ever and even sacrificed their own lives with the aim of creating a better world, but for the ones in power those lives were only seen as bargaining chips to obtain better conditions for themselves and not for everybody.

Chapter ten is opened setting the story some years after, when Muriel, Bluebell, Jessie, Pincher, Mr Jones, Snowball, Boxer and many other animals are dead and forgotten. Only Clover, Moses, Benjamin and the pigs remember the Rebellion. Also, despite the fact that the windmill was built, only the pigs and the dogs improved their conditions (2006:85-86). However, the animals continued feeling honoured for being

part of the only one farm in the country that was ruled for and by animals. One day, Squealer took the sheep to teach them another maxim, and some time later Napoleon and Squealer appear walking on his hind legs. This fact astonished the other animals and just in this moment the sheep burst out singing: “Four legs good, two legs better!” (2008:89). Clover asks Benjamin to go to the wall and to read the Seven Commandments to her, but there was only a single one which stated: “All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others” (2008:90). After that, the animals did not feel strange when they saw the pigs using the telephone, subscribing to newspapers, smoking, and wearing expensive clothes. Napoleon invited some farmers to admire the way in which the Animal Farm worked and had extremely friendly meetings with them. In one of these meeting, Napoleon points out that there is no sign of the white hoof and horn on their flag, of Old Major’s skull, and he announces that the name Animal Farm is now abolished and it is again called “The Manor Farm” (2008:94). The book ends with Napoleon and Mr Pilkington arguing while the other animals look at them by the window and “twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man and from man to pig, and from pig to man again: but already it was impossible to say which was which” (2008:95).

This final part points out that it does not matter who is in power, whether Stalin or the Tsar, the working class will always be oppressed and manipulated. For this reason, the structure of this literary work can be considered as a circular one because despite the many crises that the animals have to experience, their situation does not improve. The same destiny was suffered by the Soviet proletarians: they dreamed about an idyllic communist state, but were awoken from this dream with the fact that their conditions were the same and they had been sacrificing themselves for the most powerful ones' sake and not for the community's one.

5.2. *Animal Farm's* Criticism.

Among the different themes and critiques which appear in *Animal Farm*, there are some of them which are highly remarkable such as the use of language as a means of control, the corruption that lays in power, the social structure and the cult of personality. In this subsection, the different forms that Orwell used to express his views will be explained.

5.2.1. Language as a Means of Mass Control.

The use of language as a means of massive control can be considered as one of the unifying threads of this beast epic. The book is opened with Old Major's long speech encouraging the rebellion against human beings. Old Major states that he has had a kind of revelation in a dream that has made him reach some conclusions. By simply using the word "dream", Old Major is already implying some positive and idyllic meaning. He starts his speech by addressing the difficult conditions that the animals have to face: they are forced to work, they are poorly fed, they are whipped, and when they are not useful, they are slaughtered (2008:3). Then, he points out the guilty ones of their situation: human beings. He asserts that:

Why then do we continue in this miserable condition? Because nearly the whole of the produce of our labour is stolen from us by human beings. There, comrades, is the answer to all our problems. It is summed up in 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 for ever. Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he 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 (2008:4).

He reaches the climax of his speech by directing the animals' thoughts about the cause of their bad situation. He uses language to group the animals together, animals who until this moment have not acted as a group before, and thus to give them a common objective whose achievement is explained in detail. Animals must start a rebellion against human beings to do justice and once that this rebellion is carried out, animals will be able to live happily ever after. He finishes his speech by stating that "All men are enemies. All animals are comrades" (2008:6) and therefore, he summarises his speech into two simple sentences that all animals can remember. Additionally, he provides the animals with an anthem which is a kind of mixture between P. B. Shelley's "Men of England" (1819) and the left-wing anthem "The Internationale". Anthems have been used to group people which have a similar feeling or identity, and the act of singing them together as a group provides the singers with a sensation of being strong

and united, and can even erase the feeling of individuality. In Old Major's "Beast of England" it is possible to observe seven different stanzas: the first one which encourages all animals to be united to achieve a "golden future time" (2008:7), the second one in which it is stated that the day of the rebellion will come and the human beings will be overthrown while animals are in power, then the third stanza is addressed to the abolition of animals' slavery symbols such as rings, harness and whips, the next one praises the future food that they will eat, stanza number five describe the beautiful land which one day will be owned by them, the sixth one encourages animals to work harder to reach their objective, and the last one repeats the same concept as the first one.

Nevertheless, the character which is constantly using language as a means of massive control is Squealer, the pig who can "turn black into white" (2008:9). He is in charge of progressively changing and twisting Old Major's ideas in favour of the pigs, and he does this in a highly intelligent way. One of the first occasions in which he proves his ability is when the animals discover that the pigs are eating the apples and the milk that was going to be shared among them. He explains that:

"Comrades!" he cried. "You do not imagine, I hope, that we pigs are doing this in a spirit of selfishness and privilege? Many of us actually dislike milk and apples. Milk and apples (this has been proved by Science, comrades) contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig. We pigs are brainworkers. The whole management and organization of this farm depend on us. Day and night we are watching over your welfare. It is for your sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back!" (2008:23).

Squealer always uses really sophisticated speeches in which a lot of proofs are included. In this speech, he appeals to science to maintain that pigs need milk and apples to do their job. He starts to classify pigs on top by saying that pigs are the ones who are able to properly use their brains to organise the farm and to watch over the other animals. He even adds that most pigs do not like these foods, which make them look like some mixture between martyrs and demigods. Squealer finishes his speech with a kind of indirect threat: if pigs are not well-fed, Mr Jones will come back and all animals will be slaves again. Squealer uses this same technique when has to defend that the pigs use beds, drink alcohol or trade with humans. This method is combined with

another one in which he erases the past and rewrites the history, or in other words, to rewrite the Seven Commandments. He rewrites them at night, so when the animals that are able to read have some doubts about them, they can find the new commandments on the wall. This technique could not be carried out without taking into account the fact that the farm animals are highly innocent and deeply trust pigs. If they had had a more critical way of thinking, they would have been able to note the differences on the wall and distrust the pigs.

Another method which is widely used by Squealer is to provide large lists of numbers which the animals do not understand, but they seem to prove that their benefits are increasing as it can be observed in the following excerpt:

On Sunday mornings Squealer, holding down a long strip of paper with his trotter, would read out to them lists of figures proving that the production of every class of food-stuff had increased by two hundred per cent, three hundred per cent, or five hundred per cent, as the case might be. The animals saw no reason to disbelieve him, especially as they could no longer remember very clearly what conditions had been like before the Rebellion (2008:61-62).

Here, it is possible to analyse the way in which Squealer dresses up his lies like truths. Despite the fact that the animals are in the same or even in worse conditions that they were with Mr Jones, he states that their production, and therefore, their benefit have been multiplied. Again, the animals are not able to remember their past. Notwithstanding, on this occasion Squealer is not rewriting the past, but the present.

Another example of massive manipulation by means of language is the way in which Snowball is demonised. Although he started being one of the leaders of the Animal rebellion, he is eventually seen as a traitor who comes back during the night to destroy their achievements. This transformation is carried out in different steps: Napoleon expels him from the farm and Squealer asserts that Snowball is a criminal and that he can bring Mr Jones back (2008:37); then, Snowball is found guilty of entering into the farm to destroy the windmill and to convince other animals that they should plot against Napoleon (2008:52), and after that, it is announced that Snowball did not fight with the animals but against them (2008:78). Little by little, Snowball occupies the

place that Mr Jones had at the beginning: the one of being the worst nightmare of the farm animals.

All this massive control by means of language is also completed with a range of mottos which are progressively changing without being noticed, but which remain stuck in the animals' minds. Among these mottos it is possible to find the well-known: "Four legs good, two legs bad", "Napoleon is always right", "I will work harder", "Four legs good, two legs better". These mottos work as simple rules that the animals can understand, remember and follow easily. George Orwell created a list of six rules in his essay "Politics and the English Language" (1946)⁷ that helps writers to create texts without distorting the English language. These rules are:

1. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous. (Orwell, 2004:119)

It is highly interesting that while Squealer's speeches do not follow these rules as they are full of long and scientific words in order to make the intellectual division between the pigs and the other animals even clearer, in the maxims and mottos he does follow these rules in order to make them direct and easy-to-understand statements. This clearly summarises how manipulation through language is achieved. Orwell even defines political language as a constant manipulation of our thoughts as it can be observed in the following quotation from the already mentioned essay:

Political language – and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists – is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind. One cannot change this all in a moment, but one can at least change ones' own habits (Orwell, 2004:120).

⁷ This essay is included in the bibliography as a chapter of the book *Why I Write* (2004).

This subsection cannot be ended without remarking that the massive control through language is successfully carried out because of two different factors: the pigs' intelligence and use of rhetoric, and also to the other animals' gullibility.

5.2.2. Cult of Personality: Napoleon vs. Stalin.

As it has been explained above, Napoleon is a character which parallels Stalin in many ways, and one of these ways is the cult of personality that is built around them and also the way in which they take profit of it. From the very beginning, Napoleon is described as not a very good speaker but “with a reputation for getting his own way” (2008:9) and as Alec Nove points out in his book *Stalinism and After: The Road to Gorbachev*, their names are also connected:

Stalin was born in Gori, Georgia [...] The pseudonym Stalin was adopted to suggest “steel”, and proved to be well chosen. No doubts these facts are an important element in Stalin's personal psychology, and no doubt this personal psychology played its role in Russia's and the world's twentieth-century history. Yet it is perhaps even more useful to see him as a Russian leader, heir to a Russian tradition and meeting Russian needs in ways which had deep Russian roots. This is not the only such case in European history. One has only to remember Napoleon, a very French emperor who was nevertheless a Corsican (Nove, 1990:3).

As naming this pig Stalin would have been a quite obvious reference, Orwell decided to look for a more subtle reference. Although Stalin was Georgian he became a Russian leader in the same way as Napoleon Bonaparte, though being Corsican, eventually was the emperor of France. Another similarity between these two men is that both wanted to expand their power and their empires to all countries in Europe. Having this information in mind, we can understand Orwell's reference. Additionally, according to what Jam Plampler explains in the book *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power*, Napoleon was the first person around whom it was built a cult of personality (Plampler, 1970:3). It is important to clarify what the concept of cult of personality means: “at its most basic level, [it is] the symbolic elevation of one person much above others [...], through the process of elevation of the person who is glorified in a cult

comes to be endowed with something I will interchangeably call ‘sacrality’ and ‘sacral aura’” (Plamper, 1970:xv-xvi).

Napoleon, the boar, is quickly placed at the top of the animal hierarchy due to his intelligence and alleged benevolence towards others. However, it is worth noting that Napoleon did not create Animalism, he only summarised it, nor did he fight in a brave way in the battles, it was Snowball who was even wounded. What Napoleon does throughout the story is to manipulate others to take profit from them, this is his real skill. Nevertheless, the animals see him as their life-saver thanks to the way in which Squealer controls them as it can be seen in the following quote:

Do not imagine, comrades, that leadership is a pleasure! On the contrary, it is deep and heavy responsibility. No one believes more firmly than Comrade Napoleon that all animals are equal. He would be only too happy to let you make your decisions for yourselves. But sometimes you might make the wrong decisions, comrades, and then where should we be? (Orwell, 2008:37).

Here, his totalitarian form of government is justified by stating that although he would really love to give freedom of speech and thought to the other animals, their innocence would lead the farm to chaos. He makes this look like an enormous sacrifice and thus, Napoleon appears to be a highly devoted leader. It is not strange then to find that Napoleon is never referred to simply by his name, but with elevated formalisms such as “Our Leader, Comrade Napoleon”, “Father of All Animals”, “Terror of Mankind”, “Protector of Sheepfold” or “Duckling’s friend” (2008:62). These formal ways to address Napoleon mirror the ones that Stalin enjoyed such as "Our Best Collective Farm Worker", "Our Shockworker", “Our Best of Best”, and "Our Darling, Our Guiding Star" as it is explained by Valentine Cunningham in her article “Saville's Row with the *Penguin Book of Spanish Civil War Verse*”.

It is also curious the way in which he isolates himself from the others as this paragraph reveals:

Napoleon himself was not seen in public as often as once in a fortnight. When he did appear he was attended not only by his retinue of dogs but by a back cockerel who marched in front of him and acted as a kind of trumpeter, letting out a loud “cock-a-

doodle-doo” before Napoleon spoke. Even in the farmhouse, it was said, Napoleon inhabited separate apartments from the others. He took his meals alone, with two dogs to wait upon him, and he always ate from the Crown Derby dinner service which had been in the glass cupboard in the drawing room. It was also announced that the gun would be fired every year on Napoleon’s birthday (Orwell, 2008:62).

He is transformed in some kind of god which needs constant vigilance by means of his dogs and even to be announced. This division between him and the other pigs is represented by suggesting that he has a different room and food – and probably better than the others. This is connected with what Sarah Davies explains in her chapter “Stalin and the Making of the Leader Cult in the 1930s” when she states that Stalin’s way of encouraging the rewriting of Soviet history to make him look greater, or his public birthday celebration proves that he was building his own personality cult (Apor, et al., 2004:29).

Finally, we would like to highlight the influence of propaganda on the construction of Napoleon’s and Stalin’s cult. Additionally, by promoting these two leaders to be some kind of religious figures who must be praised, people are making the social differences even greater as they voluntarily put themselves at their leaders’ service hoping to receive some favours. In other words, by promoting the leaders, people are demoting themselves which is the real danger of the personality cult.

5.2.3. Corruption in Power.

Another central theme in *Animal Farm* is the inherent corruption of power. Orwell addresses his criticism to a very specific form of power: totalitarianism. According to his essay “Why I Write”, he states 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, 2004:8). This literary piece is not an exception and it clearly attacks all forms of totalitarianism by using the example of the Soviet Union, since at the end of the book, it is impossible to distinguish those who are left-winged from the right-winged ones as all forms of totalitarianism are similar.

Napoleon is the perfect example of the rise of a totalitarian state. In fact, his tactics are not only similar to Stalin’s, but also to the techniques used by other dictators

such as Adolf Hitler (1889 – 1945), Augusto Pinochet (1915 – 2006), or Pol Pot (1925-1998) among others. Nevertheless, the very first example of a totalitarian government that it is possible to observe in *Animal Farm* is carried out by Mr Jones. This farmer is deeply feared by all animals because his almost permanent drunkenness makes him unable to run the farm and, for this reason, he mistreats the animals giving them mandatory hard work, low quality food and even whipping them. The animals, following the instructions of Snowball and Napoleon, organise themselves to overthrow him since unlike Napoleon, Mr Jones is not praised or respected. After the farmer's overthrowing of power is carried out, Napoleon starts his continuous search for power behind a mask of benevolence. It is true that at the very beginning all animals, pigs included, seem to be convinced by the high expectations of Animalism, but soon this atmosphere ends. It is just after the first moments of the rebellion when the pigs decide to stole the milk and save it for their own consumption (Orwell, 2008:16). Despite the fact that Squealer justifies this action as it has been previously analysed, Napoleon needs more and more power. It is true that Snowball is also corrupted because he also drinks the stolen milk and eats apples, but he is committed to help the other animals by teaching them to read and write, and by the creation of committees. Napoleon sees education as another way to gain power. He observes in a highly intelligent way that if young animals are taught to trust and defend him, he would never lose their obedience. This is the main objective when he takes Jessie and Bluebell's puppies to indoctrinate them (2008:22). Napoleon's purpose can be easily understood with these lines from "Politics and the English Language":

All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred, and schizophrenia. When the general atmosphere is bad, language must suffer. I should expect to find — this is a guess which I have not sufficient knowledge to verify — that the German, Russian and Italian languages have all deteriorated in the last ten or fifteen years, as a result of dictatorship. But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation even among people who should and do know better (Orwell, 2004:116).

Napoleon realizes that by means of language and education, he can manipulate others' minds in order to take advantage of them and be more powerful. Once that he

creates his strategy, he analyses the situation and detects his only one possible find: Snowball. This boar has a great ability giving speeches which is something that Napoleon lacks, and Napoleon confirms it when Snowball convinces all animals to work on his idea of building a windmill. In this precise moment Napoleon uses the dogs that he has indoctrinated to attack Snowball and expel him from the Animal Farm and, thus, to become the only one leader (Orwell, 2008:35). From this moment onwards, Napoleon's corruption does not stop growing and he breaks all commandments: he trades with humans, kills other animals, uses clothes and wigs, drinks alcohol, and even sleeps in a bed.

Another episode which clarifies his corruption takes place when Napoleon proclaims the farm as a Republic and as this kind of government it must have a president. Here, Napoleon carries out an election with himself as the only candidate, being therefore elected president by all animals. (Orwell, 2008:78). Something similar took place in the Soviet Union since there was only a party and a candidate – Stalin – and the only way of showing discomfort was to vote against the party. Nevertheless, this was something really uncommon.

The climax of the corruption which is inherent to power takes place at the end of Orwell's work, when pigs and human beings are in a meeting:

Twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man and from man to pig, and from pig to man again: but already it was impossible to say which was which” (Orwell, 2008:95).

These last lines imply that corruption can affect any kind of politicians being them left or right-winged, as the pigs and the men portray. The notion that communism and nazism were two similar totalitarian thoughts was even used in the Soviet Union during Stalin's dictatorship. An example of this can be seen in Picture 1, which is a cartoon published in the official newspaper of the Soviet Union. His author, Boris Yefimov, used this drawing to attack those communist leaders who were accused in the trials. To fulfil his purpose, he characterised them as pigs eating the food that a Nazi official gives them. It is worth noting that both authors, Orwell and Yefimov, chose the same mammal to portray those they criticise.



Picture 1. “Vaterland”⁸ by Boris Yefimov (1938).

Finally, it is necessary to remark that Orwell did not mean that all kind of revolutions and forms of government are corrupted. He addressed *Animal Farm* to those leaders who are not devoted to their followers, but to themselves and see politics as a way of gaining profit. Similarly, Orwell drew parallelisms between left and right wing totalitarianisms by suggesting that no matter the ideology, dictators only want to obtain power.

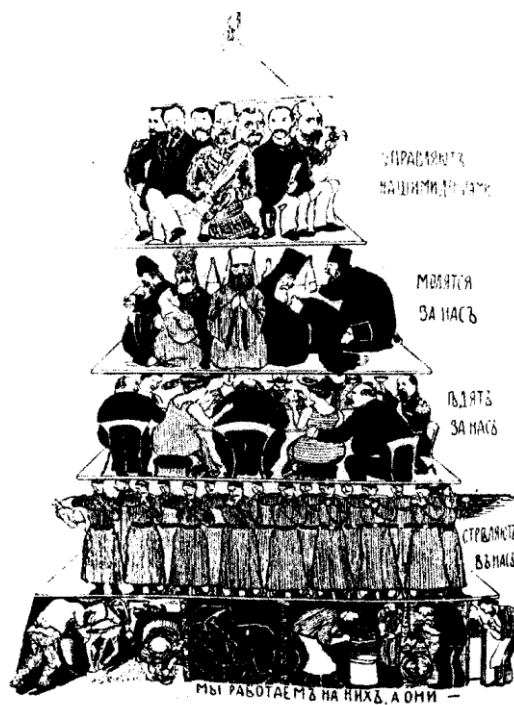
5.2.4. Social Division.

Animal Farm perfectly portrays the social structure in which Russian society was divided since Tsarism up to Stalinism. Although the top of this social pyramid suffers some small changes, its main structure is almost permanent. The first social distribution can be observed during Mr Jones’s ownership of the farm. He and Mrs Jones form part of the most elevated class, and below them it is possible to find their favourite pet, Moses the raven. Then, all the animals belong to the bottom part of this social pyramid as they are the ones who work and provide benefits for the farm and carry it upon their

⁸ In German, Vaterland can be translated as fatherland.

shoulders. When the rebellion succeeds and Mr Jones is expelled from the Manor Farm, the social structure is slightly different. The boars and the young pigs are immediately promoted to the top of it as they are alleged brainworkers who must control the welfare of the farm and the rest of the animals. Then, we find Moses again who leaves and enters the farm depending on its state. Below, the older pigs also occupy an accommodated position but it is not as high as the youngest because they were not fully raised in Animalism. Again, at the bottom of the pyramid were the rest of animals – horses, donkeys, cows, hens, sheep, and goats – that must work harder than ever to make the farm profitable.

These social divisions mirror the ones that were held in Russia. During the Romanov’s reign the royal family and the aristocracy formed the highest social class. Then, it was possible to find the Russian Orthodox Church which had many facilities and was used to control the people. The following social class was the bourgeoisie and below them the layer of the army can be found. The lowest part was reserved for the proletariat and the peasants who had to work in highly difficult conditions to obtain insignificant amounts of money. This social division can be observed in Picture 2.



Picture 2. Anonymous picture of the Russian social pyramid.

In the picture above it is possible to find some statements written in Russian which explain how the social classes relate among themselves. From the bottom to the top, it asserts that “We work for them while they...”, “They shoot as us”, “They eat on

our behalf”, “They pray on our behalf”, and “They dispose our money” (Service, 2015:2).

What is most striking about *Animal Farm*'s class division is that the animals do not fight for removing the pigs from power. On the contrary, they accept that they are the new rulers even though they memorise the motto “All animals are equal”. They divide themselves between brain workers and strength workers. Although at the beginning the pigs try to cover up their luxuries, as time comes by, they do not make any kind of effort and establish clear divisions between them and the other farm animals. The clearer example is the education of the piglets which is taken in a really serious way, creating a special school for them and teaching them to be apart from other animals. Education proves to be the best path to achieve success and power due to the fact that by educating the piglets, they will be able to run the farm by using the other animals' work. On the other hand, the animals' gullibility is another factor that is necessary to take into account here. Most animals do not make any effort to learn how to read and write as it can be observed in the following lines:

Benjamin could read as well as any pig, but never exercised his faculty [...] Clover learnt the whole alphabet but could not put the words together. Boxer could not go beyond the letter D [...] Mollie refused to learn any but the five letters which spelt her own name [...] None of the other animals could get further than the letter A (Orwell, 2008:21).

As they are not able or do not want to educate themselves, they do not develop their critical thought and therefore they believe all that the pigs tell them. Something similar took place in Russia. Most of its inhabitants were illiterate so they could not obtain information from books to improve their lives, they should rely on those who were able to read. This illiteracy was another reason why the Soviet propaganda was so effective: the workers believed everything that the state asserted without questioning anything, and the state took profit of this situation to obtain even more richness. At the end, Orwell's main intention is to warn the working class about the fact that if they do not develop a critical thought by means of reading and writing, their fear and ignorance would lead them to be always dominated and manipulated.

6. GEORGE ORWELL'S ANIMAL FARM IN OUR MODERN SOCIETY

George Orwell is usually known as a kind of visionary because he seemed to foretell the future in some of his literary pieces such as *Animal Farm* or *Nineteen Eighty-four*. However, what I sustain is that more than a visionary, he was a great analyst and drew some conclusions about how some forms of government work. In *Animal Farm* he establishes a step by step account of how a totalitarian government is created. Consequently, it is possible to observe some parallelisms between Orwell's work and some recent historical events.

One of the clearest parallelisms that can be drawn up is the one of the North Korean dictatorship. According to what Andrei Lankov states in his book *Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of De-Stalinization, 1956* (2005), North Korea has a mysterious halo which does not allow researchers to obtain all the information that they need (Lankov,2005:vii) in the same way that Robert Service pointed to the great difficulty to carry out investigations about Russia even in our times (Service, 2015:vii). Lankov suggests that the mid 1950s were a turning point in North Korea since this country rejected the new Moscow line with the aim of remaining loyal to Stalinism creating thus a new "independent Stalinism" (Lankov, 2005:3). One of the greatest similarities between *Animal Farm* and North Korea is the enormous power which people give to their leader. Since Kim Il-sung ascended to power in 1948, his family has been in power, being succeeded by his son Kim Jong-il and, then, by his grandson Kim Jong-un. It is true that *Animal Farm* ends before Napoleon's death, so it is not possible to know who would have been his successor. Nevertheless, he educated his offsprings in such an elitist way that it suggests that one of these piglets would have been his successor. North Korean leaders have been said to be:

Remarkable master[s] of political manipulation who often used the same, invariably successful trick: [they] would single out a particular enemy who appeared the most threatening at a given time, and then [they] would create a broad coalition that included virtually everyone but the targeted enemy (Lankov, 2005:8).

This method of attacking their finds is exactly the same that Napoleon uses in the book. His enemies change from Mr Jones to Snowball, and then from Mr Pilkington to Mr Frederick. It is worth noting that North Korean leaders and Napoleon also try to fool

their less powerful enemies to fight against the most powerful ones, and therefore, letting them destroy themselves.

We also observe some parallelisms between Napoleon and the Kim family in relation to the cult of personality that is built around them and that they firmly encourage. They are formally called by titles such as “The Great Leader” or “The Dear Leader”, and even some good events are related to them in the same way that animals relate them to Napoleon: “You would often hear one hen remark to another, ‘Under the guidance of our Leader, Comrade Napoleon, I have laid five eggs in six days’; or two cows, enjoying a drink at the pool, would exclaim, ‘Thanks to the leadership of Comrade Napoleon, how excellent this water tastes!’” (Orwell, 2008:62). These two societies worship their leaders as if they were gods. Additionally, it can be also pointed here the fact that North Korean leaders’ birthdays are highly celebrated in the whole country, just as Napoleon’s one was celebrated in the farm.

According to the article “Human Rights in North Korea (DPRK: The Democratic People's Republic of Korea)” in *Human Rights Watch*, the access to primary services such as medical health care or education is divided according to the family’s loyalty to the leader, and as there is no freedom of press, manipulation and censorship are the two most widely used mass control tools. The use of slogans, mottos, songs and posters to praise the leader is accepted and encouraged. Another interesting fact about this country is that the judiciary system is not independent and there are many trials which are carried out without proper evidence. Human Right Watch reports that “Those who are sent to prison face cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment; many die inside the prison because of mistreatment, malnutrition, and lack of medical care. Torture appears to be endemic”. This judiciary system recalls the public trials that Napoleon in which animals confess false crimes as it can be analysed in the following quotation: “They were all slain on the spot. And so the tale of confessions and executions went on, until there was a pile of corpses lying before Napoleon’s feet and the air was heavy with the smell of blood, which had been unknown there since the expulsion of Jones” (Orwell, 2008:57).

However, it is not necessary to focus on North Korea to observe some Orwellian elements from *Animal Farm*. Nowadays, we consider ourselves too intelligent to believe in propaganda in the same way that the animals from the farm did, for this reason we follow the refrain “A picture is worth a thousand words” and we only believe those things that we can see. The great problem is that we are living in a period of mass media

manipulation which can even alter images by means of picture editing tools such as Photoshop. In relation to TV, even the Spanish state-owned public channel has been pointed due to some manipulation events as it was reported by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in *Documents: Working Papers, 2004 Ordinary Session (first part), 26-30 January 2004* or in *The Guardian's* article "Spanish government accused of purging critics from national radio and TV" (2012).

Notwithstanding, the greatest example of mass manipulation in Spain is taking place right now. The Catalan Independence shows some similarities with *Animal Farm*. This Spanish region, like many others in Spain, possesses a different language and culture which during Franco's dictatorship (1938 – 1975) were suppressed. This repression created a feeling of hate towards the Spanish government that is lasting to our days as it is explained in *The New York Times'* article "Catalonia's Independence Push: What Now?" (2017). The most striking part of this secessionist problem is that, as Squealer does, some Catalan scholars and groups are trying to manipulate people by means of changing the history. A great example of this are the publications carried out by Norbert Bilbeny i Garcia (1953) in which he asserts that famous characters such as Miguel de Cervantes, Leonardo da Vinci and Mother Teresa of Calcutta were from Catalonia as it can be observed in the works *Cristòfor Colom: Príncep de Catalunya* (2006), *Brevíssima relació de la destrucció de la història* (2014), or *Totes les preguntes sobre Cristòfor Colom* (2015). Another example can be found in Institut Nova Història and its projects "Projecte Descoberta Catalana d'Amèrica", "Projecte Lleonard", "Projecte Servent" or "Projecte sobre la Censura i la Manipulació".

Into the bargain, it is worth noting that mass control is also achieved by means of social networks since in some occasions users post fake or unreferenced news which are read by millions of people all around the world. For this reason, *Animal Farm* still matters in our days. We need something to remind us that if we are not educated and develop our critical thinking, our naïveté will lead us to believe everything we see and read. Orwell tried to warn us about this with his beast epic.

Animal Farm has also been a basis for further literary works. A great example of this is William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies* (1954) which explores human nature and its inclination towards power and social division. Nevertheless, Golding does not use animals for his allegory, but children who have to rule their own island. It is worth mentioning the fact that the most intelligent boy of the novel is called Piggy which may

have some relation with Orwell's extremely clever pigs and boars. Another vaguely inspired literary piece is Kurt Vonnegut's short story "Welcome to the Monkey House" (1968) which portrays a dictatorship which abuses so much of its power that it even forces people to take birth control pills and to commit suicide. To achieve these purposes, the government uses TV as a means of massive control in the same way that Squealer convinces the animals to keep on working. Additionally, Margaret Atwood's feminist work *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986) also shows some similarities with *Animal Farm*. This work describes a world in which women are subjugated to men in a similar way as animals are to Napoleon or Mr Jones. However, its bigger parallelism is the fact that this new order has been achieved through a revolution in which even its commanders do not seem to follow its principles just like Napoleon and the other pigs break with the principles of Animalism.

Fortunately, Orwell's influence has reached us by many different artistic fields such as music, cinema or TV series. In the music field, it is possible to find Pink Floyd's album *Animals* (1977) which uses Orwell's critic towards communism to criticise capitalist societies by establishing a division based in the one that Orwell offered in his book. In other words, Pink Floyd follows *Animal Farm* to address their criticism to the opposite side. There are clear references to *Animal Farm* in the title of its songs as it can be observed in "Pigs on the Wing 1", "Dogs", "Pigs (Three different ones)", "Sheep" and "Pigs on the Wing 2" which evoke Napoleon, Snowball, Old Major, Bluebell, Pincher, Jesse and the sheep. Additionally, in the fifth album of the American band R.E.M. it is possible to find the song "Disturbance at the Heron House", which is vaguely inspired in Orwell's work as it can be observed in the following lines:

The call came in the monument
To liberty and honor under the honor roll
They've gathered up the cages and courageous
The followers of chaos out of control
The call came in to Party Central
Meeting of the green and simple
Try to tell us something we don't know. (R.E.M & Litt, Scott:
1987)

If these lines are analysed, it is viable to relate them to the moment in which the animals gather in order to rebel against Mr Jones and get rid of their cages. It is highly

interesting the last sentence, because it perfectly describes the feeling of knowing everything that the animals had despite being unaware of the real truth. In Radiohead's album *Kid A* (2000) there is a song which is deeply related to *Animal Farm* and specially to Boxer. This song is "Optimistic" and it contains lines such as "The big fish eat the little ones", "You can try the best you can", "This one drops a payload/Fodder for the animals/Living on an animal farm", or "I'd really like to help you man/ Nervous messed up marionette/ Floating around on a prison ship" (Godrich, Nigel: 2000) which lead us to connect this song with Boxer's favourite motto "I will work harder" (Orwell, 2008:18) and to compare the animals of the farm with puppets controlled in a theatre. Also, the metal core group Ice Nine Kills released the album *Every Trick in the Book* in 2015 in which every song is devoted to a literary piece. Its first song, "The Nature of the Beast" deals with Orwell's *Animal Farm* and deals with the revolutionary feelings of the animals when they were organising themselves to expel Mr Jones from the Manor Farm.

In relation to cinema, it is possible to find *Animal Farm* (1954) directed by Halas and Batchelor. This is an adult cartoon based on Orwell's work and which according to what Daniel J. Leab explains in his book *Orwell Subverted*, was funded by the CIA to be used against the Soviet Union during the Cold War (Leab, 2007:xviii-xiv). There was also another version directed by John Stephenson in 1999 starred by real animals, but did not catch the audience's attention. Curiously enough, there have been several references to *Animal Farm* in several well-known TV series. For example, in the almost never ending British TV series *Doctor Who* there is an episode called "The Dalek's Master Plan" in which a dalek⁹ makes a reference to the commandment in the sentence: "Though we are all equal partners with the Daleks on this great conquest, some of us are more equal than others" (Nation & Camfield: 1965). Besides, in the dark comedy of the HBO channel, *Oz*, there is an episode entitled *Animal Farm* in which prisoners confess crimes that they have not committed in the same fashion as the animals of the farm.

Having all this into account, it can be asserted that George Orwell's *Animal Farm* has influenced some of our society's fictions and cultural productions. Orwell's warning about the dangers of corruption in power and the gullibility of the working class are not new ones, but he makes them look innovative with the direct language that he uses. I deeply agree with Christopher Hitchens when he states that: "It was not a matter of what

⁹ Daleks are fictitious aliens with robot appearance which appear in the TV series *Doctor Who*.

he thought but how the thought, which in turn is the explanation of why he still matters, and always will” (Service, 2015:207). We have been always told that we need to educate ourselves in order not to be fooled, but the British author insists on this message in a new and effective way. He presents us with the consequences of what happens if we are not critical and do no mind being manipulated.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Once that this analysis has been carried out, it is viable to draw some conclusions about it. It cannot be denied that Orwell hid its critical views about corruption in power behind an apparently naïve and childish story. However, this decision of using this childlike form is due, as Morris Dickstein explains, to the fact that “he wrote *Animal Farm* at a time when criticism of our Soviet ally was strongly discouraged at the West” (Rodden, 2007:144). For this reason, Orwell had to use the genre of the beast epic with the aim of tucking away his criticism from the editors. Nevertheless, this is also a weakness in *Animal Farm* because beast epics and satires need to be interpreted by the reader, and there are sometimes very different interpretations. For example, “William Empson told Orwell that his young son Julian, ‘the child Tory’, was delighted with the book; he had gleefully read it as very strong Tory propaganda, which was not exactly what the writer had intended” (Rodden, 2007:144).

As it has been explained above, George Orwell himself admitted that his works were written against totalitarianism and this one is not an exception. He used Russian Communism to exemplify that some political concepts seem to be perfect in theory, but when put into practice do not work because of human inclination towards power. There are enough similarities between the revolution carried out by the animals and the one of the Bolsheviks to assert that Orwell tried to offer a summary of how a utopia can easily become the opposite of paradise. According to this, it is relevant not to forget that *Animal Farm* addresses its message towards all kinds of totalitarian governments because it “belongs to a literature of argument, a committed literature that means to make a difference in the world, yet it is still resonates long after the system that occasionated it has passed from the scene” (Rodden, 2007:145).

The importance of this literary work is not restricted to the context in which it was written, but to our modern world as well. Although the Soviet Union was dissolved in

1991, its mass control techniques have not been abolished but polished and improved. This can be seen in Kim Jong-un's speeches in North Korea, Nicolas Maduro's ones in Venezuela or the ones given by Fidel and Raúl Castro in Cuba. These political leaders have used their power to manipulate their followers' way of thinking in a highly similar way to the one depicted in *Animal Farm*. Besides, it is interesting to mention the increase of people who influence other people through social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Youtube or Instagram. These people are commonly called influencers and they use their power to bias people towards different fields such as fashion, sports or politics.

Notwithstanding, it should not be forgotten that Orwell also sent a warning to people through this literary piece. He portrayed a world in which naïveté and ignorance are two of the main causes of corruption. If we do not educate ourselves and develop our critical thought, people in power will take advantage of the situation and will fool us. This warning appears also in Orwell's most famous work *Nineteen Eighty-four*, for this reason, it would be very interesting to continue this study on Orwell's criticism with a comparative analysis of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-four* in order to compare the different paths that this British writer used to pursue the same objective: to prevent people against being manipulated by powerful individuals and corrupted political institutions.

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¹⁰ The URLs have been shortened using *Google URL Shortener*: <https://goo.gl/>

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8.2. Sources of pictures

Picture 3. "Vaterland" by Boris Yefimov (1938). This picture was taken from page 168 of: Service, Robert. (1997) [2015]. *The Penguin History of Modern Russia: From Tsarism to the Twenty-First Century*. London: Penguin Random House.

Picture 4. Anonymous picture of the Russian social pyramid. This picture was taken from page 2 of: Service, Robert. (1997) [2015]. *The Penguin History of Modern Russia: From Tsarism to the Twenty-First Century*. London: Penguin Random House.