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Animal Farm Project 2: Logical Fallacies

“Vote for Snowball and the three-day week’ and ‘Vote for Napoleon and the full manger” (50). The animals are presented with only two options, creating a false dilemma. The dilemma is used to fool the animals, into thinking there are only two possible courses of action. The fallacy is effective, as it divides the animals, based on their political affiliations; “the animals formed into two factions under the slogans” (50). The author uses false dilemma, to illustrate the illusion, of choice in government. The animals appear to control the policies with their “vote”. In reality, Napoleon and Snowball have sole power over the animals, and are battling for support. “The pigs... should decide all questions of farm policy, though their decisions had to be ratified by a majority vote.” (47).

Squealer uses logical fallacies, to explain to the animals, why Napoleon expelled Snowball from the farm. “Suppose you had decided to follow Snowball, who, as we now know, was no better than a criminal?” (55). Squealer poisons the well, characterizing Snowball as a “criminal”. Squealer’s intention, is to create a common enemy (Snowball), and make Napoleon look like a hero. He juxtaposes “the sacrifice that Comrade Napoleon has made”, with Snowball’s foul character (55). Squealer’s fallacy is not effective; some animals are startled by the abrupt announcement that Snowball is a criminal (55). The author reveals Napoleon’s motives, as a leader, through Squealer’s statements. Napoleon wants to make himself look virtuous, hence the words “sacrifice” and “responsibility,” in order to gain the animals’ trust (55).

To dispel the animals’ remaining skepticism, Squealer makes a hypothesis contrary to fact. “One false step, and our enemies would be upon us. Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?” (56). The pig speculates that any mistake would lead to the return of Jones. He uses his hypothetical statement, to support his argument. Squealer’s “argument was unanswerable” because the animals believe man must be avoided, at all costs. “If the holding of debates was liable to bring [Jones] back, then the debates must stop” (56). The same logical fallacy is used two other times (46, 67). The author effectively uses repetition, to emphasize the irrational fears of the animals. The animals’ prime fear is that Jones will come back, even though their living conditions, are already worsening. “Starvation seemed to stare them in the face” (74).

Squealer uses false analogy, to explain why the pigs can sleep in beds. “Why not? A bed merely means a place to sleep in. A pile of straw in a stall is a bed, properly regarded” (67). The pig compares a pile of straw to a bed, wrongly equating the two. Squealer’s analogy is not effective. He ignores the animal’s association of beds with man. The author uses Squealer’s comparison to show the widening rift, between the pigs and other animals. The pigs have the privilege of beds, while the animals rest on “straw in a stall”.

Napoleon resorts to physical threats, to suppress opposition. “Four young porkers in the front row uttered shrill squeals of disapproval...But suddenly the dogs sitting round Napoleon let out deep, menacing growls, and the pigs fell silent and sat down again” (54) Napoleon uses ad baculum, to imply that anyone who disapproves, will receive the wrath of the dogs. The threat is effective, because the animals fear for their lives. The author demonstrates, Napoleon’s use of force to keep order. In his militarist state, the dogs function as an army. Napoleon uses them to enforce laws: “the dogs saw to it that these orders were carried out” (76).