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12 May 2017

How Fables Communicate Exigence

Every author in history, from Homer to Hemingway, Shakespeare to Steinbeck, has written masterpieces based on hopes, dreams, nostalgia, or fear for society. This motivation is called an author's "exigence." Among authors Geoffrey Chaucer, George Orwell, and Jean-Paul Sartre, their exigence is a fear of the effects of conformity, on society. Authors have many ways of communicating their ideals, and both Chaucer and Orwell chose a similar method: the fable. Fables use a combination of foreshadowing, mood, and juxtaposition to communicate the author's exigence, in a manner that is both appealing and persuasive.

In fables, foreshadowing outlines a moral struggle. Moral struggle creates conflict. Conflict drives the plot of fables. In Chaucer's *Nun's Priest's Tale*, Chanticleer the rooster dreams, "I espied a beast / Much like a hound, who would have at the least / Laid hold of me and left me cold and dead" (2899-2901). The vision awakens Chanticleer's inner fear, and intuition. Thus, inner conflict is established: Chanticleer must choose between listening to his intuition, and conforming to his society. Since conflict affects the main character directly, it carries great emotional heft. Meanwhile, in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, foreshadowing also exposes conflict. Old Major, the boar, declares, " '...remember also that in fighting against Man, we must not come to resemble him' " (pg. 11). By foreshadowing the eventual demise of the Animal Farm, Old Major predicts a key struggle. While the animals strive for an ideal society, they are doomed by virtue of their willingness to conform. This moral struggle creates conflict throughout most of the story. However, nonfiction documents are not as convincing, in their development of an emotional conflict. In Jean-Paul Sartre's *Existentialism and Humanism*, the conflict of choosing something selfishly for oneself, or thoughtfully for mankind, is explained through confusing examples and anecdotes. No utilization of foreshadowing can be found. Instead, the processes of choosing a political party or getting married are offered as examples, which are described as affecting all people (§ 3). The pathos appeal is lost, and so is the attention of many readers. Foreshadowing outlines morals. Foreshadowing creates conflict. Foreshadowing affects mood.

Mood empowers fables. Fables are empowered by mood. Mood is often utilized to create a pathos appeal for the author's exigence. In the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, Chanticleer remarks, "...folks when they're dreaming have such dread / Of arrows or of fire that's flaming red" (2929-2932). The strong, negative, deathly connotations of these lines, add tension and fear to the mood. Thus, the mood appeals to Chaucer's view, of following one's intuition. The author's fear of conformity is supported, in this case, by a fear of death. Mood also plays a large role in *Animal Farm*. At the climax, "Amazed, terrified, huddling together, the animals watched the long line of pigs march slowly around the yard" (pg. 133). The negative connotations of "terrified," and "huddling," along with the profound significance of the event, create a very negative and fearful mood. The

strong pathos appeal supports Orwell's exigence: fear of conformity. Fables can communicate these ideals with more emotional heft, since their plot is driven by emotional, personified characters. Meanwhile, almost by definition, nonfiction works do not utilize mood. In the nonfiction essay *Transcendentalism*, the use of mood to create pathos appeal is absurdly absent, despite the emotional nature of the topic. Instead, anecdotes are provided about the history of 1800's transcendentalism, but they fail to develop the thesis (§ 2). Mood creates pathos. Pathos identifies good and bad. Good and bad are highlighted by juxtaposition.

Juxtaposition is a vital aspect to all fables; juxtaposition creates contrast and conflict and distinction. In the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, Lady Pertelote exclaims, " 'I cannot love a coward, there's no way!... We all desire, if heaven let be, / Wise, hardy men of generosity' " (2911, 2913-2914). In this case, conflict is created, as Lady Pertelote contrasts Chanticleer's behavior with her ideal of a husband. In fables, these conflicts are more pronounced, as foil characters are often intentionally created to contradict one another, such as Lady Pertelote and Chanticleer. Juxtaposition is used to create many contrasts (and conflicts) in this story, between the rich and poor, dreams and reality, and practicality and premonition. Meanwhile, in *Animal Farm*, Old Major exclaims, " 'The soil of England is fertile, its climate is good... Why then do we continue in this miserable condition?' " (pg. 7). Juxtaposition is used to contrast the hope for utopia, against the inevitability of harsh reality. This "idealists versus realists" conflict continues throughout the book, leading to a seemingly inevitable, harsh, negative outcome. The fatalistic result of a failed utopia supports Orwell's fear of a conforming society, and the strong role "fate" played in the outcome adds a dimension of universal application. However, in the nonfiction essay *Transcendentalism*, juxtaposition is used to a lesser extent. The difficulty transcendentalists find existing in society, is contrasted to their peaceful existence in the expanding United States of the 1800's. While the juxtaposition may be accurate, it does not extend the plot or create conflict, like in a fable. It merely serves to make a factual point, about transcendentalism's existence in early America. Even worse, the comparison fails to find meaning in a modern, orderly society. In fables, juxtaposition creates contrast. Juxtaposition incites conflict. Juxtaposition highlights struggle.

Through the use of foreshadowing, mood, and juxtaposition, fables communicate the author's exigence with clarity and pathos appeal. The authors' fears about a conforming society are conveyed with emotional depth. The style in which fables are written, causes every outcome to appear as an irreversible product of human (or animal) nature. Compared to non fiction documents, fables have stronger themes, and manipulate the reader's emotions, with greater effect. Fables communicate emotion. Fables convey exigence. Fables portray human nature, with unparalleled clarity.