

# *An Analysis of Napoleon's Tripartite Personality in Animal Farm from the Perspective of Psychoanalysis*

Li Huifang<sup>1</sup>, Bao Chenglian<sup>2</sup>

1. School of Foreign Languages, Henan University of Technology, Zhengzhou 450052, Henan, China

2. School of Foreign Languages, Henan University of Technology, Zhengzhou 450052, Henan, China

**Keywords:** Animal farm, Tripartite personality, Characteristics of napoleon, Tyrannical

**Abstract:** Animal Farm is the masterpiece of George Orwell. It tells an allegory that animals successfully revolutionized their farm by driving out their human owners and establishing an equal animal's society. However, the animal leader Napoleon eventually usurped the fruits of the revolution and became even more dictatorial and totalitarian rulers than their human masters. This paper will analyze the characteristics of Napoleon from the perspective of tripartite personality theory. Through the analysis on the plots of this novel, and the certain sentences about Napoleon, we can conclude that his id selfish and hypocritical, his ego is intelligent and self-willed, his superego is morally bankrupt. All his characteristics tell that Napoleon is a tyrannical but successful emperor.

## 1. Introduction

As we all know, Freud is a world famous psychologist and a thinker. His theory of psychoanalysis not only has a strong impact on traditional psychology and psychiatry, but also has a profound impact on the spiritual world and social and cultural life of human beings. The tripartite personality theory is actually the most special one among Freud's theories which is widely used in literary criticism. Freud holds that personality of one person consists of id, ego and superego. Firstly, id is the most original part and it exists since the date of birth. Id always can be tracked from the basic needs of human beings, such as hungry and thirsty. It is always unconscious, governed by pleasure-principle. Secondly, ego is developed from id after experiences in real world. If the needs derived from id cannot be immediately met in reality, ego must come out to accommodate the limitations of reality and learn how to be satisfied in reality. Therefore, ego is governed the reality-principle. Besides, ego has the function of buffering and regulating between the impulses of the id and the control of the superego. Lastly, superego is always on behalf of the morality. It is governed by the mutual-principle to repress the instinctive impulse. Normally, id and superego are not in harmony. In daily life, id can ignore social morality in order to be happy. But superego stands for social morality, which is always desperately trying to suppress the id so that nothing against morality. This paper will analyze the id, ego and superego of Napoleon through his words and behaviors. Through analysis, we can see that Napoleon's id, ego and

superego are imbalanced; the three are all out of control of ego. He finally turns out to be a thief, a tyrannical ruler, a hypocritical revolution leader.

## 2. Napoleon's Id is Selfish and Hypocritical

Napoleon can be called a king, and emperor, as the meaning of his name. His first appearance left a deep impression on readers, clever, strong and fierce, which lays the foundation of his rebellion to meet his ambitions-being a ruler. Honestly, he never hides his ambitions to be a ruler and his needs after being a ruler. There are many sentences about him and things what he has done to other animals, his selfish and hypocritical id can be proved convincingly. The first beginning one is the about Milk. Look at the following sentences:

“Soon there were five buckets of frothing creamy milk at which many of the animals looked with considerable interest. “What is going to happen to all that milk?” said someone. “Jones used sometimes to mix some of it in our mash,” said one of hens. “Never mind the milk, comrades!” cried Napoleon, placing himself in front of the buckets. “That will be attended to. The harvest is more important. Comrade Snowball will lead the way. I shall follow in a few minutes. Forward, comrades! The hay is waiting.”

It can be easily figured out that most animals are of great interest in milk: they have won the war, owned this farm, and of course owned the milk. Milk, as the first familiar and great fruit of their revolution, should belong to all animals here. It can be shown that animals were eager to enjoy their fruit from the words “frothing”, “creamy”, and what the hens said. Of course, pigs are no exception. To be honest, pigs deserve to be the cleverest animals in this farm, especially Napoleon. He wanted the milk but he would never show that he wanted the milk. As one of the cleverest animals here, brain would be the most powerful weapon to defeat those fools. The milk should be taken away in a proper way. The five buckets milk was ignored by animals after his tricky and passionate speech. When animals came back in the evening after the harvest, the milk had disappeared. Here two points can be concluded: first, milk was taken away directly or indirectly by Napoleon, he aimed to enjoy the milk exclusively. Second, Napoleon didn't care about the hay harvest. He even wouldn't go to the hay field. He wasn't and won't to be a warrior, he would not bother to be a warrior. All he wanted to do was to capture and enjoy the fruits of revolution. Freud's theory shows that id was unconscious and governed by pleasure-principle. He didn't think twice of his comrade even snowball but enjoyed the milk alone. He is selfish and his can't realize that he is selfish. To meet his selfish need-enjoying the milk exclusively, he gave a speech which seems just and righteous. But readers know that justice is only a mask to hide his true purpose, which can be the evidence to prove that Napoleon is hypocritical: justice inside but darkness inside.

## 3. Napoleon's Ego is Crafty and Self-Willed

We have been told by the author that pigs were generally recognized as being the cleverest of the animals, Napoleon is of course also the cleverest one among animals. However, Napoleon is not kind; he is selfish and hypocritical since the beginning of revolution. Of course he wouldn't do a better job in the later works.

We've talked that ego is governed the reality-principle. If the needs derived from the id cannot be immediately met in reality, ego will try to accommodate the limitations of reality and learn how to be satisfied in reality. After the revolution, Snowball and Napoleon obviously were the main leaders in Animal Farm. But they two have totally different attitudes toward the society-building in this farm. Snowball made every effort to improve the life quality and promote the educational level. By contrast, Napoleon was totally the opposite. Consequently, animals respected Snowball

much more than Napoleon. The needs from Napoleon's id cannot be met fully, so some improvements and adjustments will be done according to the reality-principle. The contrast between the two can be clearly seen from the following paragraphs:

"Snowball busied himself with organizing the other animals into what he called Animal Committees. He was indefatigable at this. He formed the Egg Production Committee for the hens, the Clean Tails League for the cows, the Wild Comrades' Re-education Committee (the object of this was to tame the rats and rabbits), the Whiter Wool Movement for the sheep, and various others, besides instituting classes in reading and writing."

"Napoleon took no interest in Snowball's committees, he said that education of the young was more important than anything that could be done for those who were already grown up. It happened that Jessie and Bluebell had both whelped soon after the hay harvest, giving birth between them to nine sturdy puppies. As soon as they were weaned Napoleon took them away from their mothers, saying that he would make himself responsible for their education. He took them up into a loft which could only be reached by a ladder from the harness-room, and there kept them in such a seclusion that the rest of the farm soon forgot their existence."

From the above paragraphs, we can see that Snowball is a servant of the animals through and through, he wanted to make a better life for animals. Ironically but clearly, Napoleon desired nothing but power and Napoleon known himself that what he desired and how he would get the power. So his ego tells him to do something so that the reality can be changed to some extent. Therefore, he raised nine dogs to form a private army so that he could usurp successfully later. Generally speaking, power depends on army, rebellion needs army, told by history. Obviously, Napoleon known the rules so he formed an army in advance. Wasn't he clever? Yes, he was so clever, so crafty.

To satisfy his needs from id, he also did many other bad things to adjust the reality, or we can say, to strength his power and his almighty position in this farm. Napoleon broke almost all the rules: no more public debates, lying that the windmill plan was stolen by Snowball, Snowball was a criminal, pigs are brain workers so that they could sleep on beds, nine hens died because of their refusal to surrender their eggs for the contract... ..By now we can see that as a leader, Napoleon was very self-willed. His ego had been lost and reality-principle didn't work anymore.

#### **4. Napoleon's Superego is Morally Bankrupt**

Superego stands for morality and is governed by the mutual-principle to repress the instinctive impulse so that nothing against morality. It may be ridiculous to discuss moral and morality in an animal-dominated society. However, they had norms and rules for every animal in the early days and Napoleon shall make them his own rules to stop himself from his abnormal needs derived from id. Here are the Seven Commandments:

The Seven Commandments

- 1)Whatever Goes Upon Two Legs is an Enemy.
- 2)Whatever Goes Upon Four Legs, or Has Wings, is a Friend.
- 3)No Animal Shall Wear Clothes.
- 4)No Animal Shall Sleep in a Bed.
- 5)No Animal Shall Drink Alcohol.
- 6)No Animal Shall Kill Any Other Animal.
- 7)All Animal Are Equal.

Originally, all animals should obey the rules if they live in this farm. And the Seven Commandments, to some degree, are the moral codes in Animal Farm. But he failed. His superego has been totally lost and morality had been completely disappeared. The seven Commandments

have been changed at will to meet pigs, especially Napoleon's needs. In chapter six, Squealer said the Fourth commandment is 'No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets'. Chapter eight mentioned that the Sixth commandment had been added something, which was 'No animal shall kill any other animal without cause'. Then the Fifth turned out to be 'No animal shall drink alcohol to excess'. And in the last chapter, the simple version of the Commandments 'Four legs good, two legs bad' had been adapted into 'Four legs good, two legs better'. What's more, the Seven Commandments also had completely transformed into 'All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others'.

According to Freud's theory, superego should suppress the unreasonable demands from id, and ego should adopt some measurements to fit the real world and to get used to the moral codes. However, when rules can be changed at will, rules are no rules, morality doesn't exist anymore. Therefore, Napoleon's superego has been morally bankrupt. Till the end of the novel, the sky over animal farm is always covered with the shadow of the autocratic ideology. Animals are not allowed to have personalities and tell the truth. In fact, animals have lost their nature and do not know what the truth is. All in all, animals launched a revolution to get a brand-new life. A new society should be full of hopes and good things. However, after Napoleon got the power, the animal farm was under his totalitarian rule. It could either be captured by human beings and return to the era of darkness but no starvation, hacking, exhaustion and biting death, or the animals launched a rebellion again, to set up a "second animal farm", set up another committee, put an end to the recurrence of dictatorship. But in either way it will end in tragedy at last.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, Napoleon's id was so selfish that he could take a candy from a baby. To seize the power, he didn't hesitate to ruin the reputation of Snowball, to torture other animals, to kill animals who weren't obedient to him. His ego was self-willed and his superego was morally lost. The three had been totally imbalanced. All these reasons make Napoleon a tyrant, a cruel ruler, a thief, and a hypocritical leader. However, what makes people sad is methods that Napoleon adopted to control animals here are also very often to be traced along the history in different countries and nations by rulers. That means there are not only Napoleon uses violence to make his subject obedient, it is such a normal way. From this aspect, Napoleon could be seen as a successful ruler but based on his lost personality.

## References

- [1] G. Orwell (1951). *Animal Farm*. New York: Penguin Books Ltd.
- [2] Y Xia (2017). *The Imbalance and Spilt of Personality--A Psychoanalytic Analysis of Macbeth's downfall*. *Overseas English*, vol.18, no.22, p.173-174.
- [3] Freud (1986). *The Ego and Id*. Shanghai Translation Publishing House.
- [4] X. S. Shi (2008). *Freud's Psychology Theory in China* *Chinese Book Review Monthly*, vol.14, no.5, p.19-23.
- [5] P. Zhou and P. J. Chen (2017). *Changeability and Servility: A study of Human Nature in Animal Farm*. *University Education*, vol.6, no.3, p.92-94.
- [6] Y. H. Song (2015). *The Political Allegory of Napoleon in Animal Farm*. *Journal of Hulunbeier University*, vol.23, no.6, p.62-65.
- [7] Y. H. Shen (2011). *An Analysis of Animal Farm: Tame Bodies and Loyal Minds*. *Journal of Changchun University of Science and Technology*, vol.6, no.11, p.65-66.
- [8] A. P. He (2011). *On the Application of Freud's Triple Personality Theory in Literary Criticism*. *Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, vol.30, no.2, p.98-99.
- [9] Y. H. Liu (2015). *Rise and Cry under the Pressure of Reality*. *Masterpieces Review*, vol.36, no.17, p.157-159.
- [10] L. Qiao (2013). *Co-existing Relationship of Power and Language: Critical Discourse Analysis of Squealer in Animal Farm from Perspective of Power Discourse*. *Foreign Language and Literature*, vol.29, no. 4, p. 30-35.

[11] L. Q. Luo (2011). *The Cage of Human Beings: George Orwell's Fables*. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, vol.39, no.3, p.131-134.