

ЛИТЕРАТУРОВЕДЕНИЕ

УДК 821.111-313.1/2+7.045(045)

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ТИПЫ И ФУНКЦИИ АЛЛЕГОРИИ
В ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИИ ДЖ. ОРУЭЛЛА «СКОТНЫЙ ДВОР»

TYPES AND FUNCTIONS OF ALLEGORY
IN G. ORWELL'S *ANIMAL FARM*

В данной статье исследуется использование аллегории в антиутопическом романе Дж. Оруэлла «Скотный двор». Выделены три основных типа аллегории в повествовании – историческая, политическая и философская – с соответствующими функциями выявления, критики и символизации. Анализ основан на политических теориях лидерства, предложенных М. Вебером и Дж. Бернсом. Исследование показывает, что главные персонажи (мистер Джонс, Старый Майор, Снежок и Наполеон) аллегорически представляют авторитарный, визионерский, партиципаторный и авторитарно-тоталитарный типы лидерства. Одна из наиболее проявленных философских позиций в романе, изложенная через аллегорическую фигуру Боксера, – терпеливость, послушание и лояльность – оказывается несостоятельной и подвергается автором серьезному сомнению.

Ключевые слова: *аллегория; антиутопический роман; политическая аллегория; историческая аллегория; философская аллегория; символизация; проводник; смысловое содержание.*

This article examines the use of allegory in G. Orwell's dystopian novel *Animal Farm*. We identify three main types of allegory in the narrative – historical, political, and philosophical – with the relevant functions of exposure, critique, and symbolization. We base our analysis on the political theories of leadership proposed by M. Weber and J. Burns. The research reveals that the major characters (Mr Jones, Old Major, Snowball and Napoleon) allegorically represent authoritarian, visionary, participatory and authoritarian-totalitarian types of leadership. One of the philosophical stands outlined via the allegorical figure of Boxer – tolerance, obedience and loyalty – proves inadequate and is seriously challenged in the novel.

Key words: *dystopia; political allegory; historical allegory; philosophical allegory; symbolization; vehicle; tenor.*

Allegory, a literary device with roots stretching back to antiquity, has been the subject of extensive scholarly explication and analysis. Its enduring presence, rich literary history and versatile nature have made it a fertile ground for literary criticism, exploration of its forms, functions, and cultural significance. Contemporary researchers continue to unravel its complexities and explore its

evolving role in narrative art focusing on various aspects of this category, primarily paying attention to the evolution of allegorical writing from ancient times to modernity (G. Teskey, A. Fletcher), levels and classifications of allegory (M. Quilligan, M. Bakhtiyorova), and, specifically, allegorical modes in medieval texts (Sh. Delany, N. D. Guynn, S. K. Akbari).

Among the genres that stand out as the most prominent examples of allegorical poetics, one would inevitably mention utopian and dystopian novels. Thus, H. Lefebvre's extensive reflections on the rehabilitation of utopia as a critical tool for conceptualizing modern urban spaces – "...utopia that had successors: the City of God, the City of the Sun" [1, p. 105] – have influenced contemporary discussions on the allegorical dimensions of utopian and dystopian narratives. M. K. Booker examines how dystopian fiction functions as social criticism, using allegory to critique political and social structures, his major assumption being "that the modern turn to dystopian fiction is largely attributable to perceived inadequacies in existing social and political systems" [2, p. 20]. In dystopian novels in particular, allegory plays a significant role in creating the setting and characters, in performing the critique of society and establishing the dominant features of the genre that define the very nature of the dystopian novel. As H. Greven-Borde points out, "allegory as structural framework for modern rebellion against a dystopic system can easily lend itself to visions of distant lands or remote future times..." [3, p. 209]. Allegory may also be a structural element in the dystopias revealing the past. G. Clifford assumes that modern allegories "require a single act of translation (fiction to history for example) and then can be read as straight narratives whose moral significance is obvious" [4, p. 7].

In this paper, we shall focus on such questions as what types of allegory – political, philosophical, religious or cultural – are employed in George Orwell's short novel *Animal Farm* (1945) and what their functions are. We shall also consider the images used to maintain the double plane of reference – that is, to portray the characters and events as belonging to the purely fictional world and simultaneously – to the recognizable reality. Based on A. Fletcher's theory of allegory, researcher O. Oerlemans uses the terms "the vehicle (the surface story)" and "the tenor (the allegorized abstraction)". He argues that "(a)n allegorical representation asserts a hierarchy, since the vehicle of the allegory is inferior to its tenor, and at the same time belies this hierarchy because our attention is drawn to what is immediately presented" [5, p. 31]. Thus, the novel under analysis uses a seemingly traditional "vehicle" (animal characters) which was a typical feature of medieval fables; its "tenor", however, is starkly modern – contemporary oppressive forms of governance.

As *Animal Farm* gained immense popularity immediately after its publication, so too did the proliferation of critical analysis surrounding the book. V. Pietilä, for example, explores how *Animal Farm* functions as an allegory on different levels, using the theories by Dante Alighieri and Fredric Jameson [6]. J. Drew's approach challenges the traditional anthropocentric allegorical interpretations of *Animal Farm*

by employing Derridean deconstruction. He argues for a more-than-human interpretive approach that considers the perspectives of multiple species [7, p. 189]. Tian'ai Xie's analysis centres on the political allegory in *Animal Farm*. The critic looks at such political aspects as leadership, civilians and third party individuals, analysing their behaviours and metaphorical roles in expressing Orwell's central idea: "...the hell of totalitarian rule and the real dark side of democracy" [8, p. 223]. A Salem Press *Critical Insights* publication about *Animal Farm* offers a multidisciplinary range of perspectives on the book, including political and biopolitical studies, readings of the text as a beast fable and from the narratological perspective. Notably, B. Ireland points out that the allegory in the novel "worked because it was simple and uncomplicated" [9, p. 73].

To contradict that latter point, we approach this book as a multi-layered narrative in which allegory presents a complex device and can be split into political, historical, and philosophical types. The background for identifying these types has been established by a number of scholars. Thus, C. S. Lewis emphasizes the visual and symbolic nature of allegory, particularly in medieval works. He contrasts allegory as a "picturable" [10, p. 45] form (e. g., personifications of abstract ideas) with more historically grounded narratives, indirectly touching on distinctions between philosophical and historical allegory. M. Murrin differentiates a hermetic approach to allegory (non-historical, symbolic interpretations) from typological or historical approaches. He points out that "the Hermetic rhetorician could create a Mind-speech, incomprehensible to the many, since they could not possibly understand the 'unheard of'" [11, p. 38]; while a typological level [Ibid, p. 129] presupposes parallels and familiarity with certain implications. Though focused on premodern texts, his analysis provides a basis for distinguishing allegorical types by their relationship to history: "Allegory and poetry civilize men because the present is judged implicitly or explicitly in relation to a mythic past, which itself possesses a transcendent perfection and can apply to any stage of human history" [Ibid, p. 84].

Some scholars address these distinctions indirectly or in specific contexts. N. Frye's concept of a "continuous allegory" [12, p. 90] categorizes allegorical works based on their complexity and intent. He distinguishes between the "naive allegory" – "a disguised form of discursive writing, [which] belongs chiefly to educational literature on an elementary level: schoolroom moralities, devotional exempla, local pageants, and the like" [Ibid] (e. g., Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, where characters directly embody virtues), and modern allegories (without offering any definitive terms) with more abstract or paradoxical themes: "All formal allegories have, *ipso facto*, a strong thematic interest" [12, p. 53]. Frye's framework implicitly allows for categorizing allegories by their thematic focus, such as political, historical, religious, philosophical, etc.

In *Animal Farm*, the most salient type of allegory is definitely political. The animal narrative (the tenor) serves as the signifier which points at the humanist political peripetia as the signified. This allegory is built on political typology of

leaders and their actions. It functions in close alliance with the historical allegory: the events parallel those that took part in history and frame political ideas related to such issues as leadership, class system and power distribution.

One of the central political issues raised in the novel is the theme of leadership. According to political theory, leadership is often defined as an influence relationship between leaders and followers [13]. One of the typologies of political leadership has been suggested by Max Weber. He identified three leader types: traditional, charismatic, and bureaucratic – based on the legitimacy of authority and the leader's interaction with societal norms [14, p. 157]. James Burns expanded on Weber's ideas by distinguishing between transactional and transformational leaders [15, p. 54]. Burns categorized transactional leaders into subtypes, such as opinion leaders and bureaucratic leaders [Ibid, p. 224], while transformational leaders include reformers and revolutionaries [Ibid, p. 189]. R. Tucker suggested the leadership types based on political consciousness, including reformers, revolutionaries, and conservatives who resist change [16, p. 101–104].

In the novel under consideration, we can identify several characters who represent leadership: Mr Jones, Old Major, Snowball and Napoleon. They seem to align with the types suggested by political philosophy. Thus, Mr Jones can be categorized as a negligent, conservative and authoritarian leader. His leadership style is marked by cruelty, exploitation, and incompetence, which ultimately leads to his downfall. He indulges in excessive drinking, neglecting the welfare of the animals and the farm's upkeep: "In past years Mr. Jones, although a hard master, had been a capable farmer, but of late he had fallen on evil days. He ... had taken to drinking more than was good for him. For whole days at a time he would lounge in his Windsor chair in the kitchen, reading the newspapers, drinking... His men were idle and dishonest, the fields were full of weeds, the buildings wanted roofing, the hedges were neglected, and the animals were underfed" [17, p. 12]. This negligence fosters resentment among the animals and sets the stage for rebellion. Symbolically, Mr. Jones represents Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, "an indolent leader asleep (or drunk) at the wheel while his farm careens toward mass poverty" [18, p. 123]. His ineffective leadership and disregard for his subjects contributed to the Russian Revolution.

Old Major can be viewed as a visionary and delegatory leader type. He is characterized by his ability to inspire and motivate the animals through his ideas and speeches, rather than through coercion or manipulation. His leadership style is based on wisdom, bravery, and the power of revolutionary: he "was so highly regarded on the farm that everyone was quite ready to lose an hour's sleep in order to hear what he had to say" [17, p. 4]. He inspires the animals and creates a vision for them to follow but does not engage in decision-making, allowing them to make their own choices. Old Major symbolizes figures like Karl Marx and "the nearest potential analogue" [19, p. 20] of Vladimir Lenin, embodying the ideals of revolution and equality that the animals initially strive for. His legacy continues to influence the narrative even after his death, as his vision of Animalism becomes

the foundation for the animals' rebellion and subsequent governance of the farm. "Napoleon had denounced such ideas as contrary to the spirit of Animalism. The truest happiness, he said, lay in working hard and living frugally" [17, p. 72].

Snowball matches the category of transformational and democratic leaders. He partially embodies visionary leadership, striving to improve the lives of the animals through education, innovation, and collective decision-making. Snowball uses inclusive strategies, engaging all animals in discussions about farm policies and projects, such as the windmill plan, which symbolizes his forward-thinking approach to enhancing productivity and living conditions. Snowball's leadership style can be viewed as participatory and consultative, too. "Snowball also busied himself with organising the other animals into what he called Animal Committees. He was indefatigable at this" [Ibid, p. 19]. Though most of the projects turned out to be a failure, he still inspired collective action. The symbolic personification is straightforward: "Snowball is Leon Trotsky" [9, p. 64], a revolutionary figure who advocated for progress and modernization but was ultimately ousted by Stalin (represented by Napoleon). Snowball's idealism and focus on equality align with Trotsky's vision for a better society, though his lack of military power leads to his downfall.

Napoleon ("the Stalin of the tale" [20, p. 53]), can be classified as an authoritarian, manipulative, and ultimately totalitarian leader. His style is that of coercion, creating fear, and using deception to maintain control over the other animals on the farm. Napoleon consolidates power for himself through ruthless tactics. He establishes a command-and-control structure, making unilateral decisions. He eliminates democratic processes, such as the Sunday debates, and uses intimidation to suppress dissent. He frequently employs propaganda through Squealer, manipulating information to shape the perceptions of the other animals. This includes spreading lies about Snowball, portraying him as a traitor to justify his own actions. Napoleon maintains his authority by utilizing trained dogs to enforce his will. Public executions of dissenters serve to instil terror among the animals and discourage rebellion. His leadership is marked by a lack of empathy for the other animals. "At the Meetings Snowball often won over the majority by his brilliant speeches, but Napoleon was better at canvassing support for himself in between times" [17, p. 29]. "According to Napoleon, what the animals must do was to procure firearms and train themselves in the use of them" [Ibid, p. 31]. Napoleon exemplifies a tyrannical leadership style which can only exist with the support of special forces, or dogs: "It was noticed that they wagged their tails to him in the same way as the other dogs had been used to do to Mr. Jones" [Ibid, p. 32].

Based on the above, it is possible to suggest that the function of the political allegory in the novel is that of harsh critique bordering on satire, "that depends for its effects on a peculiar species of dramatic irony: human readers bear the burden (and the pleasure) of knowing what the animal cannot" [21, p. 40]. Political allegory in this novel condemns the unjust power dynamics, corruption and oppression, and represents and problematizes particular types of leaders.

There is a range of cultural and historical allusions in *Animal Farm*, correspondences in history that justify its reading as a historical allegory. The first commonly acknowledged parallel is between the animals' revolution (the vehicle) and the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent rise of Stalinism (the tenor). Commenting on his way of mirroring key events and figures from Soviet history through the story of farm animals overthrowing their human oppressors, Orwell admits: "Of course I intended it primarily as a satire on the Russian revolution. But I did mean it to have a wider application in so much that I meant that that kind of revolution (violent conspiratorial revolution, led by unconsciously power-hungry people) can only lead to a change of masters" [quoted from 22, p. 53]. V. C. Letemendia suggests that "Orwell makes it quite clear here that he refers to an animal perspective in defining the class struggle as one between humans and beasts. Certainly the point of departure was, in both the Russian situation and in this particular allegory, the identification and removal of the most evident class of oppressors" [22, p. 50].

Though some steady parallels are commonly recognized, such as between the Windmill project and Stalin's Five-Year economic plans [9, p. 65], the execution of animals confessing to non-existent crimes for dissent and the Stalin's Great Purge [23, p. 112], there are also more ambiguous cases that do not directly hint at specific historical figures, outlining certain facts in history nevertheless. Thus, critics generally agree that "Squealer represents the propagandists of the regime" [24, p. 26]. Orwell's use of animals and a farm setting makes these complex historical events accessible, emphasizing the universal relevance of his critique. While history is encoded in the narrative as its tenor, the allegory's function in this regard is that of exposure, or highlighting aspects that need scrutiny by depicting harsh realities.

We can also distinguish a philosophical allegory in the novel. This type functioned as a separate genre in medieval literature and was structured as personified abstractions: narratives featured personified animals, objects, or forces of nature to deliver a moral or ethical lesson. Some scholars term it "fable allegory" [25, p. 96]. However, not being a pure fable, *Animal Farm* still uses personified animals representing certain human qualities and ideas to teach a moral lesson. V. Meyers writes: "To oppose Marx, Orwell turned to a classic seventeenth-century work of political philosophy, Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651). <...> According to Hobbes, <...> all human beings are inclined to 'a perpetual and restless desire after power'" [24, p. 32]. The critic specifically points out that Hobbes did not see "men as capable of creating a new society" [Ibid]. She clarifies that "Orwell did not agree with Hobbes's political philosophy, nor did he, like Swift, find mankind ultimately disgusting. He simply believed that the rise of Russian totalitarianism could best be explained by Hobbes's theory, rather than by Marx's" [Ibid].

Here we could add our argument that philosophical allegory is broader in scope than either political or historical. Therefore, besides standing for the established historical figures, the animals also allegorize a moral message. Thus,

Old Major's role is that of idealistic inspiration, representing wisdom and the ability to envision a better future. Snowball's moral qualities comprise intelligence and innovative thinking, underscoring the values of progress, collaboration, and intellectual engagement. An inner binary opposition within the novel's allegory – Napoleon's manipulative, ruthless, and power-hungry nature vs Snowball's democratic tactics – helps to highlight the immoral stance of corruption and tyranny.

A combination of behavioural patterns and rhetoric creates certain philosophical concepts in the novel. One of the most noticeable of such philosophies is that of Boxer's, which can be termed as the philosophy of self-sacrificial hard work and blind loyalty. His two mottos, "I will work harder" and "Napoleon is always right", encapsulate his approach to life, which is centred on unwavering dedication to labour and uncritical trust in authority. In the end, however, allegiance and perseverance appear to be futile in the face of the authority's hypocrisy, which is proven by Boxer's tragic fate. This philosophy symbolizes the mindset of the working class under oppressive regimes – dedicated, trusting, but ultimately exploited. The image of Boxer represents admirable qualities but also highlights the dangers of unquestioning obedience in the face of corrupt leadership. Other animals enrich this spectrum with kindness and moral conscience weakened by helplessness in challenging injustice (Clover), skepticism and realism (Benjamin) invalidated by apathy, selfishness (Mollie), unthinking loyalty and gullibility (the Sheep), and religious faith (Moses), which may be read as a tool to pacify populations with promises of a better afterlife while distracting them from current oppression. Philosophical allegory thus performs a symbolizing function. As A. Byers asserts, this symbolization was "both a tribute to and a condemnation of the working class that Orwell felt could be led into tyrannical directions" [26].

In conclusion, the identified types of allegory in *Animal Farm* – political, historical and philosophical – aim to subvert the genre of the fable where animal figures stand as only abstract signifiers of certain human traits and qualities, and to broaden the potential of allegorical narratives by bringing them closer to reality and historical fact. The functions of political, historical, and philosophical allegory in *Animal Farm* – critique, exposure and symbolization – articulate the layered meanings and purposes of the narrative. The ideological critique via political allegory targets such types of leadership as authoritarian and totalitarian, while also invalidating weak participatory and reformatory governance. Political allegory aptly satirizes the leaders' manipulate language and control over the population, as well as the mechanisms of power consolidation and corruption. Historical parallelism and exposure of the true essence of real events, transforms historical narratives for future reflection. Finally, philosophical allegory challenges the rationality of the philosophies like Animalism or blind obedience to power, showing their vulnerability to corruption. It encourages readers to examine moral questions about loyalty, justice, and equality, and helps grasp the notions of freedom, oppression, and moral qualities through their symbolization.

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Поступила в редакцию 08.05.2025