

Aaron R. Esau

Mr. Wilson

Honors English 10

April 10, 2018

Persuading the Sheeple

In the book *Animal Farm* (by George Orwell), Squealer gives a speech to the other animals. When the other animals in the farm learn that the pigs have been sleeping in the beds, they grow uncomfortable and begin to lose trust in their leaders. So, Squealer tries to persuade them that the pigs need to sleep in beds, even though doing so was originally against the Seven Commandments. He uses rhetorical concepts such as pathos and logos throughout his speech to appeal to the animals, in hopes that doing so will convince the animals that he is correct, and that the pigs do, in fact, need beds.

Arguably the most notable example of Squealer's use of methods of persuasion is when he argues that the beds are "not more comfortable than [the pigs] need, I can tell you, comrades, with all the brainwork we have to do nowadays. You would not rob us of your repose, would you, comrades? You would not have us too tired to carry out our duties?" (67). In this section of the argument, there are many uses of pathos. For example, his repetitive use of the word "comrades" invokes a sense of community; a "comrade", as defined by Google Dictionary, is "a companion who is a fellow member of an organization". Furthermore, when Squealer finishes arguing about how the pigs need the beds, he says, "Surely none of you wishes to see Jones back?" (67). This makes it seem as if Jones will come back if the pigs don't have the beds. But

because none of the animals want Mr. Jones, of course, nobody will oppose his argument. In fact, the book actually mentions that “the animals reassured him on this point immediately, and no more was said about the pigs sleeping in farmhouse beds” (67). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that his use of pathos in his argument was effective.

However, Squealer’s argument doesn’t just appeal to the animals’ emotions; he also uses logos to persuade them. He does this by reasoning with the animals. The most notable example in his argument is when he says that “a bed merely means a place to sleep in. A pile of straw in a stall is a bed, properly regarded. The rule was against sheets, which are a human invention. We have removed the sheets from the farmhouse beds, and sleep between blankets.” (67). When Animal Farm was established, a law was instituted that legally prevented any animal from being allowed to use or sleep in a bed in the farmhouse. However, the pigs changed the laws of Animal Farm so that animals specifically cannot sleep in a bed with sheets, rather than just any bed. Squealer justified this change by arguing that a bed is merely a place to sleep in, just like the straw beds in the stalls that the other animals are forced to sleep in. By structuring his argument as he did, he is trying to make himself appear to be “reasonable” to the other animals.

When used properly, methods of persuasion, especially logos and pathos in this case, can be very effective. Squealer used logos and pathos in his argument properly, so he was able to convince the animals to follow his commands without question because they assumed that there was always a logical explanation for them. So the moral of the story is that, when people begin to lose faith in their leaders, it’s often a good idea for the leaders to speak, and use rhetoric to persuade their followers that they are doing the right thing.