

Olivia Ernst

Mrs. House/ Mr. Conner

English 2H; Period 5

20 May 2016

No One Man Should Have All That Power

Edmund Burke once stated, "The greater the power, the more dangerous the abuse." A topic of wide debate has been which strategies leaders use in order to have effective power. *Animal Farm* by George Orwell and *Night* by Elie Wiesel are two literary texts which discuss power, while quotes from Mao Zedong, Nikita Khrushchev, and Hitler debate ideas on this subject. Collectively, these sources discuss the idea that leaders use power effectively through the use of force, fear, and the unthinking masses which allows these leaders to stay in power but also turns them corrupt and immoral.

Force is one of the ways in which leaders use power effectively. For example, Mao Zedong was the leader of the Communist Party of China. The Cultural Revolution was going on during this time, which tore down tradition and abolished the Four Olds, which were Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits, and Old Ideas. Mao tried to maintain control over his people when he stated, "All political power comes from the barrel of the gun. The Communist Party must command all guns, that way, no guns can ever command the party" (Zedong). The government controls all guns so that no one can tell the government what to do. Mao has forced the population of China to follow his rule by not allowing guns. The people of China have no say in what goes on in the government and have no means of overthrowing the government if something bad happens. The

use of force through controlling all guns is immoral because it is a way for the leader to gain power at the expense of the rest of the population, since their voice in government has been taken away. Furthermore, when Napoleon announced that he will start engaging in trade with nearby farms, the some of the pigs are uneasy: "The four young pigs who had protested when Napoleon abolished the meetings raised their voice timidly, but they were promptly silenced by a tremendous growling from the dogs" (Orwell 76). Some pigs are trying to protest against Napoleon's change, but the dogs' growls silenced their complaints. Napoleon uses the dogs' growls as a way to force the pigs to stop protesting. Napoleon is corrupting because the animals no longer have say in the farm's operations. Mao Zedong as well as Napoleon from *Animal Farm* show that force is a way that leaders use power effectively.

In addition, leaders use power effectively through the use of fear tactics. Stalin was a leader of the communist USSR after the Russian Revolution. During this time, there was a transition from the harsh and brutal rule of Stalin to the softer rule of Khrushchev. Nikita Khrushchev said of Stalin, "Stalin, on the other hand, used extreme weapons and mass repressions at a time when the revolution was already victorious" (Khrushchev). Even when the Russian Revolution was over, Stalin was still using weapons against Soviet society. Stalin used fear tactics to get people to follow him as a leader. He inflicted unnecessary violence within the people of Russia in order to gain followers which has turned him into an unethical leader. Moreover, in Elie Wiesel's *Night*, Eliezer discusses Hitler with his hospital roommate, who says, "I have more faith in Hitler than in anyone else. He alone has kept his promises, all his promises, to the

Jewish people” (Wiesel 81). Eliezer’s roommate believes in Hitler because he is the only one who follows through with his promises. Life for the hospital roommate has become so disturbed that the only thing he can count on is the unethical manner in which he will eventually die through Hitler’s rule. Hitler’s consistent immorality has caused so much fear that his victims have no choice but to follow him. As a result, Stalin as well as Hitler as mentioned in *Night* demonstrate that fear is an effective way to gain power.

Furthermore, effective power is possible through the use of unthinking masses. Napoleon walks out of the farmhouse on hind legs and a whip in his trotter and before the animals could speak, the sheep bleated: “Four legs good, two legs *better!*” It went on for five minutes without stopping. And by the time the sheep had quieted down, the chance to utter any protest had passed...” (Orwell 133). The sheep of Animal Farm recited a new chant that they learned from Squealer, which went on for five minutes and prevented any chance for protest. Napoleon used the sheep to stop any other animal from protesting against the new change he made. He is preventing animals from inputting their opinion on the subject and therefore is acting evil. Additionally, Hitler was the leader of Nazi Germany and caused the murder of millions of Jews during the Holocaust. He said, “How lucky for those in power that people don’t think” (“Adolf Hitler”). Hitler likes that controlling unintelligent people is easy. Hitler used the unthinking masses as a corrupt way to gain power because he is making decisions for people that cannot realize that he is an villainous person. Napoleon in *Animal Farm* and Hitler both use the unthinking masses to gain power.

Force, fear, and unthinking masses are three strategies that leaders use to gain power over their citizens. Often times, this effective use of power causes the leaders to turn immoral and corrupt. Hitler, Mao Zedong, Stalin, and Napoleon all demonstrate these ways in which power is used effectively. It is important to note the effects of effective power to realize when it happens to oneself and in politics within society.

Works Cited

“Adolf Hitler.” Xplore Inc, 2016. 11 May 2016.

<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/adolfhitle109950.html>

Khrushchev, Nikita. “Secret Speech.” Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. *n.d.* Speech.

Orwell, George. *Animal Farm*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1945. Print.

Wiesel, Elie, and Marion Wiesel. *Night*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, a Division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988. Print.

Zedong, Mao. *Problems of War and Strategy*. Peking: Foreign Languages, 1966. 224. Print