

The Coherence Relations of “Mollie” in Animal Farm under Segmented Discourse Representation Theory(SDRT)

Anqi Meng^{1,a,*}

¹*Macau University of Science and Technology, Macau, China*

a. 2385941609@qq.com

**corresponding author*

Abstract: This paper delves into the coherence relations of Mollie, a character from George Orwell's "Animal Farm," utilizing the Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT) to analyze her role within the narrative. The study reviews the current research on "Animal Farm," highlighting the scarcity of in-depth analysis of Mollie's character, which is often overlooked in favor of more prominent characters. The paper introduces SDRT, a linguistic theory that dissects discourse into smaller segments to examine logical connections and coherence, providing a fresh perspective to explore Mollie's actions and their implications in the novel. The application of the SDRT framework to Mollie's character reveals how her individual desires and actions contrast with the collective ethos of the farm, symbolizing the broader themes of individualism versus collectivism. It also underscores her reactions to the power structures, which are indicative of the farm's societal dynamics. The analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of Mollie's role and her interactions with other characters, offering insights into the underlying social and political commentary of "Animal Farm." The paper concludes that SDRT not only enriches our comprehension of Mollie's character but also enhances the interpretation of the novel's overall message, shedding light on the complexities of power, freedom, and loyalty within the context of a totalitarian regime.

Keywords: SDRT, coherence relations, ‘Mollie’ in Animal Farm.

1. Introduction

In George Orwell's seminal work "Animal Farm," the narrative unfolds as the animals rise up against their human overlords to create a society governed by their own kind. Initially, this revolution seems to promise a utopia of equality and justice[1]. Nevertheless, as the story progresses, the dream of a liberated animal society sours. The power dynamics shift, and a new hierarchy emerges, leading to a form of oppression that mirrors the one they initially overthrew.

Within this allegorical tale, Mollie, a mare on the farm, captures the reader's attention with her distinctive traits and actions. Her character serves as a microcosm of the broader themes Orwell explores, such as the corruption of power and the struggle between individual desires and collective responsibilities.

This analysis employs Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT) to delve into the intricate web of coherence that defines Mollie's role in the novel[2]. SDRT provides a framework for understanding how her actions and statements are not only interconnected but also reflective of the larger narrative's progression and themes.

By examining Mollie's character through the lens of SDRT, we can uncover the subtleties of her behavior and the implications it holds for the story's message. Her penchant for personal indulgence, her aversion to the collective's demands, and her eventual defection to the side of the humans all contribute to a complex portrayal that challenges the reader's perception of loyalty and freedom.

The aim of this exploration is to extend beyond a surface-level characterization of Mollie, offering insights into how her story arc reinforces the novel's central arguments. Through a detailed analysis of her discourse segments, we seek to contribute to a deeper comprehension of "Animal Farm" and the enduring relevance of its cautionary tale.

2. Literature Review

In the scholarly discourse surrounding George Orwell's "Animal Farm," a variety of analytical approaches have been applied to uncover the novel's intricate layers of meaning.

Explores the central conflict in "Animal Farm," focusing on the power dynamics between the ruling pigs and the other animals[1]. The paper highlights how the pigs' consolidation of power results in a societal structure where the center dominates and exploits the periphery[1]. Mbon and Mabiala conduct a connotative analysis of the characters, revealing the symbolic meanings Orwell embeds in each animal to represent different facets of human nature and society[2]. P. A. M., Rahman, and Anriadi examine the instruments of symbolic violence within the narrative, arguing that these tools are crucial in establishing and maintaining the oppressive hierarchy on the farm[3]. Xiao employs New Historicism to analyze the political implications of "Animal Farm," linking the novel's allegory to the historical context of the Soviet Union and broader themes of totalitarianism [4]. Li and Bao offer a psychoanalytic reading of Napoleon's character, dissecting his multifaceted personality to understand the psychological underpinnings of his tyranny[5]. Marks investigates the theme of equality in both animated and animatronic adaptations of "Animal Farm," scrutinizing how these adaptations interpret and represent the original text's message about class and power[6]. Shaikh focuses on symbolic political exploitation in the novel, demonstrating how Orwell uses animals to symbolize the manipulation and control exerted by ruling powers[7]. Ma discusses the symbolism in the absurdity presented in "Animal Farm," arguing that the novel's absurdist elements serve to critique the failures of the political system it satirizes[8]. Dijk and Kintsch discuss strategies of discourse comprehension, offering insights into how readers interpret and make sense of the complex allegorical nature of "Animal Farm"[9]. Beaugrande and Dressler provide an introduction to text linguistics, which serves as a foundation for analyzing the textual elements that contribute to the coherence and impact of Orwell's work[10]. Hoek examines discourse segmentation and the linguistic marking of coherence relations, a study that could enrich the understanding of the structural organization of "Animal Farm"[11]. Wolyn and Simske discuss character relationship mapping, a method that could be applied to visualize and analyze the intricate relationships among characters in "Animal Farm"[12]. Gold, Kovatchev, and Zesch focus on annotating and analyzing interactions between meaning relations, a study that could provide a deeper understanding of the symbolic and allegorical layers in "Animal Farm" [13]. Sun analyzes animal images and metaphors in "Animal Farm," highlighting how these elements are used to convey Orwell's social and political commentary [14]. Dai offers an analysis of "Animal Farm" from the perspective of defamiliarization, a technique that Orwell employs to challenge readers' preconceptions and encourage a critical examination of the narrative [15].

These scholarly works collectively represent a rich tapestry of research that has shaped our current understanding of discourse analysis, text linguistics, and computational approaches to language.

3. Methodology

3.1. Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT)

Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT) is a linguistic theory designed for analyzing and interpreting coherence and logical relationships in natural language. Proposed by Hans Kamp and Uwe Reyle in 1993, and further developed by Lascarides and Asher, it is primarily utilized for dealing with the information structure and reasoning processes within discourse. The theory posits that each assertion in discourse corresponds to a discourse representation, and these representations are interconnected through logical relations to form a coherent whole. By constructing the logical form of discourse, SDRT assists researchers in understanding and interpreting the meanings and inferences within texts, especially in complex discourses and dialogues, through Discourse Representation Structures (DRSs) and rhetorical relations. In SDRT, each segment of discourse is assigned a DRS, and coherence is established through rhetorical relations that define the logical and semantic connections between discourse segments [3].

The theoretical foundation of SDRT lies at the intersection of formal semantics and discourse analysis. It relies on a meticulous analysis of discourse and an understanding of how the various parts of the discourse interact to construct overall meaning. This analytical approach focuses not only on the meaning of individual sentences but also on how these sentences are interrelated and support each other within a broader context.

SDRT effectively addresses the anaphoric relations of singular and plural pronouns, and it does so with creativity and clarity [4]. SDRT identifies various rhetorical relations, including but not limited to:

Elaboration: One discourse segment provides additional details about another.

Contrast: Discourse segments are juxtaposed to highlight differences or oppositions.

Result: One event is presented as a consequence of another.

Narration: Events are connected in a chronological sequence.

However, there are more complex cases of pronoun reference, where they do not refer to individuals but to propositions. For example: "The monitor put the note with the formula under the test paper, the study committee member had formulas all over their palm, the league secretary wrote the formula on their thigh, these three cheated on the exam, but the head teacher doesn't believe it." Here, "it" refers to the proposition that "these three cheated on the exam." There is also "pragmatic anaphora" or bridging reference in natural language, such as "Zhang San has a dog, its fur is white." The noun in need of interpretation is "fur," which refers to the dog's fur. This reference is made possible by the connection from the whole to its parts, and this type of reference is also not within the scope of DRT. In order to explain more anaphoric phenomena and to address some other shortcomings in DRT, Professor N. Asher from the University of Austin proposed the SDRT theory. The most prominent feature of SDRT is the emphasis on the impact of rhetorical structure on discourse meaning, introducing rhetorical relations into the logical form of discourse. In DRT, the logical form of discourse is represented by DRS, while in SDRT, it is represented by SDRS. Lexically, SDRS contains three types of vocabulary. The first type belongs to the micro-structure, which is a set of logical forms of atomic sentences in natural language, that is, DRS; the second type is labels such as p_0 , p_1 , p_2 , p_3 , etc.; the third type is relational symbols representing discourse markers: R_0 , R_1 , R_2 , R_3 , etc.

The SDRT framework builds coherence in discourse by breaking it down into smaller information units (discourse segments) and analyzing the logical relationships between these units [5]. In constructing discourse representations, SDRT employs a formalized notation, including Discourse Representation Structures (DRSs) and conditionals. A DRS is a graphical representation used to illustrate the entities, events, and relationships within a discourse.

3.2. 'Mollie' in Animal Farm

Within the narrative of "Animal Farm," Mollie's character can be analyzed through the lens of SDRT. Mollie, the mare used to draw Mr. Jones's 'trap' or carriage, is one of the 'horse characters' in Animal Farm, along with Boxer and Clover. However, she is distinguished from both of those other characters. From the very beginning, we get hints that she's not going to last long in the rebellion: she comes late to Old Major's speech, and she "took a place near the front and began flirting her white mane, hoping to draw attention to the red ribbons it was plaited with". The first thing she wants to know is, "Will there be sugar after the rebellion?"; the second thing she wants to know is whether she'll be allowed to wear ribbons. Not that she waits for an answer: after the rebellion, the animals find her in the farmhouse, where "she had taken a piece of blue ribbon from Mrs. Jones's dressing-table, and was holding it against her shoulder and admiring herself in the glass in a very foolish manner". When the work begins, Mollie shows up late and leaves early. When there's fighting, she hides in her manger. And when life gets hard during the winter, she gets troublesome: "She was late for work every morning and excused herself by saying that she had overslept, and she complained of mysterious pains, though her appetite was excellent". Clover eventually sees Mollie letting one of the neighborhood men pet her nose. In the end, Mollie runs off to be taken care of by humans. When Mollie runs off, the narrator notes that "none of the animals ever mentioned Mollie again".

Her actions and utterances can be seen as a series of discourse segments connected by rhetorical relations [6]. For instance, Mollie's vanity and her fondness for ribbons might be linked to her disinterest in the rebellion through an Elaboration relation, where her material desires elaborate on her apolitical nature.

By constructing DRSs for Mollie's discourse segments and identifying the rhetorical relations between them, we can gain a deeper understanding of how her character interacts with the overall narrative structure of "Animal Farm." This analysis can reveal how Mollie's character reflects and influences other characters and events and how her actions resonate with the novel's themes and messages.

Comparing Mollie's discourse coherence with other characters, such as Boxer and Snowball, can further highlight her traits and symbolic significance. For example, Boxer's discourse coherence might be tightly connected to the farm's labor and revolutionary activities through Result and Narration relations, while Mollie's might be set apart through Contrast relations. SDRT provides a robust theoretical tool for analyzing and interpreting the coherence relations of Mollie's character in "Animal Farm." By identifying and analyzing the rhetorical relations between Mollie's discourse segments, we can better understand how her character weaves into the fabric of the novel's overall narrative and themes.

4. Results

In "Animal Farm," Mollie's discourse can be divided into several key parts, not only embodies the tension between the individual and the collective but also touches on broader themes such as power, freedom, and betrayal[7]. Her ultimate betrayal is not only the result of personal choice but also a product of the farm's social structure and power relations. Through Mollie's story, Orwell reveals that even in an ideal society pursuing freedom and equality, individual choices and behaviors are still influenced by deep-seated social structures.

4.1. Segmentation of Mollie's Discourse

4.1.1. Pursuit of Material Enjoyment

Mollie often expresses her craving for sweets and personal adornments, reflecting her high regard for material enjoyment.

4.1.2. Aspiration for Freedom

She shows a yearning for the freedom to leave the farm and explore the outside world, revealing her dissatisfaction with constraints and her desire for freedom.

4.1.3. Fear and Submission to Power

In the face of power and violence, Mollie often exhibits fear and submission, revealing her sense of powerlessness towards power structures.

4.1.4. Ultimate Betrayal

Mollie's choice to leave Animal Farm and join the nearby human settlement is an act with strong symbolic significance in the story.

4.2. Analysis of Coherence Relations

4.2.1. Conflict between Personal Desires and Collective Interests

The conflict between Mollie's pursuit of personal desires and the collective interests of the farm illustrates the tension between the individual and the collective.

4.2.2. Opposition of Freedom and Constraint

Mollie's aspiration for freedom is in stark contrast to the constraints she experiences on the farm, reflecting her inner longing for freedom and the limitations of reality.

4.2.3. Individual Response under Power Relations

Mollie's fear and submission in the face of power are contrasted with the bravery of characters like Boxer and the intelligence of Snowball, showing different individual responses within power structures.

4.2.4. Discrimination between Betrayal and Loyalty

Mollie's act of betrayal prompts profound reflection on loyalty and betrayal. Her choice is not only a personal one but also reflects broader social and political issues.

4.3. Symbolic Significance of Coherence Relations

Mollie's actions and choices are symbolic in the novel, representing those groups who are easily swayed and pursue personal interests in the midst of power struggles and social change. Through Mollie's character, Orwell criticizes individuals who display selfishness and weakness in the face of collectivism.

4.4. Coherence relations analysis of other characters

4.4.1. Boxer

Discourse Segments: Boxer's discourse is characterized by his slogans "Napoleon is always right" and "I will work harder," reflecting his dedication and simplicity.

These segments are coherent with the theme of blind loyalty and the exploitation of the working class. His discourse maintains a consistent relation to the ideals of hard work and devotion until his tragic end.

4.4.2. Snowball

Discourse Segments: Snowball's discourse is marked by his strategic planning and educational initiatives, such as his windmill project.

His segments are coherent with the theme of intellectual leadership and progressive ideas. However, his expulsion from the farm by Napoleon disrupts this coherence, symbolizing the suppression of knowledge and innovation.

4.4.3. Napoleon

Discourse Segments: Napoleon's discourse includes manipulative rhetoric and the gradual assumption of power, evident in his rewriting of the commandments.

His discourse is coherent with the theme of authoritarianism and corruption. The continuity in his discourse segments reflects the consolidation of power and the manipulation of the narrative to maintain control.

4.4.4. Squealer

Discourse Segments: Squealer's discourse is characterized by his persuasive speeches and justifications for Napoleon's actions.

His segments are coherent with the theme of propaganda and the manipulation of information. His discourse serves to maintain the coherence of the ruling regime's narrative by justifying any actions and silencing dissent.

4.4.5. Analysis

Contrasting Coherence: Comparing Mollie's incoherent relation to the collective with Boxer's unwavering coherence highlights the novel's commentary on the fates of those who either conform or resist the ruling power[8].

Leadership and Control: Snowball's and Napoleon's discourses show a shift from a coherent vision for the farm's future to a coherent control over its present, illustrating the transition from revolutionary ideals to totalitarian rule.

Manipulation and Deception: Squealer's consistent discourse, in contrast to the fragmented discourse of the animals, underscores the role of language in maintaining the coherence of the oppressive regime.

The coherence relations of characters in "Animal Farm" are instrumental in driving the narrative and reinforcing the novel's themes [9]. Mollie's departure from the collective discourse, Boxer's tragic adherence to it, Snowball's expulsion from contributing to it, Napoleon's manipulation of it, and Squealer's exploitation of it all contribute to a complex web of discourse that mirrors the dynamics of power and resistance.

5. Discussion

5.1. Mollie in Animal Farm

Through the analysis, it is discovered that "Animal Farm" utilizes the character of Mollie to discuss the dynamics between the individual and the collective, the influence of power on the pursuit of freedom, and the discernment of loyalty versus betrayal [10]. Mollie's individualistic actions are in stark contrast to the collective principles of the farm. Her pursuit of personal desires highlights the underlying conflicts between the individual and the collective within a society that prioritizes collectivism. Mollie's behavior illustrates the impact of collective norms and expectations on individuals within a collective society, while also emphasizing the natural inclination of individuals to seek self-actualization [11].

Despite Mollie's intense yearning for freedom, her fear of and submission to power curtail her pursuit of it. Mollie's fear and submission may originate from the unequal power dynamics on the farm, leading to a contradiction between her desire for liberty and her actual conduct. This reveals the potential for power structures to suppress individual freedom [12].

Mollie's ultimate decision to abandon Animal Farm, an act of betrayal, reveals not only her personal frailties but also the defects in the farm's social structure. Her betrayal is indicative not only of personal choice but also of the influence of social structures and environments on individual actions. Her departure mirrors the chasm between the farm's ideals and reality, prompting a profound contemplation on the definitions of loyalty and betrayal.

5.2. Similar characters for Comparison

Not only Mollie in Animal farm, also many similar characters in other literary works can provide a perspective on the relationship between the individual and power across different cultural and social context.

Scarlett O'Hara from "Gone with the Wind". Scarlett, like Mollie, is portrayed as an individualist who often prioritizes personal desires over collective responsibilities. Her response to the changing social order during the American Civil War can be compared to Mollie's reactions to the farm's new hierarchy.

Jay Gatsby from "The Great Gatsby". Gatsby's pursuit of wealth and status to win Daisy's love mirrors Mollie's pursuit of material pleasures. Both characters face the disillusionment of their dreams in the face of harsh realities imposed by societal norms.

Hester Prynne from "The Scarlet Letter". Hester's defiance of societal norms by having a child out of wedlock and her subsequent punishment can be compared to Mollie's ostracization for not adhering to the farm's ideals. Both characters experience the consequences of challenging authority.

Willy Loman from "Death of a Salesman". Willy's delusions of success and his eventual realization of failure offer a contrast to Mollie's naivety and her eventual betrayal. Both characters grapple with the gap between their aspirations and the reality imposed by their social environments.

5.3. Cultural Interpretations of Mollie's Character

In "Animal Farm," Mollie's actions and symbolic role are subject to various interpretations depending on the cultural backgrounds of the readers [13]. Her character, often seen as vain and self-centered, reflects the broader themes of the novel related to power, freedom, and individualism. Here's how different cultural contexts might influence the perception of her character:

Western Perspective: In individualistic cultures, Mollie might be viewed as a symbol of the bourgeoisie who are reluctant to give up their comforts and luxuries, even at the cost of freedom and

equality. Her defection to the humans is seen as a betrayal of the collective ideals of the farm, representing those who prioritize personal gain over communal good.

Eastern Perspective: In collectivist cultures, Mollie's behavior might be interpreted as a stark contrast to the values of hard work, unity, and sacrifice for the common good. Her individualistic tendencies and eventual abandonment of the farm could be seen as a critique of selfishness and materialism, emphasizing the importance of community over personal desires.

Middle Eastern and North African Contexts: Here, Mollie's character might be viewed through the lens of honor and shame, where her actions could be seen as bringing dishonor to the farm and herself. The cultural emphasis on loyalty and solidarity might lead readers to see her as a character who fails to uphold these values, thus becoming an outcast.

Latin American View: In cultures with a history of political upheaval and class struggle, Mollie might symbolize the fickleness of the middle class and their tendency to side with the powers that be for personal security and comfort. Her character could be seen as a critique of those who abandon revolutionary ideals for personal gain.

African Contexts: Considering the strong communal values and the importance of collective responsibility, Mollie's actions might be viewed as a severe breach of trust and unity. Her individualistic pursuit might be seen as going against the cultural ethos of working together for the common good.

In conclusion, the interpretation of Mollie's character in "Animal Farm" can significantly vary across different cultural backgrounds. Her character serves as a mirror reflecting the values and expectations of different societies regarding power dynamics, individual freedoms, and collective responsibilities.

5.4. Limitations

While Mollie's case offers profound insights into the relationship between the individual and the collective, the effects of power, and the disconnect between ideals and reality, it may also be confined by the novel's specific narrative framework and symbolic meanings [14]. Furthermore, interpreting Mollie's actions as a critique of a particular social group might overlook the complexity of her character as a literary figure.

Future studies could further investigate the reception and interpretation of Mollie's character across various cultural and social settings, as well as how her actions reflect broader social and political themes. Concurrently, comparing the coherence relations of other characters in "Animal Farm" can offer a more holistic perspective to comprehend the novel's themes and messages. Additional character comparisons, cross-cultural analyses, and further discussions of social structures can be undertaken. Future research can delve into the interactions between Mollie and other characters, particularly those who make different choices between collectivism and individualism.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we delve into the coherence relations of Mollie's character in "Animal Farm" through the lens of Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT) [15]. As a robust tool for analyzing discourse coherence, SDRT allows us to meticulously dissect Mollie's actions and words within the novel and explore how they interconnect with the overarching narrative structure.

Mollie's individualistic behaviors starkly contrast with the farm's collective principles, revealing the potential challenges and conflicts faced by individuals within a collectivist society. The contradiction between her yearning for freedom and her fear and submission to power illustrates the potential suppression of individual pursuits of liberty by power structures. Mollie's act of betrayal is not merely a personal choice but also reflects flaws in the farm's social structure, prompting a

profound reflection on the definitions of loyalty and betrayal. Mollie's actions and choices offer readers a window to contemplate the social dynamics and individual roles within *Animal Farm*, highlighting the contradictions between ideals and reality.

By analyzing Mollie's coherence relations in "*Animal Farm*," we not only gain a more comprehensive understanding of her character but also gain insight into the deeper social and political themes within the novel. Mollie's story, as a unique perspective, allows us to explore and reflect on universal themes such as power, freedom, and loyalty. The analysis of her coherence relations enriches our understanding of "*Animal Farm*" and provides profound insights into similar social dynamics in the real world. Ultimately, Mollie's character and her coherence relations hold a significant place in the narrative of "*Animal Farm*," adding more layers of interpretation and space for contemplation to this classic work.

References

- [1] M J N. *The Conflict Between Center and Edge in George Orwell's Animal Farm*[J]. *Journal of Educational Research and Policies*, 2023, 5(6).
- [2] MBON A, MABIALA I R G. *A Connotative Analysis of Characters in George Orwell's Animal Farm*[J]. *International Journal of Literature Studies*, 2022, 2(2):118-125.
- [3] P. A M, Rahman F, Anriadi. *Instruments of Symbolic Violence in George Orwell's Animal Farm*[J]. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2022, 13(4):826-833.
- [4] Xiao S. *An Analysis of Political Implications in Animal Farm from the Perspective of New Historicism*[J]. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 2022, 5(3):102-107.
- [5] Li Hui Fang, Bao Chenglian. *An Analysis of Napoleon's Tripartite Personality in Animal Farm from the Perspective of Psychoanalysis*[J]. *Journal of Sociology and Ethnology*, 2021, 3(5).
- [6] Marks Peter. *Are some more equal than others? Animated and animatronic adaptations of Animal Farm*[J]. *Textual Practice*, 2021, 35(10):1667-1683.
- [7] Shaikh Noman. *Symbolic political exploitation in George Orwell's Animal Farm*[J]. *Motifs: A Peer Reviewed International Journal of English Studies*, 2021, 7(1):98-109.
- [8] Ma Guocheng. *Symbolism in the Absurdity of Animal Farm*[J]. *The Frontiers of Society, Science and Technology*, 2020, 2(3).
- [9] T. A. Dijk, W. Kintsch. "Strategies of discourse comprehension." (1986).
- [10] R. Beaugrande, W. Dressler. "Introduction to text linguistics." (1981).
- [11] J. Hoek. "Making sense of discourse: On discourse segmentation and the linguistic marking of coherence relations." (2018).
- [12] Sam Wolyn and S. Simske. "Character Relationship Mapping in Major Fictional Works Using Text Analysis Methods." *ACM Symposium on Document Engineering* (2023).
- [13] Darina Gold, Venelin Kovatchev et al. "Annotating and analyzing the interactions between meaning relations." *LAW@ACL* (2019).
- [14] P. Sun. "Animal Images and Metaphors in Animal Farm." (2015). 01-07.
- [15] Rumeng Dai. *An Analysis of Animal Farm from the Perspective of Defamiliarization*[J]. *The Frontiers of Society, Science and Technology*, 2020, 2(2).