

## The Ideology of Ceremonial Activities in George Orwell's Animal Farm

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أيدولوجية الأنشطة والمراسيم الاحتفالية في مزرعة الحيوانات لجورج أورويل ١٩٤٥

ملخص:

يبدو ان رواية "مزرعة الحيوانات" لجورج أورويل تقدم صراعاً بين أيديولوجيات معينة لكنها متناقضة. ففي حين يفترض أن انتفاضة الحيوانات تشير إلى أيديولوجية معينة، فإن عواقب ذلك التمرد وصعود نابليون إلى السلطة يشيران إلى أيديولوجية معاكسة تماماً. وبهذا الصدد، تم تسليط الضوء على أنشطة نابليون الاحتفالية وتقديمها بأهمية قصوى في الرواية لأنها تقترح أنها تنفذ أيديولوجيته السياسية وتخدم أجندته. فكل الاحتفالات التي يقيمها نابليون في الرواية تم اقرارها والعمل بها بعد نجاح ثورة الحيوانات وبعد أن أصبح نابليون الزعيم المطلق لمزرعة الحيوانات وبلا منازع. وفي ضوء ذلك، تقترح الورقة البحثية الحالية وبناء على ذلك تتوي النقصي والقول بأن احتفالات نابليون المختلفة تتبع من أيديولوجية معينة والتي من المفترض أنها تخدم أجندات معينة وتحقق أغراضاً معينة. وتقترح الورقة البحثية التحقيق في هذه الأنشطة الاحتفالية وتحليلها في محاولة لتتبع ومعرفة الأيديولوجية التي نشأت منها. كما ستتناول الدراسة أيضاً الأغراض المحتملة التي قد تسعى هذه الاحتفالات إلى تحقيقها في ضوء الأيديولوجيات المحتملة التي تقف وراءها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مزرعة الحيوان، الأنشطة الاحتفالية، الأيديولوجيا، الشمولية، الأجندة السياسية

### Abstract

George Orwell's Animal Farm is a novel in which there seems to be a conflict of certain contrasting ideologies. Whereas the animals' uprising supposedly indicates a particular ideology, the aftermath of that rising and the ascendancy of Napoleon to power designates an entirely contrary one. In that order, Napoleon's ceremonial activities are highlighted and presented with paramount significance for they assumingly implement his political ideology and serve its agenda. All ceremonies Napoleon establishes in the novel are implemented after the success of their animal revolution and after he becomes the absolute and undisputed leader of the Animal Farm. In view of that, the current research paper assumes and based on that intends to argue that Napoleon's various ceremonies originate in a particular ideology and presumably serve certain agendas and achieve particular purposes. It proposes to investigate and analyze these ceremonial activities in an attempt to trace and find out the ideology in which they originate. The study is also going to examine the potential purposes these ceremonies might seek to achieve in the light of the possible ideologies behind them .

Keywords: Animal Farm, Ceremonial Activities, Ideology, Totalitarianism, Political Agenda

## Introduction

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* could be assumed as a form of political fiction and as such is expected to have a certain political ideology. As a political fiction, it would be defined as "a fairly new form of literary expression which has come into vogue in the post-War period of the twentieth century," (Edmund 43). This form of fiction is widely recognized to have risen after WWI as a reaction by certain sensible writers like Orwell to the war's disturbing atrocities and its devastating aftermaths. Such atrocities were supposedly attributed to the rising power of the totalitarian regimes of Nazism and fascism in the European continent . Orwell's *Animal Farm* and similar narratives have seemingly established new fictional narratives that were entwined with political theory to assumingly express and communicate a political ideology of anti-totalitarianism. With the introduction of political concerns in their fiction, these novelists apparently express their concern of what might happen if such totalitarian regimes prevailed. Just like *Animal Farm*, similar political fiction would deal with the political possibilities and outcomes of the rise and power control of particular forms of governing .

Hence, the ominous advent of WWII has apparently stirred Orwell and the likes of him to write such political fiction. They have assumingly foreseen the tragic consequences of the upcoming conflict and attempted to reflect the people's fears and warn against the disturbing unruliness of war: "George Orwell wrote his both novels *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which were very effective arguing for the resistance of totalitarianism and raising the consciousness of social inequity," (Kleinová 18). After all, it seems like those writers held the society's safety, wellbeing and its need for peace and development at high regard. Their writing thus condemns and warns against the rise of totalitarian ideologies and the danger of allying with them .

Bringing political theory into fictional narrative would then seem to pave the way for ideology to function within the parameters of literary narratives. Though the field of political theory would be regarded as the natural locale of ideology, its presence in literature is widely acknowledged and would supposedly raise awareness and help people see the world in a particular way :

The word 'ideology' has long seemed to be a foreign interloper in our everyday and disciplinary languages. Its natural habitat is political theory, where it sometimes refers to hidden motives or to factors of which we are unaware that lead to false consciousness. Bakhtin uses it to refer to 'a particular way of viewing the world, one that strives for social significance,' and in this sense, it is close to the ordinary meaning of 'point of view'. (Martin 150-51)

Orwell in writing *Animal Farm* seems also to have harbored certain doubts over whether power and ideology could observe morality, ethics, civility, history and other values or tread over them. As a writer of the people, Orwell gives the impression that he himself is in a state of uncertainty about that and thus appears to have just reflected the people's worries and expressed their concerns over such existential matters :

Orwell simply was not sure on both these big issues: could there be a total divorce of power from morality and of history and ideology from truth? Few people were sure at the time he wrote, when Soviet power, if containable, seemed impregnable, and Nazi power was a very recent memory and many feared its recurrence. (Rodden 157)

Hence, by the closing of the novel at hand, it might become obvious that not only wherever there is power there definitely is ideology, but also that there seems to be little or no observation of ethics and other values . In that regard, it would also be impractical to assume that Orwell or any other writer is out of or beyond ideology and its influence. After all, no author and probably no human individual could "escape entirely the ideology of his or her time and place and that, therefore, we ought not to evaluate voices and ideologies solely according to their conformity with our own," (Phelan 58). Orwell, for that matter, would supposedly be conceived to live and write within a capitalist political ideology; an ideology that stands at a stark contrast to all other seemingly totalitarian ideologies .

In this respect, we could venture saying that Orwell has deeply been enchanted with the communist ideology and Stalin's totalitarian regime. Orwell would perceive the Russian communist regime at the time as literarily corrupt as it is politically. Such reprimanding attitude of Orwell is said to have been fueled by "Lenin's view that art and literature must become instruments of the party's ideology, and therefore that artistic expression must be controlled by the state," (Quinn 361) .

Hence, Animal Farm might be perceived as an anti-communist as it is anti-totalitarian narrative as well. Yet, since Britain and communist Russia were allies at the time of writing this novel, many publication houses rejected the text and refused to publish it :

Due to Orwell's pricking and lashing vision of Russian Communism, many publishing houses denied bringing out the novel. Finally, it was the editor Warburg that decided to publish the book. (Lang 202)

Nonetheless, a close reading of Orwell's Animal Farm would bring someone to the realization that the novel is not simply an anti-totalitarian political ideology per se. rather, the novel seems to have ranged in interest and artistic presentation through culture, class, sociology and economy just like it has with ideology and political philosophy .

That is probably why it is usually recognized that Orwell's "writings, taken together, may offer the most comprehensive profile of modern English society ever produced by one individual," (Rodden 28). Orwell also appears to have been interested in and advocated the cause of the low working classes and their welfare. He is thus received by some to have articulated an ideology of socialism, and "it was in this sense that Orwell's socialism was concrete: a way of living one's life rather than a blueprint for restructuring society," (Ingle 115). The ensuing argument hence attempts at reading the implications of ceremonial activities in the novel in the light of all that mentioned above .

The Ideology of Ceremonial Activities in Animal Farm

Totalitarianism has abolished freedom of thought to an extent unheard of in any previous age. . . . It not only forbids you to express—even to think—certain thoughts, but it dictates what you shall think, it creates an ideology for you, it tries to govern your emotional life as well as setting up a code of conduct. And as far as possible it isolates you from the outside world, it shuts you up in an artificial universe in which you have no standards of comparison. (Orwell, The Collected Essays, Vol. II, 97)

The series of situations [ceremonial activities] thus created give rise to the swift enlargement of power and the totalitarian radicalization of the means of control; in the course of this process, the totalitarian dictatorship comes into being. (Friedrich 367)

Orwell's Animal Farm presents its events with an extraordinary artistic finesse specially those of ceremonial activities. After the animals' revolution, the novel portrays a series of ceremonies exercised by the farm animals. These ceremonies hold greater significance for the novel's perspective and the construction and flow of its events. First, it is Napoleon that the novel links to most ceremonial undertakings. Almost all these ceremonial activities are invented, established and imposed on all animals by Napoleon. Besides, it appears that such ceremonies are of a dictatorial nature because they are carried out by force, and a severe punishment awaits those who do not comply .

Hence, it could in the beginning be assumed—and argued and investigated herein—that ceremonies similar to those in Orwell's novel established by Napoleon are generally related to tyranny. It seems that tyranny and such ceremonial activities enjoy a kind of existential relation as they almost always operate together. Going hand in hand, such ceremonial activities and tyrannical rule are further argued to originate in and serve certain ideologies .

On a wider and more general level, it is assumed that the forceful adoption and performance of most ceremonial activities like those in the novel or the like of which in actual contexts comes out of and is intended to work for a given political ideology. That particular ideology would be assumed totalitarian because "the totalitarian state tries, at any rate, to control the thoughts and emotions of its subjects at least as completely as it controls their actions," (Orwell, The Collected Essays, Vol. II, 97). This scenario of absolute power and control resembles the state of the farm and its animals under Napoleon's reign .

In the beginning however, the novel introduces Napoleon as one of the farm's pigs who has not been or known to be a tyrant ruler. Principally, when the novel opens the farm is run by human individuals in the person of Mr. Jones and his men. Yet, once the animals decide to start an uprising against man's rule and exploitation, it seems like Napoleon begins to brood the idea of becoming the next ruler of the farm. It also seems that Napoleon does not just aspire to rule the farm but also desire to establish an absolute and totalitarian form of governing .

In that order, Napoleon sets on a hard and bloody pursuit for power and absolute control over the farm. In order to achieve that goal, Napoleon employs and exercises a series of strategies ranging from deception and manipulation to acts of coercion and the establishment of several and numerous ceremonies. Yet, Napoleon's

fundamental philosophy is implemented and carried out in the form of a series of ceremonies. Napoleon increases the amount and number of songs, speeches, parades and other ceremonies. He assumingly does that to keep the animals' busy enough not to think about their own wretchedness so that he could acquire full authority and absolute control .

For example, he bans the animals from chanting the "Beasts of England", which has been their revolutionary anthem. In its stead, Napoleon establishes and instructs the chanting of the "Minimus" poem as an official and formal ceremonial activity and orders the animals to sing it on a daily basis. Besides, Sunday is assigned as a day of rest that is accompanied with certain rituals. It, for instance, commences with a flag raising ceremony; after that, a general meeting is held to discuss new resolutions—during which only pigs offer resolutions though—and concludes with setting plans to plan the due work of the coming weeks .

As for the poem as a ceremonial activity, however, animals should have been given the liberty to choose either poem or in the least sing the "Beasts of England" alongside the "Minimus" poem if they like to. To the animals' chagrin, that was not the case; Napoleon not only prohibits animals from singing that poem but also determines that the chanting of it by any animal is a criminal act that requires an extremely serious punishment .

Therefore, it could be suggested that Napoleon's ban of a particular song and replacing it with another with the prospect of criminal punishment against violation is an act of tyranny and oppression. As such, the tyrannical ban of a tradition and the compulsory imposition of another in its place appears to originate in a particular totalitarian ideology in which the imposition of such ceremonies seems to serve its agendas .

Assumingly, Napoleon's order of the "Minimus" chanting is a ceremonial activity in the form of a song, but one that seemingly originates in a particular ideology and serves certain purposes. For one thing, banning the animals from chanting the 'Beasts of England' and ordering another seems to stem from an authoritarian ideology as the poem is enforced not adopted. Thus, such an ideology seemingly serves the purposes of oppressing and controlling the animals .

This authoritarian ideology apparently oppresses any thoughts of a revolt. The "Beasts of England" has previously inspired rebellion in the animals, and rebel they did, successfully. Therefore, the prohibition of such poem assumingly originates in Napoleon's paranoid fear that the song might awaken a spirit of defiance and revolt in the animals against him and his rule just as it did during their revolution against Jones and his men :

Beasts of England was the song of the Rebellion. But the Rebellion is now completed. The execution of the traitors this afternoon was the final act. The enemy both external and internal has been defeated. In Beasts of England we expressed our longing for a better society in days to come. But that society has now been established. Clearly this song has no longer any purpose. (Orwell, Animal Farm 45)

Soon after the success of the animals' uprising against Jones and his men, all farm animals—more particularly Snowball—start to observe in Napoleon radical changes of thought, act and deed. It turns out, the animals realize, that Napoleon appears to be consumed by an enormous lust for power. By the passing of sometime and events after the revolution, the farm animals even come to the conclusion that Napoleon is a power-hungry monger .

It is no longer difficult for the animals to understand and even know for sure that Napoleon is going to be just as bad and oppressing as Jones and his men. The farm animals even begin to fear that Napoleon will exceed his predecessors and become a more abusive, exploiting and totalitarian ruler. On His part, Napoleon indeed demonstrates an unquenchable greed for power and authority, of the totalitarian nature though. He assumes that since the animals have previously been capable of uprising—they have actually demonstrated their potential in successfully revolting against Jones—they might very likely ignite a revolution against him as well, and for whatever reason .

Hence, Napoleon desires to oppress any rebelling spirit in the animals' midst. To do so, he needs to acquire absolute control over the animals and almost all aspects of their life. Accordingly, Napoleon supposes that the animals need to be ordered into what to do, what to celebrate, how to unquestionably obey instructions and even how to lead their lives. In view of that, Napoleon makes sure through various strategies—on top of which are a series of ceremonial activities—that animals are regularly reminded of the need and necessity of fulfilling their duties, meeting their responsibilities and protecting the farm .

To that end, Napoleon crowds the animals' life with an assorted series of activities and events, duties and responsibilities. Celebrations in the form of ceremonies and ceremonial events represent a major component

within Napoleon's recipe of subjugating and controlling the animals. For that purpose, too, Napoleon replaces the "Beasts of England" with the "Minimus" poem and makes it obligatory. This new song is a particularly pathetic and distasteful song that stimulates no uprising, resistance or anything of that sort .

To the contrary, such a song would hopefully inspire in the animals a submissive spirit. Through such indoctrination, animals are expected to grow in an attitude and mentality of obedience, commitment and hard work. As such, animals would be made to commit to work, duties, and responsibilities and would submit entirely to their one and only leader and ruler of the farm; to Napoleon and his rule :

Animal Farm, Animal Farm ,

Never through me shalt thou come to harm! (Orwell, Animal Farm 45)

As we can notice, the "Minimus" poem—instilled as a ceremonial undertaking—teaches the animals to love Napoleon and even breeds into the animals' minds the idea that he alone is their savior. Although the new song would on face value be perceived as a ceremonial, placating and innocuous practice; it, on deeper levels, seems to originate in an ideology of governing that inculcates and embraces oppression and totalitarianism . Such totalitarian ideology would definitely have certain purposes to serve; it apparently seeks to subjugate the animals, have complete control over them and their life and subdue them into total submission. Eventually, it seems that such totalitarian ideology of governing has achieved its goals; Napoleon gains absolute power and establishes complete control over the farm and its animals .

Moreover, Napoleon's aggressiveness and intimidation to animals is increased as he is always surrounded by his fierce dogs in the farmhouse and "when he did emerge it was in ceremonial manner," (Orwell, Animal Farm 56). Therefore, all animals have tremendously grown by now in submission and obedience; they unconditionally and unquestionably submit to Napoleon and his rule. Whether willingly, unbeknownst to them, or against their wish; the animals submit to Napoleon, follow his orders to the letter and never question his rule .

Out of fear of Napoleon and his dogs and pigs, and out of knowledge of the consequences of protest and/or dissent or both; or even out of their own ignorance, the animals lead a submissive and obedient life in the farm fulfilling Napoleon's orders and doing all the hard work with no questions or complaints :

Whether the individual nonpig animal is big and strong like Boxer or small and weak like the hens, it is held in check by an ideology of its own ignorance and dependence, subjected to violence and intimidation, and urged to sacrifice itself. Such an animal is not likely to rebel. (Bloom, Modern Critical, 2009, 16)

They chant the "Minimus" poem with joy and satisfaction just as they do with all other ceremonial activities, chores, duties and responsibilities .

A further ceremony linked to Napoleon and his reign is the sheep's bleating. The novel shows that the sheep accompany Napoleon to all his meetings with other animals. This is a ceremonial event, too, because it acquires the status of regularity and gets established and recognized as a formal procedure. Wherever and whenever Napoleon holds a meeting with the farm animals to discuss or debate some issue, he regularly brings the sheep with him to the meeting and orders them to noisily bleat anytime any animal wishes to discuss or debate the issue under discussion .

This weird but ceremonial occurrence is assumed to impart a particular ideology and is thus expected to achieve certain goals. Here, background ideology of such practice seems to be identical with the song activity; a totalitarian and oppressing ideology. Though Napoleon's meetings with the farm animals seems on face value to be based on a democratic prospect of governing and is intended for the wellbeing of all, no animal shares any ideas or discusses during such meetings .

The apparent purpose—almost always—of Napoleon's meetings with the animals is to discuss the welfare of the animals and other issues related to animals and the future of the farm. However, Napoleon regularly brings the sheep to his meetings and orders them to bleat once a given animal starts talking. Therefore, the pretext of democracy vanishes and the seemingly philanthropic proposals never materialize; they fall terribly short of white intentions, authenticity and validity .

The sheep's bleating is so loud and noisy that it disrupts the discussion or debate of any ideas, frustrates the exposure of any truth and therefore scares the animals into silence and sheer compliance :

Frightened though they were, some of the animals might possibly have protested, but at this moment the sheep set up their usual bleating of 'Four legs good, two legs bad,' which went on for several minutes and put an end to the discussion. (Orwell, Animal Farm 45)

Accordingly, the sheep with their bleating identify themselves with Napoleon and his pigs and operate as an oppressing tool that initially deceives and distracts but primarily suppresses difference and silences sharing and participation. As part of Napoleon's ceremonial activities, the sheep's bleating apparently serves totalitarian agendas. They assist Napoleon in burying obvious truths and distorting perceptible facts. The sheep help establish and consolidate Napoleon's reign of dictatorship and oppression over the farm and its animals .

The sheep's bleating eliminates the animals' feasible prospect and perhaps only chance of sharing their ideas, expressing protest or voicing their disagreement over the matter being debated. What Napoleon does through the sheep is oppress the animals' freedom of speech and the right to debate, protest and disagree. This ceremonial undertaking also helps Napoleon manipulate the animals' understanding of how things are and should be .

That policy eventually produces more ignorantly obedient and much easier to be manipulated subjects who can do nothing but accept the status quo and blend in with the crowd. In this instance, the animals have to accept Napoleon's rule and embrace the collective ideology he has already determined for all animals :

It cannot be a matter of surprise that the sheep identify with a communal ideology which makes them merge with the mass at the expense of individual autonomy. Put through a catechism, they become mere prattlers, finely tuned to pigs' ways. They loudly proclaim their unshakable loyalty by ritually breaking into "Four legs good, two legs bad" drowning any possibility of antiphonal thought. (Bloom, Critical Interpretations 42)

In a similar vein, Napoleon establishes and upholds the death and funeral ceremony. Napoleon makes it into a formal event that once an animal dies, it shall receive a ceremonial funeral. The deception and paradox lies in the fact that all animals—except the pigs—lead a miserable, wretched and an unjust life. Hence, though the funeral ceremony might be perceived as a nice and honoring gesture, it could be asserted that an animal deserves justice, dignity and honor during their life as well .

Holding a ceremony for Boxer's funeral is a prominent example of such ceremonial undertaking. When Boxer dies after a life of hard work, toil and pain, Napoleon holds a funeral ceremony for hm. He orders the pigs to prepare a wreath of flowers to be placed on his tomb. Napoleon further glorifies Boxer by ordering the arrangement and recitation of a requiem that closes with Boxer's two most common maxims :

Napoleon ended his speech with a reminder of Boxer's two favorite maxims, 'I will work harder' and Comrade Napoleon is always right'-maxims, he said, which every animal would do well to adopt as his own. (Orwell, Animal Farm 63)

Still, such ceremonial undertaking would assumingly fit within an authoritarian ideology of lies and deception. It serves the purpose of deepening ignorance, assuring obedience and thus perpetuating oppression and tyranny .

After all, Napoleon is assumingly doing with the farm animals what all dictatorships and totalitarian regimes have been doing with their peoples; both forms of governing dictate onto their subjects what to do and how to live. Such forms of governing overflow the lives of their subjects with an endless series of duties and responsibilities to divert their attention away from more important matters .

Although they might spice their oppression up with certain ceremonial activities, everything for them is enforced and serves their hidden but true agenda; absolute power and control and thus utter exploitation :

Now that the initial rebellion has passed, however, and Animal Farm's base of power is consolidated into the hands of a few pigs, these commemoration ceremonies are used to reinforce the animals' loyalty to the cause. The hoof-and-horn flag also serve the same. (Bloom, Animal Farm 24)

In view of all that, ceremonial activities and other related rituals appear to eventually originate in and come out of a particular ideology. Such ceremonies seem to have oppression and authoritarianism as their background ideology. They also seem to impart and breed total submission, obedience and unquestionable compliance as their ultimate purpose .

#### Concluding Remarks

It is concluded that under Napoleon's reign of the farm, the farm and its animals have witnessed and experienced an increasing amount of ceremonies and celebratory occasions that Napoleon has enforced on them. Such events have varied between chanted songs and speeches to demonstrations and birthday parties that have apparently glorified Napoleon and demanded total submission. Emanating from an oppressing and authoritarian ideology, such ceremonial activities and other celebrating occasions Napoleon has established and upheld have eventually contributed to the creation of a tyrant, oppressing and authoritarian dictator out

of him. After all, readers would come to realize that it is through such series of ceremonies and other activities that Napoleon's totalitarian form of governing has been solidified .

In addition, all such undertakings have seemingly aimed at achieving the same goals; they aim at subduing the animals and gaining absolute power and control over them. It would therefore appear by now that Napoleon has from the start intended such activates to help him program the animals, divert them away from important matters and keep them preoccupied with trivialities so that they pose no threat of protesting, resisting or revolting against him and his rule. Achieving such agenda would then enable him to gain complete power and authority over the farm and its animals. As the argument of the ceremonies in the novel has shown, that is quite what ultimately happens with Napoleon and the farm animals .

Readers would by now come to realize that the significant implication the novel has dedicated to these and other ceremonial undertakings is duly made and presented. They have apparently originated in an ideology of totalitarianism and represented the tools through which Napoleon could unquestionably and unaccountably rule, control and exploit the animals. Through Such ceremonies and other measures implemented by Napoleon, he has succeeded in keeping the animals too worried and inattentive to notice their own dejection and misery. Accordingly, Napoleon has rested assured that animals have no chance to rise up against him and his tyranny .

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