



“Better Feared than Loved”: A Machiavellian Reading of Power in Orwell’s Animal Farm

Muhammad Shahrukh Asghar¹

¹MPhil Scholar at Department of English, Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), Lahore,
Email: gishahrukh@gmail.com

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Corresponding Author:

Muhammad Shahrukh Asghar

Email:

gishahrukh@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study explores the dynamics of political authority in George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* through the lens of Niccolo Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, focusing on the dictum that “it is much safer to be feared than loved.” *Animal Farm* is often seen as an allegory of soviet authoritarianism, but this paper attempts to shift the focus from ideological critique to the mechanics of power that Napoleon employed for consolidating the power and sustaining the rule. Drawing upon Niccolo Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, particularly the dictum that “it is much safer to be feared than loved,” this research develops a theoretical framework termed as Machiavellian Power Principle. This framework consists of four interrelated components; instrumental fear, regulated cruelty, fear-without-hatred, and performative reputation, which together demonstrate the strategic rationality behind Napoleon’s governance. By employing qualitative textual analysis and close reading, the study explores how intimidation, symbolic violence, propaganda, and controlled appearances are used as tools to shape and maintain the political hierarchy within the farm. The findings reveal that Orwell has not only dramatized Machiavelli’s views on power but also explores the ethical and societal costs of fear-based rule exposing how authoritarian regime gains stability through the manipulation of perception and suppression of dissent. The paper argues that reading *Animal Farm* through this theoretical framework will deepen the understanding of Orwell’s critique of political authority and demonstrates the relevance of classical political thought to contemporary structures of power, obedience, and narrative control.



Introduction

George Orwell's magnum-opus, *Animal Farm* has been considered the most apt political allegories of the twentieth century. "Orwell's *Animal Farm* remains the most successful political allegory ever written in English; its simplicity conceals a profound understanding of revolutionary dynamics" (Hollis and Rodden). The novella exposes how revolutions often meet counterrevolutions. How the revolutionary ideals are corrupted by the very constructs of power they seek to overthrow. Though it is a simple story but there is a nuanced examination of the dynamics of power, obedience, and manipulation. Where there has been great focus on Orwell's critique of totalitarianism and his satirist depiction of Stalin's Russia, less focus has been put on the mechanism of power that Napoleon deployed to sustain his rule. This needs to be seen within the framework of classical political theory. This study attempts to read *Animal Farm* through a Machiavellian lens by extracting a framework from his famous treatise *The Prince*.

Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli, most known as Niccolò Machiavelli famously asserted that "it is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with" (Machiavelli 56) carries his idea of political power. It captures his realist view of politics: while love is fragile and depends on loyalty, fear is a strong and reliable way of maintaining order. According to Machiavelli, a successful ruler must appear virtuous while he is able to act pragmatically. He may resort to deception, coercion, or cruelty to secure power and prevent disorder. According to Weber, "within a social relationship, power is any chance to carry through one's own will (even against resistance)" (Munro).

Looking at *Animal Farm* from this perspective, the central character, Napoleon, is a perfect embodiment of Machiavellian traits of cunningness, manipulation, and ruthless pragmatism. Napoleon's rises to power through violence and sustains it by deploying fear and manipulation. The animals are made to believe, by propaganda and intimidation and not genuine affection, that they are all free and equal. This illustrates that fear ensures obedience when love fails.

George Orwell's work can be seen as both an illustration and a critique of Machiavellian politics. He exposes the dehumanizing and self-destructive consequences of the use of fear as a stabilizing force, as proposed by Machiavelli. The farm, towards the end, descends into despair and moral decay as it was governed ruthlessly by fear. Which proves that "the widespread assumption that social power presupposes the capacity to overcome resistance is false" (Abizadeh). This paper, thus, argues that *Animal Farm* embodies and scrutinizes Machiavelli's principle that it is safer for a ruler to be feared than loved. Orwell presents a fictional depiction of Machiavellian power, through the character of Napoleon and the portrayal of propaganda, violence, and manipulation, and at the same time, rings the alarms of its ethical and social ramifications.

Significance

This study is significant because it attempts to bridge the gap between classical political philosophy and literary studies by reading *Animal Farm* through a Machiavellian lens. While mostly, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* has been understood as an ideological critique on totalitarianism, it has rarely been viewed through the discourse of political power and strategy as envisioned by Niccolò Machiavelli in *The Prince*. With the application of what this study calls "Machiavellian Power Principle – a systematized use of fear, cruelty and deceptive appearance", this study shifts the focus from the failure of revolution and the rise of totalitarianism in *Animal Farm* to the strategy of power used by Napoleon to sustain his rule. This approach establishes Orwell's political allegory as an exploration of statecraft. This study also resonates with the current political behavior of political leaders – manipulation of fear, appearance, and narrative.

Research Objectives

- To read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell through the political philosophy of Niccolò Machiavelli using *The Prince* as a theoretical base.
- To develop and apply the Machiavellian Power Principle as a theoretical framework for examining the use of power, fear, and the construction of authority within the text.
- To closely look at how Orwell's depiction of Napoleon's rule truly reflects the relevance of Machiavellian principles in the understanding of the modern systems of political control.

Research Questions

- How does *Animal Farm* by George Orwell reflect the renowned dictum that "it is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with"?
- How does Napoleon's concentration of power embody the strategies of fear, calculated cruelty and manipulation of reputation inscribed in *The Prince*?
- By applying the Machiavellian Power Principle to *Animal Farm*, how does it deepen our understanding of Orwellian political power and its mechanism of control?

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative textual analysis as its primary research method and focusses on close reading and critical interpretation of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* in the light of Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*. This study performs a theoretical and comparative analysis by applying the principles articulated in *The Prince* – particularly related to fear, love, cruelty and sustaining the authority and power – to the political power structure, hierarchy, and the character within *Animal Farm*. By using the "Machiavellian Power Principle" as an interpretive lens, the study explores how Orwell dramatizes the transformation of the much-appraised revolutionary ideals into the once despised instruments of control and exploitation. This research relies on secondary sources, such as the existing scholarly criticism and the interpretations of both George Orwell and Niccolò Machiavelli, to give context to its argumentation and support the textual analysis. The method is qualitative rather than quantitative. It also emphasizes the depth of interpretation and seeks to establish how classical political thought of sixteenth century (renaissance) continues to reform the modern conceptions of power and control in twenty first century.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual foundation for this study is derived from *The Prince* – a renaissance treatise of Niccolò Machiavelli. The book offers a pragmatic power theory which prefers efficacy over morality. Machiavelli, in early sixteenth century, reconceptualized power as a model of governance that is sustained by circumstance rather than virtue. It asserts that the stability of the state is more important than moral considerations. From the famous maxim of Machiavelli, "it is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with" (Machiavelli 56) and related discourse of cruelty, hatred and reputation, this study develops a conceptual model which constitutes instrumental fear, regulated cruelty, fear-without-hatred and performative reputation. These ideas, put together, make the Machiavellian Power Principle, providing theoretical base for a Machiavellian reading of *Animal Farm*.

Instrumental fear, as the first component, takes fear, not as an emotion but as a tool of control. Machiavelli asserts about men that "they are ungrateful, fickle, false, cowardly, covetous" and it is wiser if a ruler depends on fear because "fear preserves you by a dread of punishment which never fails" (Machiavelli 56). In *Animal Farm*, Napoleon perfectly embodies it by training dogs into personal guards who "dashed straight for Snowball, who only sprang from his place just in time to

escape” (Orwell 41). Political dissent in *Animal Farm* was thus dealt with physical terror of Napoleon’s dogs, illustrating Machiavelli’s notion of fear as a lasting guarantee of obedience.

The second element, Regulated Cruelty, builds upon the warning that it should be used in a calculated manner and out of necessity to maintain the order and avoid the chaos. Napoleon’s staged confessions and public executions is his opportunity “to punish the delinquents, to clear out the suspects, and to strengthen himself in the weakest places” (Machiavelli 3). The spectacle of “a pile of corpses lying before Napoleon’s feet” (Orwell 65) depicts cruelty as a tool of policy and not just savagery.

Machiavelli says that “a prince ought to inspire fear in such a way that, if he does not win love, he avoids hatred; because he can endure very well being feared whilst he is not hated” (Machiavelli 56). This principle gives the third component of the Machiavellian Power Principle which is Fear-without-Hatred. This balance of hatred and love is evident in Napoleon’s manipulation of the ideology by arousing fear of Jone’s return in the farm whenever dissent arises. Lastly, Performative Reputation illustrates Machiavelli’s claim that “everyone sees what you appear to be, few really know what you are” (Machiavelli 60). He believed that appearances sustain authority more effectively than virtue does. Squealer performs this deception by his tireless propaganda efforts. “He could” swiftly “turn black into white” (Orwell 13) It was Squealer who maintained the illusion of equality in the farm even as this was not the case.

Together these four pillars of the Machiavellian Power Principal; Instrumental Fear, Regulated Cruelty, Fear-without-Hatred, Performative Reputation, help synthesizing Machiavelli’s ideology with Orwellian vision. This perspective elucidates how the tactics of fear, violence, restraint, and spectacle intertwine to produce obedience and perpetuate power.

Literature Review

Scholarship has well positioned *Animal Farm* as an allegory of Russian Revolution. The character of Napoleon has been interpreted as a stand-in for Stalin, and the deterioration of the farm has been read as betrayal of the socialist ideals. The promised “future where all animals are equal and where the farm is operated under the principles of fairness and collective good” (Asadova) before the revolution, never materialized. Napoleon, who was supposed to work for the welfare of the farm animals, became their exploiter. He became all powerful and by “this consolidation of power, Napoleon abandons the principles of equality that once underpinned the revolution” (Asadova). Birgul Asadova emphasizes more on the fact that the ideals of liberty were ignored once animals came to power on the farm.

Recent scholarship has explored the tools used by Napoleon and his supposed administration to keep the power intact and rule sustained, For instance, Aurea Mae S. Tagupa, in their article *The Gilded Cage: Language, Ritual, and Institutional Capture in Animal Farm*, expanded on this perspective by linking ritualized spectacles i.e. the Seven Commandments, the windmill and the bureaucratic consolidation to the consolidation of “coercive power” or the “intensive power” (Tagupa). The character of Squealer used multiple rhetorical strategies such as repetition, scapegoating and historical negotiationism, all to serve one purpose, to keep the order in the farm. Hence, this “journey” of animals “from hope to subjugation becomes a chilling allegory of how the oppressed, blinded by faith and fear, can become complicit in their own domination” (Mondal). Mondal explores how the control on narrative exposes a system of run on the grounds of propaganda, coercion and ideological distortion and emphasizes the cyclical nature of revolutionary promises.

The non-fiction writing of George Orwell is significant in the understanding of the political commitments as undertones in *Animal Farm*. He repeatedly spoke about his fear of truth, language, and public consciousness being distorted by power. In his famous essay “Why I Write,” it is evident that his creative and political impulse are inseparable. He states that “Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it” (Orwell, “Why I Write”). This declaration frames ideological base of *Animal Farm*. This political intention clarifies why Orwell used allegory and satire as narrative tools. These forms provided him with the symbolic economy needed to expose the mechanisms of authoritarian regime. The essay repeatedly warns that political system deteriorates when language becomes a tool of deception. In another essay titled “Politics and the English Language,” Orwell states that “political language is designed to make lies sound truthful” (Orwell, “Politics and the English Language”). Taken together, authorial comments by Orwell reveal that his primary concern was not merely to criticize a particular regime in history but to expose the deeper psychological and narrative tools that enable authoritarian rule to thrive.

Niccolo Machiavelli’s *The Prince* remains the foundation to political realism because it describes power not as a moral vocation but as a practical tool to be used, when necessary, with strategy. He famously asserts in the Chapter XVII of *The Prince* that “it is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with” (Machiavelli 56). This line has shaped centuries of political thought and continues to help analyze modern authoritarian leadership. Scholars have argued that realism of Machiavelli does not celebrate cruelty for its own sake but its wise and strategic use to prevent disorder and secure stability. Within literary studies, Machiavelli’s ideas explore how narratives represent political psychology: how subjects respond to fear and how leaders manipulate their appearances. These insights offer a base for interpreting Napoleon’s regime in *Animal Farm*, where fear, violence, and symbolic authority operate as a complex mechanism of dominance in line with Machiavelli’s statecraft ideals.

Modern scholarship on Machiavelli highlights the centrality of reputation and public appearance within his political thought. This also has become a focal point in the analysis of *The Prince*. Quentin Skinner, one of the most influential historians, argues that according to Machiavelli the ruler “must not acquire the reputation of being a wicked man, because this will destroy his power instead of securing it” (Skinner, *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction*) emphasizing that effective rule depends on the careful construction of public perception. For example, what matters is not moral authenticity but the projection of stability, decisiveness, strength, and control. This act of appearing virtuous while acting pragmatically creates a flexible model of governance that allows rulers to employ cruelty, deception or manipulation while publicly maintaining an image of a benevolent ruler. Skinner’s insight is particularly relevant to *Animal Farm* where Napoleon’s authority is upheld by carefully crafted performative leadership, fabricated heroism, and Squealer’s continuous propaganda. This further clarifies the mechanics used to build such spectacles. Power survives not merely through fear or coercion, but through the ideological management of how the leader is perceived.

The controversial role of fear and cruelty within the political framework of Machiavelli has been widely acknowledged by the scholarship. One of the most influential critics of Machiavelli in twentieth century, Leo Strauss, argues that Machiavelli’s treatment of cruelty represents a drastic shift from earlier moral and political traditions. Machiavelli, according to Strauss, endorses forms of cruelty that are “well used” (Strauss) i.e., cruelty employed swiftly, deliberately and for the preservation of political stability rather than out of malice or excess. Machiavelli’s justification of harsh measures, scholars widely discussed, stems from his belief that political order often require actions incompatible with conventional morality. His arguments about cruelty and fear are not

incidental observations but foundational components of his pragmatic political ideas. These elements have become essential references in contemporary analysis of political power.

Although the scholarship on *Animal Farm* and Machiavelli is individually extensive, their intersection remains unexplored to a great deal. Studies of the novel focus on Orwell's critique of Soviet totalitarianism, the corruption of revolutionary ideals, and the role of propaganda in the state control. Meanwhile, studies on Machiavelli – ranging from classical political theory to modern leadership studies – engage with themes like fear, cruelty, reputation, and political necessity. Yet these bodies of research rarely overlap. While scholars have applied Machiavelli's political thought on Renaissance literature and Shakespearean drama but there is almost no evidence of an attempt to read Orwell's fiction through a Machiavellian framework. Existing research predominantly sees Napoleon as an allegorical character – representation of Stalin – rather than seeing it as a literary embodiment of Machiavellian political power. As a result, the structural and philosophical dimensions of power in *Animal Farm* have not received the warranted theoretical attention. This study attempts to explore how Napoleon's rule can be understood not merely as historical satire but as a dramatization of political realism. This perspective expands current understanding of Orwell and shows how foundational Machiavellian ideas remain relevant in literary and political contexts. This interdisciplinary perspective enriches both Orwellian studies and Machiavellian scholarship, revealing the value of bringing the two traditions into discourse.

Analysis

Our analysis applies the Machiavellian Power Principle, developed from Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* to the political dynamics of Orwell's *Animal Farm* and trace how Napoleon's rise and consolidation of power follow a pattern which includes deployment of fear, cruelty, reputation, and psychological manipulation. The analysis also aims to explore how this is in consistence with Machiavelli's principles based on political realism, how his leadership possesses a coherent strategy grounded in the pragmatic reasons of power. Through close reading, it reveals that Napoleon's governance is not just an expression of tyranny. It is a calculated and well-crafted system designed to engineer obedience, silence the dissenting voices, and create an all-powerful and unchallengeable image of power. By mapping George Orwell's narrative structure onto Machiavelli's political thought, the mechanics of authoritarian rule as dramatized in *Animal Farm* will be highlighted.

Machiavelli considered fear as a more reliable foundation of political authority than love because it “preserves you(ruler) by a dread of punishment which never fails” (Machiavelli 56). Napoleon's rise to power starts off with an unmistakably Machiavellian gesture: the introduction of trained dogs. The puppies Napoleon seizes early in the story reappear as “enormous dogs wearing brass-studded collars” (Orwell 41). They were “huge dogs, and as fierce looking as wolves” (Orwell 42) who rush at Snowball “who only sprang from his place just in time to escape their snapping jaws” (Orwell 41). This moment is not just about elimination of a rival. It created the first spectacle of Napoleon's coercive capacity uncovering his hidden premeditation for consolidating the means of intimidation before claiming leadership publicly, the tactic Machiavelli approves off in *The Prince* that the ruler should be advised to secure and concentrate instruments of force before asserting political dominance.

After Snowball is expelled, Napoleon consistently uses fear not as a random violent act but as a tool to discipline the collective consciousness of the animals in the farm. Napoleon frequently abolished meetings, not because he is indifferent to the debate but because the spectacle of dogs on his side ensures silence and dissent seems synonymous with danger. Orwell described the scene when Snowball was forced out of the farm by saying that “silent and terrified, the animals crept back into the barn” (Orwell 42). By doing this, Napoleon demonstrated his power and successfully

managed to inculcate his fear in the rest of the animals. Machiavelli's insistence that the ruler should be obeyed out of the fear of punishment is dramatized here with clarity as the farm animals realized they need to comply because disagreement with Napoleon would bring them unbearable consequences.

Another vivid application of fear is its use as a psychological instrument of control through Squealer's rhetoric. One of his most effective techniques is the repetitive warning of the Jones, the former human farm owner, coming back. He manipulated the animals by saying that "Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back! Yes, Jones would come back! Surely comrades, cried Squealer almost pleadingly" (Orwell 28). This emphasis produced a shudder throughout the animals. Machiavelli approves this maintaining fear not only through force but through shaping perceptions of external threats. Napoleon thrives by using Jones as a specter to justify any and every policy, however oppressive that maybe. And animals suffer from brutality and continue to live under Napoleon's rule because to them, the alternative was framed as more catastrophic. There was a broader consensus among the animals that "surely there is no one among you who wants to see Jones come back?" (Orwell 28). This reflects Machiavelli's observation that people will keep up in challenging times if they fear the consequences of instability more than the cruelty of the ruler.

Napoleon's response to the Hens' Rebellion – when hens resist surrendering their eggs - provides another demonstration of fear being deployed as an instrument. He did not exterminate them all. Instead, he acted swiftly by cutting their ration and decreeing that "any animal giving so much as a grain of corn to a hen should be punished by death" (Orwell 59). This response or repression is harsh but strategic in the sense that it isolated the dissenting group while warning the rest of the animals of the cost of defiance. Napoleon's handling of the hens aligns with this Machiavellian logic that punishment is public, purposeful, and political.

Fear as an instrument reaches its peak when there are staged confessions and executions. The spectacle is not just a massacre but a carefully orchestrated event of terror. Most notably, the instance when "Napoleon stood sternly surveying his audience; then he muttered a high-pitched whimper. Immediately the dogs bounded forward, seized for of the pigs by the ear and dragged them, squealing with pain and terror, to Napoleon's feet" (Orwell 64) served to renew Napoleon's fear and reminded the animals of his absolute power. Looking at it from a Machiavellian perspective, this moment crystallized the effectiveness of the decisive and symbolic cruelty by a pragmatic rule in establishing control. Across all these instances, Napoleon carefully constructs a system of governance based on the calculated inculcation of fear in the subject. Orwell's narrative clearly demonstrates how the element of fear can not only be used to punish the individuals but also to mold the behavior of the masses, silence the dissent and establish order dependent on obedience. Thus, the novel mirrors Machiavelli's claim that fear, when carefully managed, becomes the most dependable and solid foundation of power.

It is permitted in Machiavelli's political realism to use cruelty as an instrument of order rather than just a form of brutality. His idea is not to reject cruel measures outrightly but to employ them in a prudent way so that they serve to secure and not undermine the power of the ruler. This notion of well-used cruelty – swift, focused, and instrumental – is a particularly useful lens for reading Napoleon's punitive measures in the farm. The violence staged by George Orwell in *Animal Farm* is not unjustified chaos, it is carefully planned, allocated, publicized, and timed so as to maximize deterrence while limiting the likelihood of mass revolt. Hence, the novel aptly dramatizes this Machiavellian logic: cruelty that is calculated functions to preserve the power of the regime.

In the sequence of confessions and consequent executions, Orwell stages this logic emphatically. After the mysterious food poisoning and other incidents, Napoleon summons a solemn tribunal in

which animals confess to imaginary crimes and are immediately seized by the dogs and executed. The terror of the scene comes not only from the executions but from the theatricality. Violence is transformed into a political rite with confessions, the public spectacle and the ritualized announcement and execution of punishment. The spectacle communicates, at the same time, three messages – the leader’s capacity for absolute coercion, the inevitability of punishment for dissent, and the futility of resistance. It functions as a prophylactic against further opposition or uprising. From Machiavellian perspective, this mechanism conforms to the idea that cruelty should be applied decisively and publicly as a form of exemplary punishment in order to deter but not to terrorize indiscriminately.

Napoleon’s handling of dissent in case of the hens’ rebellion also demonstrates regulated cruelty calibrated to deal with specific threats without provoking masses. He punished the rebellion by starvation and isolation of the dissenting group to break the resistance rather than killing them all. Napoleon, thus, acted upon Machiavellian advice to not use prolonged cruelty because it has potential to engender hatred. Machiavelli further advises that a ruler “ought to be slow to believe and to act” (Machiavelli 55). At the same time, any necessary harshness be executed swiftly to forestall enduring resentment. Orwell shows this restraint in Napoleon’s character when he uses the repression severe enough to cow the dissidents but carry it out with procedural formality along with Squealer’s rationalized propaganda which reduces the risk that the punishment itself will consolidate a broader coalition of opposition. Hence, the cruelty of Napoleon’s regime is regulated, i.e., employed as a surgical intervention rather than a reign of terror.

Cruelty, when combined with the impression of necessary firmness, can seem justifiable to subjects. Machiavelli emphasizes that the reputation and the appearance of virtue compliment the coercive measures. Orwell depicted this duality when after each punitive episode, Squealer would reinterpret events, justify the leader’s actions, and reframe the punished as traitors. At one point, Squealer says that “The execution of the traitors this afternoon was the final act. The enemy both external and internal has been defeated” (Orwell 67). This act of punishment, followed by propagandist reframing, ensure that cruelty is not perceived only as injustice but as a necessary defense of the farm’s security. This dual force and narrative align closely with Machiavelli’s prescription to the ruler that he must manage both deeds and appearances so that harsh measures are understood as prudent rather than vindictive.

Finally, the use of cruelty by Napoleon has a paradoxical efficacy. It secures short-term compliance while corroding social trust and moral capital in the long term. In Orwell’s presentation, there is a dramatization of long-term costs. Although, power was consolidated and sustained by the theatrical spectacles of public executions and punitive calculations, the animals, consequently, were desensitized and violence as a political technique was also normalized in the farm. The obedience was achieved but at the cost of the permanent destruction of the farm’s civic fabric. Thus, through Machiavellian lens, *Animal Farm* demonstrates both the functional logic of cruelty and its long-term, corrosive moral consequences.

In his book, *The Prince*, Machiavelli advises rulers that although “it is much safer to be feared than loved” (Machiavelli 56) they must avoid being hated, because hatred exposes them to conspiracies, uprisings, and the erosion of their authority. Fear can ensure obedience, but hatred generates, in masses, a desire for revenge. Thus, for a ruler to be successful, he must cultivate a political atmosphere in which subjects fear punishment without emotionally turning against and challenging the power of the sovereign. Napoleon’s smartness in *Animal Farm* lies in this balance. He produces fear in his subjects and at the same time saving himself from direct resentment. Through this strategic balancing, the manipulation of blame, and the deliberate construction of heroic reputation,

Napoleon sustains a form of power that aligns with Machiavelli's insistence on fear-without-hatred as a cornerstone of political stability.

One of the key tactics advised by Machiavelli is the maintenance of distance between the ruler and the acts of violence that may provoke hatred. He states that while a prince may rely on fear, he must "clear himself in the minds of people and gain them entirely to himself" (Machiavelli 22). He should keenly take care of the impression that "if any cruelty had been practiced, it had not originated with him, but in natural sternness of the ministers" (Machiavelli 22). This way the hated measures are attributed to the ministers rather than the ruler. Orwell, in *Animal Farm*, consistently dramatizes this logic through Napoleon's reliance on Squealer and the dogs. "Napoleon himself was not seen in public as often as once in a fortnight. When he did appear, he was attended not only by his retinue of dogs but by a black cockerel who marched in front of him and acted as a kind of trumpeter, letting out loud "cock-a-doodle-doo" before Napoleon spoke" (Orwell 70). When he appears, he rarely speaks. Instead, Squealer becomes the spokesperson who justifies every action of Napoleon, frames every event as a necessary action, and deflects every grievance as non-issue. Hence, by maintaining a spatial and communicative distance, Napoleon avoids becoming the immediate target of resentment.

This distancing is complemented by a systematic deflection of blame. Squealer makes sure, in times of hardship, that Napoleon is not held responsible, instead animals are made to attribute the hardships to imagined enemies. This is perfectly in line with the advice of Machiavelli that a ruler should direct public resentment and rage towards external threats and save himself from the blame of misfortune. Whether the windmill collapses or rations are reduced, "Snowball was in league with Jones from the very start!" (Orwell 61) becomes the narrative explanation. Any and every mismanagement or failure of governance will be deflected to the supposed troublemakers in the farm, for instance, Squealer propagates that "the rats, which had been troublesome that winter, were also said to be league with Snowball" (Orwell 60). This manipulation ensures that the blame remains attached to the external enemies rather than to Napoleon. Thus, preventing the ruler against the emotional consolidation of hatred in the minds and hearts of the subject.

Napoleon also uses benevolent symbolism. Although the animals fear dogs and the machinery of coercion, they are continually reminded of Napoleon's supposed self-sacrifice, wisdom, and protective care. Squealer, at one point, tearfully declares about Napoleon that "He would be only too happy to let you make your decisions for yourselves. But sometimes, you might make the wrong decisions, comrades, and then where should we be?" (Orwell 43). Such rhetoric efficiently frames Napoleon's authoritarianism as parental concern rather than domination. These political strategies of Napoleon ultimately demonstrate an intricate balance between fear and hatred that Machiavelli recommends but rarely see fully enacted.

Napoleon's regime in *Animal Farm* illustrates the Machiavellian principle that political power does not only rely on force but also on the ruler's ability to manufacture an appearance of virtue through a sustained campaign of image making and symbolic performance orchestrated inorganically by Squealer. Orwell narrates that when Napoleon consolidated power, he became the subject of elaborate rituals and was "never spoken of simply as Napoleon" (Orwell 70). His close associate "pigs liked to invent for him such titles as Father of All Animals, Terror of Mankind, Protector of Sheepfold, Ducklings' Friend, and the like" (Orwell 70). This symbolism mirrors Machiavelli's advice that ruler must craft reputation that inspires awe, devotion, or gratitude, even if the reality contradicts the constructed image.

A key component of Napoleon's performative reputation is the systematic rewriting of history. There is a conscious effort to revise the history of the Battle of Cowshed. It was initially celebrated a Snowball's achievement but now the narrative was reconstructed to cast Napoleon as the true

hero of the battle despite the animals' memories suggesting otherwise. This manipulation is not simply propaganda; it is a Machiavellian tactic designed to bolster Napoleon's legitimacy by anchoring his authority in a fabricated history of bravery and sacrifice. By this monopoly over the past, Napoleon constructs a reputation that renders dissent not only dangerous but irrational and against the farm's interest.

Napoleon further cultivates his reputation through well-orchestrated displays of productivity and benevolence. Machiavelli advises that even when a ruler imposes harsh policies, he must maintain the impression of acting for the public good. Orwell shows this strategy clearly in the manipulation of statistics and public announcements. Squealer presents fabricated figures claiming that "the production of every class of foodstuff had increased by two hundred per cent, three hundred per cent or five hundred per cent, as the case maybe (Orwell 69). These fabricated statistics are shared in public processions and at the same time animals endure growing hunger and exhaustion. These lies about prosperity preserve the myth of Napoleon as a competent and generous leader, preventing the animals from associating their deprivation with his mismanagement. In Machiavellian terms, Napoleon's strength lies not in delivering genuine welfare but in maintaining an image of a leader who works for the good of the farm. This scripted, rehearsed and relentlessly propagated reputation of Napoleon functions as a political instrument that stabilizes his rule not through virtue but the carefully crafted appearance of virtue.

Conclusion

Taken together, the four components of Machiavellian Power Principle – instrumental fear, regulated cruelty, fear-without-hatred, and performative reputation – reveal that Napoleon's rule in *Animal Farm* operates through a coherent and highly calculated political strategy rather than mere authoritarian impulse. Each facet of the governance aligns with Machiavelli's prescriptions in *The Prince*, demonstrating how fear is engineered through the dogs and coercive tactics, how cruelty is administered selectively and theatrically to deter dissent, how hatred is deflected through scapegoating and strategic distancing of ruler from the acts of violence, and how reputation is meticulously constructed through propaganda, ritual and fabricated and distorted history. Orwell critiques the political realism Machiavelli theorizes. The novel thus functions as both a dramatization and an indictment of Machiavellian statecraft illustrating how the mechanisms that secure authority can ultimately hollow the very people they are meant to govern.

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