

**A COMPARISON OF TOTALITARIANISM IN GEORGE ORWELL'S ANIMAL FARM  
AND ZULFU LIVANELI'S LAST ISLAND****GEORGE ORWELL'İN HAYVAN ÇİFTLİĞİ İLE ZÜLFÜ LIVANELI'NİN SON  
ADA'SINDA TOTALİTERLİĞİN KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI****Yrd. Doç. Dr. Fırat YILDIZ**Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Dil Bilimi Bölümü.  
Van/Türkiye**ABSTRACT**

George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, which makes critical references to earlier Soviet regime, is one of the classics of the twentieth century. In this novel, Orwell aims to teach an allegorical lesson and to show how an individual can change when the conditions become appropriate. Animals rebel in order to establish a farm where they will live in peace and fraternity, however they fall down into a tragic situation at the end. A minor group seizes sovereignty and exploits the majority, that's why the expected prosperity becomes unattainable. Zulfu Livaneli's *Last Island*'s structure is reminiscent of *Animal Farm*. It discusses how the life of a community that lives peacefully in a utopian island turns into a nightmare. The president, who settles in the island and seizes the administration of the island, destroys the peaceful life of the island. The purpose of this study is to compare overlapping points between the two novels.

**Key Words:** Utopia, Dystopia, Totalitarianism**ÖZET**

Georger Orwell'ın eski Sovyet rejimine eleştirel göndermelerde bulunduğu *Hayvan Çiftliği* adlı eseri yirminci yüzyılın klasiklerinden biridir. Alegorik bir ders vermeyi amaçladığı bu romanında, şartların uygun hale geldiğinde bireyin ne denli değişebileceğini göstermeyi amaçlamıştır. Barış içinde kardeşçe yaşayacakları bir çiftlik hayaliyle harekete geçen hayvanların en sonunda düştükleri trajik durumu gözler önüne serer. Küçük bir sınıfın egemenliği ele geçirerek çoğunluğu sömürdüğü sistemde beklenen refaha ulaşamaz. Zülfü Livaneli'nin *Son Ada* adlı romanının *Hayvan Çiftliği*'ni anımsatan bir yapısı vardır. Anakaradan, teknolojiden uzak, yasemin kokuları yayılan ütöpik bir adada barış ve huzur içinde yaşayan bir topluluğun hayatının nasıl değiştiği ele alınır. Adaya sonradan yerleşen ve adanın yönetimine el koyan başkanın adadaki insan yaşamı üstündeki yıkıcı etkisi trajik bir şekilde resmedilir. Bu çalışmanın amacı her iki roman arasında örtüşen noktaları karşılaştırmaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ütopya, Distopya, Totaliterlik.**1. INTRODUCTION**

*Animal Farm*'s ostensible purpose is to illustrate a fable in which animals take control of a farm. However, it gives an allegorical lesson about immorality of politics. The incentive force behind George Orwell's writing a contrarian piece is the destructive politics of Soviet communism. Yet in general, *Animal Farm* is a satire to totalitarianism. From this perspective, Zulfu Livaneli's *Last Island* shows traces of Orwellian tone. *Last Island* depicts the destruction of a heavenly island by a totalitarian ruler. Both novels are good examples in representing the pernicious effects of pressure authority. This study scrutinizes both novels and traces the certain similarities. It is striking that there are plenty of common points, which are discussed below.

**2. DISCUSSION**

At the beginning of *Animal Farm*, a highly regarded wise pig, Old Major, calls all animals for a meeting. He states the obvious facts about animal exploitation. Man is determined as the source of

animal misery and slavery. The freedom and prosperity of animals depend on humans' coming off the stage. In this regard, the only chance for animals is rebellion. He sets the motto of the prospective rebellion as; "All men are enemies. All animals are comrade" (Orwell, 1996; 10). When the expected day comes, the neglected animals of Manor Farm take the opportunity and drive men out of the farm. Animals take control of the farm. The sense of freedom is something new for them. At the early stages of life after the rebellion animals work for themselves, sleep in peace and have leisure time. There is no stealing, no quarrel and no jealousy among animals (Orwell, 1996). Animals give rise to a utopian land for themselves. When it comes to Livaneli's *Last Island*, a utopian place that is far from everywhere is depicted. Residents of the island live in seclusion far from the mainland. With its mild climate lasting all seasons, it is named as the last island; it is the last corner of humanity (Livaneli, 2017). Residents live in peace in the heavenly island and they do not have problems of outer world. They run the daily tasks with collective work. However, the blissful times do not last forever neither for the farm nor for the island. There is a process of dissolution, which is discussed as the occasion arises. By the end of both novels the former optimist atmosphere leaves its place to a completely pessimist atmosphere.

In *Animal Farm* the organisation, education and management fall upon pigs because they are accepted as the cleverest of animals. This privilege is only valid for pigs. This is the first violation of the equality among animals. Two pigs, Napoleon and Snowball, come into prominence in leadership. There is a strong opposition between the couple. Only when it comes to benefits of pigs the opposition is glossed over. Otherwise, the struggle for leadership goes on. Despite Snowball's sagacity, Napoleon has physical power; six dogs render as his guards. Snowball is defeated and banished from the farm. Napoleon becomes the only principal holding the authority. Henceforth the demoralisation gains speed. The governing heads towards a totalitarian state. Same process is observed in *Last Island* as well. All residents of the island live in equality. The peaceful atmosphere abides until the arrival of the retired president. As he seizes the power, the deterioration starts.

The housing of the island is numbered from one to forty. The residents' names are not expressed; people are referred with the numbers of their houses. When one of the residents, who is referred as number twenty-four dies, the president buys the house and moves in with his family. The other prominent residents can be listed as number one, whose father owned the island and founded the residential area on the island; number seven, who is a writer and number thirty-six, who is the narrator of the story. Nothing more changes at the earlier stages of president's arrival. There is only one resident, the writer, who is aware of the upcoming upheavals. He is well aware of the fact that president's background gives messages about his future practices. The island has a beautiful road shadowed by large trees. President's first malignant practice is ordering his guards to trim the trees. One of the most natural beauties of the island is destructed. It causes turmoil among residents but they are pacified by president's influential speech on order and civilisation.

One of the controversial issues mentioned in both novels is the state of equality. In *Animal Farm*, before the rebellion, Old Major sets certain rules for animals. He highlights the fraternity of animals and he also states that; "no animal must ever tyrannise over his own kind" (Orwell, 1996; 11). After the rebellion, animals compromise on seven commandments. The last clause of the commandments asserts the equality of all animals. The equality is violated in favour of pigs. Pigs impose their superiority gradually. By the end of the novel the commandment turns into; "All animals are equal. But some animals are more equal than others" (Orwell, 1996; 134). This is a declaration of inequality among animals. Some are superior, the rest are inferior. The similar hypocrisy appears in the *Last Island*. After the arrival of the president and his family, the residents prepare a welcoming party. At the party the president makes a toast and gives a speech about their warm welcoming; "From now on we are members of your society. There is no different between us. We are honoured to be your neighbours" (Livaneli, 2017; 29-30). However, this speech is merely a political distraction far from sincerity. In public, he speaks like that but when in private, he defines his real views and he contradicts with what he mentioned before. He asserts that; "There is no absolute equality" (Livaneli, 2017; 71). He states the inequality of people and he asserts that; "...human beings are not equal...Equality,

friendship, democracy, they are all nonsense concepts fabricated by weak ones” (Livaneli, 2017; 72). He behaves hypocritically. Actually what he believes is power. The superiority is gained through power. The majority of residents side with the power (Kosmak, 2012; 276). As time passes, the number of supporters of president increases.

Another similar aspect between two novels is the desire to monopolize the absolute hegemony. In *Animal Farm*, Napoleon disposes Snowball, thus he clears away the most important obstacle on his way to leadership. Indisputably, Napoleon becomes the only authority. After adopting his power thoroughly, other animals refer to him as “our leader”, “Father of All Animals”, “Terror of Mankind” (Orwell, 1996; 93). Actually in the character of Napoleon, Orwell refers to Stalin’s totalitarianism. Orwell defines himself as a socialist (Beadle, 1975; 291) but he is anti-Stalinist and anti-totalitarian (Chapman, 1996; 484). In the totalitarian atmosphere animals tend to deify the leader. Napoleon perpetuates his authority through fear-based sanctions. He uses two motivations to discipline other animals. He has six dogs, which he brought up according to his will, that guard him. In case of a tiny opposition, the guards provide the control by growling. They spread terror among other animals. The second motivation is threatening. If animals do not obey the rules, the human beings will come back and take the control of the farm again. This choice is unacceptable for animals. Despite the repressive authority of pigs, the human authority is more repellent for animals. Napoleon is ready to apply any way to maintain his authority. He is quite aggressive to any threat that has potential to shake his position. The uncontrolled is determined as enemy. Snowball is blamed for all obstacles and mischief. Even irrelevant and nonsense allegations are projected against him.

The desire to seize the control is observed in *Last Island* as well. Shortly after president’s arrival, residents are called for a meeting. The disorder on the island can only be regulated by a new administration. He constitutes a board of management by invented proceedings. With an ostensibly democratic election, he takes the control of the island. Over the course of his ruling, the island goes through dissolution. Despite the secured status of island, he keeps three guards. This is attributed to his fear. Cowardice is a common characteristic of Napoleon and the president. Each door of Napoleon’s residence is guarded by a fierce looking dog (Orwell, 1996; 75).

There are similar characters that function as mediators between regular residents and the management in two novels. The Squealer of *Animal Farm*’s footprint is number one of *Last Island*. Squealer is a wise pig. He is such an intriguer that other animals believe that he “could turn black into white” (Orwell, 1996; 16). Napoleon’s fallacies are rationalised through Squealer’s manipulations. Boxer is a hardworking, faithful member of the farm. Boxer is “Manifestation of faithful proletarian who is ignorant and deprived of vision” (Fadaee, 2011; 23). As Boxer gets older he loses his power, thus he is sent to knackers. However, Squealer convinces other animals that he is sent to veterinary (Orwell, 1996; 125). In *Last Island* the mediator is number one. He is not as intelligent as Squealer. Before the arrival of president, he is one of the residents that live in perfect harmony and peace. President threatens him and takes him into his service. Number one becomes an indisputable supporter of president. Through a prearranged election, he makes the president the administrator of the island. He supports the president’s all nonsense practices.

Another common aspect of two novels is submission. It is striking that both societies submit to pressure. The intenseness of pressure increases gradually. In some instances, there are meagre oppositions but they are silenced easily. Society’s memory is quite weak. The past is forgotten in a snap. Animals forget the good days and fraternity of the early times of rebellion. By the end of the novel, an elite class of pigs is constituted. Hereby the residents of farm are classified as pigs and other animals. This classification is observed as the strong and the weak in the *Last Island*. The elite and strong classes do not regard them as equal to lower classes. The inferior classes are supposed to submit the hegemony of superior classes. This anticipation is carried out accordingly. It turns out to be quite easy to convince and manipulate the lower classes.

The application of democracy as a veil to undemocratic practices is also a common subject of the novels. After Napoleon strengthens his position and disposes potential rivals, the Animal Farm is

proclaimed a Republic. At this state, it becomes essential to elect a president. As it is expected, there is only one candidate. Napoleon is selected unanimously. It happens in the name of democracy. So no one can complain about a totalitarian system. Similarly, in *Last Island*, some decisions are given by making elections to highlight the so-called democracy. All results are turned out to be in favour of president's will as a result of prearranged manipulations. As an example, the selection of the president as the head of the committee is stated as a prearranged practice by the narrator (Livaneli, 2017; 49). A small committee is established and decisions for the majority are given by this committee. Moreover, the decisions are not open to argument. They have the sanctions, such as deporting from island, to pacify any opposition.

The state of isolation is observed in both settings. The Animal Farm is isolated from its neighbours because all humans are declared as enemy (Orwell, 1996; 10). The island is also considerably isolated from the mainland. They are reluctant to develop strong ties with outer world. In *Animal Farm* the "economic necessity compelled the animals to compromise with human system" (Woodhouse; 1996; xx). Mr. Whympers "acts as intermediary between animals and the outside world" (Orwell, 1996; 64). Likewise, the island has limited relations with mainland. The shopkeeper on island is the only connection to outer world. The essential requirements are provided by shopkeeper.

In both novels, the last state of residents is far worse than their first state. In this regard, the sense of regret prevails on the farm as well as on the island. In the farm, the animals become slaves of so-called comrades. At the beginning of the *Animal Farm*, the affiliation to the animalism is the most important aspect of their unity. It is the driving force behind their rebellion. Maalouf states that there; "...is always a certain hierarchy among the elements that go to make up individual identities, that hierarchy is not immutable, it changes with time" (2000; 12). The significant element of animal identity is their bandage to animal class. However, by the end of novel this element loses its meaning for the pigs. They begin to imitate humans. They walk on their hind legs, wear clothes, live in houses and finally get in contact with humans. They change the name of the farm from Animal Farm to Manor Farm. Their overriding affiliation is not with other animals anymore. There is a minority of self-complacent class on the farm. The status of the majority is worse than the time of human ruling. The rations are reduced and the working hours are increased. The totalitarian system turned other animals into slaves. The pessimist atmosphere is observed in the *Last Island* too. They regret for not resisting the president. The president gradually annihilated the peaceful life on island. Eventually the forest and the houses are burnt down and the residents are forced to evacuate the island. The life on island comes to a tragic ending.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In *Animal Farm* and allegorical lesson is given through a fable. The alteration of a normal system into a totalitarian one is represented. Maalouf states that; "There is a Mr. Hyde inside each one of us" (2000; 24). According to this claim when the circumstances allow everyone may develop a different character. At the beginning of the *Animal Farm*, the priorities are different from the ones at the end. Eventually the Mr. Hyde in Napoleon shows up. He turns into a tyrant. The administration of the farm becomes totalitarian. The repressive system is gradually constituted. The life conditions become unbearable for other animals. The same circumstances are observed in *Last Island*. The residents of island live in peace and harmony. The president arrives and lives in harmony for a while. Then the Mr. Hyde in him shows up and he takes the control of is the island. He systematically puts destructive practices in application. In the end, the peaceful life of island dies down. Ferreira states that; "...every actual human society necessarily breeds some form of slavery" (2016; 91). The residents of the island and the farm become victims of tyranny. However, they have their share in the alteration of the system. Their fallacy is their submission without questioning.

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