

Morality and Moderation of a Leader in *Animal Farm*

คุณธรรมและความพอประมาณของผู้นำใน *แอนนิมอล ฟาร์ม*

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Abstract

The study aims at investigating morality and moderation according to Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) characteristics portrayed by Major, the main character, characterized as a leader in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and the reasons behind the portrayals of these characteristics. A qualitative method is used, and the results are presented in a form of a descriptive analysis. The study finds that Major displays morality. The sub-elements of morality such as kindness, unity, morality, justice, prosperity, and morality itself are seen. Major portrays moderation, too. In addition, he contrasts both morality and moderation with humans' greed and brutality. The reasons behind the portrayals of these two features are to lay a political theory, to soothe his fear, and to differentiate human farm owners from the farm animals. However, happiness—the ultimate outcome of the SEP—that never becomes real means that all SEP features are not displayed by Major and the features he displays do not belong to his true self. He just uses morality and moderation to exploit the animals, or in other words, to reach his personal gains.

Keywords: Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, morality, moderation, *Animal Farm*

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษา คุณธรรมและความพอเพียง คุณลักษณะตามความหมายของปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียง ที่แสดงออกโดย เมเจอร์ ตัวละครเอกที่เป็นผู้นำใน *แอนนิมอล ฟาร์ม* ของ จอร์จ ออร์เวล และเพื่อศึกษาเหตุผลที่ซ่อนอยู่เบื้องหลังการแสดงคุณลักษณะทั้งสองนี้ วิจัยใช้การวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพและเขียนแสดงผลการวิจัยแบบบรรยาย พบว่า เมเจอร์แสดงคุณธรรมและองค์ประกอบย่อยของคุณธรรม ได้แก่ ความใจดี ความเป็นหนึ่งเดียวกัน ความยุติธรรม และความเจริญรุ่งเรือง และเมเจอร์ได้แสดงความพอเพียงด้วย นอกจากนี้ เมเจอร์ ยกเอาความตะกละและความโหดร้ายของมนุษย์ มาขั้บเน้นคุณธรรมและความพอเพียงของตนให้เด่นชัดมากขึ้น เหตุผลที่ซ่อนอยู่เบื้องหลังการแสดงคุณธรรมและความพอเพียงของ เมเจอร์ มีสามประการ คือ ต้องการวางทฤษฎีการเมือง ปลอดภัยตนเองจากความกลัว และแยกมนุษย์ออกไปจากสัตว์ อย่างไรก็ตาม ความสุขอันเป็นผลกระทบที่สำคัญของปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงไม่เกิดขึ้น แสดงให้เห็นว่า เมเจอร์ไม่ได้แสดงคุณลักษณะ

ทั้งหมดของปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงและคุณลักษณะที่แสดงออกนั้น ไม่ใช่คุณลักษณะที่เป็นตัวตนจริงของเมเจอร์ เขาเพียงแต่ใช้คุณธรรมและความพอเพียงเพื่อเอาเปรียบสัตว์ หรืออีกนัยหนึ่ง เพื่อผลประโยชน์ส่วนตัว

คำสำคัญ: ปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียง, คุณธรรม, ความพอประมาณ, *แอนนิมอล ฟาร์ม*

1. Introduction

Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) is a guideline approach to life and conduct. Rachroat Punyaboon (2011) summarizes the meaning of the philosophy that Sufficiency Economy Philosophy is a set of moral, ethical, and practical guidelines intended to help the Thai people more effectively navigate globalization through adherence to the principles of moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity in the light of knowledge and virtue.

Knowledge and virtue (morality) are characterized as the underlying conditions of SEP. At the time, moderation, reasonableness, and self-reliance or self-immunity are served as the SEP three key elements. These characteristics are defined in *Sufficiency Economy: A New Philosophy in the Global World* as follows. Knowledge consists of accumulating knowledge from various subjects from the past, present, and future. Morality embraces the four virtues namely kindness, unity, honesty, and justice that, if practiced, it will bring peacefulness and prosperity to each individual and also the public. Moderation or sufficiency means not doing something too much or controlling of behavior within reasonable limits. Reasonableness is fairness and sensibleness for all factors and consequences affecting. Self-reliance means the ability to face a difficult situation and to predict both short-term and long-term difficulties with the self-awareness of external and unpredicted factors (The Thai Chamber of Commerce, 2007).

These characteristics of SEP can be seen in various literary works. In Thailand, many researchers analyze the SEP characteristics through a lot of Thai literature. Nida Meesook (2007) reports in *Makatho's Self-Growth and the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy* that studies the self-growth of Makatho in *Rajadhiraja*, the epic about the battle between Burmese and Mon (an ethnic group). Meesok finds that Makatho's self-growth starts from being a vendor's son having traveled to sell goods in many places to becoming the king. Moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity including the two necessary conditions: knowledge and morality can be seen. She also reports that Makatho's self-growth demonstrates the sense of sufficiency as a careful and gradual change with morality, especially without stinginess. In addition to that, she views SEP as an outstanding path leading people to step forward with sustainability and security. Nontcharas Wongwichaiwat (2009) writes an article entitled *An Analysis of the Concept of Sufficiency Economy in Wang Dokya by V. Vinicchayakul*. The SEP concept in *Wang Dokya* reflects the Thai way of life in urban areas and the sufficiency way of life which has the standard of Buddhism concept. Wongwichaiwat depicts the SEP concept through characters, dialogues, settings, and intellectual words. This article reveals the sufficiency way of life that is the ultimate outcome of the self-sufficient farm imagined in *Animal Farm*. Anont Srisakda (2011) writes an article entitled, *An Analysis of Ideas in Suphasit Phra Ruang with Reference to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy*. It studies the numbers of teachings that are consistent with SEP. Srisakda reports that the

morals from *Suphasit Phra Ruang* conform to the characteristics of SEP in many aspects, namely, moderation, reasonableness, self-immunity and the two important conditions: knowledge and morals.

The worth of the philosophy reported in these studies proves its enormous significance. It encourages the idea of bringing SEP to analyze world classics. This study aims at investigating morality and moderation in terms of SEP portrayed by Major, a leader of the farm animals, in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and understanding the reasons behind the portrayals of these characteristics.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate morality and moderation in terms of SEP, portrayed by Major, the main character, in *Animal Farm*
2. To point out the reasons behind the portrayals of these characteristics.

1.2 Scope of the Study

This study uses data to analyze morality and moderation according to Sufficiency Economy Philosophy portrayed by Major, the main character, in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* from beginning to end of the story.

1.3 Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study are that Major, the main character, in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* portrays morality and moderation, two key characteristics of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. Also, there are certain reasons cause these portrayals to be demonstrated.

2. Research Methodology

A qualitative method is conducted through the steps as follows. First, the data is collected from the Major's dialogues when he talks to other characters. In this step, the narration of his actions and the circumstances surrounding are also investigated. Second, the data is analyzed by exploring morality and moderation Major portrays and examining the reasons behind their portrayals of them. Third, the conclusion and the discussion are demonstrated.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results: Morality and Moderation according to Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in *Animal Farm* and the Reasons behind the Portrayals

Major is the oldest male pig who is found dead after transferring a Marxist regime to the farm animals. Major is characterized as a reliable pig as found in "everyone was quite ready to lose an hour's sleep in order to hear what he had to say" (Orwell, 1996). John W. Campbell (2000) describes Major's characteristics in *The Book of Great Books* that Major is a leader who lays a political theory, "Prize pig who plants seeds of Rebellion against human control. Urges animals to

cooperate, stressing that they are all equal. Tells of the “golden future time” and teaches animals to sing “Beasts of England,” a song of unity. His skull later becomes an object of veneration (dignity, respect, worship)” (Campbell, 2000).

Morality is the beliefs about how people should behave. In this study, morality is characterized as kindness, unity, honesty, justice, altruism, and patience sensed and practiced through moral awareness.

Moderation refers to the acts of doing something in a middle way or not doing something too much or too little. In this study, moderation is characterized as the satisfaction of individuals’ basic needs or the condition of having food, shelter, clothing, and medicine.

The study finds that Major portrays morality. It is seen when he is giving a speech, or in fact, laying a political theory. First and foremost, Major’s kindness reflects when he is characterized as wise and benevolent, “he was still a majestic-looking pig, with a wise and benevolent” (Orwell, 1996). This statement notably reflects kindness because ‘benevolent’ means kind and generous. Unity is also seen through the aim of this speech because, while he is giving it, Major is uniting the animals to be ready to revolt against human owners. Although the aim reflects violence, the animals’ unity is shown. Morality itself can be seen when Major expresses his concern about his role and duties on the animals, “I feel it my duty to pass on to you such wisdom as I have acquired” (Orwell, 1996). As wisdom refers to knowledge with morality and ethics, this statement reflects Major’s morality as well as knowledge at the same time. When he uses the word ‘wisdom’ to characterize himself, Major is confirming that he has morals. Justice has appeared throughout the story through the following big words, stated firstly by Major, showing the attempt to build up equality among all animals, “All animals are equal” (Orwell, 1996). Prosperity is pointed out in Major’s speech when he describes the rich of the valuable natural resources of the land such as “The soil of English is fertile, its climate is good, it is capable of affording food” (Orwell, 1996). Prosperity is also found in the song, *Beasts of England*, when he leads the animals to sing it, “Of the golden future time” (Orwell, 1996). In that moment, golden refers to a golden opportunity, golden days, or golden years that great happiness or success will come. Even, it may lead some animals to think about the happiness arising from people with a ‘heart of gold’—a very kind character. Kindness, unity, morality, justice, prosperity, and morality itself reflect in Major and are interconnected by him.

Also, Major’s moderation is seen. The study finds that, while Major is displaying morality, he is presenting moderation as well. Like morality, moderation is found in his speech, “The soil of England is fertile, its climate is good, it is capable of affording food” (Orwell, 1996). It is classified as moderation because the land can produce enough food. When soil and climate are fertile and good, they bring life to the land which helps feed the population. The soil and the climate are the necessary factors Major points out to build up the atmosphere of not only prosperity but moderation. Later on, moderation is noticed again in the song, *Beasts of England*, describing England as the land that is fruitful enough to produce a lot of crops, “Riches more than mind can picture, Wheat and barley, oats and hay, Clover, beans, and mangel-wurzels, Shall be ours upon that day” (Orwell, 1996). From the victorious rebellion until the end of the story, the animals have been willing to do all

physical hard work with happiness with the hope for fruitful land depicted in such description, “All that year the animals worked like slaves. But they were happy in their work” (Orwell, 1996). This implies that, from that moment onwards, Major succeeds in imprinting the need of living independently without humans into the animals’ mind through sense of morality and moderation. In addition to the portrayals of morality and moderation, the study also finds that Major sharply contrasts these features with humans’ greed and brutality. Humans are depicted as greedy and not capable of producing in “Man is the only creature that consumes without producing” (Orwell, 1996). Brutality is demonstrated when Major points out the death of the animals caused by humans, “no animal escapes the cruel knife in the end” (Orwell, 1996).

The reasons behind Major’s portrayals of both morality and moderation can be categorized into 3 main aspects as follows: laying a political theory, soothing fear, and differentiating humans from the animals.

The two SEP characteristics: morality and moderation are clearly displayed in Major’s serious attempts to lay and transfer a political ideal—a Marxist regime—to the farm animals. In fact, Major has been found being characterized as the one everyone believes in even before he displays the SEP features, “Old Major was so highly regarded on the farm that everyone was quite ready to lose an hour’s sleep in order to hear what he had to say” (Orwell, 1996). Thereupon, morality and moderation including other SEP features are portrayed to support such characterization. At the time, the two characteristics support each other to express Major’s personality to become more reliable. These cause everyone to feel pleased and secure under his leadership. Therefore, the animals are ready to listen to him, and it results in sending the animals to fight more easily. After the rebellion, the animals have hopes for better things to come and feel happy to wait for it while working harder and harder. This proves that the political ideal laid by Major is imprinted on the animals’ mind forever.

In addition to that, the study finds that Major uses both morality and moderation to sooth his fear. Like other farm animals, Major has just lived in the farm and is awaiting for death. The study notices that Major suffers from the illusion that he cannot avoid death caused by humans, “no animal escapes the cruel knife in the end” (Orwell, 1996). When he expresses his concern about the animals’ life and living conditions, he is protecting himself from such fear. He shows his moral awareness to make all animals stay by his side and even be willing to sacrifice themselves to fight against humans. Major also draws an imagination of the moderation in the dream, in the future, and in an ideal society to fulfill a hope of better life after the humans are exiled. Meanwhile, the sense of living without humans can erase Major’s fear of death.

Moderation differentiates humans from the animals, too. While Major leads the animals to reject things that are necessary for humans, the things are pointed out to be unnecessary for the animals, “No animal must ever live in a house, or sleep in a bed, or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or touch money” (Orwell, 1996). In this case, Major uses the word ‘no’ to mean ‘enough’ for the animals. Moderation is seen through the animals because the word ‘no’ shows that they do not need anything more. On the contrary, extravagant life is characterized to belong to only humans because they

consume these things. As humans' need is far from the sense of enough, they are entirely different from the animals. In addition, because humans and the animals are not the same, moderation builds up a sense of happiness of living without humans to the animals. Therefore, moderation is helpful for Major to differentiate humans from the animals as well as making it easier to transfer a political theory to the farm animals.

3.2 Discussion

Morality and moderation according to SEP are displayed by Major, one of the main characters of *Animal Farm*. This is consistent with the research of Meesook (2007), Wongwichaiwat (2009), and Srisakda (2011) which report that SEP features are found through the characteristics of the main characters in various Thai literary works. At first glance, the study finds that the reasons behind the portrayals of Major's morality and moderation are similar with the portrayals of the main characters in Thai literature. They present SEP features because they need to build up trust within their own community, to live with happiness with others, and to bring better life to the community.

However, with a closer look, the study finds the reasons behind the portrayals of morality and moderation of Major appear significantly different from other main characters in literary works. Of the three pigs (Major, Snowball, and Napoleon), Major is only leader who is portrayed to lay a political theory—a Marxist regime—for the farm. Particularly, he is the first one who uses both morality and moderation, including other SEP features such as knowledge, as a significant mean to make full use of Marxism. Thereupon, the portrayals lead him to reach his personal gains which refer to the need to replace humans as well as the need of power. It appears that Major exploits the idea of equality and happiness to build up hopes among the struggling animals. The hopes are based on the belief that if they are guided by Major, the animals are able to not only alleviate misery arising from being overloaded with hard work but also gain both equality and happiness. Meanwhile, Major makes up the condition that the human owners have to be replaced by him so that he can lead all animals to be treated as equals and to share benefits they need.

There is an important reason that causes Major's portrayals of SEP to be different from the portrayals portrayed by the main characters in typical literary genres. The main characters in *Animal Farm* are demonstrated to satirize real people in and after the period of the Russian Revolution (1917-21). Campbell (2000) states that the writer describes Major to satirize Karl Marx, "Orwell compares Old Major to Karl Marx (1818-83), a major force behind socialism (in this context, communism), who had a dream of a better society, where justice, equality, and service to the common good would prevail". According to Campbell, Major acts as Karl Marx in the true story. After cruel human owners are exiled, the pigs, new leaders of the farm, embark on the oppression and the exploitation of the animals in their own place—the place that once the pigs, together with all animals, used to fight for justice and to eradicate the inhuman distinction. Throughout the story, the animals still do all physical hard work. It is obvious that morality which is prosperous for a while is overshadowed and even erased. On the other hand, cruelty which creates its own cycle to stay eternity has played its role tirelessly and even can grow prosperously

especially in civilized circumstances. *Animal Farm* that ends up as a tragedy rather than a happy ending or living in harmony leads many people to believe that, although the theory of Marx seems beneficial, it cannot bring happiness or equality to life if bad people use it. This is consistent with the words of Ho Chi Minh, the greatest Vietnamese leader of the revolution in 1945. He strongly confirmed the brutal inequality of human beings with his miserable sense, “despite the differences in skin color, there are only two human races on earth: the exploiter and the exploited” (Xanh, 2008).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, Major portrays morality and moderation according to SEP through his speech and the song, *Beasts of England*. The sub-elements of morality such as kindness, unity, and justice are also found displayed. He even points out brutality and greed of the humans to express his senses of morality and moderation. The results of the portrayals affect not only Major himself but all animals in the farm, and even the human owners. Major is trusted by all animals and successfully lays a political theory. Thereupon, the animals accept him as a leader and differentiate the human owners as the enemies. These cause them to be ready to fight against the humans. Meanwhile, the portrayals help Major to reduce his fear of death caused by a human’s knife.

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