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## How Moses the raven is used as a representation of the church in Animal farm

*Animal Farm* is an allegorical novel written by George Orwell based upon the historical events of the 1917 Russian Revolution. The short tale revolves around an overworked group of farm animals that rebel against their owners in an attempt to create a utopian state. Above the quarrelling and altercations of the embittered animals is situated a religious raven that resembles the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Russian Revolution. This essay will explore the satirized relationship between Moses the Raven and the Orthodox Church in the Russian Revolution. Firstly, it is evident that authority struggled to abolish both Moses and the church due to the strength and support behind the two. Furthermore, by maintaining control and sanity in the workers and peasants through propelling preaches, Moses and the Orthodox church demonstrate how religion can be beneficial to a functioning society. Lastly, the two religious forces essentially attached themselves to forms of authority, in a bid for superior advantages.

Throughout *Animal Farm*, Moses the Raven is religiously emphatic and quite difficult to efface. He speaks of a utopian world named Sugarcandy Mountain, where all hard working animals will be rewarded. Before the pigs realise that he may be an advantage, they fear his religious presence will distract the animals from the concept of Animalism. This is evident in Chapter 2 of the novel, where “the pigs had to argue very hard to persuade them that there was no such place”. Despite his lack of contribution towards work around the farm, Napoleon tolerates Moses’ brash presence on the farm after his return after the Battle of the Windmill: “In the middle of the summer Moses the raven suddenly reappeared on the farm, after an absence of several years” (9.8). The pigs realize that Moses can be taken to advantage. Equivalently, the Russian Orthodox Church was heavily prominent around the revolution. The Bolsheviks found it difficult to diminish religion during the revolution because of the church's large following and tenacity. Stalin, the leader of the Bolsheviks, believed in science and reason, completely disregarding the Russian Orthodox Church. However, it was only after World War 2 when the Orthodox Church gained status and toleration by the government, only because it was seen as an opportunity to keep the slaves and peasants subdued. Karl Marx is quoted to have said that “Religion is the opiate of the masses”. Essentially, this means that religion is a drug for the people. Before the Russian Revolution, religion presumably ‘sedated’ the members of the working class, enabling them to look past the pain and hard work and dream about the afterlife. Moses is allegorically represented as the opiate in *Animal Farm*, metaphorically a ‘pain killer’. This determination can be linked to the Russian Orthodox Church during the Russian Revolution. Despite the Bolsheviks strong efforts in trying to diffuse the popularity of the church,

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the true strength and depth of religion really pulls through especially after World War 2. Therefore, it is evident throughout the novel that due to the strength and power of Moses, it was difficult to diffuse his popularity; similar to religion in the revolution. Although the pigs themselves disagreed with the supposed existence of a 'better world', they tolerated his existence because, for a small offering of beer, Moses was unknowingly benefitting them by keeping control in the animals; which the Russian Orthodox Church was also known for doing.

Moses the Raven preaches of Sugarcandy Mountain, where "it was Sunday seven days a week, clover was in season all the year round, and lump sugar and linseed cake grew on the hedges" (2.8); such fantasies were the underlying reason of control and sanity amongst the animals. The animals are tricked and pressured into believing that there is such thing as an afterlife, and are lulled into a state of endurance, therefore continuing to work hard: "Many of the animals believed him. Their lives now, they reasoned, were hungry and laborious; was it not right and just that a better world should exist somewhere else?" (9.8). Because the oppressed farm animals have something to look forward to, they look past the barbaric working conditions and dream about the Promised Land. The role of the Russian Orthodox Church in the revolution is uncannily similar. The church resembled a pain-killing drug; used on the poor to keep them working. Religion maintained control by creating a fantasy for the workers. This particular idea of an afterlife provided solace for the hard working and distressed poor during the revolution, thus eliminating controversy and maintaining discipline. Without the church, there would have been uproar, chaos and the chance of more rebellions. The church kept stability and hope amongst the working class society, paralleling Moses' role in *Animal Farm*. Moses unknowingly became a great asset to the pigs. "They all declared contemptuously that his stories about Sugarcandy Mountain were lies, and yet they allowed him to remain on the farm, not working, with an allowance of a gill of beer a day." (9.8), only if he spoke to the farm animals about Sugarcandy Mountain regularly. Essentially, the pigs realised why Moses was the Jones' favourite pet, because he kept control on the farm.

The relationship between Moses and Mr Jones correlates with the relationship of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Tsar. Rasputin was a trusted friend of the Tsar, as he was a mythical faith healer and demonstrated his religious powers on the Tsar's son Alexei Romanov when he was sick. The Tsar was the last Tsar of Russia, and Mr Jones was the last farmer of the Manor Farm; proving allegory. The two were known to be negligent rulers, hence the rebellions. It is evident in Chapter 2 of the novel that Moses and the human owner of the farm share a bond, "Mr. Jones's especial pet, was a spy and a tale-bearer, but he was also a clever talker". He leaves with the Jones' after the rebellion because without the daily offerings of bread and beer, he has no reason to remain on the farm: "Mrs. Jones looked out of the bedroom window, saw what was happening...and slipped out of the farm. Moses sprang off his perch and flapped after her, croaking loudly" (2.12). Moses returns to the farm after the satirized version of World War 2 in the novel, 'The Battle of the Windmills,' as he is offered "a gill of beer a day" (9.8) without

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completing any work, unconsciously being taken advantage of. Therefore, it can be made clear that both religion (in this case, a member of the Russian Orthodox Church) and Moses share the similarity of attaching themselves to a member of higher authority in a bid for superior advantages.

Throughout the novel *Animal Farm*, many allegories for people and groups within the Russian Revolution can be identified. Moses the Raven and the Russian Orthodox Church are an example; two figures that uncannily correlate together, sharing many similarities. Both were hard to abolish from the farm/Russia due to the strength and power in the religious values they held. Moses made a return after the Battle of the Windmill, and the church made a comeback after World War 2 when they realized that the people needed them. The idea of an afterlife kept control and sanity in the slaves and peasants of Russia and on the farm, demonstrating how religion can be beneficial to a functioning society. Lastly, Moses and the Russian Orthodox Church attached themselves to a leader in a hope of gaining something out of such a bond. With all three similarities considered in detail, it is evident that the character Moses in *Animal Farm* is a metaphorical yet optimal representation of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 1917 revolution.

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