ERWC Unit #2 English II Pre-Honors Name

Directions: Read the following article and annotate it (3+ good annotations per page).

**A Big Issue Raised On *Animal Farm***

By Roger Simon June 22, 1986 *Los Angeles Times*

This country never will fall to foreign invaders. No, that is not how we will lose our liberties.

We will simply give them away.

We are doing so now. This country is going along with the shameful banning[[1]](#footnote-1) of *Animal Farm* from an international theater festival being held in Baltimore.



The reason for the banning? The Soviet Union did not want this play in the festival.

The Soviets did not want this play in the festival, even though the festival is being held on American soil. So they summoned the head of the festival to Moscow and told him to ban it. And he did. And the United States went along.

To our small credit, we did not crawl completely on our bellies like snakes. Though *Animal Farm* was kicked out of the festival, it is being presented at a different theater that has become sort of a “repression-free zone,” I guess.

What we have done is ghettoize[[2]](#footnote-2) free speech. We say it can exist in this separate location, but it is not allowed to exist in the festival.

As George Orwell might have said: “All [plays](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1986-06-22/news/8602140401_1_theater-festival-animal-farm-soviets##) are equal. But some plays are more equal than others.”

What is especially galling[[3]](#footnote-3) is that U.S. tax dollars are being used to support the festival. Our government has asked for some, though not all, of those tax dollars back.

The festival, called the Theater of Nations, is run by the International Theater Institute, founded by UNESCO. The festival hopes to raise $400,000 through ticket sales.

I hope it goes broke. Cowardice should have a price tag.

The play *Animal Farm* is a musical adaptation of Orwell’s famous novel written in 1945. The book, which Orwell subtitled “A Fairy Story,” has endured because it has an enduring message: Revolutionaries, once in power, often become as repressive[[4]](#footnote-4) as the people they have overthrown. All too often the oppressed become the oppressors.

Russia is not mentioned in the book. As almost everyone knows, the action takes place on an English farm and the leading characters are all pigs.

The book certainly is anti-Stalinist and anti-totalitarian, but one wonders what the Soviets were afraid of, considering none of their citizens would have seen the play at the festival.

I think it was all just a show of power. The Soviets flexed their muscles, stamped their big feet and watched everyone cave in.

The organizers in America did not make the decision to ban the play from the festival. They merely went along with it. Which must have caused quite a chuckle in the Soviet Union. Here is a foreign power controlling what can be part of a theater festival in America.

What should we have done when the festival banned *Animal Farm*?

We should have said: “This is America. This is a free country. And we want all sorts of plays in our festivals here. We don’t believe in censorship[[5]](#footnote-5) and we won’t allow it. Not here. Not in this country. Not in Baltimore.”

We should have said: “If that is not acceptable to your masters in Moscow, you can move the festival elsewhere. Chernobyl[[6]](#footnote-6) might be nice.”

Instead, the local people were so dizzy with delight at getting this “prestigious[[7]](#footnote-7)” theater festival that we sold out our fundamental beliefs to hold it here.

I would like to report that many people are in an uproar over this, but few really are. The voice of calm was expressed by New York producer Joseph Papp, who said in an interview:

“The obvious liberal point of view is the usual feeling that anyone in the arts should be concerned about censorship. On the other hand, the purpose of the festival is to create harmony among nations. . . . It’s so easy to fall into that kind of obvious condemnation[[8]](#footnote-8). In this day and age, you have to work things out together. The festival is important for that reason.”

Has moral bankruptcy ever been expressed so eloquently?

We are engaging in censorship “to create harmony,” and that is more important than liberty, I guess, “in this day and age” when opposing censorship has become a “liberal point of view.”

Funny, I thought it was an American one.

I am sure all the deep thinkers associated with the festival reached way down into their souls before going along with the demands of Moscow.

Too bad they didn’t come up with some guts.

🡪 After initial reading, chunk up the article (using a different color) and identify the main point/focus of each marked section (intro, evidence, concession, conclusion, etc).

**POST-READING Article Review Activity: SOAPS Tone**

What is the Subject? The general topic, content, and idea contained in the text

What is the Occasion? The time and place of the piece, the current situation

Who is the Audience? The group of readers to whom this piece is directed

What is the Purpose? The author’s reason behind writing the text

Who is the Speaker? The voice that tells the story; how he/she relates to the audience

What is the Tone? The emotional attitude the writer expresses toward the subject

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S (Subject) | This article is about . . . |
| O (Occasion) | The events which led up to the writing of this piece include . . . |
| A (Audience) | One can assume the author’s intended audience is . . . |
| P (Purpose) | The main purpose of this article is . . . |
| S (Speaker)  &  Tone | The author is . . . |
| He/She establishes . . . |

4-sentence summary:

Rhetorical Precis FORMAT/TEMPLATE

In his/her \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( )

*(type of text)* (*title of work*) (year of article)

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(*author’s first and last name*) *(information about the author)*

that

(*claims/argues/asserts*) (*main argument*)

this claim by first

(*He/She*) (*supports/develops*) (*Explain what the author is doing: verb*)

Next, (s)he

Towards the end,

Finally, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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‘s purpose is to

(*author’s last name*)

establishes

(*He/she*) (*Describe the tone of the author*)

for

(*Describe the intended audience of the article*)

This work is significant because

Proofread your PRECIS and make sure it is in present tense and uses formal tone (no personal pronouns)

1. **Banning**: official prohibition or restriction; (to **ban** means to forbid) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **Ghettoize**: to confine or restrict to a particular area [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. **Galling**: irritating, vexing [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. **Repressive**: controlling, suppressing (towards others) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. **Censorship**: the act/process of examining and banning or deleting parts of publications/performances [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. **Chernobyl**: a site of a nuclear-plant accident in 1986 (North Ukraine) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. **Prestigious**: honored, esteemed [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. **Condemnation**: strong censure; disapproval; severe reproof [↑](#footnote-ref-8)