
George Orwell's *Animal Farm*: An Exploration of Dogma, Power, and Propaganda

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Abstract

The selected novel is widely read as an allegory of Russian Revolution, however this study focuses on how ideology, hegemony, propaganda, class struggle, and false consciousness serve together as tool of control. This study draws heavily on argument how domination is not static but dynamic in the way that it evolves from evident, visible forces into something hidden, insidious. It expresses that this kind of authority resides in people's psyche, sustained not by threat but habit, belief, ad manipulated perceptions.

This study takes a qualitative approach and analyze the text through Marxist view and Antonia Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony as its main theoretical framework. By closely examining key scenes and its characters, this study explains how language, information withhold, and ideology influence the way reality is understood in the novel. This analysis reveals a failed revolutionary attempt in achieving genuine equality that instead of demolishing unjust hierarchical system it reconstructs a new where pigs holds the role of ruling class. Propaganda is utilized as the key instrument in shaping reality and manipulating truth, while false consciousness causes the oppressed animals to accept and even defend their own exploitation. This study also discusses that hegemony over time converts visible savagery into consent establishing roots.

Eventually, this study concludes that *Animal Farm* is not merely a political expression but far beyond that, it exposes the psychological manipulation and ideological framing through which power, violence, dominance, and savagery is regulated. It argues that George Orwell's narration presents an everlasting example of how revolutionary ideals, gradually overtaken by force, convert into controlling systems Hence, this study certifies novel's unending significance in understanding present day's power structures.

Keywords: *Animal Farm; Marxist Theory; Cultural Hegemony; Ideology; Propaganda; Class Struggle; False Consciousness; Power Relations.*

Introduction

Much like a boat is not brought down by the vast sea surrounding it, but the water that seeps within. Similarly, revolutions rarely fail due to extrinsic opposition. These ideals are gradually corrupted from within. Literature, a social critique of life, has long served as a critical lens for exposing socio-political inequalities and unjust. Modern literary studies do not treat texts as mere artistic expressions but as mirror of hidden controlling and dominating systems that seeps in human mentalism and destroy from within.

Newly Marxist scholar highlighted that discrimination is not only in economic level but also in ideological terms, in which dominant class rules through money and making their own perception ideology. This shows that how powerful person is maintained by ideology and violence. Modern scholars follow Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony. According to this concept, dominance

can be kept not only by violence but also through agreement. Gramscian study highlight that dominant class maintain their control through making opinions and customs to show it organic and suitable. This system of force and ideological effect is common in literary studies, to summarize that how dominancy is normalized in society. Study on ideological and linguistic hegemony moreover emphasizes the role of communication in keeping dominancy. According to research, language is part by which ruling class build a reality and form agreement between lower class. KhosraviNik (2020) emphasizes the role of discourse in shaping power relations by arguing that communication systems actively construct social realities rather than simply reflecting them. Through ruling plots and communication, dominancy affects how people understand social condition, mostly avoiding opposition. In literature and allegorical narratives, scholars show how hegemonic rule is presented by disinformation, influencing and handling reality. Expertise use planned language to form impression and safe compliance without complete depending on violence. Generally, literature agrees that hegemony is a difficult mechanism in which ideology, language, and agreement act together to maintain power.

Dominancy, within Marxist and post-Marxist system, is considered as a mechanism maintained not only by power but also through ideological control. Scholars mostly discuss that dominant class maintained their power by making opinions, principles and own point of view to legal and support power system. New studies emphasize that ideology work as main system in building of dominant class. As highlighted in *The Role of ideology in making interest*, powerful class do not completely depend on violence, rather they affect how people understand social reality. This system normalizes discrimination and plant system of dominant class into daily perception, making dominant class seem organic and certain. In addition to this, idea and change in modern society highlights the secret nature of ideological dominancy. Dominant class mostly continue because people are unknown to violence which is building their faith. This system is mostly linked to the idea of perception, narrow crucial awareness and allow the maintenance of power. When people are unaware about ideological effect, they mostly accept and copy dominant class. Likewise, Raju J. Das discuss that dominant class run through two systems: money and ideological control. In his study, class fight is not limited to economic relation but also reveals in the domain of thought where agreement is built and continued. This shows a wide view of power as forcible and agreed, arranged with the idea of hegemony. In summary, modern scholarship presents ruling class as a complicated and nested system maintained by visible and hidden system. Ideology plays a vital role in creating awareness, securing agreement and maintaining control, emphasizing that power works as much by opinions and point of view as it does by money.

New scholarship constantly defines class struggle as a framework made by power, action and social ranking. It is widely discussed that discrimination is not unplanned but is constantly created and maintained by system of domination within society. Scholarly debate on “elite capture” discussed that changing are mostly shifted when powerful or educated people take control of all for their own benefit. This system result in new ruling class in which powerful gains benefit while normal workers are ruled out, showing that class struggle can continue after change. Moreover, it is highlighted that most changes failed to get real equality because a new dominant class takes over the previous one. Instead of removing order system, a new class structure is made, supporting the idea that domination is continuously generated with post-revolutionary societies. Therborn (2020) explains that class struggle still exists in modern societies through ongoing global inequality. He argues that inequality is not random but is created and maintained by social and economic systems that benefit powerful groups. This shows that even after revolutions, new elites can still emerge and continue domination in different forms. His view highlights that class struggle is not only a past historical phase but a continuous condition found in society today. Furthermore, it is discussed that dominant class maintain controlled by a mixture of violence and false narratives. This dual system of pressure and ideological effect enhance class system by crushing and forming public point of view, that’s why maintaining an unequal ruling class system.

In addition, research emphasizes that control over important supplies like food and tools plays a vital role in knowing social dominancy. When access to supplies is controlled by a small group, a fixed social class arise, making it complex for lower class to dare discrimination. Overall, it is continuously emphasized that class struggle is maintained by elite domination, the restoring of ranking after changes, ideological control and supply control. Together, these viewpoints show that discrimination is deeply fixed within society where power may change form but rarely disappears.

False consciousness has been widely discussed in Marxist and modern critical theory as a state in which people fail to understand their own socio-economic control due to accepted faith systems. Taken together, these points of view show that false consciousness is not simply unawareness but a psychological and ideological process. While John T. Jost highlights system-justifying psychology, S. Loughnan et al. focus on ideological perspectives, Michael J. Brandt highlights structured belief systems, and Robin Celikates connects it to internalized domination. Overall, the literature shows that false consciousness helps explain how discrimination is maintained through both belief and acceptance.

Jason Stanley (2020) visualize propaganda as a system that controls language and emotional request to build and support ideological faith. He discusses that propaganda runs not only through false narratives, but by forming how people see reality itself. This viewpoint is important in highlighting the indirect and mostly unrevealed nature of propaganda; however, it focuses on communication process and gives less importance to structural and formal systems. Basing upon systematic approach, Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell (2021) explained propaganda as a voluntary and systematic form of communication, formed to effect viewpoints and direct behavior towards particular result. Unlike Stanley's highlights on language, their structure focuses calculation and plan. Nevertheless, their definition has been analyzed for its range, as it can sometimes dim the importance between propaganda and general convincing communication. In the context of modern information systems, David Miller (2022) highlighted the main role of information control. He discussed that power is closely bound to the ability to manage and block entry to information, allowing ruling class to form accepted reality. While this point of view actually highlights structural power, it may underestimate the role of audience explanation and opposition in the propagation of information. Likewise, W. Lance Bennett and Stephen Livingstone (2020) define propaganda in the modern age, focusing on disinformation, repetition, and network communication technologies. They discussed that repeated narratives can build understood realities, even when misleading. Their work is particularly similar in defining modern propaganda; however, its highlights on digital media may lessen its applicability pre-digital or literary contexts. Taken together, the point of views explain that propaganda is a multifaceted process, including linguistic control, planned communication, and control of information. While Stanley highlighted large effect, Jowett and O'Donnell highlight voluntary plans, and Miller, with Bennett and Livingstone, focus on information communication within modern media environments. Overall, the literature explains that propaganda remains a main instrument of power, continually growing with social and technological change.

This study is grounded in Karl Marx's theory, and since it forms the basis of Marxism, I have used it as a reference here. Along with the ideas of Antonio Gramsci, I have focused on six key terms to analyze the novel *Animal Farm*.

Marxism

Marxism and Friedrich Engels, introduce Marxism in their famous book 'The Communist Manifesto (1848). As my analysis this theory shows that how our economy runs our cultural and society laws, where Bourgeoisie (rich owner) appropriate the surplus value earned by the proletariat. This creates a significant gap between the rich and the poor. According to Marx and Engels, history is always a class struggle where capitalism exploits workers and creates alienation.

They argue that the solution is a social uprising to create an equal society. Thus, Marxism teaches us that true peace comes from economic equality and closing the gap between classes.

Cultural Hegemony

The concept of cultural hegemony was introduced by the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci between 1929 and 1935. He wrote his famous ideas in a series of essays in his book *Prison Notebooks* while he was imprisoned by the Fascist regime. This theory explains how the ruling class uses cultural beliefs and values of society as a medium to rule over society without using any force. It suggests that the ruling class maintains power through political society force (Police, Army, and Law) and civil society (consent) (Schools, Media, Religion, etc.). Gramsci said for uprising the controlling factories is not enough for that we need the War of Movement (a direct physical struggle for power) and the War of Position (a long-term struggle to change the culture and ideas of the people first). As my view, real change comes through real education and free thoughts rather than just war.

Karl Marx argues that society has parts the Bourgeoisie (owner) and the Proletariat (worker). In *Animal Farm*, we see the class structure. Where the pigs (owner) wants more profit while the laborer wants their rights. The owner does it not just for money, it is also for controlling recourses and power.

Ideology is not just collecting the ideas; it is usually use for manipulating truth. Like in the novel we clearly see how characters use the ideas, such as belief that being poor is a matter fate. They shape these ideas in that way control the human mind easily.

Hegemony is that ruling class does not always use the force sometimes they rule through consent. For that they use promises and cultural tools to make people believe that their government his good for them. Through story of animal farm, we understand how power is maintaining by using these tools. In propaganda ruling class tell the half-truth to mislead the people. If we look at the 'Animal Farm' so our concept is clear about propaganda, like napoleon or squealer in animal farm, present their speeches in a wrong way or with half-truth to mislead the masses. It shows how power is maintained by manipulation rather than honesty.

In false of consciousness people internally struggle with themselves, they stop questioning and focus on doing rather than thinking. They blindly believe on others without searching for truth instead looking at the reality, they blame themselves. In simple wording they lose their self-esteem and stop caring about what is happening around them. They totally get lost in their own world. This all sign false of consciousness we see in the character of boxer when he said "I will work harder and napoleon is the best" that help us fully understand the concept of false of consciousness. Power structure means society decided who holds authority and who makes the rules. According to Marxism in many literary texts, these rights and powers are only held by the upper class, while the poor class is always ignored or oppressed. This structure is built on who controls the resources and money in a society.

Analysis and Discussion

This section aims to critically examine how ideology, class struggle, language, propaganda, false consciousness work as powerful systems in the novel of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Our findings show that this piece of literature is not only a political allegory of rebellion and corruption but a profound depiction of how power is recreated through ideological systems rather than immediate pressure. The study moreover discovers that domination in this novel is both psychological and political, since the animals' beliefs and insights are progressively formed to accept inequality as natural.

First, the study observes that inequality is not removed after the revolution of the animals at Manor Farm but recreated through ideology. By looking at Marxist Theory, specifically the idea of class struggle, and economic manipulation, beside Capital and Ideology and Kotkin's Theory of Modern Class Conflict, it becomes obvious that power in *Animal Farm* shifts from humans to

animals. The pigs displace the humans and emphasize their superiority through ideology and justification, considering themselves as brainworkers to get better supplies as compared to other animals.

Second, the study emphasizes that propaganda plays a major role in this system. Based on Propaganda Theory, including Stanley (2020), Jowett and O'Donnell (2021), Miller (2022), Bennett and Livingston (2020), Till (2020), and SemEval (2020), propaganda is not simply misinformation; but an organized system of persuasion. In this novel, Squealer's narratives and slogans shape the animals' thinking about reality, blurring the lines between truth and falsehood. Propaganda is an organized system of political discourse that structures thinking, emotion and belief. This illustrates how language can become a political weapon.

Third, this study presents False Consciousness as a form of deep ideologization which helps to explain the success of propaganda (Jost, 2020; Loughnan, Dunning, & Rankin, 2020). False Consciousness, according to Brandt (2021) and Celikates (2022) is the adoption of ruling ideology, in which victimization is accepted as an ordinary, normal, or natural state. In this version, Boxer is loyal and the animals accept the amended commandments show how belief makes domination self-sufficient.

Fourth, this study shows inequality can control others. Since the animals are not educated, the pigs change the commandments and the truth to suit their needs and gain power over the animals. This agrees with discourse analysis and studies on language and knowledge dominance, where unequal access to knowledge helps preserve the pigs' authority.

Fifth, the findings demonstrate that hegemony substitutes violence as the first method for their domination. Looking at Antonio Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony and Robinson's Propaganda framework, power is achieved through agreement not only through violence. Boxer's blind loyalty by repeating his famous slogan, Napoleon is never wrong, shows the adoption of hegemonic ideology. The animals obey not only because they are enforced, but because they are convinced.

The study finds that power in *Animal Farm* functions through two systems, intimidation and ideology. Aligning with authoritarianism research and Lin's (2024) System-Based Propaganda Theory, where dogs portray fear and Squealer portrays persuasion work together to maintain total control. Overall, Orwell portrays domination as both physical and mental. Finally, the study answers its research questions by demonstrating that ideology systematizes privilege, class struggle is transformed into a new system, and propaganda maintains power through language.

Besides its theoretical depth, our study has some limitations. The research is limited to a single literary book, *Animal Farm*, which restricts wider interpretations across other literary or political backgrounds. Comparative analysis with other anti-utopian works could enhance the findings.

The study depends mainly on theoretical frameworks like Marxist Theory, Gramscian Hegemony, Critical Discourse Analysis, Propaganda Theory and False Consciousness Theory. Though these models lend themselves well to interpretations of the text, they also prevent feminist, postcolonial, psychoanalytic, and cultural readings from being applied to it.

The study draws a parallel between Orwell's work and that of contemporary scholars of political and social structures, including Stanley (2020) Jowett and O'Donnell (2021) Bennett and Livingston (2020) Till (2020), SemEval (2020), and Jost (2020). The study defines the relevance of Orwell's work to contemporary research.

The study provides an ideological interpretation of the novel, examining how authority is generated through language, thought, class structure, and institutional reason.

The findings of this study are consistent with current scholarly literature. Unlike studies that separate propaganda or class struggle, the current research shows that ideology, hegemony, false consciousness and discourse work simultaneously as interrelated systems of domination. Capital and Ideology support the Marxist assertion that inequality is socially created rather than natural.

In the same way, Kotkin's analysis of Modern Class Conflict agrees with the idea that elite classes tend to displace earlier ruling systems after rebellion.

A key scene that supports the findings of our research is that pigs decide to keep milk and apples for themselves. From a Marxist point of view, this scene reflects the ruling class that takes control over supplies, while most of the workers remain economically disadvantaged. Instead of following the principles of equality, the pigs replicate a class system in which they justify superior food on the basis of intellectual labor. Our framework confirms the findings of Capital and Ideology that suggests inequalities are legitimized by narratives that rationalize privilege. The novel opens not with physical violence, but with ideological violence justification. Boxer's adage that Napoleon is never wrong becomes a slogan reflects Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony where power is sustained through manufactured consent rather than overt force. This is in line with the False Consciousness Theory because Boxer's constant allegiance to the system laboring him to increase production, indicating results of previous studies which suggests, for Boxer, subservience is not only physical but also psychological. Boxer blindly belief on Napoleon which strengthens and makes the domination more consistent. In this way, loyalty is presented as a calculated form of ideological control. The commandments were secretly changed by the pigs, reflects Critical Discourse Analysis, which analyzes language as a tool to reshape the reality. This scene applies modern theories through its use of Propaganda Theory with False Consciousness. The pigs altered the commandments written on the wall while, others accepted them without conflict. Thus, the scene holds, dominion is maintained through control of language and memory. These speeches are an example of Propaganda Theory, in which communication is deliberately utilized to shape beliefs and behavior through constant reinforcement, fear and emotional appeals, persuading the animals to accept the pigs' judgements, upholding earlier scholarship that propaganda works through psychological means rather than through falsehood. Furthermore, speech forms a powerful tool for his political ends, such as when he intimidates his compatriots by threatening to reintroduce Jones to their lives. Propaganda is complicated than general falsehood.

Napoleon uses his dogs to chase Snowball off the farm, exemplifies the exercise of Totalitarianism and intimidation. Hegemony explains consent for obedience, but also builds on earlier theorists who argue that domination relies on both terror and consent. Dominance is a dialectic of ideology and violence in the novel. The final scene shows the pigs indistinguishable from humans. It is often interpreted as an endorsement of the Marxist Theory and elite replacement theory that revolutions can replace one ruling class with another. This supports the conclusion that revolutions may change their leaders while not changing their class systems; furthermore, the scene affirms that political change without social justice is not fully realized. As such, some avenues for further research are suggested. First, comparative readings might appeal to *Animal Farm* alongside another work of Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-four*, for research about ideological control in both. Second, it is useful to further apply propaganda analysis to digital spaces, applying frameworks such as SemEval (2020) and Modern Propaganda Theory to the social media platforms. Finally, future work could examine artificial-intelligence-generated communication systems, following Lin's (2024) System-Based Propaganda Model, in order to study whether they reproduce or change customary forms of propaganda and false consciousness.

Conclusion

It can thus be concluded that *Animal Farm* is not simply a political allegory, but rather a complex picture of the nature of power. Revolution does not abolish domination, but rather, the authors argue, it changes domination. As such, even the victorious revolution replaces it with new forms of domination. Drawing on the principles of Marxist Theory, Gramscian Hegemony, Critical Discourse Analysis, Modern Propaganda Theory and the False Consciousness Theory, this research finds that both coercive and discursive forms of power work to sustain the system, and

that when the coercive form of power cannot work, the discursive form of power is the only option. The book demonstrated that political power does not disappear with the revolution, but merely changes form. It also showed that belief in this power by the people is necessary. Findings of the book remain valid with respect to the role of media and political messages in influencing public discourse. Unlike, other works of literary parody, the warning Orwell is raising is that tyranny in its most effective form can be exercised not by violence but by information, ideology, and psychological submission.

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