



BEYOND THE ALLEGORY: TIMELESS REFLECTIONS OF SOCIETY IN GEORGE ORWELL'S *ANIMAL FARM*

Abdullahi Haruna (Ph.D.)

Department of English, Nigerian Army University Biu, Borno State – Nigeria.

Email: harunaabdullahi481@gmail.com; Tel: +2348138530391

Cite this article:

Abdullahi Haruna (2026),
Beyond the Allegory: Timeless
Reflections of Society in
George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.
International Journal of
Literature, Language and
Linguistics 9(1), 71-85. DOI:
10.52589/IJLLL-ANNZJLNZ

Manuscript History

Received: 5 Mar 2026

Accepted: 1 Apr 2026

Published: 26 Apr 2026

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s).
This is an Open Access article
distributed under the terms of
Creative Commons Attribution-
NonCommercial-NoDerivatives
4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND
4.0), which permits anyone to
share, use, reproduce and
redistribute in any medium,
provided the original author and
source are credited.

ABSTRACT: *George Orwell's Animal Farm (1945) remains one of the most influential political allegories in modern literature. While the novella has traditionally been interpreted as a satirical representation of the Russian Revolution and the emergence of Stalinism, contemporary scholarship increasingly recognizes its broader significance as a critique of political power, ideological manipulation, and social inequality. This article re-examines Animal Farm as a timeless reflection of societal dynamics rather than merely a historical allegory. Drawing on Marxist theory, Gramscian hegemony, Foucauldian discourse analysis, and Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses, the study analyzes how Orwell's narrative exposes the corruption of revolutionary ideals, the manipulation of language and propaganda, and the reproduction of class hierarchy. Integrating recent scholarship on political discourse and ideological control, the article argues that Orwell's allegorical narrative provides enduring insights into contemporary political systems characterized by propaganda, misinformation, and authoritarian populism. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that Animal Farm continues to serve as a powerful literary framework for understanding the cyclical nature of political power and the vulnerability of societies to ideological domination.*

KEYWORDS: Political allegory; Propaganda; Ideology; Discourse and power; Marxist criticism; Cultural hegemony; Authoritarianism; George Orwell.



INTRODUCTION

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* occupies a central position in twentieth-century political literature. First published in 1945, the novella narrates the story of farm animals who overthrow their human owner in pursuit of equality and collective self-governance. Despite the revolutionary optimism that characterizes the early stages of the rebellion, the political system that emerges ultimately reproduces a new form of tyranny under the leadership of the pigs, particularly Napoleon.

The text has long been interpreted as an allegorical critique of the Russian Revolution and the subsequent consolidation of Stalinist dictatorship (Rodden, 2019). Orwell himself acknowledged that the narrative was inspired by the betrayal of socialist ideals within the Soviet Union (Orwell, 1945/2003). However, the significance of *Animal Farm* extends beyond this historical context. As Williams (2016) argues, Orwell's work reflects broader concerns about the relationship between political power, ideology, and language.

Recent scholarship has emphasized the continuing relevance of Orwell's critique in contemporary political discourse. Studies of propaganda and political communication increasingly cite *Animal Farm* as an illustrative example of how language can be manipulated to shape public perception and legitimize authoritarian power (Fowler, 2017). The narrative demonstrates how propaganda, historical revisionism, and ideological discourse function as mechanisms of political control.

This article therefore re-examines *Animal Farm* as a timeless reflection of societal dynamics rather than solely a satire of Soviet communism. By integrating insights from Marxist theory, Gramscian hegemony, Foucauldian discourse analysis, and ideological criticism, the study explores how Orwell's allegorical narrative reveals recurring patterns of power, propaganda, and social inequality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly engagement with George Orwell's *Animal Farm* has evolved significantly since its publication in 1945. Early criticism focused primarily on the novel's historical allegory of the Russian Revolution and Stalinist dictatorship. However, contemporary scholarship increasingly approaches the text through interdisciplinary perspectives that emphasize ideology, discourse, propaganda, and power relations. Recent studies between 2015 and 2024 demonstrate a growing interest in how Orwell's allegorical narrative reflects broader mechanisms of political manipulation and ideological domination in modern societies.

Classical Interpretations: Political Allegory and Anti-Totalitarian Critique

Early critical interpretations of *Animal Farm* emphasized its allegorical relationship to Soviet history. Scholars generally agreed that the narrative closely parallels the events of the Russian Revolution and the subsequent rise of Stalinism. Within this framework, the characters represent historical figures and political forces: Old Major symbolizes the revolutionary philosophy of Marx and Lenin, Napoleon represents Joseph Stalin, and Snowball reflects Leon Trotsky's intellectual leadership.



These interpretations positioned *Animal Farm* as a powerful critique of totalitarianism. According to Williams (2016), Orwell's narrative illustrates how revolutionary movements may gradually evolve into authoritarian regimes that reproduce the same structures of oppression they initially sought to dismantle. Rodden (2019) similarly argues that Orwell exposes the fragility of revolutionary ideals when political authority becomes concentrated in the hands of a small ruling elite.

While the allegorical reading remains central to Orwellian scholarship, critics increasingly argue that the significance of *Animal Farm* extends beyond its historical context. The narrative's depiction of ideological manipulation, propaganda, and political rhetoric reveals broader patterns of power that transcend specific historical regimes.

Ideology, Power, and the Reproduction of Social Hierarchy

More recent scholarship has expanded the interpretive framework of *Animal Farm* by emphasizing the ideological dimensions of the narrative. Scholars argue that the novel illustrates how political elites use ideology to legitimize social hierarchy and maintain authority.

From a Marxist perspective, the rebellion of the animals represents a proletarian uprising against an exploitative ruling class. However, the emergence of the pigs as a new elite demonstrates how revolutions can reproduce systems of domination rather than eliminate them. According to Xiao (2022), the novel reflects anti-utopian themes that expose the contradictions between revolutionary rhetoric and political reality.

Contemporary scholars have, therefore, interpreted *Animal Farm* as a critique not only of Soviet communism but also of ideological manipulation in general. The pigs' reinterpretation of Animalism demonstrates how political leaders may reshape ideological principles to justify their own authority. This process illustrates the institutionalization of ideology within authoritarian political structures.

Furthermore, studies of power relations within the novel highlight the role of class hierarchy in the narrative. The pigs gradually transform themselves into a privileged ruling class while the other animals remain exploited laborers. This development reflects the persistence of social inequality even within political systems that claim to promote equality.

Language, Propaganda, and Political Discourse

One of the most significant developments in contemporary Orwellian scholarship involves the study of language and propaganda in *Animal Farm*. Researchers increasingly focus on how Orwell portrays linguistic manipulation as a mechanism of political control.

Orwell himself addressed the relationship between language and political power in his essay *Politics and the English Language*, where he argued that political language is often designed "to make lies sound truthful" and obscure reality (Orwell, 1946). This insight has become central to modern analyses of *Animal Farm*.

Recent research has explored the rhetorical strategies used by characters such as Squealer to manipulate the animals' perception of reality. For example, Merzah (2024) identifies several pragma-stylistic techniques used in the novel, including scapegoating, exaggeration, false



dilemmas, and historical distortion. These strategies allow the ruling pigs to justify their authority while suppressing dissent among the animals.

Similarly, pragmatic and discourse-analytic studies emphasize how language functions as an instrument of ideological persuasion. Linguistic analysis demonstrates that the pigs rely on slogans, repetition, and rhetorical simplification to influence the animals' political consciousness. These techniques reduce complex political realities into simplified ideological messages that discourage critical reflection.

The famous slogan "Four legs good, two legs bad," for example, functions as a discursive device that reinforces ideological conformity among the animals. By reducing political ideology to easily repeatable phrases, the pigs prevent the animals from engaging in meaningful political debate.

Critical Discourse Analysis and the Construction of Political Authority

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) has become one of the most prominent methodological approaches in recent *Animal Farm* scholarship. CDA focuses on how language reproduces power relations and ideological structures within society.

Studies using this approach have examined speeches by key characters such as Old Major and Squealer to uncover the rhetorical mechanisms through which ideology is constructed and maintained. One analysis demonstrates how these speeches shape collective identity and reinforce power hierarchies within the farm (Azizan et al., 2023).

Another discourse-analytic study emphasizes the role of coherence and narrative structure in reinforcing ideological messages. The narrative demonstrates how linguistic and contextual elements interact to shape the reader's understanding of political events and social relationships.

These studies highlight the importance of discourse in the construction of political authority. By controlling the narrative surrounding the rebellion and its outcomes, the pigs establish themselves as the legitimate rulers of the farm.

Critical discourse analysis also reveals how ideological polarization is embedded in the narrative. The pigs construct a binary distinction between loyal animals and traitorous enemies, reinforcing their authority by framing dissent as betrayal.

Propaganda and Psychological Manipulation

Another important strand of contemporary scholarship examines the role of propaganda in the narrative. Scholars argue that *Animal Farm* offers a detailed representation of propaganda techniques used by authoritarian regimes.

Research on propaganda in the novel identifies several key strategies employed by the pigs: misinformation, emotional manipulation, fear appeals, and the repetition of ideological slogans. These techniques are designed to influence the animals' perception of political reality and discourage resistance.

Accordingly, the novel can be interpreted as a study of propaganda itself, illustrating how authoritarian leaders manipulate public opinion through persuasive communication. The pigs'



control over information enables them to construct a narrative in which their authority appears both necessary and benevolent.

The manipulation of statistics represents another important propaganda technique in the narrative. By presenting fabricated production figures, the pigs create the illusion that the farm is prospering under their leadership, even as the living conditions of the animals deteriorate.

These propaganda strategies highlight Orwell's concern with the psychological dimensions of political power. Authoritarian regimes often rely not only on coercion but also on the manipulation of public perception.

Nonverbal Domination and Symbolic Power

Recent scholarship has also begun to examine the role of nonverbal communication and symbolic power in *Animal Farm*. While earlier analysis focused primarily on language, newer studies emphasize the importance of gestures, symbols, and physical intimidation in maintaining political authority.

A 2025 study applying critical discourse analysis identifies several nonverbal strategies of domination within the novel, including the threatening growls of Napoleon's dogs and the distracting bleating of the sheep (Horgan, 2025). These behaviors function as forms of symbolic communication that reinforce the pigs' authority.

The dogs serve as a visual representation of political violence, while the sheep's repetitive chanting reinforces ideological conformity. Together, these nonverbal elements create an atmosphere of intimidation and distraction that prevents the animals from questioning the political system.

This line of research demonstrates that Orwell's critique of authoritarianism extends beyond linguistic manipulation to include broader systems of symbolic power.

Contemporary Relevance of *Animal Farm*

In recent years, scholars have increasingly emphasized the contemporary relevance of *Animal Farm*. The novel's depiction of propaganda, misinformation, and ideological manipulation resonates strongly with modern political developments.

Studies examining political discourse in the digital age suggest that many of the rhetorical strategies depicted in *Animal Farm* remain prevalent in contemporary political communication. Techniques such as slogan repetition, scapegoating, and historical revisionism continue to shape public opinion in modern societies.

These studies demonstrate that *Animal Farm* remains an important resource for examining the dynamics of political authority in the modern world.

Research Gap

Despite extensive scholarship on *Animal Farm*, several gaps remain in the existing literature. Many studies focus primarily on individual aspects of the novel, such as propaganda or discourse, without integrating these perspectives into a comprehensive theoretical framework.



Furthermore, while recent research highlights the importance of language and ideology in the narrative, fewer studies combine multiple theoretical approaches—such as Marxist theory, discourse analysis, and theories of ideological power—to examine how these mechanisms interact within the novel.

The present study addresses this gap by integrating these theoretical perspectives to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms of power and ideological manipulation depicted in *Animal Farm*.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* in this study is grounded in an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that integrates four influential perspectives in political and cultural theory: the Marxist theory of class struggle, Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony, Foucault's theory of power and discourse, and Althusser's notion of ideological state apparatuses. These frameworks provide complementary analytical tools for examining how political authority, ideological manipulation, and social hierarchy operate within Orwell's allegorical narrative. By synthesizing these theoretical perspectives, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of how power is constructed, maintained, and contested in *Animal Farm*.

Marxist Theory: Class Struggle and Revolutionary Ideology

Marxist theory provides a foundational perspective for analyzing the class dynamics represented in Orwell's narrative. According to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, social structures are fundamentally shaped by economic relations and the conflict between dominant and subordinate classes (Marx & Engels, 1848/2015). In capitalist societies, the ruling class controls the means of production and exploits the labor of the working class, creating conditions of structural inequality.

Within *Animal Farm*, the rebellion against Mr. Jones can be interpreted as a symbolic representation of proletarian revolution. The animals initially unite against their human oppressor, reflecting Marx's notion that revolutionary change occurs when the oppressed class develops a collective consciousness of its exploitation. Old Major's speech serves as the ideological catalyst for this revolutionary consciousness, articulating a critique of exploitation and encouraging solidarity among the animals.

However, the subsequent emergence of the pigs as a new ruling elite illustrates what Marxist scholars describe as the reproduction of class domination within revolutionary movements. Rather than abolishing social hierarchy, the revolution merely replaces one ruling class with another. The pigs gradually assume control over political authority and economic resources, establishing themselves as a privileged elite.

The character Boxer represents the exploited working class whose labor sustains the political system. Boxer's unwavering loyalty and dedication to hard work reflect the commitment of workers who believe in the promises of revolutionary ideology. Yet his eventual betrayal by the pigs demonstrates the vulnerability of the working class to exploitation by political elites.



Through this Marxist lens, *Animal Farm* reveals how revolutionary movements can reproduce the same structures of inequality they originally sought to dismantle. Orwell's narrative therefore illustrates the contradictions inherent in political revolutions that fail to address the underlying dynamics of class power.

Gramsci's Theory of Cultural Hegemony

While Marxist theory emphasizes economic power and class conflict, Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony expands the analysis of political authority to include ideological and cultural dimensions. Gramsci argued that ruling classes maintain their dominance not only through coercion but also through the ability to shape cultural beliefs and social norms (Gramsci, 1971).

According to Gramsci, hegemony occurs when the values and worldview of the ruling class become accepted as common sense by the broader population. Through institutions such as education, media, and political discourse, dominant groups establish ideological leadership that legitimizes their authority.

In *Animal Farm*, the pigs maintain their dominance through precisely this process of ideological leadership. Rather than relying solely on force, they reshape the animals' understanding of political reality through propaganda, slogans, and the reinterpretation of revolutionary principles.

The gradual transformation of the Seven Commandments reflects the establishment of hegemonic ideology on the farm. By altering these commandments, the pigs redefine the ideological framework that governs the society. Over time, the animals internalize these revised principles and accept the authority of the pigs as legitimate.

The sheep play an important role in reinforcing this hegemonic order. Their repetitive chanting of slogans such as "Four legs good, two legs bad" simplifies political ideology into easily repeatable phrases that discourage critical reflection. This process illustrates how ideological messages can become embedded within everyday discourse.

Gramsci's concept of hegemony therefore provides an important framework for understanding how political authority is sustained in *Animal Farm*. The pigs do not maintain power solely through coercion; they also shape the ideological consciousness of the animals, ensuring that their dominance appears natural and inevitable.

Foucault: Power, Knowledge, and Discourse

Michel Foucault's theory of power and discourse offers another important perspective for analyzing the dynamics of authority in *Animal Farm*. Foucault argues that power is not simply concentrated in political institutions but operates through networks of knowledge and discourse that shape how individuals perceive reality (Foucault, 1977).

According to Foucault, discourse defines what is considered truth within a society. Those who control discourse possess the ability to shape social knowledge and influence how individuals interpret political events. Power and knowledge therefore become mutually reinforcing processes.



In Orwell's narrative, the pigs exercise power by controlling the production and circulation of knowledge on the farm. They manipulate language, rewrite historical events, and regulate access to information. Through these practices, they construct a political reality that legitimizes their authority.

The character Squealer exemplifies the relationship between discourse and power. As Napoleon's spokesperson, Squealer continually reshapes the animals' understanding of political events. By presenting selective information and reinterpretations of history, he persuades the animals that the decisions of the pigs are both necessary and beneficial.

The manipulation of statistics represents another example of discursive power within the narrative. By presenting fabricated production figures, the pigs create the illusion that the farm is prospering under their leadership. These claims shape the animals' perception of reality even though their material conditions continue to deteriorate.

Foucault's theory therefore helps explain how political authority in *Animal Farm* operates not only through force but also through the control of knowledge and discourse.

Althusser and Ideological State Apparatuses

Louis Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses provides an additional framework for understanding how political power is reproduced within social institutions. Althusser argues that ruling elites maintain their dominance through institutions that shape ideological beliefs and social identities (Althusser, 1971).

According to Althusser, ideological state apparatuses include institutions such as education, religion, media, and cultural practices. These institutions influence how individuals understand their social roles and reinforce the legitimacy of existing power structures.

In *Animal Farm*, similar ideological mechanisms operate within the political system established by the pigs. The pigs control education on the farm, limiting literacy among the animals while reserving intellectual knowledge for themselves. This restriction prevents the animals from critically examining the ideological claims of the ruling elite.

Songs and rituals also function as ideological apparatuses within the narrative. The revolutionary anthem "Beasts of England" initially symbolizes collective resistance and solidarity among the animals. However, after Napoleon consolidates power, the song is replaced by a new anthem praising his leadership. This transformation illustrates how cultural symbols can be appropriated to reinforce authoritarian authority.

The training of the dogs represents another ideological mechanism that supports Napoleon's rule. By raising the dogs from birth to serve as loyal enforcers, Napoleon ensures the existence of a coercive apparatus that protects the ruling regime.

Through these ideological institutions, the pigs maintain control over both the material and ideological dimensions of the farm's political system.

Integrating the Theoretical Perspectives

The integration of Marxist theory, Gramscian hegemony, Foucauldian discourse analysis, and Althusserian ideology provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the mechanisms of



power in *Animal Farm*. Each perspective highlights different aspects of political authority within the narrative.

Marxist theory emphasizes the economic and class dynamics that structure the social hierarchy of the farm. Gramsci's concept of hegemony explains how ideological leadership allows the pigs to maintain dominance without constant coercion. Foucault's theory of discourse reveals how control over knowledge and language shapes the animals' perception of political reality. Finally, Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses demonstrates how institutions and cultural practices reinforce the legitimacy of the ruling regime.

Together, these theoretical perspectives reveal the complex interplay between power, ideology, and discourse in Orwell's narrative. *Animal Farm* thus emerges not only as a political allegory but also as a profound exploration of the mechanisms through which political authority is constructed and maintained.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This section provides a detailed critical examination of the major themes and ideological structures that shape George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. While the preceding sections of this study have established the theoretical and scholarly context of the text, the present discussion applies those conceptual frameworks to a close analysis of the narrative. Through this analytical approach, the section explores how Orwell's allegorical representation of the animal rebellion functions as a broader critique of political authority, ideological manipulation, and the reproduction of social inequality.

The discussion focuses on several interrelated dimensions of power represented in the novel, including the corruption of revolutionary ideals, the manipulation of language and propaganda, the construction of ideological hegemony, and the transformation of revolutionary leadership into authoritarian rule. By examining these elements, the analysis demonstrates how Orwell exposes the mechanisms through which political regimes consolidate authority and maintain control over social consciousness. Particular attention is given to the role of discourse, symbolism, and narrative structure in revealing the dynamics of power that operate within the fictional society of *Animal Farm*.

Drawing upon the theoretical perspectives outlined earlier—Marxist theory, Gramscian hegemony, Foucauldian discourse analysis, and Althusserian ideology—this section interprets the events and characters of the novel as symbolic representations of broader socio-political processes. The characters in *Animal Farm* do not merely function as narrative figures but also embody specific ideological positions and social roles within a hierarchical system of power. The pigs, for instance, represent the emergence of a new ruling class that manipulates ideology and information to maintain dominance, while the other animals symbolize the exploited masses whose political agency is gradually undermined by propaganda and coercion.

Furthermore, this section situates Orwell's critique within wider debates on political discourse and authoritarian governance. The manipulation of language, the rewriting of history, and the use of propaganda depicted in *Animal Farm* reflect broader patterns of ideological control that are evident in many political systems. By analyzing these mechanisms within the context of



the novel, the discussion highlights the enduring relevance of Orwell's narrative for understanding contemporary political dynamics.

Ultimately, the discussion and analysis aim to demonstrate that *Animal Farm* is not merely a historical satire but a sophisticated exploration of the relationship between power, ideology, and social control. Through its allegorical narrative, the novel exposes the processes through which political authority becomes institutionalized and normalized, revealing the fragility of revolutionary ideals when confronted with the realities of power. The sections that follow, therefore, examine the key thematic and structural elements of the novel in order to illustrate how Orwell constructs a timeless reflection on the dynamics of political behavior and ideological domination.

Allegory and the Narrative Architecture of Power

One of the defining features of *Animal Farm* is its use of allegory as a mode of political critique. Allegory allows Orwell to represent complex historical and ideological processes through symbolic characters and events. According to Rodden (2019), Orwell's narrative employs allegorical representation not only to depict Soviet political history but also to examine broader dynamics of authority and social control.

The animals on the farm symbolize different social classes and political actors within revolutionary societies. Napoleon embodies authoritarian leadership, Snowball represents intellectual revolutionary idealism, and Boxer symbolizes the exploited working class whose labor sustains the political system. Through this symbolic structure, Orwell transforms the traditional beast fable into a sophisticated analysis of political power.

The narrative trajectory of the novel reflects a recognizable political pattern: revolution, consolidation of power, ideological transformation, and authoritarian domination. Scholars have noted that this trajectory mirrors historical processes in which revolutionary movements gradually evolve into centralized regimes that suppress dissent and institutionalize inequality (Williams, 2016).

Orwell's use of satire further reinforces this political critique. Statements such as "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" illustrate the contradictions inherent in authoritarian rhetoric (Orwell, 1945). Through this satirical strategy, Orwell reveals how language can be manipulated to legitimize inequality and obscure political reality.

The Corruption of Revolutionary Ideals

The theme of ideological corruption is central to the narrative structure of *Animal Farm*. At the beginning of the novel, the animals unite around the principles of Animalism, an ideological framework inspired by Old Major's revolutionary vision. Old Major's speech articulates a critique of exploitation and encourages solidarity among the oppressed animals.

From a Marxist perspective, this moment represents the emergence of revolutionary consciousness among the working class (Marx & Engels, 1848/2015). The animals recognize their exploitation by human rulers and collectively mobilize to overthrow the existing system.

However, the revolutionary ideals articulated by Old Major gradually deteriorate as the pigs consolidate political power. Napoleon and the other pigs reinterpret the principles of



Animalism to justify their own privileges. This transformation illustrates what scholars describe as the institutionalization of revolutionary ideology within authoritarian structures (Rodden, 2019).

The gradual modification of the Seven Commandments symbolizes this ideological shift. Initially designed to guarantee equality among the animals, the commandments are repeatedly altered to accommodate the changing interests of the ruling elite. For example, the commandment prohibiting animals from sleeping in beds is later revised to permit sleeping in beds but not “with sheets,” illustrating how ideological principles can be reinterpreted to legitimize privilege (Orwell, 1945).

This transformation highlights a fundamental paradox of revolutionary politics: movements that seek to abolish inequality may inadvertently reproduce new systems of domination.

Propaganda and the Manipulation of Language

Orwell’s critique of political power is closely connected to his concern with the manipulation of language. In *Animal Farm*, propaganda functions as a central mechanism through which the pigs maintain their authority. Squealer, Napoleon’s spokesperson, plays a crucial role in shaping the animals’ perception of reality.

Through persuasive rhetoric, Squealer repeatedly convinces the animals that the policies of the pigs are necessary for the survival of the farm. His speeches employ rhetorical strategies such as exaggeration, emotional appeals, and the selective presentation of information.

Recent studies in pragma-stylistics have identified these rhetorical strategies as forms of linguistic manipulation designed to control political consciousness (Merzah, 2024). By framing political decisions as unavoidable necessities, Squealer discourages critical reflection among the animals.

The use of slogans also contributes to the consolidation of ideological control. Phrases such as “Napoleon is always right” simplify complex political realities into easily repeatable statements. According to Fowler (2017), such slogans function as discursive tools that reinforce ideological conformity and suppress dissent.

Orwell’s portrayal of propaganda reflects his broader concern with political language. When language becomes a tool of ideological manipulation, citizens lose the ability to critically evaluate political authority.

Power, Surveillance, and Authoritarian Governance

The consolidation of power in *Animal Farm* reflects the dynamics of authoritarian governance. Napoleon gradually transforms the farm into a political system characterized by centralized authority, surveillance, and coercion.

The trained dogs that serve as Napoleon’s enforcers function as instruments of political intimidation. Their presence ensures that dissent is swiftly punished, creating an atmosphere of fear among the animals. This system of surveillance reflects what Foucault (1977) describes as the relationship between power and discipline in authoritarian regimes.



The expulsion of Snowball represents another key moment in the consolidation of Napoleon's authority. By accusing Snowball of treachery and forcing him into exile, Napoleon eliminates political competition and establishes himself as the uncontested leader of the farm.

Subsequent purges and public confessions further reinforce this authoritarian structure. These events illustrate how political regimes maintain power through both ideological persuasion and coercive force.

Historical Revisionism and the Control of Collective Memory

Another significant aspect of political power in *Animal Farm* is the manipulation of historical memory. As Napoleon's regime consolidates authority, the pigs begin to rewrite the history of the rebellion. Events that once reflected collective achievement are reinterpreted to glorify Napoleon's leadership.

The reinterpretation of Snowball's role in the Battle of the Cowshed illustrates this process. Initially celebrated as a hero, Snowball is later depicted as a traitor who collaborated with human enemies. By altering the historical narrative, Napoleon reinforces his legitimacy and discredits potential opposition.

Scholars have argued that the control of historical narratives plays a crucial role in the maintenance of political authority (Rodden, 2019). When ruling elites reshape collective memory, they influence how societies interpret both past events and present realities.

In *Animal Farm*, the animals' limited literacy makes them particularly vulnerable to this manipulation. Because they cannot accurately remember or verify historical events, they are unable to challenge the revised narratives presented by the pigs.

Class Hierarchy and the Reproduction of Inequality

Although the revolution promises equality, the social structure of the farm gradually becomes increasingly hierarchical. The pigs occupy the highest position within the political system, while the other animals remain subordinate laborers.

This hierarchy reflects the re-emergence of class inequality within the revolutionary society. From a Marxist perspective, the pigs represent a new ruling class that controls both political authority and economic resources (Marx & Engels, 1848/2015).

The character Boxer embodies the exploited working class. His unwavering loyalty and commitment to hard work reflect the dedication of laborers who believe in the ideals of the revolution. However, Boxer's tragic fate—being sold to the knacker once he becomes physically weak—illustrates the extent to which the ruling elite prioritize their own interests over the welfare of the working class.

Through this portrayal, Orwell emphasizes the persistence of class inequality even within political systems that claim to promote equality.

Contemporary Political Relevance

The enduring significance of *Animal Farm* lies in its remarkable capacity to illuminate recurring patterns of political behavior across different historical periods and political systems.



Although George Orwell wrote the novella in response to the specific historical circumstances surrounding the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalinism, scholars have increasingly emphasized that the mechanisms of power and ideological manipulation depicted in the narrative extend far beyond that context (Rodden, 2019). Orwell's portrayal of propaganda, misinformation, and the manipulation of political language continues to resonate strongly with contemporary political developments, making *Animal Farm* a highly relevant text for analyzing modern systems of governance and political communication.

One of the most striking aspects of Orwell's narrative is its exploration of propaganda as a central instrument of political control. In *Animal Farm*, the pig Squealer functions as the regime's chief propagandist, constantly reinterpreting events and policies in ways that favor Napoleon's leadership. Through persuasive rhetoric, selective presentation of information, and emotional appeals, Squealer convinces the animals that the decisions of the ruling elite are necessary for the collective good of the farm. This manipulation of language reflects Orwell's broader concern with how political discourse can obscure truth and reshape public perception. As Rodden (2019) observes, Orwell's depiction of propaganda reveals the subtle mechanisms through which authoritarian regimes cultivate consent and suppress dissent.

In contemporary political communication, similar rhetorical strategies have become increasingly prominent. Political leaders and institutions frequently employ persuasive language, strategic framing, and carefully constructed narratives to shape public opinion and influence political outcomes. In many cases, political discourse relies on simplified slogans, emotionally charged rhetoric, and selective information designed to mobilize support while minimizing critical scrutiny. The use of such rhetorical techniques parallels Squealer's role in *Animal Farm*, where the repetition of slogans such as "Napoleon is always right" and the constant invocation of external threats serve to discourage dissent and reinforce ideological conformity.

Moreover, the spread of misinformation has emerged as a defining feature of modern political discourse. In the digital age, information circulates rapidly through social media platforms and online communication networks, creating new opportunities for the dissemination of misleading or distorted narratives. Political actors often exploit these communication channels to promote particular ideological agendas or undermine competing viewpoints. Orwell's depiction of manipulated statistics and fabricated production reports on the farm anticipates this contemporary phenomenon. By presenting false evidence of progress and prosperity, the pigs create an illusion of success that masks the deteriorating conditions experienced by the other animals.

Another important dimension of Orwell's critique involves the manipulation of historical narratives. In *Animal Farm*, the pigs repeatedly rewrite the history of the rebellion to reinforce their political legitimacy. Events that once symbolized collective achievement are gradually reinterpreted in ways that glorify Napoleon's leadership while discrediting potential rivals such as Snowball. This process of historical revisionism enables the ruling elite to control the animals' understanding of the past and thereby influence their perception of the present.

The rewriting of history remains a common strategy in political conflicts around the world. Competing interpretations of historical events often play a crucial role in shaping national identity, collective memory, and political legitimacy. Governments and political movements frequently reinterpret historical narratives to justify policy decisions, mobilize public support,



or delegitimize political opponents. By controlling the narrative of the past, political leaders can influence how societies understand their present circumstances and future aspirations.

In this regard, *Animal Farm* highlights the importance of historical memory as a site of political struggle. The animals' inability to accurately remember the original commandments or the true events of the rebellion makes them particularly vulnerable to ideological manipulation. Orwell suggests that when societies lose control over their historical narratives, they become susceptible to authoritarian forms of governance that rely on the distortion of truth.

Furthermore, the novel underscores the relationship between political power and public consciousness. Authoritarian regimes often seek to reshape collective understanding through propaganda, censorship, and the control of information. These strategies aim not only to suppress dissent but also to redefine the boundaries of political reality. When individuals are exposed to constant ideological messaging, they may gradually internalize the narratives promoted by those in power, thereby reinforcing the stability of the political system.

Ultimately, *Animal Farm* continues to function as a powerful literary lens through which readers can analyze the dynamics of political power and ideological control. The novel's exploration of propaganda, misinformation, and historical revisionism reveals fundamental patterns in the exercise of political authority that remain relevant across diverse political contexts. By illustrating how revolutionary ideals can be gradually transformed into instruments of domination, Orwell reminds readers that the struggle for political accountability and democratic integrity requires constant vigilance.

In this sense, the enduring relevance of *Animal Farm* lies in its ability to encourage critical reflection on the relationship between language, power, and truth. As long as societies continue to grapple with the challenges posed by propaganda, ideological manipulation, and the concentration of political authority, Orwell's allegorical narrative will remain an essential framework for understanding the complexities of political behavior in both historical and contemporary contexts.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* remains a powerful and enduring critique of political authority, ideological manipulation, and the fragility of revolutionary ideals. While the novella is firmly rooted in the historical context of the Russian Revolution, this study has demonstrated that its significance extends far beyond that specific moment. Orwell constructs a universal model of how power operates, consolidates, and ultimately corrupts.

Through an integrated theoretical framework drawing on Marxist theory, Gramscian hegemony, Foucauldian discourse, and Althusserian ideology, the analysis has shown that *Animal Farm* reveals the mechanisms through which political systems reproduce inequality. The transformation of the farm from a site of revolutionary hope into an authoritarian regime illustrates how centralized power, when left unchecked, erodes collective ideals and institutional accountability.

Central to this process is the manipulation of language and ideology. The pigs maintain control not only through coercion but through the systematic reshaping of truth, memory, and belief.



As the narrative demonstrates, domination becomes most effective when it is internalized by those who are governed. The animals' gradual acceptance of contradiction and inequality underscores the role of ideological conditioning in sustaining power.

The novella's enduring relevance lies in its capacity to illuminate recurring political patterns. The dynamics of propaganda, historical revisionism, and discursive control depicted in *Animal Farm* remain visible in contemporary political systems, particularly in contexts marked by media manipulation, populist rhetoric, and democratic erosion.

Ultimately, Orwell's allegory offers a cautionary insight: the failure of revolutionary movements is not inevitable, but it becomes likely when power is concentrated without accountability and when critical consciousness is replaced by ideological conformity. *Animal Farm* therefore endures not merely as a historical satire, but as a timeless reflection on the persistent tensions between power, truth, and equality in human societies.

REFERENCES

- Althusser, L. (1971). *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)*. Monthly Review Press.
- Azizan, N, et al. (2023). A Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis of Identity and Power in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 7(3), 112–125. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.70310>
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Pantheon Books.
- Fowler, R. (2017). *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (Q. Hoare & G. N. Smith, Eds. & Trans.). International Publishers.
- Horgan, M. (2025). Nonverbal Domination Strategies in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*: A Critical Discourse Analysis. *World Journal of English Language*, <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v15n1p88>
- Iswandi, I. et al (2020). Teaching Critical Literacy Through George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. *Journal of Language and Literature Education*, <https://doi.org/10.24036/jlle.v8i2.109560>
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2015). *The Communist Manifesto*. Penguin Classics. (Original work published 1848)
- Merzah, S. K. (2024). Linguistic Manipulation in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*: A Pragmatic-Stylistic Perspective. *Arab World English Journal*, <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol15no2.8>
- Orwell, G. (2003). *Animal Farm*. Penguin Classics. (Original work published 1945)
- Orwell, G. (2009). *Politics and the English Language*. Penguin Modern Classics. (Original work published 1946)
- Rodden, J. (Ed.). (2019). *The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell*. Cambridge University Press.
- Weninger, C. (2020). Critical Literacy and Ideology in Literary Education: Teaching Orwell in Contemporary Classrooms. *Journal of Literary Education*, <https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.3.1.16561>
- Williams, R. (2016). *Orwell*. Oxford University Press.
- Xiao, L. (2022). Anti-Utopian Themes in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2022.5.6.1>