

## HEGEMONY IN ANIMAL FARM

Shrikrishna S. Vaidya

Ph.D Research Fellow,

SPPU Pune

### Abstract –

*The present paper discusses the concept of Hegemony proposed by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci and its existence in the famous novel Animal Farm by George Orwell. It also examines how practices of the politics are hegemonic. Superficially, they are presented with the motif of public well-being but underneath they are directed by the hegemonic force. With the help of character analysis and various incidents in the novel the practice is expounded.*



Global Online Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal's licensed Based on a work at <http://www.goeiirj.com>

**Key words-** Antonio Gramsci, Marxist criticism, Hegemony, Animal Farm, socialism.

### Introduction-

Many revolutions have taken place in human history. From the stone age up to this modern age the human has gone through uncountable transformations in social and economic contexts. The literature, through its every form express this journey. Although the motto of literature is considered to entertain, illumination is also vital objective as well. Animal farm is a novel by George Orwell, talking about the failure of Russian revolution which took place in 1789. It is a satire on the revolution as a whole. It underlines the fact that the revolution is darkened by its products only. The principles used to lay the foundation, are altered, transformed and eventually abolished according to the circumstances. This novel also gives idea of freedom and its public implications that how freedom is a fake idea, how freedom is shown something and executed something else. How politicians and those in power make the people believe that whatever is done by the politics is only for public well-being. People are forced to believe it. This idea of dominance of one particular group over other is, Hegemony. Hegemony is a concept used by Antonio Gramsci in his book Prison Notebooks. In his prison notebooks he ponders over many topics and one of them is Hegemony. Hegemony is a practice of dominating others with the help of power or thoughts. Animal Farm is a symbolic novel explicitly narrating a story of some animals and their fight against the dominating owner of manor. But implicitly it is a pinching remark on the Russian revolution and its bitter

consequences. He states that in spite of their birth country, dictators are same everywhere. They develop they develop their own personal life-style and it must be supported by everything else in the community.

**Animal farm** : A snapshot

Animal farm is a epoch making novel by George orwell written between 1944-45. This novel presents the historical incidents in Russian revolution symbolically. This novel is a perfect example of an allegory. Allegory is a story which conveys a denotative meaning. It has to say something different than it speaks. This novel depicts the story with the help of animals from Manor Farm. The characters are representing some historical figures from the epoch of Russian revolution. The pigs are intelligent and cunning. Other animals from the farm are not having conscience and they like to follow the status-quo situation that is prevailing since long time. The animals from the farm, inspired by the speech of old Major and tired because of injustice with them, revolt against the owner of the farm and throw him away from the power. After this expulsion, who will be the next leader is a question that is pondered over a long span of time. There is a competition between two leaders from the pigs, Napoleon and Snowball. Both are intelligent. But point of view differs them. They are the exponents of Communism and socialism respectively. The tug of war for the power between these two prevails for a long period. Both of them try hard to consolidate and advocate their eligibility but Napoleon surpasses Snowball in cunning approach and with secret army he is successful to throw away the hindrance of Snowball. The seven commandments for the equality and common good are painted on the wall like two legs are good are four legs bad, no animal shall wear clothes, sleep in bed, drink alcohol kill other animals and all animals are equal. The hard workers from the farm continue to work hard due to the feeling of freedom and those who kept themselves aloof of hard ships were surviving a cozy life now and then. Although some animals on the farm was knowing the fact that each and every activity by pigs is not intended for their well-being, they lack the power to speak it out. Those who tried to argue against them, met the same end, the expulsion by hook or crook. Without complaining all the animals were abiding to follow the orders from Napoleon and his company like squealer, his mouth piece and propagandist, and other pigs as well.

Slowly and gradually each and every act on the farm us controlled by the leader Napoleon. He controls all the power over there. Every decision is made by himself without winning the confidence of common animals from the farm. This continues for a long period. The hardships of other animals and the privileges for the pigs goes increasing day by day. The act of altering the principles of animalism is practiced every day. The injustice is surmounted. The farm creates relations with men and began to follow the human beings and their life style. They began to wear

clothes, drink wine, sleep in bed and trading with humans. In short one tyrant is thrown and new is replaced over there. The fate of common animals never turns happy.

### **The concept of Hegemony-**

In words of Thomas R Bates “it means political leadership based on the consent of the led, a consent which is secured by the diffusion and popularization of the world view of the ruling class.” (1)

In simple terms hegemony is a leadership or dominance by one state, nation, country or social group. It is derived from the Greek Word Hegemon meaning leader. Leadership, dominance, authority, command, sovereignty, supremacy, superiority, rule, dictatorship are the contextual synonyms of hegemony. Hegemony, in general, means anything that dominates another; it may be political, cultural, local or international. The crucial factor in hegemony is power. Power is main root of hegemony.

The quote by John Action, ‘power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely’, fits here. Alien hegemony, ideological hegemony, social hegemony, patriarchal hegemony, racial hegemony, media hegemony, political hegemony, religious hegemony, military hegemony, corporate hegemony, linguistic hegemony, cultural hegemony etc. are some of the types of hegemony. Antonio Gramsci (1831-1937) was an Italian Marxist who propounded this concept in his epoch making book Prison Notebooks (1935). He divides the society in two categories, the political and the civilized. The axiom, ‘The man is not ruled by force alone, but also by ideas’ talks about the hegemony and its undercurrents.

### **The Hegemony and Animal Farm-**

Along with the amusement the novel Animal Farm gives lot of examples of hegemony. The keen reading gives the readers many insights how the hegemony is practiced in it. In the opening scene when the old major gives a speech and a song beasts of England, the pigs carry this credit of the pioneers for the rebellion till the end of the novel.

*The pigs now revealed that during the past three months they had taught themselves to read and write from an old spelling book. Napoleon sent pots of black and white paint... snowball (for it was snowball who was good at writing) painted Animal Farm*

It shows that a particular group is enjoying the privileges with the consent of other members from the society. The group is representing itself superior. The work of deciding the commandments and the inscription on the tarred wall is also executed by the pigs only. Other animals haven't asked to put their opinions about them, even they are not invited to discussion of the principles. It says a lot



about the way of governing which goes close to tyranny.

After the rebellion though the work was carried out more quickly the animals were happy as they were made to believe *'that it was truly their own food, produced by themselves and for themselves, not doled out to them by a grudging master'*. Slowly the pigs acquired the 'harness-room as their headquarters' where they trained themselves blacksmithing, carpentering and other necessary arts 'for the welfare of the farm'. The reading writing project was a little success. Pigs already learned to read and write perfectly, the dogs could read fairly well but they don't want to read anything else than the seven commandments. Some animals learning remained limited to four alphabets. Nevertheless, the animals like sheep, hens and ducks shown inability in learning the seven commandments, it was abridged for them in a single sentence, *'four legs good, two legs bad'*. The free play of the hegemony can be experienced here. The milk which was disappearing everyday was mixed with the pig's mash.

*The early apples were now ripening, and the grass of the orchard was littered with windfalls. The animals had assumed as a matter of course that these would be shared out equally; one day, however, the order went forth that all the windfalls were to be collected and brought to the harness-room for the use of the pigs only...*

The orders were not easily acceptable for the animals. But Napoleon and other pigs, even Snowball were in full agreement with this point. The whispers of disagreements were silenced by Squealer with his sugar quoted words and cunning arguments,

*'comrades, you do not imagine, I hope, we pigs are doing this in a spirit of selfishness and privilege? Many of us actually dislike milk and apples. I dislike them myself. Our sole object in taking these things is to preserve our health. Milk and apples contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig. We pigs are brain-workers. The whole management and organization of this farm depends on us. Day and night we are watching over your welfare. It is for your sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. Do you know what will happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones will come back! .... 'surely there is no one among you who wants to see Jones come back?'*

The animals have to say nothing when they are bought in the light of Jones coming back to the farm. Now they believe that pig's health is important for their own well-being. So without any argument it was agreed that the windfall apples and the milk was to be reserved for the pigs only. The consent is at work here.

Who ever tried to argue against the decisions made by Napoleon and his party has to face the cruel treatment by the nine dogs secretly kept. Before expressing the bitter views everyone has to

think about the dogs with the growling jaws. So no one dared to do so.

*One Sunday morning, when the animals, assembled to receive their orders, Napoleon announced that he had decided upon a new policy. From now onwards Animal farm will engage in trade with the neighboring farms; not, of course, for any commercial purpose, but simply in order to obtain certain materials which are urgently necessary. The needs of the farm must override everything else, he said. He was therefore making arrangements to sell a stalk of hay and part of the current year's wheat crop and if more money were needed, it would have to be made up by the sale of eggs....*

So the selling of the farm products was to be done for the needs of farm only. No commercial purposes are there such claims were made. Doing these things were having their own intentions but it was shown as if they are to be done only for the animals on the farm. Slowly and gradually readers come to know that all the commandments are being altered diplomatically and with the consent of other animals.

### **Conclusion-**

The present research paper deals with the hegemony in novel Animal Farm. The novel various instances and scenes where the animals from the farm are made believe that the rules are for their well-being. The ruling animals win the consent of the animals which are ruled. On the basis of the discussions and arguments made in the paper one can comprehend the existence of hegemonic practices in the concerned novel.

### **References**

- Senn, Samantha. "All Propaganda Is Dangerous, but Some Are More Dangerous than Others: George Orwell and the Use of Literature as Propaganda." *Journal of Strategic Security*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2015, pp. 149–61. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26465253>. Accessed 16 Oct. 2022.
- White, Richard. "George Orwell: Socialism and Utopia." *Utopian Studies*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2008, pp. 73–95. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20719892>. Accessed 16 Oct. 2022.
- Moore, Wilbert E. "But Some Are More Equal Than Others." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1963, pp. 13–18. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2090452>. Accessed 16 Oct. 2022.
- Letemendia, V. C. "Revolution on Animal Farm: Orwell's Neglected Commentary." *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1992, pp. 127–37. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3831551>. Accessed 16 Oct. 2022.