

Post-colonial Nation and and Cultural Hegemony in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* A Rereading

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Abstract

Animal Farm by George Orwell is an English literary classic. The novel is taught and read in most English departments worldwide to introduce beginners to English literature. It has been widely read and researched as an allegorical satire, focusing chiefly on communist Russia. Specifically, this 1945 novel is an excellent referent for any state-level abuse of power. Researchers also read the novel's representations of the dominants' corruption and the marginal's misery from a post-colonial perspective. The present paper builds on the post-colonial research tradition. However, it turns the interpretative screw a little, employing a cultural lens. The paper reads the novel as an allegory of a post-colonial nation that dismantles the imperial powers but becomes destabilised under the sway of cultural hegemony. It divides animal time through the colonial/post-colonial binary. It explores how the colonial time enforces cultural authenticity and why post-colonial times dislocate it. The paper situates the study within colonialism, nation and cultural hegemony framework. In this way, the article uncovers various power axes in society and contends that the post-national period becomes unstable when various forms of cultural hegemony render people from transcultural to ambivalent.

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Animal Farm by George Orwell is an English literary classic. The novel is taught and read in most English departments worldwide to introduce beginners to English literature. It has been widely read and researched as an allegorical satire, focusing chiefly on communist Russia. Specifically, this 1945 novel is an excellent referent for any state-level abuse of power. Researchers also read the novel's representations of the dominants' corruption and the marginal's misery from a post-colonial perspective. The present paper builds on the post-colonial research tradition. However, it turns the interpretative screw a little, employing a cultural lens. The paper reads the novel as an allegory of a post-colonial nation that dismantles the imperial powers but becomes destabilised under the sway of cultural hegemony. It divides animal time through the colonial/post-colonial binary. It explores how the colonial time enforces cultural authenticity and why post-colonial times dislocate it. The paper situates the study within colonialism, nation and cultural hegemony framework. In this

way, the article uncovers various power axes in society and contends that the post-national period becomes unstable when various forms of cultural hegemony render people from transcultural to ambivalent.

Keywords: Orwell; rereading; post-colonial nation; cultural hegemony; cultural dislocation; transculturation

Subject classification codes: post-colonial reading

Introduction

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is an English literary classic. The novel has touched the imagination of literature lovers and researchers since its publication in 1945 and subsequent adaptation in films, cartoons, and motion pictures.¹¹ George Orwell, John Halas, and Joy Batchelor. *Animal Farm* (Australia: Siren Visual Entertainment, 2004); Alex Salmon. "Orwell's Morality Tale Staged." *Green Left Weekly*, no. 1216 (2019): 19. . In addition, most English departments worldwide teach the novel to introduce beginners to English literature. Hence, the novel has been widely read and researched, chiefly as an allegorical satire on communist Russia.²² Harold Bloom. *Animal Farm*. New York: Infobase Learning, 2006. ProQuest Ebook Central. (accessed August 16, 2021), 34-7, 37-9, 46-8. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.uq.edu.au/lib/uql/detail.action?docID=516854>. Also, the animal narrative has become an excellent referent for any state-level abuse of power—the existing research concerns representations of the dominants' corruption and the marginal's misery in the novel.³³ Shikha Thakur. "Understanding the Fundamental Nature of Power through Myths in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* ." *Language in India* 20, no. 1 (2020): 122. <http://www.languageinindia.com/index.html>; H. Sewall. "George Orwell's *Animal Farm* : A metonym for a dictatorship." *Literator* 23, no. 3 (2002): 81–96. <https://doi.org/10.4102/lit.v23i3.344>.

Specifically, the novel is well-known among literature researchers, hailed from countries with British colonial history. Since Orwell was born in a civil servants' family in colonial Bengal and worked in the Indian Imperial Police, his writings are significant sources to know about the British and the Indian relationships during the British Raj.⁴⁴ John Rossi and John Rodden. "A Political Writer." in *The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell*, ed. John Rodden, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 1–11. doi: 10.1017/CCOL0521858429.001; Ian Williams. "Orwell and the British Left." in *The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell*, ed. John Rodden, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 100–111, doi:10.1017/CCOL0521858429.008. Orwell began his literary career in 1920 with some lively and thought-provoking essays. He then wrote four fictions: *Burmese Days* (1934), *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1935), *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying* (1936) and *Coming Up for Air* (1939), and three memoirs: *Down and out in Paris and London* (1933), *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), and *Homage to Catalonia* (1938). *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) are his final novels. Orwell's last novels departed from his earlier writer vision. During this time, Orwell bitterly recognised the malfunction of socialism in Spain and the USSR that lent Orwell the voice of a satiric writer. In *Animal Farm*, Orwell satirises Communist Russia through animals' everyday life and illustrates how the power-mongers pawn the public for their interests.⁵⁵ Erika Gottlieb, "George Orwell's Dystopias: *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* ," in *A Companion to the British and Irish Novel 1945–2000*, ed. Brian W. Shaffer. (New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005), 241–53.

This power thesis enables some contemporary researchers to engage with Orwell's anti-imperial standpoints and study his writings through colonial and post-colonial theories.⁶⁶ Hussein Zeidanin and Abdullah Shehabat, "Revisiting the Concept of Freedom in George Orwell's 'a Hanging' and 'Shooting an Elephant': A Postcolonial Perspective," *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies* 21, no. 1 (2021); Pavan Kumar Malreddy, "Imperialist Shame and Indigenous Guilt: George Orwell's Writings on Burma," *European Journal of English Studies* 23, no. 3 (2019): 311–25; Ahmad Ghaforian and Ahmad Gholi, "A Postcolonial Reading of George Orwell's Shooting an Elephant with Special Reference to Edward Said's Orientalism and Binary of the Self and the Other," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 5, no. 7 (2015): 1361; Mohammed Sarwar Alam, "Orwell's 'Shooting an Elephant': Reflections on Imperialism and Neoimperialism," *IIUC Studies* 3 (2006): 55–62; and Ensieh Shabanirad and Seyyed Mohammad Marandi, "Edward Said's Oriental-

ism and the Representation of Oriental Women in George Orwell's *Burmese Days*," *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences* 60 (2015): 22-33. Mainly, Ruly Indra Dharmawan analyses *Animal Farm* through Bhabha's mimicry and internal colonisation theory.⁷⁷ Dharmawan, "Revisiting Bhabha's Mimicry in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*," *PIONEER: Journal of Language and Literature* 12, no. 2 (2020): 141-56. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36841/pioneer.v12i2.731> Similarly, Yahya Barkhordar explains the farm's events as colonialism, focusing on animals' enslavement and exploitation in the human and animal eras.⁸⁸ Barkhordar, "Animal Farm and Its Analysis Based on Colonialism and Postcolonialism," *ECONSPEAK: A Journal of Advances in Management IT & Social Sciences* 7, no. 3 (2017): 46-68. Finally, Guillermo Verdecchia focuses on the relevance of *Animal Farm* in contemporary neo-liberal, post-colonial Canada through Anthony MacMahon's adaptation of the novel for Soulpepper Theatre in Toronto. Since Canada has not been an oppressive political country, MacMahon moves away from the Orwellian story in his adaptation, *Animal Farm 2.0*. Instead, he critically interrogates the capitalist economic system that damages ordinary people's lives.⁹⁹ Verdecchia, "Revisi (Ti)Ng *Animal Farm* and the *Cherry Orchard* : Adapting Classics for a Neoliberal, Postcolonial Canada," *Anglistik: International Journal of English Studies* 30, no. 1 (2019): 81-91. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6db9/0257b1c5fd5d9343c439485e5c03f63ad86e.pdf>.

The present paper builds on this rereading of *Animal Farm* from a post-colonial perspective.¹⁰¹ I use the hyphenated "post-colonial" throughout the article, because the term means "after colonialism" in the analysis of the novel. However, it turns the interpretative screw a little, employing a cultural lens. The paper reads the novel as an allegory of a post-colonial nation that dismantles the imperial powers but becomes destabilised under the sway of cultural hegemony. It divides animal time through the colonial/post-colonial binary. It explores how the colonial time enforces cultural authenticity and why post-colonial times dislocate it. The paper situates the study within colonialism, nation and cultural hegemony framework. Eventually, the article uncovers various power axes in society and contends that the post-national period becomes unstable when various forms of cultural hegemony render people transcultural and ambivalent. For that purpose, it will first set up the theoretical framework and then analyse the text in light of the theories.

Theoretical Framework

Colonialism

Colonialism is the practice of settling communities as the governing class from one country to another. The term originates from the ancient Greek word 'colony' that means 'the foundation of an independent city by emigrants.' However, the meaning of the word changes with the development of the Roman Empire. It denotes 'the settlement of a community in a conquered territory as a battalion.'¹¹ Peter Childs and Patrick Williams, *An Introduction to Postcolonial Theory* (Essex: Longman, 1997), 227. Further citation to this work given in the text. Edward Said views colonialism as an offshoot of imperialism—"the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory"²² Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), 8. It is also one of many imperialist practices concerned with 'the settlement of one group of people in a new location.'³³ John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 7. Further citation to this work given in the text. Imperialism considers the distant locations *asterra incognita* or empty lands and thus legitimises military and empirical control over those lands. As a result, colonialism manifests three chief features—settlement in a new place as an authoritarian group, economic control over resources and finally, the governing of the native people.⁴⁴ Bill Ashcroft and Others, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2003), 46; Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), 2.

European colonialism started with the desire to discover unknown worlds in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when the renaissance revolutionised the maritime sectors. The Europeans searched for the new and exciting that eventually led them to trade and profit in Asia and Africa in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. However, Europeans could not limit their desire in gaining capital and enriching their

metropolitan centres. Instead, they rose to the local political powers and exploited the people and societies economically and culturally. They consolidated their rule through Orientalist and scientific discourses of discriminatory race, colour, ethnicity and gender concepts and premises.⁵⁵Edward Said. *Orientalism*, (Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1978), 9-12. Robert Young calls this conquest and rule of distant territories the colonial desire to penetrate and impregnate the exotic other.⁶⁶Young. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995): 181-82.

Post-Colonial Nation

Nevertheless, European colonialism could not go without resistance. The British, the most potent imperial and colonial agent, encountered anti-colonial risings. The local people desired an independent homeland, began the anti-colonial movement and resisted the colonials. Simon During contends:

The post-colonial desire is the desire of decolonised communities for an identity. It belongs to that programme of self-determination which Adorno, unlike Jameson, could envisage. Obviously it is closely connected to nationalism, for those communities are often, though not always, nations.⁷⁷During, "Postmodernism or Post-Colonialism Today," *Textual Practice* 1, no. 1 (1987): 43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502368708582006>.

The colonised communities inhabited continents and subcontinents as tribes, clans and kinfolds. They formed was known as *samaj*, assembly and *jati*, Caste or subcaste and *rajjo*, Kingdom.⁸⁸*Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. "Samaj," (accessed August 17, 2021) <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Samaj>; and *WordNet 3.0, Farlex Clipart Collection*, s.v. "jati." (accessed August 17, 2021) <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/jati>. Hence, they were not nations. The nation was Europe's invention and one of the marvellous gifts to the world.⁹⁹Partha Chatterjee. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 4. Further citation to this work given in the text. In a lecture, 'What is a nation?' Ernest Renan says:

Nations... are something fairly new in history. Antiquity was unfamiliar with them; Egypt, China, and ancient Chaldea were in no way nations. They were flocks led by a Son of the Sun or by a Son of Heaven. Neither in Egypt nor in China were there citizens as such. Classical antiquity had republics, municipal kingdoms, confederations of local republics and empires, yet it can hardly be said to have had nations in our understanding of the term.¹⁰¹⁰Bill Ashcroft and Others. *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2013), 135.

Nation originated into the breakdown of the classical and medieval empires. Then, it gained traction in European social and political contexts and, later, their desire to expand imperial power in the foreign location. Thus, the Europeans imported and implanted the notion of a nation into their Empires. This notion as a badge of modernity enabled the natives to know themselves newly and towards the anti-colonial risings. They struggled for an autonomous land and identity based on their specific languages, cultures, and values, different from the identity imposed by the colonial power. According to majority language, ethnicity, religion, and communal groups, they fabricated and fought for new borders to map their lands that eventually broke down vast territories into small states.

Hence, a nation is not just there, a natural entity. Instead, it is a form of social construction that comes into being at a particular point of history and takes a stronghold in a specific people's desire and will. A nation's conceptual foundation is nationalism—'an intense devotion to one's nation.'¹¹¹¹Richard A. Sauer. *Nationalism*. (New York: Infobase Learning, 2010), 1. ProQuest Ebook Central. (Accessed August 17, 2021). Since the colonisers subjugate the colonised, the latter manifests a spirit of nationalism. They describe their land chained under colonial power, gain mass support and tragically defend and contest their map and border with blood and sacrifice. ¹²¹²Childs and Williams, *An Introduction*, 206.

A post-colonial nation comes into being in this process. It 'unites many individuals into one people' and becomes 'an imagined political community.'¹³¹³Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on*

the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, (New York: Verso Books, 2006): 6. In this community, the members will never

know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. Individuals *think* they are part of a greater collective, that they share a deep, horizontal comradeship.¹⁴¹⁴Ibid., p 6.

Thus, the basis of a nation is a mutual sense of identity, collectivity, belongings, fraternity, and freedom. Moreover, people describe the land as their own—motherland, native land, or homeland and themselves the sons of the soil and the defender of their mother. Thus, they inspire a sense of origin, rootedness, and home.¹⁵¹⁵Childs and Williams, *An Introduction*, 205. Consequently, today's world is a collection of different nations, separated by borders, and often offers a territorial vision of roots and home.

Cultural Hegemony

However, the post-colonial nation can become dystopian,¹⁶¹⁶Bill Ashcroft, "Introduction: Spaces of Utopia," *Spaces of Utopia: An Electronic Journal* 2, no. 1 (2012): 1-17. and nationalism can become 'a dark, elemental and unpredictable force.'¹⁷¹⁷Chatterjee. The Nation and Its Fragments, 4. Power-hunger, greed, group politics and nationalist elitism can weaken the nation.¹⁸¹⁸Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans, and ed. by Constance Farrington (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 152; Amílcar Cabral, "National Liberation and Culture," in *An Introduction to Postcolonial Theory*. eds Peter Childs and Patrick Williams (Essex: Longman, 1997), 58; Chatterjee. The Nation and Its Fragments. 35-7; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Die Philosophic* 14, no. 27 (2003): 42-58. <https://doi.org/10.5840/philosophin200314275>. Specifically, cultural hegemony can play havoc on the national consciousness and destabilise the nation. Hegemony or cultural hegemony is a buzzword in post-colonial writing. Several researchers on Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Toni Morrison use the concept to understand imperial relationships and colonial subject positions.¹⁹¹⁹Hussain Ahmed Linton. "Towards a Critique of Cultural Hegemony and Nationalist Resistance: A Reading of Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*." *Language in India* 12, no. 2 (2012); Jing Chen and Ting-jun Guo. "Escaping the Prison of White Cultural Hegemony—The post-colonial reading of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* [J]." *Journal of Nanhua University* 3 (2005); and Mohammed Ilyas. "Traumatic Portrayal of Nativity and Post-Colonial Cultural Hegemony in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*," *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, Asian Economic and Social Society, vol. 9 no. 2 (2020), 76-85.

Antonio Gramsci uses hegemony first in his *Prison Notebooks*. The word originates from the Greek *hēgemonía*, which means 'leadership or, rule.' *Oxford English Dictionary* explains hegemony as "leadership, predominance, preponderance; especially the leadership or predominant authority of one state of a confederacy or union over others."²⁰²⁰Brian Schmidt. "Hegemony: A Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis." *Berlin: Dialogue of Civilization Research Institute*, August 15, 2018, <https://doc-research.org/2018/08/hegemony-conceptual-theoretical-analysis/>. (accessed 21 August 2021). As defined by Gramsci, hegemony is a process of intelligent and moral leadership where the subordinate class in a state accepts the ruling class without any force or coercion:

The 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. ²¹²¹Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Ed. and Trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 12.

The bourgeoisie, the dominant class of a Western European nation, owns the means of production and employs wage-labourers. It can promote its interest in society through education, cultural practices, and media. These apparatus work upon everyday codes, norms, language, myths, religion and present them as standard and good sense. They restructure them as a set of daily lived systems and creates a particular

worldview that people find proper and acceptable. Moreover, the bourgeoisie presents itself as the bearer of these values and their interests as the common interest for the common good. Therefore, its rule is legitimate.

Consequently, the proletariat, the ordinary people, become ideologically mystified. They encounter the dominant ideas and practices in their everyday life in various social institutions. They see that what the rulers do is related to their history and culture. Their interests are natural and practical. In this way, the hegemony presents

a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of our living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values—constitutive and constituting—which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming.”²²²²Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*. (Oxford [Eng.]: Oxford University Press, 1977), 110.

The proletariat, therefore, feels pressure to follow the ruling culture and consciousness. They do not understand that ruling-class philosophy is little suitable for them. The latter systematically uses the civil society (volunteer and cultural units like schools, unions, and families) to circulate some cultural elements rational and progressive and influences thoughts, ideas and cultural practices of individuals and organisations. Thus, certain cultural elements become dominating and more influential than others. The imperial cultures tend to be superior, and the conquered ones are shocking and backward.²³²³Said, *Orientalism*, 15.

Hence, covert coercion coexists with consent in hegemony that generates a conflicting consciousness in the proletariat. This consciousness represents a form of duality that pushes forward and pulls back the force of resistance and transformation. On the one hand, the people understand that they are subordinate. They desire to change their position and claim equality and equity. They want to be united, act against unjust cultural practices and upset the system. However, they find it challenging to formulate causes of resistance against hegemonic domination. They find the dominant cultures play upon their common sense and familiar cultures. Again, they feel bound to the past and history where they had a cooperative interaction with the ruling class. As a result, the mass becomes mute and passive.²⁴²⁴TJ Jackson Lears, “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities,” *The American Historical Review* (1985): 567-93.<https://doi.org/10.2307/1860957>.

Gramsci ascribes this paucity of voice partly to language. Language is a powerful tool for domination. The ruling class makes discourses and rhetorics to uphold their worldview and justify their rule. The subordinate group is oriented to these linguistic tools through economic, education and cultural institutions. So, they discover themselves speaking in the bourgeoisie language and limited within boundaries of permitted discourses. They do not find an alternative to these political vocabs, nor can they identify the source of their unease. Hence the subordinate rarely can transcend the existing discursive practice. Their consent mixes approval and apathy, resistance, and submission.²⁵²⁵Ibid.,. 569-70.

Textual Analysis

The novel *Animal Farm* is set on a fictional farm in rural England. In the novel, men and animals formulate an asymmetrical social structure with men as the rulers and the animals as the ruled. Mr Jones, his family, the solicitor Mr Whympers and other farm owners such as Pilkington and Frederick represent this superior ruling race and class. The animal characters, from pigs to hens, are the inferior and dominated class. Again, the animals are not a homogenous group. According to their biological, physical, and intellectual abilities, they are graded into various groups. For example, The pigs are the cleverest and intelligent. Boxer and Clover are enormously built and robust animals. Again, some animals are four-legged, and some are two-legged but have wings. Some are pet animals, and some are wild. Thus, animals are sociable and hostile. All the animals respect Major, Boxer and Clover on the farm. However, dogs and cats look down upon lesser animals and endanger the life of birds and rats. Orwell uses these typical diversities and multiplicity of social relations to represent social stratification. He shows how these stratifications fracture the nation into various contending groups in post-colonial times and lead the animal world towards anarchy.

The Colonial Era: Anti-colonialism and Liberation

The novel *Animal Farm* opens with a secret meeting in Manor Farm. Major, the aged White boar on the farm, delivers a speech in that meeting. He denounces human rule and heralds a future with a free and independent animal kingdom. This opening can be described as a burgeoning moment of the anti-colonial spirit. Major is the mastermind and father of this anti-colonial activity. His lecture is like many South Asian nationalist lectures during the 20th century anti-British movements.¹¹ For example, Indian nationalist Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi, Mohammed Ali Jinnah or Bangladeshi nationalist leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered revolutionary lectures to stand up against British and Pakistani colonial rules. See, Md Shamsuddoha, “The Speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 7th March 1971: A Historical Analysis,” *Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2020); Bal Ram Nanda, *Road to Pakistan: The Life and Times of Mohammad Ali Jinnah*, (Routledge India, 2013); and Mahatma Gandhi and Mohandas Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Major’s lecture also reminds us of Tagore’s portrayal of Sandip as an anti-colonial leader in *The Home and the World*. Sandip delivers a charismatic speech in Suksar, Bengal, to organise people against the British division of Bengal. Tagore depicts Sandip’s words with divine sparks of fire that intoxicate the people and prepare them to dedicate themselves to the country’s cause.²² Rabindranath Tagore, *The Home and the World*, trans., Surendranath Tagore (London: Macmillan, 1957).

As the novel shows, Major depicts Mr Jones as a reckless, cruel and unlawful master with a group of lazy and irresponsible workers. This master ignores animals’ rights and has subjugated them, although animals as the citizens of England. To Major, man is free and domineering, and the latter is fettered and slaves. Men are enjoying their life, but animals are dying every day within misery and deprivation. Again, men enjoy their life, not with the fruit of their labour. They live on animals’ production and take away animals’ riches, rights and even kids from them. However, for that wealth, men are not even grateful. Instead, when finding animals sick and weak, men either flog and drown them in the ponds, take them to the slaughterers, or make them the other animals’ food.

Major also evaluates men’s concept of animal life as a cycle of birth, work, and death. He rejects men’s concept as a cultural politics and contends that this cycle is a human construction, not natural, universal, and unchanging. Men advocate this animal life philosophy only to legitimise their rule over animals as a natural mandate. They have imposed this structure on the animals that reproduce the same order generations after generations without thinking for a second time.

Major further interrogates men’s idea of a world order where both men and animals share a common interest and work for each other interactively. Men look after animals and tend them. Animals, in their turn, help them in producing goods and with their products. However, Major dismisses this concept as fake and cheating. Instead, he argues that men are the only animal on the earth who only work for their interests and benefits. Their cooperative work premises are men’s strategies to enjoy the master’s status on earth.

Consequently, Major emphasises animals’ awakening towards their self-knowledge. To Major, animals have their land, and the land has riches. Again, animals have the moral and intellectual capacity to make the best use of their riches. However, as they are ignorant about who they are and what their powers are, animals life means arduous work and misery. Thus, he encourages the animals to know the difference between men and animals and the essence of animal identity. Men are two-legged with two arms which they use for mischief. By contrast, animals are four-legged, and those with two legs have two wings. The wings look like hands, but they are not for mischief but aviation. Again, men wear clothes, live in houses, use money, drink alcohol, gamble, and trade in the market. However, animals are unlike them. Animals go naked. They do not stay in houses. They do not use money or do business, as they are the producers of goods. They eat some natural foods, drink from ponds, and do not need any cooked and processed food and drinks. Animals also possess an inherent physical strength and a mental propensity to accomplish their works.

Therefore, Major forbids animals to do what men do: ‘No animal must ever live in a house, or sleep in a bed, or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or touch money, or engage in trade. All the habits of Man

are evil'.³³George Orwell. *Animal Farm*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, (1946) 2014, 7. Kindle edition. Further citation to this work given in the text. He inspires them to be aware of their essence and develop a separate and authentic identity. One seminal feature of this identity is friendship, fraternity, and equality. All animals are friends and brothers: 'Weak or strong, clever or simple, we are all brothers.'⁴⁴Ibid., 7. Whoever they are, they will never be parochial, domineering and terrorise fellow animals.

Major then emotionally charge the animals, advocating revolution as the path of self-actualisation. If animals can stand up against Mr Jones and dismount him from power, they will be owners of their land and independent: 'Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished forever.'⁵⁵Ibid., 5. He also presents the 'Beasts of England' as a divinely gifted childhood song in front of the animals and explains that the dream of the animal kingdom is an age-old spirit that his predecessors bore and transmitted to him. Finally, he presents himself as an old predecessor who is executing his moral duties by passing through the dream and message of rebellion through the tuneful song.

Major's speech sparks a 'wildest excitement'⁶⁶Orwell, *Animal Farm*, 9. in the animals. All animals respond to his appeal. A desire for new land colours their imagination, and they promise to turn their leader's dream true. Specifically, Major's speech significantly impacts Snowball and Napoleon. Their old worldview is changed, and they begin anti-men activities. Suitably, an anti-colonial animal party emerges in Manor Farm. Snowball and Napoleon become the late Major's torchbearers. Snowball is a vivacious planner and an excellent orator. By contrast, Napoleon manifests the features of a grave thinker and a man of action. Squealer joins them as a mediator between the leaders and the rest of the animals.

This trio first organises Major's unwritten directives into a national culture named Animalism. The imperial rule generally blocks the growth of the native and national culture. The rulers replace the colonised cultures with their own and directly or indirectly liquidate the essential cultural elements. This cultural replacement is a colonial safeguard that removes the possibility of cultural resistance.⁷⁷Cabral, "National Liberation and Culture," 53-55. For this reason, at the beginning of most anti-colonial movements, the nationalist leaders prepared their cultural system based on their languages, traditions, and histories. They aim to awaken the nation to self-consciousness and build a foundation for the future society. That is why a national culture is not just a bundle of traditions and norms. It signifies a people's efforts and actions in their thought and practical spheres to create them and sustain their existence.'⁸⁸Fanon, *The Wretched*, 187-188.

Animalism presents animals' efforts to create a national culture. Snowball and Napoleon work to make animals aware of their new identity. They arrange secret meetings and simplify the clauses of Animalism for ordinary animals. They explain who animals are, their life purpose, why Mr Jones is not their master, how a ribbon symbolises slavery, or why freedom is more valuable than anything. Although the pigs' explanation appears complicated to some animals and some remains doubtful about the change of masters, most animals declare their unwavering devotion towards them. They become well-versed in the clauses and aspire to maintain an authentic animal culture.

A significant feature of the pigs' forming national culture is their keenness for education and training. Education has been a rare opportunity for animals during Mr Jones' days. Only Major has been the lucky animals who received education and became enlightened. Moreover, modern education is a valuable medium to learn the colonisers' language, literature, logical reasoning, and science. It will help the colonisers to acquire subjecthood and speak back to their rulers. Hence, Snowball and Napoleon collect Mr Jones' children spelling books 'thrown on the rubbish heap.'⁹⁹Orwell, *Animal Farm*, 15. They also study Mr Jones books on science, vocational training, and warfare. The pigs become experts in reading, writing, blacksmithing, carpentering, and defensive war strategies in no time. They become teachers to all animals.

Eventually, the animals fight with Mr Jones and his men. Despite men's threats, lashing the whips, beating, or shooting the guns, they jointly attack them. They are bruised, bleed and shot, but they do not stop. Even men become surprised at animals' ferocity: 'They had never seen animals behave like this before.'¹⁰¹Ibid., 13. They find animals' 'sudden uprising'¹¹¹Ibid., 13., something incredible and frightening that they cannot control and subdue. Thus, men leave the farm, and animals become victorious.

Orwell describes animals' independence as a 'glorious thing.'¹²¹²Ibid.,14. He shows that animals express their joy of being independent through hilarious reactions. At first, animals feel bewildered. They cannot believe their luck. Then, from the little hilltop, they 'gazed round them in the clear morning light. Yes, it was theirs—everything that they could see was theirs!'¹³¹³Ibid.,14. This sense of ownership and belonging makes animals

gamboll[ed] around and round, they hurled themselves into the air in great leaps of excitement. They rolled in the dew, they cropped mouthfuls of sweet summer grass, they kicked up clods of the black earth and snuffed its rich scent.'¹⁴¹⁴Ibid.,14.

They find their farm something new that they have never seen and watch everything with a new outlook of rights. The joy of freedom swells the animal's heart with pride and contentment that manifest on the eve of being independent across post-colonial nations.

The Post-colonial Era: Nation Building

Nevertheless, independence is not the last word in a nation's life. Instead, it is hard to sustain freedom rather than achieve it. Decolonisation and making a post-colonial nation mean 'a fundamental change of outlook and attitude, of heart and mind. [...] a bush clearing'.¹¹Raymond F. Betts, *Decolonization* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 88. Independent people require to learn to live and represent their world differently.²²Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 179. That is why Mahatma Gandhi emphasises redefining selfhood in terms of native origin, culture, and history and rejecting White men's values to achieve *purna swaraj* (complete independence).³³Ibid.,177-179.

The liberated animals reject men's values, deleting all 'traces of Jones's hated reign.'⁴⁴Orwell, *Animal Farm*, 13. For example, they destroy tools such as bits, nose-rings, dog-chains, knives, reins and whips that Mr Jones utilised to yoke them. They burn the symbol of slavery—ribbon—and the part of human culture of dressing—a small straw hat. They bury white meat, as cannibalism is a vice. Finally, they turn the wine barrel upside down to show their commitment to being non-drinking animals.

The pigs then solidify their notions of roots and home translating traditional symbols into modern rituals and practices. Eric Hobsbawm focuses on the use of cultural signifiers to invent a nation and identity. He argues that

Entirely new symbols and devices came into existence as part of national movements and states, such as the national anthem [...], the national flag [...], or the personification of 'the nation' in symbol or image, either official, as with Marianne and Germania, or unofficial, as in the cartoon stereotypes of John Bull, the lean Yankee Uncle Sam or the 'German Michel'.⁵⁵McLeod, *Beginning Colonialism*, 69.

Snowball and Napoleon rename the farm as Animal Farm and print the new name on the main gate in the first instance. They then inscribe the Seven Commandments on the white wall of the big barn. Next, they make a flag with a hoof and horns against a green background to symbolise the animal state on green England. Next, they declare the 'Beasts of England' as the national anthem and invent various prizes and titles for war heroes and martyrs. Next, since Major has been the father of the animal nation, the pigs invent a Sunday ritual (march around Major's skull) to commemorate him. Next, they introduce the custom of blank firing from Mr Jones's gun on two national days—the day of their Rebellion and the day of the Battle of the Cowshed. Finally, they warn of all the ills of a luxurious lifestyle, declaring the house a museum to remind them of colonial suffering.

Nevertheless, building a nation based on some authentic cultural signifiers and remaining culturally loyal is challenging. Orwell draws attention to this concern, stressing a deficit in animals' personal and political agency under the sway of cultural hegemony. As the narrative shows, the newly liberated animal farm is not an isolated area in rural England. It is one of many farms and the only farm ruled by animals. Animals transcend the base societal structure and construct an independent state. However, liberation does not mean

the farm is something *outside*. Nor it means that animal farm can become autonomous in every sector. The farm and the animals must depend on the broader social structure and acknowledge the connected flow of historical events that landed them in a new era. They need to be interactive within that structure to run their farm.

In this sense, the farm is under men's indirect influence from day one of their revolution. Men are the foreign dominant group, and the pigs are the locally dominant group under the foreign powers. Men's language, knowledge, business, and culture are deeply rooted within and outside their perimeters. Men are culturally superior, financially overpowering, and structurally domineering. They are proprietors of knowledge, education, science, and progress. They have money, news broadcaster, and production means. So, the pigs can form their authentic cultural identity, educating the animals, forming committees, developing institutions, and dreaming of building windmills. They can even train pigeons as activists and preach the anti-men ideas among neighbouring farms.

Still, the animals cannot ignore men. Men are an *absent presence* of which animals must take care. The pigs must notice men's unease over animals' freedom and operation of a farm. They must rely on men's knowledge for scientific developments, buy things, such as nails, from the men-led market and seek their advice for economic changes. They need to address men's propaganda about cannibalism, corruption, and moral debauchery on the farm. They even are careful about animals like Snowball, who collaborates with foreign powers and betrays the farm.

Thus, men and animals constantly 'meet, clash and grapple with each other often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.'⁶⁶Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2008), 7. This uneven social dynamic undermines Napoleon and his followers' cultural agency. They fail to build workable relationships with men, retaining their identity. Instead, they become mentally subservient and mimic men and their cultures without any active persuasion or coercion. The pigs claim their and pro-pig citizens' superiority over common animals. They begin to lead luxurious life and fall for sex, drinking, smoking, and gambling. Napoleon trades with men and makes them the farm's inspectors. He feels overwhelmed with men's propaganda about Snowball and commits political mistakes. Finally, he and his followers dress like men and walk on two legs, carrying a whip in their trotters.

Under such circumstances, the farm begins to lose cultural authenticity. Napoleon finds animal cultural signifiers stupid and strange. He denies the origin of these signifiers and forfeits Major's rightful place as the dreamer of animal nation. Moreover, Napoleon describes the decolonising movements as petty misunderstandings between men and animals. He offers to mitigate these gaps by modifying the address comrade, the flag, the commandments, and the nationalist anthem. He replaces some symbols with new such as a national song, and restores the farm's original name—Manor Farm. Orwell illustrates the nationalist leaders' cultural evolution, stemmed from hegemonic domination, through a fluid image of identity:

But as the animals outside gazed at the scene, it seemed to them that some strange thing was happening. What was it that had altered in the faces of the pigs? Clover's old dim eyes flitted from one face to another. Some of them had five chins, some had four, some had three. But what was it that seemed to be melting and changing? [...]. Twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again, but already it was impossible to say which was which.⁷⁷Orwell, *Animal Farm*, 84-85.

The expressions 'melting and changing' and 'it was impossible to say which was which' show how hegemonic culture crumbles a nation's cultural fortress. Both men and pigs are indistinct from each other. They keep shifting from men to animals and vice versa. The onlookers cannot say who they are—men or pigs. This is transculturation—the reciprocal process of accepting the other and a continuous becoming.⁸⁸Alessandra Renzi, "Identity and Transculture in Vice Versa," *Collegium Antropologicum* 28, no. 1 (2004): 111. It is "a phenomenon of the contact zone"⁹⁹Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 7. when various cultures reciprocally reconstitute within unevenness and gaps. Both men and animals form asymmetrical social relationships and, at the same time, pick up their respective cultures. They meet and fight, cohabit and quarrel and, in the process, cultures

and identities become chaotic and unstable.

However, cultural hegemonism works in the case of the subaltern animals differently. While the leaders' change is unifacial, the animals' ones are multifacial. All the worker animals form a cohesive group of subalterns at the beginning of the nationalist rule. They doubt, falter, and sometimes struggle to understand the notions of slavery, liberation, and animal life. Still, they pose themselves as loyal. However, the more time progresses, the more they become divided and culturally ambivalent. Boxer, Clover and many animals remain culturally genuine. However, Benjamin, Mollie, Moses the raven, Cats, dogs, and sheep prove cultural inauthentic, diverting their commitment towards men and pigs and even betraying the nation.

While Boxer works hard to hardest for the cause of the farm and Clover spreads a spirit of love and fraternity, Benjamin remains indifferent and cynical. He does not show any commitment towards the nation, men or pigs. He leads a self-concentrated life, untouched by misery and sadness. Cats are carpetbaggers in behaviour and action. They do not participate in the work and hardships of the animals. They disappear at the time of work but return at mealtime. They also hide their greed for birds under the façade of fraternity and seek a chance to devour them when at hand. Therefore, they represent culturally static personalities in a post-colonial nation.

However, Moses, the raven, dogs, sheep, and Mollie represent culturally evolved personalities. Moses does not care about the animal farm and its events. Instead, he vanishes from the farm and returns with the restful tale of the Sugarcandy mountains. Although Moses' activities appear innocuous, they darken animals' consciousness. The sorrow-ridden animals become escapists, forgetting their role in changing their lives.

By contrast, the sheep and dogs become pro-Napoleon power on the farm. Dogs have lost their ethics and morality and become cultural brutes whose only work is threatening, torturing, and killing animals. Although the sheep are not monsters, they become clever interferers in animals' resistive desire. At the very moment of serious discussions, they start bleating until all lose their interest in question. Thus, they help sustain Napoleon's regime and his cultural evolution.

However, the white mare, Mollie, proves herself xenophile. In the post-colonial era, she yearns for Mr Jones's love and his gifts of sugar and ribbon. Moreover, the luxurious farmhouse with Mrs Jones's clothes and ornaments mesmerise her. Therefore, Mollie has secret affairs with men and eventually elopes from the farm. She betrays Clover's motherly words and love without a bit of regret. Instead, she becomes a man's companion in the national fair and enjoys displaying her beauty.

This split of the subalterns into heterogeneous groups mystifies the Boxer, Clover, and the animals' conscience. Boxer and Clover become ambivalent over their roles in the prevailing situation. They observe the unwanted change in their leaders and the behaviour of Benjamin, Mollie or Moses, or dogs and sheep. They feel betrayed and have an urge to fight for their rights. However, the animals cannot uprising against them because they cannot deny the role of the pigs in the anti-men movement. The pigs planned, led and fought against invading men. Doing anything against their leaders means leading the farm in the hand of men, the colonial rulers they hate most. Boxer and Clover also do not decipher the root cause of their misery. Why do the leaders hijack their liberty, keep them hungry and kill the dissenting voices?

These contradictory queries trouble Boxer, Clover, and many animals. However, they do not find any word or exact expression to voice their feelings. Sometimes, Boxer 'set his ear back, shook his forelock several times and tried hard to marshal his thoughts; but in the end, he could not think of anything to say.'¹⁰¹⁰Orwell, *Animal Farm*, 33. Likewise, Clover watches the trial scene and ensuing fear and horror among animals. However, she is mute and sad: 'Such were her thoughts, though she lacked the words to express them.'¹¹¹¹Ibid., 53. The same feeling manifests among some animals after the expulsion of Snowball and Napoleon's stop of debates. They feel they need to protest, but they cannot utter a single word due to their inability to find 'the right arguments'¹²¹²Ibid., 33-34. **Word count** : 7595. **Disclosure Statement** : I donot have any conflict on interest over the publication of the article. **Bio**: Umme Salma is a casual academic at the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, the University of Queensland, Australia. She also works as a casual research assistant at the School of Languages and Cultures, in the same university, from where she achieved

her PhD. In addition, Salma worked as a graduate digital research fellow at UQ Digital scholars' Hub in 2018-2019. Previously she taught English at the International Islamic University of Chittagong, Bangladesh. Salma published articles and book reviews in peer-reviewed journals and presented papers in high-quality conferences. Currently, she works on her first research monograph, *Entrapment and Breaking Free: Representations of Bengali Migrant Experiences in Bangladeshi Novels in English*. or surpass the sheep and dogs voices.

Failing memories accompany this linguistic inability. Sometimes animals try to compare between men's or animals' reign and understand in which reign they are happier. However, they cannot clearly remember the past. The animals cannot be sure about some commandments in the animal codes of conduct that the pigs violate. Pigs graphic stories surpass animals' integrity and plunges them into doubt and confusion. Hence, the animals become passive tools to sustain the corrupted regime. They become silent and ambivalent onlookers of a damaging nation.

Conclusion

In the above way, *Animal Farm* represents a narrative of a post-colonial nation that dismantles the imperial powers but becomes destabilised under the sway of cultural hegemony. The analysis breaks animal time into colonial and post-colonial phases. In the first phase, anti-colonial nationalism and dreams of a just homeland inspire the animals to be free and autonomous. They fight for that dream and become independent. During this time, a stark binary exists—the colonial (men)/the colonised (animals). Based on this binary, an anti-colonial movement arises and materialises the dream of an independent nation.

However, in the post-colonial era, more binaries emerge the rulers (the pigs)/the ruled (animals), pro-/anti-government animals, men-oriented /anti-men and neutral/concerned. The nationalist leaders follow men and become transculturated. The common animals divide into several groups, either remaining culturally static or transformed. Those who change, some become cultural monsters, opportunists or xenophiles, and some become ambivalent and passive social actors. In this way, *Animal Farm* uncovers a post-national society's operation along with various opposing and interactive power webs, flows and axes. The novel represents that cultural hegemony dominates the national consciousness in various ways that eventually destabilise the nation, displacing authentic nationhood.

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Notes