



Cognitive Dissonance, Ideological Control, and Power Structures in *Animal Farm*

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Abstract

Literature serves as a channel to highlight political manipulation and class segregation, universally, triggering cognitive dissonance and endorsing the need to mitigate the adverse effects of ideological manipulation. The research provides an in-depth study of George Orwell's dystopian allegory, *Animal Farm*, where the intersecting borders of literature and psychology centralize the notion of psychological mind games played by pigs to seize power. Narrative favoring Napoleon's totalitarian regime is built to solidify his rule. Extending that, this narrative construction plays a pivotal role for him in seizing power. The farm animals especially pigs confront a contradiction in their principles and practices as they forge ahead to form a totalitarian regime. The research examines the regimes' convincing persuasion and animals being rendered speechless. The investigation puts forward the struggles of farm workers like Boxer and his colleagues. The theoretical underpinning of this research is based on Leon Festinger's idea of cognitive dissonance which reflects the natural tendencies to minimize the discomfort created by two contradictory opinions. The paper unfolds the alarming effects of cognitive dissonance on changing the political landscape, keeping *Animal Farm* as a quintessential example. The research outlines the use of

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cognitive dissonance in political psychology in the textual and contextual parameters of the novel. The scope of this research lies in examining the psychological tactics for controlling the flow of information and manipulating masses using cognitive dissonance. The research foregrounds the role of human beings as resistant bodies and the extent of immediacy to edify the cognitions.

Keywords: Dissonance, Manipulation, Politics, Psychology, Regime, Totalitarianism

Introduction

George Orwell was born in 1903 in British India. His birth name was Eric Arthur Blair but he later adopted the pen name, George Orwell. He wrote in multiple newspapers voicing his political and social beliefs. He is well-known for his works like *Animal Farm* and *1984*. These works welcome socio-political debates among the literary circles till date. George Orwell built his reputation as a columnist in multiple newspapers where he published essays, articles, and commentary based on his political beliefs. He was influenced by William Somerset Maugham. He wrote, “I admire immensely for his power of telling a story straightforwardly and without frills” (Meyers 7). George Orwell was a socialist and a strong critic of totalitarianism and imperialism. He was very vocal for the working class and criticized fascist ideals. He wrote for the rights of a common man and voiced the unvoiced proletariats living on the fringes in their everyday lives. He criticized the psychological tactics used by regimes to manipulate the working class. One of these psychological tactics is the use of Cognitive Dissonance to gain political benefits. His ideologies are inculcated in his work *Animal Farm*, and Cognitive Dissonance is no exception. *Animal Farm* is a satirical commentary on the Russian Revolution and the start of Stalinism. The tale introduces animals who decide to rebel against their human owner due to the scarcity of rations, to avail better living conditions, and to set themselves free of his oppressive



rule. Mr. Jones, the farm owner, makes attempts later with his fellow humans to get the farm back but the unity of animals stands tall and they make all the human invaders run. Pigs are the wisest of the creatures on the farm. They take over the control and lead from the front initially. The wild boar, Napoleon is vicious off them all. Napoleon successfully ceases complete control of the farm and makes Snowball, his only threat to attain unattended power, flee the farm. His ideological manipulation and political tactics help him form a totalitarian regime. All the opposing voices are snubbed and the working-class animals suffer as a result of his policies. Animals in their attempt to get a better life-hood, make their lives even worse. The commandments are written as a constitution of the animal farm right after the rebellion but are manipulated and changed for the convenience and legalization of the actions of Napoleon and his likes. In the end, only one commandment remains i.e., "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" (Orwell 55), asserting the complete dominance of the pigs.

Significance

The research holds prime importance in exploring the intricate dynamics of manipulation through cognitive dissonance in political psychology from Orwell's *Animal Farm*. George Orwell's satirical novella puts forward a universal tug of war among the stakeholders as a never-ending toil to attain power. Through the lens of cognitive dissonance, the paper explores the manipulation of established power structures and their play with the cognitive inconsistencies of the masses to gain massive support and cease power with sheer authority as in the case of pigs and toiling farm animals respectively. The paper provides young minds with a study, to enhance their knowledge about rising political propaganda and declining ideological consistency. All over the globe, whether it be



populist Indian voting trends or US presidential elections, it is observed that cognitive dissonance introduces itself to manipulate human brains and intensify their support for a political party or a leader. The research acts as a study of different political systems keeping *Animal Farm* as a base text laying claim to its universality.

Research Statement

This research imagines cognitive dissonance through the political landscape of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* where a stark contrast is observed between the promises and practices of the pigs, and the ideological hegemony created by narrative construction makes animals rationalize the actions of Napoleon as they convince themselves of his sincerity and fall prey to his propaganda.

Research Questions

These questions determine the line of action of the research as the political motifs have more adverse effects on human lives at individual as well as collective levels. The research aims to answer the following questions determining the scope of the research and structure of the study:

1. What specific psychological tactics do the pigs in *Animal Farm* use to create cognitive dissonance among the other animals, and how do these tactics help the pigs maintain power and manipulate the animals to serve their interests?
2. How does George Orwell's *Animal Farm* depict cognitive dissonance through its characters and plot, particularly its allegorical representation of the Russian Revolution and Stalinist regime?
3. In what ways does *Animal Farm* demonstrate the universal application of cognitive dissonance in political psychology, highlighting its relevance to various historical and political contexts beyond the novella's immediate setting?



The answer to the above questions will provide critical insights into individual behaviors and responses to cognitive dissonance used as a tool to manipulate the masses psychologically in Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

Objectives

The study looks forward to accomplishing the following aims and objectives by answering the above-mentioned research questions:

- It aims to mitigate the effects of cognitive dissonance and looks forward to enlightening the readers of the adverse effects of the manipulative tactics used to trigger cognitive dissonance by political parties and leaders.
- The purpose of this research is to evince the multiple examples of the cognitive dissonance experienced by the animals and the ways it helped Napoleon and his likes cease power.

The study aims to derive a detailed understanding of cognitive dissonance amending political behaviors.

Background of the Study

George Orwell was an ardent critic of fascism and totalitarianism. He was very vocal about the rights of the working class and was regarded as a socialist. His work *Animal Farm* is no exception as in this novella, he launches direct attacks on the manipulative tactics and enlightens his readers about the miserable forms of oppressive rule. Thorp mentions that “he (Orwell) confronts us with the uncertainty of the future. And he is in real sense blaming “everyman” for collaborating with the enemy,” (Thorp 6) This means that George Orwell accuses individuals of shaking hands with the enemy. He argues that people tend to support and empower the odds. They don't realize their worth. He hints at this in his novel as well. Where workers like Boxer and other animals on the farm fight for their leaders. The toilers



do not get what they deserve but the chests of their leaders are burdened with medals. In his research, Thorp comments on the dynamics of terror (Thorp 1) in Orwellian fiction. Orwell on April 27, 1942, in his war diary recorded that: “I feel intellectual honesty and balanced judgment have simply disappeared from the face of earth ... they are powerless. All power is in the hands of paranoiacs” (Orwell 78). This came as a commentary when people lost political beliefs as they did not trust any of the candidates and the nation was in utter hopelessness. The lack of intelligence affected Orwell as he used “his journalism to attack politicians’ lies and blatant fear-mongering tactics” (Orwell 54). These ideas are reflected in *Animal Farm* as well. *Animal Farm* can be classified as an intellectually honest and balanced judgment, launching direct attacks on totalitarianism. “One does not establish a dictatorship to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution to establish the dictatorship” (Orwell 77). These words are attributed to George Orwell himself as they highlight the very essence of his works. It is observed in the novel *Animal Farm* as well that the purpose of the revolution was not to bring change and make all animals equal. The core aim set by the pigs was to make some animals “more equal”. The revolution was intended to not set democratic ideals but it was initiated to help pigs set up an authoritative regime. The words though are ironic but act as a lens to not only see animal farm but have multiple real-world implications as well. Alok Rai in his work writes that “Orwell’s critique of totalitarianism is rooted in his deep mistrust of centralized power and his belief in the fundamental importance of individual freedom” (Rai 99). These words present Orwell as someone envying totalitarian ideals and as an advocate of individual freedom and liberation. This is evident through the character of Boxer from *Animal Farm* as he was hardworking and significantly loyal to his work. Following that, as he worked



under the influence of Comrade Napoleon who commodified him, Boxer offered no good, but the riches to those in power. Orwell endorses that people like Boxer should be liberated and everyone should experience freedom at the individual level.

Methodology

The research inculcates literary-close-reading technique and thematic study of George Orwell's dystopian allegory *Animal Farm* to highlight the manipulative tactics used by the pigs to further strengthen Napoleon's regime. These techniques help pinpoint instances from the text where Leon Festinger's idea of cognitive dissonance in political psychology plays its part. The research is designed to be descriptive as these strategies produce critical analysis, assist thorough reading and promote evaluation. The research questions i.e. analogical, epistemological and methodical are answered, laying claim to the effectiveness of the methodological techniques used in this research. The work primarily focuses on the strategies that are used by current regimes all over the globe to govern the masses. The study of *Animal Farm* at a broader level provides us with critical insights into the ways contemporary world politics work.

Public Choice Theory and Cognitive Dissonance

Public Choice Theory is a framework that places itself at the intersecting point of economic and political theories. The idea studies individual behavior at different economic levels and tides. It aims to understand the voter behavior as well as political psychologies i.e., rational self-interest. Michael Makovi in his commentary on George Orwell i.e., George Orwell as a Public Choice Economist comment on two famous works of George Orwell; *Animal Farm* and *1984*. He says that these works of fiction are Orwell's attempts to explore different political systems and put forward their consequences. He says, "These fictions were intended as Public Choice-style



investigation into which political systems furnished suitable incentive structures to prevent the abuse of power” (Makovi 14). Public choice theory is used to observe human reactions to different situations and their effects on political behaviors. Makovi concludes that these fictional works explore new harp notes in the forming of governments and political systems. The study of cognitive dissonance extends to the concept of ‘effort justification’ where the workers expect reasonable outcomes from the work they have done. The author of the article mentions, "Effort justification is a form of cognitive dissonance where individuals rationalize the time, effort, or money they have invested in a particular endeavor, thereby inflating the perceived value of the outcome” (Makovi). This creates a dissonance between the effort and the outcome when the workers do not get enough results. To reduce the discomfort, they tend to work even harder to gain expected outcomes. This can be observed in animal farm where the animals work tirelessly for the construction of the mill. Despite the harsh weather conditions and the windmill once being destroyed, the animals continued to build it expecting the progress and advancements it would bring to their farm. This leads to the decrease in dissonance between the hard work of animals and the lack of outcomes, tracing the idea of effort justification in the novella.

Cognitive Dissonance in *Animal Farm*

One of the quintessential examples of cognitive dissonance is the experiment performed by Leon Festinger and his co-worker James M. Carlsmith in 1957. The experiment was performed on a group of people who were asked to execute a boring task i.e., placing knobs on the pegs for one hour straight. The subjects had to keep on repeating the process. After one hour, each of them was told that due to a minor inconvenience, the research assistant had not shown up, so they had to convince other people that the task was interesting and convince them to join the experiment.



Some of them were told that they would receive one dollar and others were paid twenty dollars as a stipend for their help. When the newcomers were convinced, the subjects were asked to rate the process. The subjects receiving only one dollar rated the experiment well as compared to the subjects receiving twenty dollars. It was observed that the subjects receiving twenty dollars were satisfied with the amount and didn't feel any difficulty lying about the boring task. They did not rate it well because they still considered it a boring task regardless of their act of convincing the recruits. Contrary, the subjects receiving one dollar considered the amount not enough to lie about the task. They had to convince themselves that the situation was an entertaining process to lie. This discomfort (opposing ideas) created in them was countered by their cognition convincing them about the task to be a fun activity. Festinger labeled this discomfort created as dissonance and concluded that to counter this dissonance/discomfort, people tend to convince themselves of new incoming information. He pointed out this discomfort and distress which eventually he termed as Cognitive Dissonance. The study uses the framework to explore the rich dissonance effect in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Squealer, the spokesperson of Napoleon's regime, feeds the farm animals with information favoring Napoleon to create discomfort. This discomfort is created because animals have contradictory beliefs. This information opposes the existing realities and information. Animals tend to believe him to lessen the disturbance created in their cognitions. Squealer presents Snowball as a threat to the sovereignty of the farm and encourages the animals to avoid his presence to escape a tragic end. In contradiction to this, animals held Snowball in high regard. Due to the opposing ideas now in the minds of the animals, they tend to lessen the disturbance by believing whatever Squealer says. The Napolean regime also crushes any minor rebellion or



opposition by accusing the farm animals of helping Snowball. Animals are manipulated/forced to believe whatever the regime wants them to believe. The manipulation plays a pivotal role as all the commandments are changed and altered to favor the totalitarian regime and Napoleon. Animals also tend to forget about them and believe the altered versions of the commandments to be true. The research examines the earlier mentioned ideas of manipulation and psychological motifs that act as a source of information to view the political propaganda and create resistance at multiple fronts. *Animal Farm* enlightens the readers with manipulative strategies used by authoritarian regimes. In furtherance, one of these strategies is Cognitive Dissonance and its use specifically in political psychology. Animals tend to reduce their discomfort by believing the fabricated stories of the pigs. They fall prey to manipulative strategies and register no protest in this regard. It further helps the pigs to take complete control of the farm. They fabricate stories and twist history for the farm animals. The animals like Boxer unknowingly fall prey to these tactics and keep praising the totalitarian rule of Comrade Napoleon. Erosion of the commandments in the animal farm is also a result of cognitive dissonance as pigs inculcate the cognitions of farm animals with lies, and animals start believing their propaganda. The novella is a quintessential example of the practicality of cognitive dissonance in political psychology. The idea of cognitive dissonance as discussed by Leon Festinger presents human reaction when two opposing ideas come together in human brains. He argues that humans have preconceived notions about certain things. For Instance, if I believe a task to be boring and I am asked to convince someone about the task as an exciting one; my mind will generate dissonance. It will be due to the idea already present in my cognition that will not welcome an opposing idea. Cognitive dissonance tends to extend its limbs to multiple other fields as well. Political psychology



also incorporates Leon Festinger's idea of cognitive dissonance. Political attitudes are formed due to the manipulation of dissonances caused in human minds. "Cognitive dissonance acts as a negative force in politics, fostering polarization and leading to the dismissal of inconvenient truths that could otherwise guide more rational decision-making"(Hogg 102). For Instance, if someone believes a politician to be good, the already present idea will not help the opposition propaganda succeed. The "good" politician or political party will keep inducing the audience with their agendas and motifs and people tend to be convinced easily. People ignore news and input that does not match their political or ideological beliefs to lessen or completely avoid dissonance. This manipulation through cognitive dissonance is also observed in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. The novella incorporates propaganda of the bourgeoisie class to form a totalitarian regime. Pigs not only manipulate the animals for their good but drain them physically and mentally to an extent where the farm animals stop using their minds and believe whatever comes their way. One of the pigs, Squealer fabricates stories and tales amending history and making the future where only pigs find solace. He propagates as the spokesperson for the Napoleon regime. Boxer, a hard-working horse endures as a result of Napoleon's policy. He is sacrificed at a glue-making factory but he always believed Napoleon to be his comrade and announces all his efforts to thrust glory upon Napoleon. The rules and the commandments on the farm are either vanished or amended to comply with the lives of the pigs. This erosion does not bother any of the farm animals as they welcome the lies wholeheartedly and believe whatever the regime wants them to believe. "The more man gives up his freedom to avoid the dread of insecurity, the more he becomes trapped in the bonds of cognitive dissonance" (Fromm 257). Likewise, animals tend to give up on their freedom in their attempts "to avoid the dread of insecurity"



The idea of cognitive dissonance can be used to study the psychology of the bourgeoisie and proletariats from the animal farm. Animals tend to behave certainly with certain contradictions of ideas and beliefs in their minds. *Animal Farm* highlights the roleplay of opposing ideas throughout the plot. Initially, the animals rebel against their human owner to protect their sovereignty and integrity. Later, the pigs take over as their actions contradict their political promises. The working class in the animal farm also tends to be a victim of cognitive dissonance as they fall prey to the dispute between reality and the ideological manipulation at the hands of the regime's manipulation. Daniel Kahneman in his work *Thinking, Fast and Slow* puts forward this idea, "Cognitive dissonance is a dangerous bias because it makes us blind to our errors and, more importantly, to the errors of those we trust or identify with" (Kahneman 45).

Propaganda and Silver-tongued Squealer

Squealer acts as a frontman to the pigs. He constantly amends history and manipulates the animals to consolidate power for Napoleon and ensure his long and dominant rule over the other farm animals. He alters the history of the farm to secure his goals. For instance, Snowball was remembered as the hero of the War of Cowshed. He was bestowed with the title "Animal Hero, First Class" (Orwell 88), back then, for his heroics and bravery in defending the farm. Animals vividly remember the way Snowball saved their lives and independence. After Napoleon ceased power, the pigs had to introduce an imaginary threat to preserve their rule all over the animal farm. The dead Snowball was someone they could manipulate. Squealer introduced Snowball's presence as a threat to the farm and accused him of any inconvenience caused to the animals. Do you not remember how, just at the moment when Jones and his men had got inside the yard, Snowball suddenly turned and fled, and many animals followed him? And do you not remember, too, that it was just at that moment, when panic was spreading and all seemed



lost, that Comrade Napoleon sprang forward with a cry of 'Death to Humanity!' and sank his teeth in Jones's leg? Surely you remember that, comrades. (Orwell 110) Such words created cognitive dissonance as animals were present in the battle and now, they were experiencing a set of information not familiar to their cognitions. The animals initially held Snowball in high regard but the consistent contradictory claims from Squealer created dissonance in their minds. Eventually, to lessen this disturbance all the animals altered their beliefs and made their minds comfortable with the new set of information induced by Squealer in which, the presence of Snowball is considered a threat to their existence. In another instance, Squealer labels Snowball in the league of Mr. Jones and presents him as a traitor and a spy from humans to de-stabilize the animals' government. He accuses Snowball of hiding his back and not portraying his presence as a courageous leader like Napoleon. The animals were used to the idea of Snowball being a sincere and trustworthy leader for the farm but this continuous inducing of contradictory information triggered a struggle in animals' cognitions to reconcile their memory of the heroism of Snowball with the incoming claims of his treachery. The psychological study of Leon Festinger introduces itself here. As animals now have two entirely opposing ideas about a common subject, they tend to adapt to the new information and adjust their minds to the words of Squealer. The animals start believing that Snowball is a traitor and should be killed. They tend to reduce the dissonance in their minds and eventually their psychology gets comfortable with the new facts. This happens due to the authoritativeness of the regime as well as the persuasiveness of Squealer. Festinger argues this to be purely natural as he believes human psychology works this way. Critics argue that "To reduce dissonance, people often accept new beliefs that contradict their previous ones, convincing themselves that the change is justified by the new 'evidence'" (Aronson 137).



The Silve-Tongued Fabricator i.e., Squealer, is persuasive as he is well equipped with the artistry to create dissonance in the minds of the animals. He convinces them of everything the regime wants the animals to believe in. This shows the manipulation of an established regime at one end and the role-play of cognitive dissonance at the other end. Squealer convinces the animals that their sufferings and miseries are the only way the animal farm will work. The Rhetoric Master satisfies them that misery is the only way out of misery and no external force is coming to rescue them but their hard work and dedication. Animals who used to suffer in Manor Farm were influenced previously by the idea of “less work and more benefits” if they rebelled against Mr. Jones. The animals had this thing in their cognitions that now, after the rebellion, their lives would get better and their meal portions, comfort, and livelihood would be heightened. Animals are initially told that things are going well for them as Squealer says that they had “more straw in their stalls and suffered less from fleas” (Orwell 68). Contrary to their beliefs, now they are informed that their unrest brings greater good to the community and will make the farm great in the years to come. He asks a rhetorical question “Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?” (Orwell 123). Animals are convinced and they neglect that their misery has increased since Mr. Jones was removed from the farm. This new idea contradicts their beliefs and serves their cognition with discomfort. To lessen the trouble, the animals convince themselves that they need to work and put in extra effort. They neglect their troublesome lives on the animal farm. Their viewpoint is changed and they keep working. Squealers persuade the animal of their imprudence. He makes them believe that they forget things easily and have weaker brains than the pigs. He states this as a reason that the brain work is done by the pigs and animals have to work practically. He convinces them that brain work is the harder job and that pigs are doing it for the sake of the greater good. He announces “The whole management and organization of this farm depend on us. Day and night, we are



watching over your welfare” (Orwell 134) Animals believe themselves to be a child of any lesser god and are easily convinced. Animals do not care for the illogical explanations provided by the Squealer. They accept the fabricated fact to avoid cognitive dissonance. As said by Kolbert, “To relieve the discomfort of dissonance, people often embrace new information that challenges their previous convictions, conveniently revising their beliefs” (Kolbert 15).

Animals’ Unwavering Loyalty and Boxer’s Catastrophic End

The character of Boxer is a hardworking horse who regularly chants “Napoleon is always right” (Orwell 156). He is convinced that Napoleon will take the farm to new heights of wealth and prosperity. He does not use his cognition and endorses the rule of Napoleon as their savior. He believes that Napoleon will pull them out of the trenches of distress and help them rise above the pedestal. He works twice as much as he used to work for the betterment of the animal farm. He pulls hard rocks, all day and night to build the windmill which is believed to bring new glories to their farm and lives. Other animals join Boxer too but the intensity with which Boxer toils and is dedicated to the Napoleon rule is unmatched. Boxer neglects the ideological and economic corruption of Napoleon with other animals on the farm. His trust overshadows the loopholes in Napoleon’s conduct. As discussed in *How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* by Jared Diamond “When leaders and societies fall prey to cognitive dissonance, they continue down a path of self-destruction, ignoring clear warnings and precipitating their downfall” (Diamond 441). The pigs manipulate the animals throughout the plot. They turn down the commandments and are unbothered by the plight of the animals. Everyday beliefs and the conduct of the pigs create a dichotomy in the minds of the animals. As a result, they convince themselves of the ideal nature of the pigs and neglect their practical conduct towards them and the farm. This is the result of their attempts to lessen the dissonance.



The pigs sell Boxer to a glue-making factory. Boxer in his attempts to please his leaders and reduce the discomfort in his mind, meets his tragic end. The animals see him crying as he hoarse in the wagon. He is trying to escape and save his life. He tries his best but is turned weak and injured. The animals run after him but the fast-paced car leaves them behind. They are well aware of the severity of the situation. The pigs propagate Boxer's exclusion from the farm. They tell the animals that the boxer was taken proper care of and died peacefully. The animals are so sad and distressed over the demise of their old friend but to avoid the dissonance created by two contrary opinions i.e., their first-hand view and the information fed by the pigs, they tend to settle with the new opinion and are convinced that Boxer was loved by Napoleon and was taken great care off. Shermer mentions the very idea saying that people "flip their beliefs, discarding their former convictions to accommodate the new information" (Shermer 214). This highlights the eradication of cognitive dissonance.

Ceasing Resources and Unattended Power

The cognitive dissonance can be observed as the pigs manipulate the other farm animals to the dungeons of doom and elevate themselves by hoarding goods and ceasing complete power and control. The pigs hoard apples, milk, wine, and other bounties. All animals were supposed to have an equal share of the farm resources. But, initially in the novella, when the animals returned from the harvest to their surprise the milk and apples were not there. Squealer explained to the animals that the pigs need the milk and apples as they are supposed to do the brain work and as brainworkers, they deserve to eat more as it is necessary for their health. He said that they "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 necessary to the well-being of a pig. We pigs are brain workers" (Orwell 156). It was also decided that the farmhouse would be preserved as a



museum and no one would disturb its preserved state. This decision was overturned and manipulated as the pigs started living in the farmhouse. They also hosted lavish banquets inviting humans to their farmhouse. The table used to be full of food and drinks while the rest of the animals starved and were surviving on very low rations. Napoleon calls a meeting and forces multiple animals to confess that they have been in connection with Snowball and are rebellious towards the animal farm. Napoleon wants to sell eggs but the hens resist his orders. They do not hand over their eggs to him and as a result, Napoleon cuts their rations short. A few of the hens die of starvation and the rest of them are accused of their involvement with Snowball. They are forced to confess and then executed. A few days later, some of the sheep are accused and later murdered for their collaboration with Snowball. This widespread execution instills fear among the animals and serves as a warning letter to the rest of the animals. Disagreeing with any of the orders of the pigs meant death on the farm. Either the animals were convinced through cognitive dissonance or murdered on some false charges. The dogs, Napoleon raised, act as a symbol of fear and terror in the farm for other animals. All the animals attempted to reconcile their beliefs in the ideal of Animalism but all of them failed due to the harsh realities. The animals suffered from starvation, the terror of being brutally murdered by the dogs, and the miserable working conditions. These things created discomfort in their minds as the actions contradicted the set of rules of the farm. To release the dissonance, the animals assured themselves that the murdered animals must have been in contact with Snowball and would have been proven guilty before being brutally murdered. This made them hate Snowball more as his treachery was the reason for all the miseries falling upon the lives of the farm animals. They hated him more and the fragmented reality blurred the reality and the dissonance was waived off.

***The Seven Sacred Commandments***

Seven sacred commandments were made to run the system of animal farm. These commandments were the rules and regulations each animal was supposed to follow. All the animals were happy and excited about the commencement of the new rule. These canons of animal justice were not followed for long as pigs started manipulating them and altering them for their ease and to justify their actions. For instance, the first commandment was “Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy” (Orwell 148). The animals were convinced as their hatred for Mr. Jones was at its height but the hens complained. They were redressed as the new commandment was “Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend” (Orwell 167). Animals were setting their standards for love and hatred and planning to have common enemies. They had this thing in their mind that someone with four legs and wings was a friend and anyone going on two legs was an enemy. Now animals had this notion in their minds and when they saw pigs walking on two legs they were astonished to core. The new commandment was “Four legs good, two legs better!” (Orwell 167). Sheep have memorized this altered commandment. This endorsed the superiority of the pigs. They were held in high regard as supreme creatures. The animals find this rising discomfort in their cognitions that either walking on two legs is good or bad; to lessen the effect of this dissonance they accepted the new information being fed i.e., that walking on two legs is a better quality. Animals’ accepting the new set of information endorsed the pigs’ rule. The third commandment was “No animal shall wear clothes” (Orwell 178). Animals decided to avoid using Mr. Jones’s house. They decided to preserve his belongings as a museum. Pigs adopted human traits to pace up their trade with the outer world and develop connections with trades to increase their profit margins. They were seen wearing clothes and animals eventually were fine with this change to decrease the dissonance in their minds. Animals decided to not use



the beds as well. Pigs were seen lying and sleeping on the beds and the alteration was made to the initial commandment. An addition of “with sheets” was made to the previous commandment stating “No animal shall sleep in a bed” (Orwell 147). This escalating dissonance was minimized by animals agreeing on the altered commandment and making themselves believe in the new commandment. Animals decided to exclude any sort of violence from their new idealistic farm. One of the commandments dedicated to the peace of the farm was “No animal shall kill any other animal” (Orwell 145). This claim to peace was welcomed and encouraged by every other animal. Pigs deemed other animals traitor whom they considered a threat to their totalitarian regime. They executed the animals and changed the commandments to justify their practices. They altered the commandment and added “without cause” which led them to justify their stance and kill animals. Animals believed this too, to satisfy the dissonance. Another commandment was forbidding the consumption of alcohol but pigs started drinking it. To justify their drinking, they changed the commandment to “No animal shall drink alcohol to excess” (Orwell 145). Animals had to get used to this one as well. The last commandment was “All animals are equal”. This commandment held the basic essence of the animal farm. It encapsulated the core purpose of the rebellion against Mr. Jones. The notion of equality made all animals fight for freedom. Pigs introduced their supremacy through their practices and formed a totalitarian regime. Voices and freedom were snubbed. The liberty from the farm animals was snatched. Eventually, the commandment was changed and it was altered to “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others” (Orwell 144). The term more equal is illogical and absurd in its nature as equality cannot be graded. This was the last star that shined and its light was dimmed too. No hope was left for the animals as a result of their cognitive



dissonance. They fall prey once again as the contrasting meanings of the commandments are unsettling. They believed it to avoid the dissonance and eventually were snubbed into dungeons of inferiority.

Animal Farm in the Contemporary World

Cognitive Dissonance is used all over the globe to promote political leaders, parties and their agendas. Political leaders create fragmented realities before electoral processes to gain massive support. They aim to manipulate young minds and acquire vivid support. Social media plays a crucial role as the medium transfers information to millions of people in a fraction of a second. People tend to neglect the mistakes made by their political leaders and focus on the better side of the story. They ignore their leader's flaws and promote the positive image of the leader. These actions are also classified as cognitive dissonance. As they nullify the incoming ills of their leaders to reduce the dissonance. People tend to justify the inconsistencies of their favorite political party and political leader to reduce their discomfort. Politicians often oppose policies introduced by their opponents. But when they come into power; they take the same stance they once had opposed. It may be due to the changing paradigms of the region or can be classified as the need for time. The supporters of the leader also oppose the policies of opposing political parties. Leaders tend to provide justification and reasons to minimize the dissonance of their supporters. It also minimizes their dissonance and justifies their actions to the general public. Leaders use another tactic to frame their opposition in a different light. They accuse them of corruption and follow in their footsteps at the same time. These actions pose serious threats to the credibility of the leader and integrity of the supporters but the use of cognitive dissonance quashes these problems.



The media has a lot to do with cognitive dissonance. Let's say a media channel A supports a political leader or a party say X. A will promote the policies and every event related to X but will not put forward evidence when X messes things up. There will be proper coverage of the poor decisions or false talking when X is to be blamed. The use of jargon will change when X is being discussed on A and his other great works will be given more coverage. People who are already victims of the discomforting reality of X recently will tend to watch A as this reduces their dissonance and helps their cognitive abilities to support X more ardently. This role play of cognitive dissonance makes political leaders and parties incest in media channels. They try to maintain support and goodwill in prime-time anchors and media houses to keep a better image of themselves and make an intervention of cognitive dissonance when necessary.

Strategies to Mitigate Cognitive Dissonance

In light of the above discussion, cognitive dissonance appears as a phenomenon that poisons the fair nature of democracies. Critical thinking and curiosity stem an antidote to cognitive dissonance which further acknowledges open-mindedness. Critical thinking is an essential skill in any democracy, for it allows ... decisions based on reason and evidence rather than prejudice or propaganda” (Nussbaum 52). Humans need to induce their minds with positive psychology and it is possible by developing curiosity which will promote critical thinking and viewing things in their raw forms. I believe humans trying to reduce dissonance is a defensive mechanism. Critical thinking and overlooking things maturely will minimize risk factors and foster a rich political discourse. In Animal Farm, the only source of information for the farm animals was Squealer. He held complete command of making and breaking their psychology and manipulating their cognitions. Stroud writes that “Exposure to a variety of news sources can mitigate the effects of cognitive



dissonance by presenting multiple viewpoints, which helps individuals to better understand and reconcile conflicting information” (Stroud 97). He argues that a variety of news and multiple sources present the audience with different perspectives and provide them liberty in forming their political views. This not only provides them with a better understanding but ensures a stable and productive psychology. Self-affirmation is another strategy that can be handy in fighting cognitive dissonance. One needs to be in full control of their mind and beliefs. “Self-affirmation reduces cognitive dissonance by allowing individuals to maintain their self-integrity even when confronted with threatening information” (Steele 269). So, an individual tends to act more maturely when confronted with opposing political beliefs. Conclusively, George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* explicitly puts forward the political as well as psychological moves made by those in power corridors. The novella evinces the adverse effects of this dissonance on the working class and enfolds the perks gained by the pigs’ totalitarian regime. *Animal Farm* if viewed at a broader level, is an allegory to world politics extending the spatial and temporal restrictions. The novel incorporates universal themes of lust for power. Extending that, the practical implications of cognitive dissonance are no exception as no individual successfully escapes the curse of media. Another and final method to cope with cognitive dissonance is by being on the same page. Promoting unity among the masses will minimize the adverse effects of cognitive dissonance as inter-group tussles might end and a productive political environment will be fostered. “A strong collective identity can help reduce intergroup tensions by focusing on shared goals, thereby diminishing the cognitive dissonance that often accompanies political divisions” (Brewer 125).



Unity among the masses will lessen any political division foster creative debates and result in healthy political discourses.

Conclusion

Animal Farm puts forward a dystopian world where the models of manipulation and distortion of truth reign supreme. Pigs propagate their actions and their molded orations eventually result in initiating discomforts in the farm animals. Animals tend to reduce the discomfort created by two opposite sets of information coming their way. They convince themselves to believe the propaganda to lessen the dissonance and are convinced by the lies. They forget the actual reality and are doomed into the world of Napoleon. Manipulation of commandments and Squealer's sharp witty nature serve to persuade Napoleon to establish a totalitarian regime. The practices of cognitive dissonance extend their boundaries beyond the fictional world of literature and have real-life implications as well. Throughout history, cognitive dissonance has been used to manipulate the masses psychologically and gain political benefits. The study helps us to make an analysis and reduce the effects of these manipulations on individuals. The study helps us gain insights into real-world political as well as ideological manipulation. We learn about the mechanism through which the political machinery works and aims to distort political knowledge and cognitive consistency at an individual level as well as in a group. *Animal Farm* is an allegorical satire on the ideals of the Russian Revolution. It critiques their ways of government and highlights the strong propaganda that was incorporated to achieve totalitarian goals. Napoleon's Regime parallels Kim Jong Ung's government in North Korea. The flow of controlled and filtered information in the fictional *Animal Farm* mirrors contemporary North Korea. Currently, in many countries, a shadowed totalitarian form of government is observed as media is controlled, and news is manipulated. The paper contributes to these fields as



it aims to ensure the provision of political knowledge and psychological manipulation by totalitarian leaders. The study overall helps us to question the media input and raise questions on the sincerity of the information coming our way. It advocates individual freedom and liberates individuals from the tyrannic nature of media and political leaders and parties. The research underscores the importance of critical thinking to help the masses rise above the pedestal and know their worth. Navigating through complicated political landscapes, cognitive dissonance helps us to draw a clear line between truth and lies, uphold political morals, and struggle for ethical political trends. The research paves out ways for further studies of literary characters as victims of cognitive dissonance. It also provides room for a deeper and critical study of fictional as well as real-world regimes through the lens of cognitive dissonance. Future researchers can explore other psychological concepts by examining classical literature and building upon this interdisciplinary research. The research suggests that policymakers should consider the psychological barriers that hinder the process of policy acceptance. *Animal Farm* serves as a harsh reminder in a world infested with corruption and distorted truth, that one's consent to believe the comforting lies promotes tyranny, not the oppressor. Hence, all dissonances are dangerous, but some are more dangerous than others.



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