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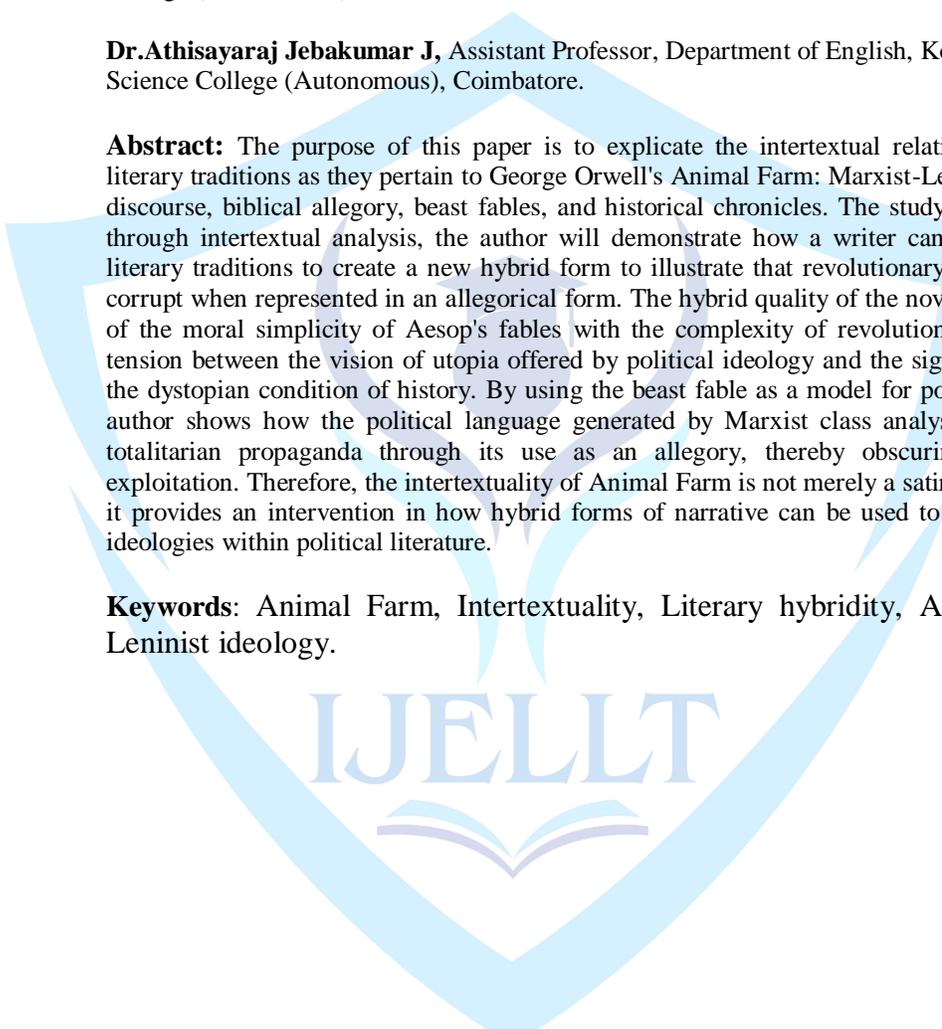
Intertextual Hybridity and Ideological Critique in George Orwell's Animal Farm: From Marxist Revolution to Allegorical Narrative

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explicate the intertextual relations among several literary traditions as they pertain to George Orwell's *Animal Farm*: Marxist-Leninist revolutionary discourse, biblical allegory, beast fables, and historical chronicles. The study further argues that through intertextual analysis, the author will demonstrate how a writer can intersperse several literary traditions to create a new hybrid form to illustrate that revolutionary ideologies become corrupt when represented in an allegorical form. The hybrid quality of the novella--the integration of the moral simplicity of Aesop's fables with the complexity of revolutionary history--creates tension between the vision of utopia offered by political ideology and the significant evidence of the dystopian condition of history. By using the beast fable as a model for political ideology, the author shows how the political language generated by Marxist class analysis is distorted into totalitarian propaganda through its use as an allegory, thereby obscuring the realities of exploitation. Therefore, the intertextuality of *Animal Farm* is not merely a satirical critique; rather, it provides an intervention in how hybrid forms of narrative can be used to analyze conflicting ideologies within political literature.

Keywords: Animal Farm, Intertextuality, Literary hybridity, Allegory, Marxist Leninist ideology.



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Introduction

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945) has long been recognized as a masterwork of political allegory, yet critical attention has focused predominantly on its representational content—the correspondence between animal characters and historical figures, and between farm events and Soviet history. This paper shifts analytical focus toward the novella's formal properties, examining how Orwell's strategic deployment of intertextual references and hybrid narrative conventions creates meaning that extends beyond historical allegory. Rather than treating *Animal Farm* as simply a transparent representation of Stalinist betrayal, this analysis considers the novella as a sophisticated engagement with multiple literary traditions that enables critique unavailable through any single tradition alone.

The concept of intertextuality understood as the relationship between texts and the ways meaning emerges from textual interaction and citation provides a framework for understanding how Orwell constructs the novella's ideological force. *Animal Farm* is intertextually saturated: it engages simultaneously with Marxist-Leninist revolutionary discourse, the biblical tradition (particularly apocalyptic and exodus narratives), Aesopian beast fables, and historical chronicles of the Russian Revolution. By layering these intertexts, Orwell creates what we might term "ideological hybridity" a narrative form that permits simultaneous engagement with mutually contradictory systems of meaning.

This paper argues that *Animal Farm's* formal hybridity the deliberate combination of fable, history, and propaganda critique serves a critical function: it exposes how political ideology becomes distorted when mediated through narrative representation. The novella demonstrates that ideology is not merely content to be represented but a formal problem embedded in narrative structure itself. By hybridizing the moral simplicity of fables with the ideological complexity of revolutionary history, Orwell creates textual spaces where the contradiction between revolutionary vision and authoritarian reality becomes formally unavoidable.

Intertextual Foundations: Russian Revolution, Marxism, and Leninist Ideology

To understand *Animal Farm's* intertextual complexity, we must first recognize the novella's grounding in Marxist-Leninist revolutionary discourse. Old Major's speech, which initiates the rebellion, rewrites fundamental Marxist analysis for animal audiences. The speech articulates Marx's theory of exploitation the appropriation of surplus labor by the capitalist class and Lenin's revolutionary vision of proletarian liberation through violent overthrow of oppressive structures. When Old Major declares that "Man is the only creature that consumes without producing," he condenses centuries of Marxist political economy into a single accusatory statement. This citation of Marxist ideology functions intertextually: readers conversant with Marxist theory recognize the speech's theoretical apparatus, while readers unfamiliar with that tradition encounter the statement as simple truth.

The Seven Commandments similarly engage intertextually with revolutionary ideology. These commandments beginning with "Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy" and "Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend" establish the novella's foundational distinction between exploiter and exploited classes. This binary logic derives from Leninist revolutionary theory, which understood history as structured around class antagonism requiring violent resolution. The commandments present ideology not as contested interpretation but as natural law inscribed on the barn wall, a formal choice that mimics how revolutionary ideology presents itself as inevitable historical truth rather than constructed interpretation.

However, Orwell's intertextual engagement with Marxist-Leninist discourse is fundamentally critical. The novella demonstrates how revolutionary ideology, rooted in genuine analysis of class exploitation, becomes corrupted when seized by those who subsequently monopolize power. The pigs' gradual revision of the commandments represents not mere betrayal but the transformation of revolutionary ideology into propaganda a formal mutation where ideological content persists while its critical function is inverted. The commandment "No animal shall sleep in a bed" becomes "No animal shall sleep in a bed *with sheets*"; the form of revolutionary law persists while its substance is evacuated. This formal operation reveals how ideology functions: it provides language within which oppression can be disguised as principle.

Biblical and Fabulistic Intertextuality

Beyond Marxist-Leninist sources, *Animal Farm* engages intertextually with biblical traditions particularly exodus narratives and apocalyptic frameworks and with Aesopian beast fable conventions. This layering of religious and literary traditions creates what might be termed "generic hybridity," permitting simultaneous engagement with different systems of narrative meaning.

The exodus narrative structures *Animal Farm's* temporal movement. Just as the biblical exodus represents liberation from Egyptian bondage, the animal rebellion represents liberation from human slavery. Old Major becomes a prophetic figure whose vision of animal liberation functions analogously to Moses' prophecy of the Promised Land. The rebellion itself constitutes an exodus: the animals leave their oppressors behind and enter a new terrain where they alone determine social organization. This biblical parallel elevates the novella's stakes: animal liberation becomes not merely political action but redemptive historical movement.

Yet Orwell systematically inverts the exodus narrative's redemptive promise. Rather than the Promised Land materializing, the farm under Napoleon's rule reproduces the oppressive structures the animals sought to escape. Boxer's ultimate fate sent to the slaughterhouse represents the most devastating inversion of exodus promise: the faithful are not rewarded with liberation but consumed by the very system they built. This inversion functions intertextually to critique revolutionary ideology that promises redemption while producing renewed oppression. The biblical framework permits Orwell to express this contradiction with particular force: the failure of animal revolution becomes a theological betrayal, not merely a political one.

Animal Farm's engagement with beast fable tradition provides the narrative infrastructure enabling its ideological critique. The Aesopian fable tradition exemplified by tales like "The Frogs and the King," where animal characters enact moral lessons establishes an intertextual contract with readers: animal narratives teach moral truths through simplified representation. Orwell inherits this formal convention but fundamentally complicates it. Rather than presenting a simple moral (as in Aesop's fables), *Animal Farm* demonstrates how moral language becomes ideological mystification. Squealer's propaganda the mantra "Four legs good, two legs bad" mimics fable's reductive moral clarity while demonstrating how such reduction enables oppression. The formal properties of fable, when applied to complex political history, become instruments of mystification.

Hybrid Form as Ideological Critique: The Politics of Narrative Style

Animal Farm's formal hybridity its simultaneous engagement with fable, history, and propaganda critique constitutes more than mere stylistic eclecticism. Rather, the novella's formal hybridity operates as a critical intervention into political ideology itself. By forcing incompatible narrative modes into proximity, Orwell reveals how political ideology functions through narrative representation.

The novella maintains fable's characteristic narrative distance and brevity while simultaneously embedding historically specific references that demand recognition of complex political reality. This formal tension creates productive contradiction: readers cannot simultaneously inhabit the comfortable moral clarity of fable and the disturbing ideological complexity of revolutionary history.

Consider the characterization of Boxer: as fable character, Boxer represents the virtue of diligent labor; as historical figure, Boxer represents the industrial proletariat whose exploitation intensifies under Stalinist "socialism"; as propaganda victim, Boxer represents those whose loyalty to revolutionary ideology renders them vulnerable to betrayal.

Squealer's propaganda itself operates through formal hybridity. Squealer combines the reductive moral language of fable ("Four legs good, two legs bad") with the sophisticated rhetorical techniques of political propaganda. This combination reveals how ideology functions: it simplifies complex social relations into memorable phrases (fable mode) while simultaneously manipulating emotional responses to maintain power (propaganda mode). The formal contradiction embedded in Squealer's speech simultaneously simple and manipulative, moral and corrupt exposes how political ideology operates through formal devices that readers might not consciously recognize as ideological.

The novella's ending crystallizes this formal operation. The final scene presents Napoleon and other pigs indistinguishable from human farmers, dining together at Manor House. This scene violates fable's conventional moral clarity: there is no simple lesson, no transparent moral truth. Instead, readers encounter a formally bewildering outcome where revolution has produced merely new oppression. The narrative form refuses the comfort of fable's moral resolution while simultaneously demonstrating that historical reality exceeds fable's explanatory capacity. This formal impasse the inability of any single narrative mode to adequately represent political reality becomes the novella's most profound critique of ideology.

Allegorical Narrative as Political Transformation

At the deepest level, *Animal Farm* engages with how political ideology transforms when narrated as allegory. Allegory, as a narrative mode, creates systematic correspondences between fictional and historical reality: Napoleon corresponds to Stalin, Snowball to Trotsky, the dogs to the secret police.

These correspondences permit precise critique of specific historical crimes while simultaneously abstracting those crimes into universal patterns of power corruption.

However, Orwell's use of allegory reveals something crucial about ideology and narrative form: the process of converting political history into allegorical narrative transforms the political meaning itself. The reduction of complex historical causation to animal character psychology simplifies Stalinist ideology in ways that both clarify and obscure. By representing Stalin as Napoleon a pig driven by personal ambition the novella emphasizes individual will and character psychology over structural analysis. This formal choice prioritizes corruption as a function of character rather than as a systematic product of unchecked power concentrated in revolutionary vanguards. The allegorical form, while brilliant as critique, potentially domesticates Stalinist ideology by reducing it to the misdeeds of individual corrupt leaders.

This tension between allegory's clarifying power and its potentially reductive effects constitutes part of *Animal Farm's* formal sophistication. By making this tension visible through intertextual layering (fable + history + propaganda + allegory), Orwell demonstrates that no narrative form can achieve transparent political representation. Every formal choice includes what it excludes; every mode of representation obscures even as it reveals. This insight formalized through hybrid narrative structure becomes the novella's contribution to theories of ideology and narrative.

Conclusion: Intertextual Hybridity as Critical Method

Animal Farm's engagement with multiple literary and ideological traditions Marxist-Leninist discourse, biblical narrative, Aesopian fable, and historical chronicle creates a formally hybrid text whose structure itself performs ideological critique. Rather than treating these intertextual layers as mere decoration or strategic allusion, we recognize them as constitutive elements of the novella's critical project. The hybridity of *Animal Farm* the productive tension between its engagement with

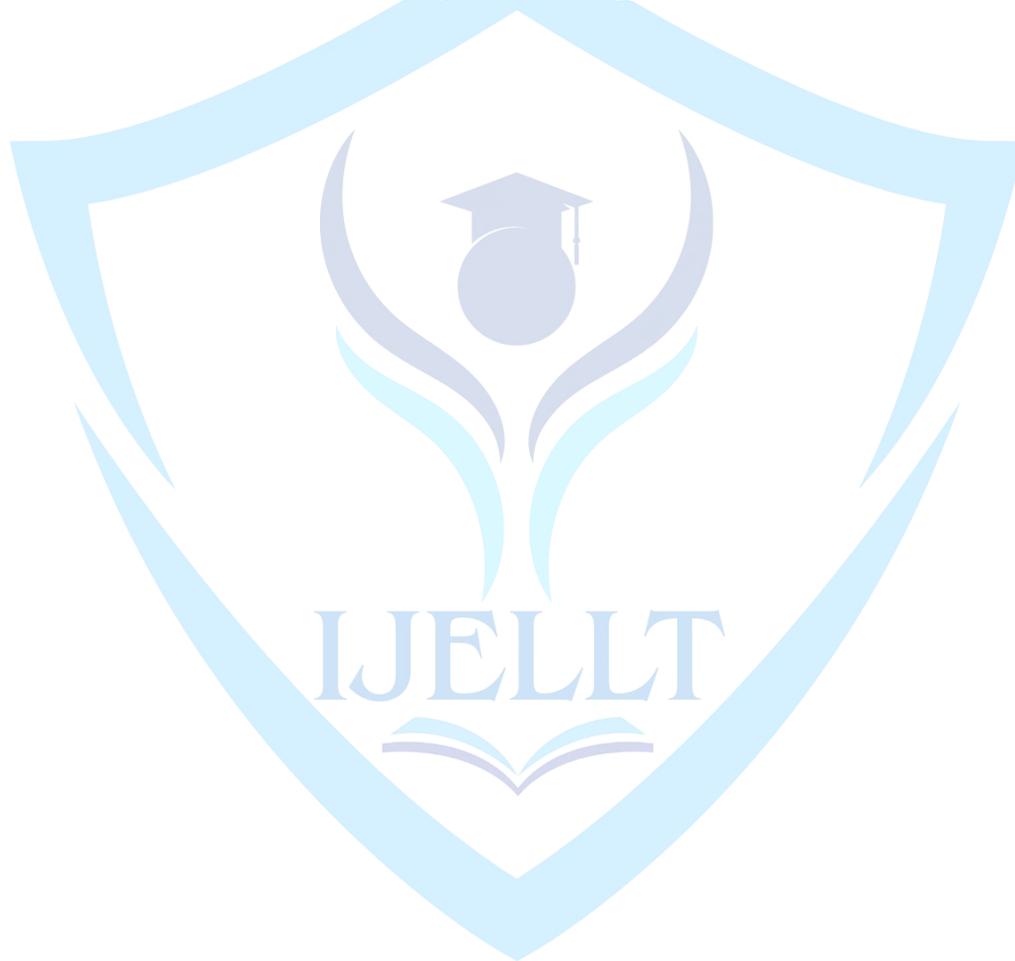
multiple incompatible traditions reveals that ideology operates not merely through content but through formal narrative structures that readers internalize as natural and transparent.

By grounding revolutionary ideology within fable conventions, Orwell demonstrates how narrative form shapes political meaning. The reductive clarity of fable, combined with the historical specificity of political allegory and the manipulative precision of propaganda, creates a formal apparatus capable of exposing how ideology functions in practice. *Animal Farm* teaches readers that political ideology cannot be critiqued through ideology alone; rather, it requires formal interventions that foreground how narrative structure itself generates ideological meaning.

The novella's enduring critical power rests on its formal sophistication: the deliberate hybridity that prevents readers from achieving comfortable interpretive closure. By maintaining tension between fable's moral simplicity and history's ideological complexity, Orwell creates space for critical analysis of how political vision becomes corrupted through narrative mediation. In this way, *Animal Farm* stands as a model for how literary form can function as philosophical and political critique not by abandoning narrative convention but by strategically deploying intertextual engagement with multiple traditions to expose the formal operations through which ideology produces and reproduces itself.

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