



Authority and Martyrdom in *Brave New World* and *Animal Farm*

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Abstract: This article analyzes the social structures in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm* through the lens of martyrdom. Both societies use propaganda, and this paper analyzes the impact of propaganda on characters. Specifically, this paper analyzes the identical story arcs of Boxer from *Animal Farm* and John from *Brave New World*. Both of them are introduced to this new and strange world only to become victims of a world that promised freedom. Through propaganda and social conditioning, both characters have been sold a lie.

Summary: An analysis of the societies in Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Both the World State and Manor Farm make use of propaganda and conditioning in order to maintain the status quo of the social hierarchy.

Introduction

Brave New World and *Animal Farm* are both novels that take place in high-control societies. The animals of *Animal Farm* are under the control of the pigs, while the citizens in *Brave New World* live under the control of the World State. Both of these systems of leadership use propaganda to keep the animals or people complacent. Animalism is warped from a philosophy advocating for freedom for all animals into an ideology that views anything human as the epitome of evil. As the motto shifts from "Four Legs Good, Two Legs Bad" to "Four Legs Good, Two Legs Better," the pigs use Animalism to defend their developing relationship to humans. Originally, the pigs foster hate against humans to unify the animals, but they begin to paint humans in a more tolerant light for their own ambition. In *Brave New World*, the World State uses sleep-teaching to influence the population through the subconscious. Young children are being introduced to the hierarchy in which the society operates and being manipulated to enforce the status quo. The authoritarian societies in *Animal Farm* and *Brave New World* mirror each other with the use of propaganda and the enforcing of rigid hierarchies, and both novels have a character take on the role of a martyr.

Literature Review

Both *Animal Farm* and *Brave New World* are thought to be cautionary tales about the dangers of authoritarianism. John and Boxer are used as martyrs to show the effects of psychological conditioning on the characters. In her 2007 paper, Caitrin Nichol writes, "An unholy alliance of industrial capitalist, fascist, communist, psycho-analytic, and pseudo-scientific ideologies has brought about the end of history. The past is taboo - "History is bunk," as "Our Ford" so eloquently said - and there is no future, because history's ends have been accomplished. There is no pain, deformity, crime, anguish, or social discontent" (Nichol, 2) . And while the lack of emphasis on the individual in the homogenous culture of *Brave New World* has very communist roots, the specific brand of hyperconsumerism is capitalist in origin.



The main source of suffering in *Brave New World* is the fact that those who are aware of their individuality are not able to express it. In the paper *The Satire Of Huxley's Brave New World*, Peter Firchow writes, "The problem, however, in the brave new world is that the conditioning is so complete and the pursuit of external happiness so compulsive that it is enormously difficult for the individual to increase his awareness of himself as an individual. Bernard Marx has become aware of his individuality, his "separateness," only because of a physical defect—due to an accidental admixture of alcohol in his blood surrogate. Helmholtz Watson, on the other hand, has come to a similar awareness because of a mental excess, because he is too intelligent to accept his conditioning uncritically. The two are friends because they both share the forbidden knowledge that they are individuals (56), but it is a knowledge which is stifled at every turn. The brave new world offers them almost no opportunity to express that individuality" (Firchow, 1). This specific dilemma is very reminiscent of John's internal conflict; he realizes that he is fundamentally different because he is aware of the truth of his individuality; however, he is unable to escape this prison.

This dilemma mirrors the dilemma faced by the animals in *Animal Farm*. In his 1992 paper VC Letemendia writes "By revealing the divisions within the animal ranks, Orwell is cautioning the reader to question the animal view of class struggle, for the crucial problem that even the wise Old Major does not predict in his identification of the enemy is power-hunger of the pigs. By allegoric implication, Orwell's identification of a flaw in the marxist theory of revolution itself" (Letemendia, 7). Just like John the animals have the knowledge to recognize injustice but they do not have the experience or wisdom to identify its true source.

Hierarchy

The social hierarchies in *Brave New World* and *Animal Farm* are both built around controlling the general population. In *Animal Farm*, the pigs manipulate the other animals into doing free labor while not seeing any benefits of their hard work. In *Brave New World*, people are specifically bred and trained to grow up to fulfill their role in society. Gammas and Deltas have their brain development stunted so they can fulfill the role of menial workers. Both social systems are meant to keep the population subservient to those above them. Both the animals of Manor Farm and the Gammas and Deltas are conditioned to become servants while believing that the status quo benefits them. The people of the World State are given anything that their hearts could desire, as long as they don't question the people who created the system. They are trapped in a prison while believing that they are free. The caste system is a product of the conformist ideology at the core of the World State, meant to create a population of identically productive workers.

Parallels Between Soma and Animalism

In *Brave New World*, Soma is the embodiment of epicureanism, as Animalism is the embodiment of stoicism in *Animal Farm*. When Old Major first tells the animals about Animalism, he introduces it as a dream for the future. Old Major envisions a future in which all animals are free. The central philosophy of Animalism is that it is the duty of every animal to work towards the goal of freedom for all animals on earth. Like Sisyphus pushing a boulder up a mountain endlessly while never reaching the top, the Animals work tirelessly towards an impossible goal.

Soma is a symbol of the people's endless pursuit of pleasure in *Brave New World*. Soma is a powerful drug that induces hallucinations. But above all else, Soma is an escape from



reality. John's mother uses Soma as a way to escape her responsibility and lose herself in the moment. Soma is a perfect example of epicureanism as it is a way to escape everything that hurts and fully embrace pleasure. Soma in *Brave New World* is used to create a conformist society where people don't question the status quo.

John as a Martyr

In *Brave New World*, the reader follows John as he adjusts to this new world he has been shoved into. John is both intrigued and horrified by everything that surrounds him. But the major turning point comes when his mother dies, and he sees the darker side of the world he now inhabits. When contending with his mother's death, John thinks to himself, "Linda had been a slave, Linda had died; others should live in freedom, and the world be made beautiful. A reparation, a duty. And suddenly it was luminously clear to the Savage what he must do; it was as though a shutter had been opened, a curtain drawn back" (Huxley, 144). In this moment, John realizes that this world which offers ultimate pleasure is actually a prison. The constant chasing of pleasure was Linda's ultimate doom, for she was trapped by her desire for escape. John then attempts to get people to recognize the dangers of the world they live in, but the people refuse to listen. John's Christian faith is very important to him, and his death through stoning is very reminiscent of heretics being stoned historically. John is viewed as a heretic who spreads dangerous ideas. Overall, John takes on the role of a martyr attempting to bring about change for the better.

Propaganda

In *Brave New World* and *Animal Farm*, propaganda is used as a tool of oppression. The pigs of *Animal Farm* warp animalism to suit their own agenda. When the pigs want the animals of Manor Farm to hate humans, they introduce the slogan "Four Legs Good, Two Legs Bad." But when they begin to associate with humans, the slogan changes to "Four Legs Good, Two Legs Better." The pigs are diluting the core message of Animalism to suit their own goals. Animalism is introduced as a dream of freedom, but by the end of the novel it is nothing but a tool for propaganda. In *Brave New World*, propaganda comes through sleep teaching. Young children have their minds molded by the time they reach adolescence in order to accept the status quo. People are given specific personality traits to better serve the system and to maintain order.

Propaganda is a powerful tool in both *Brave New World* and *Animal Farm*. It is used to generate compliance through conformity. Animalism and Sleep - Teaching are 2 different techniques that are used as tools of manipulation in totalitarian societies. Both of these novels have another common thread: they both have characters that take on the role of a martyr. Manor Farm and The World State both use propaganda to maintain conformist societies.

Boxer as a Martyr

Boxer is a martyr to the true cause of Animalism. The core philosophy of Animalism was originally that every animal had a duty to work towards freedom for all animals. Boxer works himself to death due to the belief that his struggle will bring about freedom. When Boxer realizes that he can no longer work, he says: "It does not matter. I think you will be able to finish the windmill without me. There is a pretty good store of stone accumulated. I had only another month to go in any case. To tell you the truth, I had been looking forward to my retirement. And perhaps, as Benjamin is growing old too, they will let him retire at the same time and be a companion to me" (Orwell, 60).



Throughout the novel, Boxer has worked harder than any of the animals because he believed that it would all be worth it in the end, and now that Boxer is too weak to work he believes that he will be rewarded for his labor. Instead, Boxer is sent to be killed the minute he is no longer useful. Boxer's death is also the death of Animalism, as with Boxer's death, any belief in freedom for the animals.

Boxer vs John

Both John and Boxer take on the role of martyrs but in very different ways. John declares to the people that he has come to bring freedom. After Linda's death, John wants to free people from this prison to prevent the same thing from happening to someone else. John views himself as a messenger who brings true freedom. Boxer works tirelessly as he believes that this work will bring about a better future, but it only brings his doom. Boxer is a martyr for a cause built upon lies. Both John and Boxer seek to bring freedom to the oppressed, but in the end this effort only brings their doom.

Conclusion

Manor Farm and The World State are both authoritarian states built upon oppression. The pigs of Manor Farm oppress the other animals while they reap the benefits. Linda's death leads John to take on this role of a messenger bringing freedom, but he is instead a martyr for his cause. Boxer is a martyr to a cause built upon the lie that his labor will bring about a better future. And in *Brave New World*, the caste system keeps the population in constant service towards the upper class. *Brave New World* is a cautionary tale against epicureanism, while *Animal Farm* depicts the tragedies of stoicism. Both these ideologies are used as tools to control the general population for the benefit of the select few. The conformist societies depicted in these books use propaganda and pleasure in order to control the population.

Works Cited

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