

## Facebook and Animal Farm under the Control of Capitalism

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### ABSTRACT

*The Social Network is a 2010 American drama film, which is directed by David Fincher. The movie is written by Aaron Sorkin. It reveals the founding of the social networking website Facebook and the problems of lawsuits. In general, the movie debates about the birth of Facebook and then during this period the problems that they faced. Put it differently, the film shows us the realities about Facebook and the capitalist system same as the allegorical and stair novel of Animal Farm by George Orwell. The movie and the novel show us the face of the capitalist system in a different way, because, Orwell renders the story as a fable, and criticizes the Stalin system to points out that it is impossible to elude human beings form the capitalist system. Accordingly, the article will use the movie and the novel to conclude that in a different way the system has a big eye over people, by using the human bodies, Social Network Web Sites, such as Facebook, and surveillance techniques to control the social order and people.*

**KEYWORDS:** Facebook, Surveillance Techniques, Capitalism, Animal Farm, The Social Network, Power, Human bodies

“Politics is war without bloodshed; war is politics with bloodshed” (Mao Zedong)

### INTRODUCTION

Body is a kind of vehicle to communicate with others and perceive the things, which are outside of us as Ponty mentions in the book of *Phenomenology of Perception* “the body is the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body is, for a living creature, to be intervolved in a definite environment, to identify oneself with certain projects and be continually committed to them” (Ponty 94-5). Our bodies and Facebook as a kind of vehicle for the surveillance technologies to control or discipline social structure and people, which is the source of the capitalist system. In other words, the body is a kind of bridge between personal life and physical reality; the reason is that we conscious the world by using our bodies as a medium (Ponty 94-5).

Body as a vehicle is like a mirror, or it is a mirror, which reflects us our world and our bodies “every object is the mirror of all others” (Ponty 79). The body as an object reflects other bodies as well. What is the meaning of the mirror? The mirror is the reflection of something or illusion. It means that it reflects us to others. Our bodies are the mirror of other bodies. Correspondingly,

it means that our bodies are the mirror of the rules and ideas. Such as, Facebook and animals can be accepted as a mirror that people have a chance to see and control themselves and others as well.

However, as we shall shortly see, in this mirror, we can see the physical reality and our realities, which are created by individuals. During the process of the creation, people add new things or shape the order by using their bodies that “Social values are embedded in bodies” (Gatens 65), therefore “bodies moves and recreate themselves”, on the SNSs, which are used by the small powerful groups/companies, government or individuals and in this way “power construct bodies” (Gatens 69). Social Network Web Sites have many different power structures or social control groups. Some of them base on companies, and others base on government, but still, we have power, and we think that we have freedom, but we are living inside of the prison; which is controlled by the surveillance capitalism.

In short, human bodies and surveillance technologies have an important place in one of the movies, *The Social Network* and the novel *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, as a vehicle of the capitalist system to control the society and people that is the main aim of this article.

*The Social Network* is a American drama film, which is directed by David Fincher, and written by Aaron Sorkin. It reveals the founding of the social networking website Facebook and the problems of lawsuits. In general, the movie debates about the birth of Facebook and then during this period, the problems that they faced. Put it differently; the film shows us the realities about Facebook and the capitalist system the same as the allegorical and stair novel of *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. Notwithstanding, the movie and the novel show us the face of the capitalist system in a different way, because, Orwell renders the story as a fable, and criticizes the Stalin system to points out that it is impossible to elude human beings form the capitalist system. Accordingly, the article will use the movie and the novel to conclude that in a different way the system has a big eye over people, by using the human bodies, Social Network Web Sites, such as Facebook, language, knowledge, and surveillance techniques to control the social order and people.

## ANALYSIS

Jeremy Bentham’s “panopticon” prison can be shown as a beginning of surveillance to discipline prisoners with invisible surveillance. On the other side, according to Foucault’s surveillance is related to different spaces; for example, “disciplinary power helps produce “docile bodies” and forge human subjectivities. This involved techniques such as distributing people in space, ordering them in time, corrective training, and constant monitoring, all of which were most apparent in schools, prisons, reformatories, factories, and hospitals” (Surveillance, Haggerty &Tetrault 1). In short, “Surveillance involves efforts to make someone or something visible, typically in hopes of being able to better regulate or govern the individuals, populations, or processes being observed” (Haggerty &Tetrault p.1).

Furthermore, surveillance technology has a close relationship with capitalism, because capitalism uses surveillance techniques to control social structure and people to gain power, as Shoshana Zuboffmentions “This new form of information capitalism aims to predict and modify human

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behaviour as a means to produce revenue and market control” (75-76). It means that according to capitalism, surveillance techniques are the “new form of power” (Zuboff 82).

For Fairclough “hidden power” (49) is mass media, such as television, film and newspapers, but in this current century Internet, which is one of the significant developments of the 20th century is a kind of surveillance technique. People create the Internet for themselves. It seems that it is an electronic system, but it is more than numerical data. It is a social structure and makes our lives much more visible. In other words, anything that you post on the Internet used, archived, copied, pasted and can be reused many times by the companies and institutions, such as “Governments are conducting surveillance by analyzing and exchanging ever greater quantities of information on their citizens, using data mining tools to identify individuals “of interest” (Brown 3). One of the most prominent example for the Internet and the surveillance technique is the online social networking Facebook. Facebook, for instance, asks the real name for signing up, and suddenly people can be visible for everyone. As one of the online surveys determined that “Twenty-two percent of our sample do not know what the FB privacy settings are or do not remember if they have ever changed them. --- To summarize, the majority of FB members claim to know about ways to control visibility and searchability of their profiles, but a significant minority of members are unaware of those tools and options” (Acquisti & Gross52). This online survey shows that we do not become aware of the privacy policy and we think that on our Facebook walls we are free and can do whatever we want that is the one side of the coin. However, the other side of the coin shows us the dangerous side of Facebook, which is controlling by the surveillance techniques for the capitalist system, institutions, and commercial companies.

As Bergendal quoted Shields’ interview with Lyon, Facebook has importance for us and the surveillance technologies “Facebook comes along, and instead of it needing some kind of devious and difficult process to extract the data, people put it on voluntarily, and they presort themselves by their friends. So, there is this bizarre sense in which on Facebook, your friends betray you. You can have your privacy settings set way high, but it is perfectly easy for the police, corporations or whatever to workout an awful lots about you based on who your friends are” (24-25). Surveillance technologies continue to grow and spread its power all over the world by using Facebook and human bodies as a tool.

On the one hand, *Animal Farm* is another example of surveillance capitalism, because Orwell shows us the class differences between Farmer Jones and Animals. At the beginning of the novel, Farmer Jones is the leader of Animal Farm. Animal Farm is a kind of factory and capitalist society. In this factory, Farmer Jones is boss, and the animals are the proletariat because Farmer sells what the animals produce to be productive. After that, the animals overthrow Farmer Jones, and they start to control Farm. Same as Farmer Jones Napoleon, Squealer, and Pigs, they do not want to give up power, and because of this, they use dogs to maintain power. Then, the pigs took the place of Farmer Jones, and they became like the bourgeoisie. It means that they could not be communist, and the pigs like The Communist Party members, who lived a better life than the other animals, and because of this:

the pigs, the smartest animals on the farm, begins to establish basic rules and needs, they in essence formed their own government on the farm. The pigs named this government Animalism. It basically meant that the animals would be in charge of working the fields, making necessary things, and feeding themselves. The pigs take control of the situation.

They put themselves in charge and made the 7 commandments. These laws are the keys to keeping the animals under the pigs' control. In this case the pigs become stronger and stronger and then they corrupt, though, and instead of forming the ideal animalism government, the pigs dismissed all former rules, becoming tyrants (Masofa366).

Because of their education, the pigs, who are tyrants, symbolize capitalism as well “in his age, capitalism, colonialism and socialism were the chief political ideologies taking over the world. Naturally, he had to choose from amongst them, although he liked socialism, he was against socialists. He was favourably inclined toward socialism. The reason was that capitalism was unacceptable to him because of its being exploitative” (Kumar 10). Capitalism was unacceptable for him, but the pigs are the symbol of capitalism because they establish rules, and then they change them according to themselves.

In the novel, it has class differences between the pigs and other animals. The reason is that “the work of teaching and organizing the others fell naturally upon the pigs, who were generally recognized as being the cleverest of the animal” (Orwell, 1951: 15). In other words, Pigs are “brain-workers” (Orwell 32), and the symbol of capitalism, because “the project of capitalism is a very material one. It aims to accumulate the maximum amount of profit. Capitalism’s needs in social control are also explicitly material – to make sure that people continue to work, to consume and to refrain from mounting any effective challenge to the system” (Scannell, Schlesinger & Sparks 68).

Capitalist system gives us a chance to feel ourselves free and do whatever we want. However, as Ekaterina Netchitaïlov mentions in the article of Facebook as a Surveillance Tool: From the Perspective of the User:

Capitalism is based on the idea that the private sphere should be separate from the public sphere, where the individual should in principle be able to enjoy certain autonomy and anonymity. The notion of privacy under capitalism is linked to the freedom of private ownership. It is expected that individuals should enjoy some privacy in their private lives. However, in order to function, capitalism exercises surveillance over individuals, with the aim to have as much information as possible over workers and consumers to control them and encourage them for further consumption. Therefore, in the current age of capitalism, the idea of privacy is undermined by surveillance (684).

As a result, as Netchitaïlov points out, Facebook, as a corporation, is a capitalist organization, which collects data about its users to sell them to companies for capital stock.

In 2004 we met with the new social network site, which is Facebook. As Boyd & Ellison, defines that “Facebook began in early 2004 as a Harvard-only SNS” (218), (as cited in Cassidy, 2006). Moreover, nowadays, it is one of the popular social networks because people can make themselves visible and at the same time, they can follow everyone. It seems that it entertains people, but if one looks at the connotations can see that it has political implications. Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg and with his friends at Harvard University. First, the main aim of Facebook is to communicate with their university friends. Then it starts to spread to other universities and all over the world. It is possible to suggest that it is a global network. By using this network, people can communicate with people and also companies can earn money that is the legal issues of Facebook in the movie.



From the other perspective, SNSs are like a coin “What enables us to centre our existence is also what prevents us from centering it completely, and the anonymity of our body is unseparably both freedom and servitude” (Grosz 98). On the one side of the coin, we have our freedom, and on the other side, we have our slavery. In other words, every day, the capitalist system or surveillance technologies create different subject codes for people, and these codes work with power relations. In *The Subject and Power* Foucault identifies twin meanings of power:

This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have recognized in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word “subject”: subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscious or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to (781).

Therefore, one side of the coin shows us that we are free, and we can control our bodies:

Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments, may be realized. - --- In this game freedom may well appear as the condition for the exercise of power (Foucault 790).

Such as, in the movie, people have their freedom to choose their friends and add them to their list. Also, they have a chance to control their friends' Facebook pages and their pictures.

Moreover, in the novel “Jones was expelled, and the Manor Farm was theirs” (Orwell 19) and animals control the farm and then they created their own rules “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. ----- No animals must ever kill any other animal. All animals are equal” (Orwell 12). Even, at the beginning of the Rebellion, they feel themselves free, because they have their own rules and do not have Leaders/Man the same as before.

However, the other side of the coin shows that people are slaves because politics make us like a slave, as Sanghare mentions that slavery is another way to retain power (36). For example, as we can see at the beginning of the Animal Farm the seventh commandment is “all animals are equal” (Orwell 23) then through the novel it becomes “all animals are equal but some are more equal than others” (Orwell 14), which is another way to become slave by the power.

Power and politics are working together; it is not easy to divide them “politics involves the exercise of power by some people over other people” (Donovan, Morgan, Potholm 5); therefore, first we should consider the meaning of the power. In his book, *History of Sexuality Vol.1*, Foucault defines power as “Power in this instance was essentially a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself; it culminated in the privilege to seize hold of life in order to suppress it” (Foucault 136), and even for his power is one of the ways to control society and people:

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Deduction has tended to be no longer the major form of power but merely one element among others, working to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them (Foucault 136).

As can be seen in the movie *The Social Network*, the police and government have the right to control Facebook whenever they want.

What is more, most of the commercial companies give advertisements, and they earn money over Facebook. In other words, Facebook is a kind of tool which is used by the different capitalist groups to gain power and money over people. For example, when Facebook starts to spread over the world, they recognize that they can earn money, and because of this, they established a Facebook company. However, after that, they have some problems, because “Saverin and the Winklevoss twins give depositions and testimony in some of the various lawsuits filed over the ownership and business dealings of Facebook” (Warren 5), which is the part of the capitalist system. Even a similar financial problem is seen in the novel as well.

For example, in the novel, some of the animals start to sell eggs and earn money “Napoleon announced that he had decided upon a new policy. From now onwards Animal Farm would engage in trade with the neighbouring farms: not, of course, for any commercial but simply in order to obtain certain materials which were urgently necessary” (Orwell 56). They do not call it commercial, but they do it for money. At the same time, Pigs start to learn the language, and with this way, they use Language to control others and earn money to live a good life; which is very important for the capitalist system:

Somehow it seemed as though the farm had grown richer without making the animals themselves any richer—except, of course, for the pigs and the dogs. Perhaps this was partly because there were so many pigs and so many dogs. It was not that these creatures did not work, after their fashion. There was, as Squealer was never tired of explaining, endless work in the supervision and organisation of the farm. Much of this work was of a kind that the other animals were too ignorant to understand. For example, Squealer told them that the pigs had to expend enormous labours every day upon mysterious things called ‘files’, ‘reports’, ‘minutes’ and ‘memoranda’. These were large sheets of paper which had to be closely covered with writing, and as soon as they were so covered they were burnt in the furnace. This was of the highest importance for the welfare of the farm, Squealer said. But still. Neither pigs nor dogs produced any food by their own labour; and there were very many of them, and their appetites were always good (Orwell 110).

It means that Language is one of the vital tools for our existence, which is related to our childhood, according to Lacan:

The fact that the oedipal stage roughly coincides with the entry of the child into language is extremely important for Lacan. For the linguistic order is essentially a figurative or “Symbolic order”; words are not the things they stand for but are, rather, stand-ins or substitutes for those things. Hence boys, who in the most critical period of their development have had to submit to what Lacan calls the: “Law of the Father” – as law that prohibits direct desire for and communicative intimacy with what has been the boy’s whole world – enter more easily into the realm of language and the Symbolic order that

do girls, who have never really had to renounce that which once seemed continuous with the self: the mother. The gap that has been opened up for boys, which includes the gap between signs and what they substitute- the gap marked by the phallus and encoded with the boy's sense of his maleness – has not opened up for girls, or has not opened up in the same way, to the same degree (James 216).

The importance of language leads us the power of control, which is related to knowledge. As Norman Fairclough points out that we can say that “in discourse is to do with powerful participants controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants” (Fairclough 46).

In other words, it is possible to suggest that if people have knowledge and power, it means that they can control social structure as Foucault mentions that power:

categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects (781).

Eventually, power helps use to categorize people to gain control over them, as Pigs do in the novel.

Because of the language or the knowledge Pigs become the leader of the Animal Farm, and they continue to live a good life as a master“it was absolutely necessary, he said, that the pigs, who were the brains of the farm, should have a quiet place to work in. It was also more suited to the dignity of Leader (for of late he had taken to speaking of Napoleon under the title of ‘Leader’) to live in a house than in a mere sty” (Orwell 59). It can be said that the control that both movie and novel reveal that if people know to use it properly, it means that they have enough power to control people and earn money over people.

## CONCLUSION

So, this analytical article tries to show us that unfortunately, we do not have any chance to escape the system of capitalism. We are just living inside of the free prison. The capitalist system uses human bodies and surveillance techniques to control or organize social relations and people. Finally, we are living in Disneyland, and we think that we have the freedom to create our realities, but this is an illusion or simulation. As Sanghareuses Sewlall ideas “there have been, are, and always will be pigs in every society, Orwell states, and they will always grab power” (Sanghare 77). As a result, the whole paper shows that the pigs are the symbol for Facebook, companies, government, and we who live under the control of the capitalist system, because of this in this Disneyland we do not have any chance to avoid the rules and regulations of the capitalist system, and surveillance techniques.

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