

**الصراع الطبقي والهيمنة في رواية لورين وايزبرغر
"الشیطان یرتدي برادا": تحلیل مارکسي**

**Class Conflict and Hegemonic Power in
Lauren Weisberger's The Devil Wears
Prada: A Marxist Analysis**

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المخلص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل رواية "الشيطان يرتدي برادا" من منظور ماركسي. ويركز على الصراع الطبقي والاستغلال والهيمنة، وعلاقتها بالرأسمالية في بيئة الشركات. تسلط الرواية الضوء على علاقة الموظف بالإدارة في العصر الحديث، حيث يخضع الموظفون للاستعباد الاقتصادي والأيدولوجي. كما يستعين البحث بنظريات كارل ماركس وأنطونيو غرامشي لتوضيح كيف كانت أندريا ساكس جزءًا من نظام استغل عملها وحدد وعيها. تبين الرواية كيف يمكن للصراع الطبقي أن يحدث من خلال التفاوت المادي والهيمنة الرمزية والثقافية، ويتجلى ذلك بوضوح في صناعة الأزياء. وبالمثل، يعكس تحول شخصية الرواية عملية استيعابها للاستعباد أيدولوجيًا، واعتباره أمرًا "طبيعيًا" بل و"مرغوبًا فيه". إجمالًا، يُظهر هذا البحث أن رواية "الشيطان يرتدي برادا" تنتقد الرأسمالية المعاصرة من خلال تحديد كيفية عمل السلطة على المستويين الهيكلي والنفسي يُبين هذا البحث أن "الشيطان يرتدي برادا" ينتقد الرأسمالية المعاصرة من خلال تحديد كيفية عمل السلطة على المستويين الهيكلي والنفسي.

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyze the novel *The Devil Wears Prada* from a Marxist perspective. It emphasizes class struggle, exploitation, and hegemonic power as they relate to capitalism in a corporate environment. This novel highlights the modern-day, employee/management relationship where employees are subjugated to both economic and ideological subjugation. Additionally, the research utilizes the theories of Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci to show how Andrea Sachs was part of a system that exploited her labor while also determining her consciousness. The novel shows how class struggle can occur through both materialistic inequality as well as symbolic and cultural domination; this is especially seen within the fashion industry. In the same vein, the transformation of the subject matter character reflects a process through which she has ideologically internalized subjugation as "normal" and even "desirable." Overall, this research shows that *The Devil Wears*

Prada critiques contemporary capitalism by identifying the ways in which power operates at both structural and psychological levels.

1. Introduction

Marxist theory has become an important part of literary studies, particularly with respect to analyses of how present-day narratives convey the nature of social class relationships and power structures within capitalist economies. Literature serves not only as a means of reflection on society but also provides an avenue for shaping the ideologies associated with social class, labour and authority. The workplace, therefore, is seen as one of the primary sites where the interplay of these two forms of control—economic exploitation and ideological domination—results in a number of complex forms of control over individuals. (Escudé, 2021: 22).

This story gives us a fascinating insight into these types of relationships within the fashion world by showing us how the fashion business functions as a hierarchy. Power is distributed among (mostly) one person at the top, while workers are placed under tremendous pressure to perform to a very high standard (if they want to keep their jobs). In addition to all of this pressure, we also see that the cultural aspects of work (i.e. how different kinds of people are treated and viewed at work) give rise to a culture where labour is not only exploited economically, but also used or defined culturally through internalising the values of prestige, success and social status.

Many researchers have looked at themes of identity, ambition, and gender in the novel, but the issue of class conflict and hegemonic power is greatly under-studied from a Marxist perspective. This indicates that there is a large gap in the research, especially with respect to understanding how

the narrative provides insight into the relationship between domination and consent within structures of capitalism.

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following research question:

The Devil Wears Prada illustrates class struggle and hegemonic authority at the work site in a capitalist society by exploring class conflict, class struggle, and exploitation, through a Marxist analysis of the source and nature of these struggles using the work of Karl Marx as a foundation and the works of Antonio Gramsci and Georg Lukás as supplementary theories. This study will demonstrate that the capitalist system is embedded in the totality of our society and, therefore, is a totalizing organism that impacts both the material conditions of human beings and their consciousness.

2. Theoretical Framework

Marxist theory, specifically Karl Marx's theories about class struggle, labor exploitation and alienation in capitalist society, will be the primary framework for this analysis of the novel *The Devil Wears Prada*. According to Marx, the capitalistic structure is inherently contested between the bourgeoisie owners of the means of production and the proletarians who are forced to work for wages in an unduly manner. In order to analyze the structuring of the oppressive atmosphere at the workplace within the text, it will be necessary to examine the power distribution among the characters; namely, how the characters exercise their power/hierarchy (i.e., such as an individual exercising power over an employee by extracting their labour) and also how employees are subjected to constant discipline/pressure in the workplace environment.

This framework is significant because it allows for an understanding of the workplace as more than just a site where people work, but as a

structured way to establish domination by creating economic relations that govern social behaviour and how individuals see themselves. Thus, Andrea Sachs's story can be looked at as a form of labour that has been both materially exploited and ideologically created, as she moves towards being part of a system that controls her actions and her understanding of self.

In addition to the foundational framework of this research, the hegemony theory of Antonio Gramsci was used to describe how hegemonic domination works through consent, not only through the use of force. Hegemony refers to how the ruling class of society imposes its own perspective on the majority, which then leads to a situation where the majority members of society internalize the dominant value system and act out willingly on behalf of the ruling class's view of the world as "common sense." In the context of the novel, we see evidence of this when employees have such extreme views regarding how to work under challenging conditions, that they do not consider themselves to be exploited but are instead exercising a special privilege due to their position in the highly prestigious world of the fashion industry.

A distinction is made in this research between two ways of understanding class domination: (1) those that use a Marxist framework, and (2) those with other theories to support the idea of class domination. The primary Marxist framework explains how class domination has a structural basis and therefore creates class domination structurally. However, Gramsci's hegemony provides insight into how this structural class domination is maintained through cultural and psychological processes. In addition, Marx's exploitation theory does not only refer to class domination through political authority or coercive action, but it also includes the use of aspiration/desire to establish an internalized system of

support for dominant class values. Thus, the existence of a class that exploits in the novel cannot be understood only in the context of political authority, but must also consider how aspiration/desire/psychological influence have contributed to the ongoing class domination in the novel.

The theoretical framework utilized in this study uses a system which has different levels; e.g., Marx's overall analysis sits at the top of this hierarchy, while other relevant concepts serve as supporting tools (e.g., hegemony, reification and alienation) provide an explanation for the identified narrative mechanisms. It is also the case that this framework enables the study of the subject matter of this account (i.e., a representation of the economic exploitation of individuals), as well as being a depiction of both ideological control and psychological transformation.

Therefore, in developing their theoretical constructs, this research has considered and explored various narrative mechanisms evident within the novel, such as: (1) workplace hierarchies, (2) demands for excess labour, (3) internalised values of dominant culture, (4) changing identities, and (5) the gradual loss of control over oneself. Within these narrative mechanisms, *The Devil Wears Prada* demonstrates that capitalism exists as both an external system and an embedded structural mechanism that provides the framework in which people behave and think. By exploring the mechanisms through which capitalist domination operates at both a material and ideological level, *The Devil Wears Prada* highlights how both forms of capitalist domination exist concurrently, and how they shape the way we think and act towards ourselves and others in relation to these forms of domination.

3. An Overview of *The Devil Wears Prada* by Lauren Weisberger

The Devil Wears Prada tells the story of Andrea Sachs, a young woman with a college degree who finds herself in a junior assistant position at Runway magazine under the supervision of an extremely powerful editor, Miranda Priestly. At first, Andy thinks of her job at Runway as a temporary stepping-stone in her path to becoming a writer; however, once she arrives at Runway, she discovers that it is a high-pressure environment characterized by a rigid hierarchy, intense workloads, and continuous monitoring of employees by their superiors (Murtazikoh & Hetami, 2022: 54).

The fashion world has been depicted as both glitzy and organised – it is a place where prestige from an aesthetic culture hides the underpinning relations of power and exploitation. On a daily basis Andy engages with more than just her provisions for work, but also as an employee for her employers. The imbalance of power means the employer has almost total control over the worker's time, conduct and priorities. This leads to Andy becoming increasingly fatigued, socially alienated, and mentally distressed. Gradually, Andy's personal identity and relationships are affected negatively (Cakrawati et al, 2024: 87).

Through the process of adapting to the environment of the office, Andy changes the way she looks and feels about herself in order to fit in and keep her job. Andy's transformation demonstrates how people can unknowingly accept the norms of the system that are working against them when "success" is defined as a privilege rather than a right. Ultimately, Andy's emotional and moral cost associated with her acceptance of this culture leads her to question her place within it (Wijayanti & Hawasi, 2019: 155).

Her choice to leave Runway represents not just a personal decision but also a rejection of a system that emphasizes one's position in the workplace based on output and control at the expense of human dignity. The text presents a larger criticism of contemporary work culture by demonstrating how ambition and status are used as tools to perpetuate inequality while creating a sense of normalcy around exploitation (Solano & Hardy, 2025: 37).

4. Historical Context:

The publication of *The Devil Wears Prada* in 2003 coincided with dramatic shifts in culture, economy and technology in the United States. Fashion became a core part of the identity-making of all people, when fashion transformed from an exclusive sector of production to an element of the creation of the public persona for everyone. Elite fashion designers and fashion magazines influenced not just the clothing people wear, but how they view and understand success, status and their own presentation to society (Lynge-Jorlén, 2009: 90). During this era, some prominent fashion editors and designers were not simply respected figures in the industry, but were also recognised as representatives of social power, with authority that transcended the fashion industry and influenced and shaped social life in many aspects beyond fashion (Anderson, 2024: 266). The cultural weight behind the fashion world of the novel can be found in the depiction of Runway magazine, the focal point of the novel, as emblematic of how the fashion media as a whole has played an important role in establishing, maintaining and altering social hierarchies through the creation of public identity.

During the early 2000s, the United States experienced major cultural changes; however, the economic environment was one of uncertainty and distrust. The period of prosperity that ended in the late 1990s collapsed, and the economy was further disrupted by the impact of the September 11 attacks on markets around the world. Following the collapse of the stock market and subsequent recession, there was difficulty in finding jobs as a result of difficulties in obtaining post-secondary credentials. A weakened economy made it difficult for recent post-secondary graduates to enter the workforce, resulting in many graduates being unable to find employment in fields in which they had trained and/or were unable to afford to move out of low-paying temporary jobs (Anderson, 2024: 266). In this environment, the employment conditions described in the book represent the broader employment conditions experienced by young adults at that time and are not unique to any one industry.

In addition, the fashion & media industries are now becoming more competitive & have become more dependent upon unpaid/underpaid labour; especially in regard to being employed (intern/assistant) based on experience or possible access/influence over elite's/established professionals/economically privileged classes. Since it is commonplace to work long hours frequently without receiving compensation (Cerulli-Harms 2017: 65) .

In summary, the interplay of these factors helped create a larger labor climate where young employees were expected to absorb the workplace's cultural values and to equate their self-worth with their work success (Seehaus, 2024: 44). *The Devil Wears Prada* can be viewed as part of this historical context found not in its own narrative alone, but also as a reflection of the larger structural factors that impacted labor, identity, and

aspiration in the broader United States during the early 21st century (Mandal, 2020:87).

5. Class Conflict in *the Devil wears Prada* from Marxist perspectives:

This section provides a Marxist perspective of *The Devil Wears Prada* by examining how class struggle is depicted in the novel through labor relations and power dynamics in the workplace, specifically, the structures of exploitation that exist within the labor process. The analysis will critique the mechanism for maintaining the subjugation of workers through assessing major scenes and textual evidence represented within the movie.

The fashion industry portrayed in this novel can be considered a component of an ideological superstructure wherein glamour prestige Aesthetic appeal serve as a cultural veil to hide the production relations. The imagined sophistication of the fashion world serves as a cover for the conditions under which labor is exploited and supports systems of control that are made to look like desirable or aspirational.

5.1 Economic inequality and Class differences:

I was unable to find even one decent room for less than \$1,000 and when considering my wages of \$32,500 per year, it didn't require a mathematician to conclude that \$12,000 will go towards rent and then my taxes will take what's left. And then my parents decided to take away my credit card, which was for emergencies only (now that I'm a grown-up)! Great. (Weisberger, 2003, page 31)

By demonstrating the disconnect between Andy's work and her home life, this quote illustrates the class struggle. While Andy works in the high-status industry of (insert industry name here), she does not make enough to pay for necessary items like rent or taxes, and therefore, does not have

enough for food and daily living expenses. From the Marxist perspective, this demonstrates how Capitalism keeps people in a state of economic uncertainty regardless of whether or not they have a steady paycheck and are employed full time. Because Andy has to be concerned about whether or not she will be able to survive from paycheck to paycheck, she has no choice other than to continue working long hours to be able to financially depend upon her employer.

Economic autonomy is not fully achievable in a capitalist economy. While Andy is treated as an adult, she has been denied financial independence. She will always rely on someone to support her (the company) when she can no longer depend on her family. This illustrates a defining characteristic of class struggle, where workers take all economic risk while their labour benefits the capitalist without providing any security. The disparity between the job's glamorous image and Andy's economic situation reveals the capitalist system's unequal class structure.

I'd spent 3 nights in my new bedroom, and I was still getting used to living in such a foreign location. A very small room. Just barely bigger in total area than the small storage shed in my backyard back in Avon, and unlike many empty spaces which become look bigger once furniture is placed inside of them, my new room had shrunk to about half the size of the original space. I saw the small square area and thought it must be a few inches larger than a normal sized bedroom, and so I thought that I will just buy the same style of bedroom set that I had in my old house, which included a queen size mattress and a nightstand (Weisberger, 2003:33).

The quotation demonstrates how Andy is a working-class individual trying to cope within an urban area but has to live in very impoverished material conditions. Her bedroom is an extremely small, uncomfortable, and alien space; in this way, she does not truly feel at home in such a place. In this instance, this is indicative of how capitalism restricts a worker's

ability to attain even the most basic level of comfort regardless of the value associated with the work they do. Despite being employed in a superior position, the amount of money that she receives for doing that work only enables her to live in cramped housing, which is not suitable for her.

When comparing Miranda's lavish lifestyle; including her grand homes and lofty amounts of luxury items; to Andy's working-class lifestyle, we can see very clearly that there exists a vast difference of classes between the two (Miranda represents the bourgeoisie, Andy the Proleten). Even though both have to work long hours, both have vastly different levels of living conditions even though Andy has worked evenings to pay for his rent while Miranda's wealth has afforded her with security, ample space, and comfortable surroundings. Ultimately the difference in proximity to wealth does not equal access to wealth.

Andy is limited by a small, constricting space in which she lives, which reflects her lack of control over the physical reality of the material conditions of her life (i.e., she has both physical and/or financial limitations). The “small spaces” that comprise Andy’s primary life are indicative of the subordinate class placement she holds.

Contrastingly, Miranda Priestly resides in lavish, broad spaces including huge flats, private modes of transportation, and unrestricted space. There is not only a disparity in how much money a person has to spend on living conditions, but also how much space affords them to be able to control and/or utilize it. In contrast, Andy’s limited space is indicative of a lack of autonomy and comfort as well as a manifestation of pressure or stress and continual negotiation of living.

Thus, the contrast between Andy and Miranda illustrates that class division operates not only through income and consumption, but also through control over physical space .

I sat there pondering whether I should have worn my mismatched outfit and cheap shoes to the meeting I was at. I wanted to go home to my sofa and eat Cheez-Its and smoke cigarettes for the next two weeks and was not really paying attention to her...until she said, "I have amazing news! You could come on board, and it would happen really quickly!" (Weisberger, 2003:15).

This statement emphasizes on class differences between Andy and the world in which Miranda runs (is in charge of). Andy sees her cheap and out-of-place outfit and feels that she is out of place there as well. Andy's clothes serve as a tangible representation of her social class, as she originates from a lower-class background, while Runway is associated with wealth, opulence, and elitism .

In contrast, Miranda exists comfortably at the top of this hierarchy, where authority, money, and appearance are normalized and unquestioned.

According to Marxism, this example can be analyzed in terms of the class struggle that exists within capitalist societies. Andy represents the proletariat class (working class) who has no choice but to sell her labor in exchange for her survival, while Miranda represents the bourgeois class or ruling class, the one who has all the power and makes the rules on who has access to high-status employment and, therefore, experience and cultural capital. Andy's feelings of insecurity are not about her individual abilities, but rather a result of living in a society with a structural inequality that constantly reminds workers that they are inferior.

Though the character of Miranda lives within the realm of extreme comfort, the characters of Andy struggle with fundamental physical

sustenance. Marxist theory helps us to understand the difference between the privileged, who derive benefits from the social organization, and the impoverished, who are subject to the burdens of the social order. Workers are encouraged to be thankful for their ability to provide service to the wealthy elite, while bearing the burden of hardship at the same time. The novel demonstrates how the capitalist system has continued to create an atmosphere where class relationships are normalized to accept inequity as fact; hence making 'survival' a privilege instead of a right (Jonna & Foster, 2016: 66).

5.2 Workers are replaceable:

Marxist theory argues that capitalism dehumanizes workers by treating them as mere vehicles for labor, making them inherently interchangeable, which has its roots in the fact that they have been commodified or turned into commodities. Labor power, according to Marx's Capital, acts as a commodity that is able to be purchased and discarded, and replaced by another worker at any time when it no longer meets the demands of capital accumulation (see Garegnani, 2018: 43) .

The concept of replaceability is further established by Marx's reserve army of labor, or the surplus of unemployed and underemployed labor that constantly oppresses the employees that are currently employed by threatening the employees with loss of their job and negatively impacting their wages (Gartman, 1999: 76). This leads to both economic insecurity, and ideological oppression on workers, who have historically accepted as part of their job that they are disposable, and therefore will not resist or fight back against their exploitation.

Miranda Priestly is one of the most powerful women in fashion today, and arguably also one of the largest magazine editors in the world



(literally). This could be an opportunity to work alongside one of the best editors in the world (aside from discovering how to edit) and to witness her meet with famous authors and models. Additionally, an opportunity to assist her with all of the tasks that keep her busy on a daily basis is something that is so appealing, it is hard to describe. It is also an opportunity to do something that many girls would kill for. (Weisberger, 2003: 16)

It is hard work with long hours but it's very glamorous and many girls would give anything just to do this job. Miranda is an amazing person, editor, and boss and she treats her "girls" well.(19) .

"A job a million girls would die for" (Weisberger, 2003: 30).

Andy. you work at Runway, don't you understand? A million girls would kill for your job." (Weisberger, 2003: 91).

The phrase “a job a million girls would kill for” displays class distinctions in *The Devil Wears Prada*. This phrase highlights the inequity in employer/employee relationships of capitalist work environments. It reminds employees that there are so many others who want the same job as them but very few are actually qualified for these high-end jobs.

Marxists believe that classes will always be in opposition with one another based on who has control over employment and available resources (Das, 2023: 55). Miranda Priestly is the human representation of the dominant class, and Andy Sachs is an employee of the working-class seeking the job to help her achieve a better future outside of her current situation (Wong, 2016: 87). The phrase is repeated often throughout the text shows that Andy has the capability to be replaced very easily, and that she has very little power within this relationship.

When someone says “there are a million girls who’d kill for this job,” it makes work seem like it’s a privilege rather than being a right to have. Andy is faced with the social pressure of wanting to keep her job and



puts up with longer hours, more stress, and being disrespected due to this pressure of many competitors trying to take her job. Miranda's power over Andy will continue to increase because Andy is afraid of losing her job, which limits her ability to voice concerns and to resist. This is an example of a clear class conflict because the employer benefits from the fact that they have multiple employees competing with one another for the same position, which then puts downward pressure on employees' pay .

This phrase serves as a system of control over employees; it gives the employee (Andy) notice that if she breaks the rules, she will be replaced right away. Power isn't enforced through generosity; control is enacted through fear and lack of availability (scarcity). Rather than measuring an employee's value (Andy) according to their talents/skills, they measure their value/importance based on how much they will submit to people above them in the chain of command.

5.3 Work Outside Normal Hours:

Working outside the standard working hours constitutes an obvious instance of labor exploitation, which, according to Marxism, is represented by the creation of absolute surplus value. This occurs when an employer requires their employees to work outside of their regular workday and earns more from each employee due to additional labor being performed. The distinction between time the employee spends working, and time they spend as an individual becomes blurred, creating a situation where the employee is viewed as a continuous resource for their employer. (Eagleton, 2006: 77).

Today, control in capitalism includes more than just being able to see or touch the workers. In many capitalist spaces, we can think of control as a form of colonization of the mind. Even when workers are outside of

work, they are mentally tied to the job. Throughout the book, Andy constantly gets phone calls, which creates a psychological bond between her and her job. Therefore, Andy's fear of Miranda Priestly follows her even when she tries to relax, thus eliminating any sense of personal space for her (Hammer, 2015: 54).

The time required for social reproduction (i.e., the time that workers need to rest, to maintain relationships, and to recover) is negatively affected by the way in which this condition results in both economic exploitation and a lack of a 'normal' social life. This creates social alienation and in the case of Andy, demonstrates how the demands of capitalists' work undermine the development of meaningful human relationships and prioritise constantly increased productivity over maintaining those relationships. (Scott, 2017: 122).

My god, it was a Saturday night. How the hell do you charter a flight on a Saturday night?" "I'm guessing she wasn't so into that idea?" I'd asked soothingly, feeling genuinely guilty that I hadn't been around to help her out and simultaneously ecstatic that I'd dodged that particular bullet.

"Yeah. Not so into it at all. She called every ten minutes, demanding to know why I hadn't found her anything yet, and I had to keep putting these people on hold to answer her call, and when I went back to them, they'd hang up. She gulped air. "It was a nightmare." "So what finally happened? I'm almost scared to ask." "What finally happened?"

What didn't finally happen? I called every single private charter company in the state of Florida and, as you might imagine, they weren't answering their phones at midnight on a Saturday. I paged individual pilots, I called domestic airlines to see if they had any recommendations, I even managed to talk to some sort of supervisor at the Miami International Airport. Told him I needed a plane in the next half hour to fly two people to New York. Know what he did?" (Weisberger, 2003:276).



This quotation describes an extreme workplace incident in which Andy at 11:00 PM On a Saturday evening, while she was preparing for a personal event (her birthday) is forced to sacrifice her personal life to fulfill Miranda Priestly's unreasonable demand. Late at night on a Saturday, Andy is ordered to arrange a private jet after a regular flight is canceled, even though the task is nearly impossible. She misses her own birthday party, spends hours calling airlines and pilots, and is ultimately mocked and threatened by airport officials. The scene highlights the limitless pressure of workers' time, and the imbalance of power in the workplace, showing how employees are expected to prioritize their employer's needs over their own well-being.

"I had just sat down to dinner when my phone rang. Of course, it was Miranda." (Weisberger, 2003: 78)

In this quote, it is clear that there is a divide between the employer-employee relationship, showing an inseparable relationship between Andy and her work/home life. Even while eating dinner, Andy is expected to be on call for work. The way Miranda interrupts Andy reflects a class structure, with Miranda at the top of the hierarchy - the employer - and Andy at the bottom, the employee. Simultaneous to letting her know she is expected to be on call even while dining at home, Miranda has disrupted Andy's mealtime and thus has changed the time that Andy would otherwise use for herself privately. The employer has authority over both work and worker's time. Thus, the employer benefits from Andy being required to be on call while dining, as Andy, in turn, is under pressure from her employer to perform and be on call. Andy is quiet and compliant and shows that she does not have the power to resist or complain.

6. Hegemony in *the Devil wears Prada*:

According to Gramsci, hegemonic power maintains its existence through the relationship between civil and state societies. State society refers to the coercive authority of all political institutions (e.g. statutes; armies; police), which maintain order through physical authority. Voluntary subjugation or voluntary compliance is achieved by using the power of order to compel individuals to behave in a way that is in accordance with the state as opposed to civil society through non-physical means (i.e., through the use or enforcement of law). In contrast to state society, civil society encompasses a variety of voluntary authorities (i.e., education systems, media/popular culture, social welfare systems, family structures, and cultural/ethnic norms) that do likewise through ideological means (Tok, 2003: 332).

In the novel *The Devil Wears Prada*, the fashion industry's corporate environment fulfills a substantial function as a significant institution of civil society, enforcing norms of hegemony. The fashion industry is so hierarchically structured that the corporate environment is also defined by strictness and discipline, with authority unquestioned. However, the fashion industry portrays these labour relations (among others) as positive and exalted. The protagonist gradually internalizes these desired and normative values, with the effect of transforming long hours of work into emotional subservience, and personal sacrifice into symbolic forms of capital connected to strengthening reputation and success. These transformations illustrate how hegemony aligns people's aspirations to the requirements of capitalism, thus impacting individual choice through exploitation, which may appear to be a voluntary pursuit.

"He said, 'Welcome to the dollhouse, baby.' ?" (Weisberger, 2003: 57).

This line conveys an image of an office set up like a dollhouse in which people look to another person for where they should be, what they should be doing and how they should look. Miranda, as the person outside her dollhouse, is controlling her "dolls" and their actions, behaviours and identities through her rules instead of on the basis of what they want or would like. This shows the way that authority operates as a future shaping influence that pressures people to conform instead of giving them the ability to exercise their own free will and be the author of their own behaviour.

“Miranda Priestly is the single most influential woman in the fashion industry, and clearly one of the most prominent magazine editors in the world” (Weisberger, 2003: 16).

By stating that Miranda Priestly is "the single most influential woman in the Fashion industry", it lends her not only a centre of power at Runway, but also within the entire Fashion industry. She does not simply determine the actions of her employees; she also establishes the perceptions associated with style, value, and significance in the media. As a result, she has the ability to define the how people value or interpret fashion, which provides evidence of how one individual can amass cultural power and create the guidelines for an entire industry.

"I didn't have a choice. Miranda asked for it," (Weisberger, 2003: 300).

In this case, the speaker does not express overt physical oppression, nor does he express psychological coercion; he expresses the process of absorbing another's will into one's own of one's own sense of reality. This process reflects what Antonio Gramsci referred to as Cultural Hegemony: A form of domination where the values, norms, and expectations of the elite become so completely imbedded in people's everyday experiences of

life that they no longer view them as one of many possible choices but rather as the only sensible way to live and therefore they voluntarily surrender their agency and consent without the need for coercive or violent imposition upon them because the worldview of those in power has become "common sense" (El Aidi & Yechouti, 2017: 178).

Andy feels like she has no other choice but to meet the rules and expectations of Miranda and fashion. She has been conditioned to think that her only possible option is to act according to how Miranda would want her to. This way of thinking has been completely normalized by culture around her that emphasizes obedience and perfectionism. So Andy feels like she has no choice not only with regard to one particular task, but also because of how much she has internalized the values and pressure of that culture.

"A job a million girls would die for" (Weisberger, 2003: 30).

We may reflect on the notion of hegemony in this quotation as it so perfectly evidences the way that dominant powers will maintain their position or privilege through ideology rather than simply by using brute force to do so. This quote reinterprets a demanding, exploitative work environment into a rare opportunity and it encourages Andy to view her exhaustion and the unselfish sacrifices she makes as examples of her good fortune rather than as evidence of how she is being treated unfairly. Miranda uses the idea of many other girls being available to replace Andy to legitimize a culture of competition and transience of employees that discourages individuals from resisting authority, while simultaneously promoting the normalisation of compliance. Hegemonic power is able to construct beliefs about what constitutes success, worthiness and ambition

to such an extent that individuals will self-regulate in accordance with the expectations of those who are in positions of authority over them.

7. Conclusion

This paper has shown that a critical representation of class struggle and hegemony are expressed in *The Devil Wears Prada* as they relate to today's capitalist work environment. Using a Marxist perspective, the analysis indicates that this book illustrates not only a high-stress work environment, but also an organised structure of domination through the intertwining of economic inequality, exploitative labour and ideological manipulation.

The results indicate two facets of class struggle revealed in the book. On one hand, the character Andrea Sachs lives contradictory lives of being part of a well-known company while having little financial security; this represents larger patterns of class differences based on type of employment/working conditions that exist under capitalism. On the other side, hierarchically authoritative figure Miranda Priestly is another example of how power is accumulated by those who have it and how power is exerted through dominion over time, work and opportunity.

Adding to this, the research shows how exploitation goes beyond economic extraction but also encompasses the exploitation of time (temporally dominated) and psychological pressure (doing what someone else wants). For example, by continuously requiring Andrea to do things for this job (plus breaking down the separation of how work interferes with her personal life), this continuously creates absolute surplus value and turns Andrea into a constant worker resource. This process also directly contributes to alienation, wherein the protagonist loses her sense of self (identity), her relationships and personal values.

The conclusion of the study shows that by leaving Runway, Andrea has developed a sense of class consciousness by seeing her exploitation as a structural issue and reject value system that has been imposed upon her by a capitalist society. In this sense, her departure signifies a personal pursuit of freedom from that exploitation; however, it also indicates a critique of the way in which capitalistic work culture creates and upholds inequalities based upon social class through encouraging ambition and prestige.

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