

# **TWO LEGS GOOD AND FOUR LEGS BAD: DISCOURSE MANIPULATION, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MARXISM IN ANIMAL FARM BY GEORGE ORWELL**

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## **Abstract**

*This study explores manipulative language and power dynamics through a Marxist lens, focusing on the exploitation of working-class animals by humans and pigs in George Orwell's novella "Animal Farm." The application of Marxism to the text unveils the social degradation of animal labor, highlighting the deceptive language employed by the intellectual animals to assert power over others, shaping their perceptions and actions for personal gain. Employing critical discourse analysis, the study contends that those in power, whether humans or animals, exploit their subordinates through manipulative communication, gaslighting individuals to maintain their privileged positions. The pigs' manipulation of language positions them as oppressors, enabling them to rule over the other animals. In conclusion, this research emphasizes that power dynamics and manipulative discourse persist regardless of the species in control.*

**Keywords.** *Marxism, manipulative language, bourgeois, working class, power.*

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### **Introduction**

George Orwell, an influential and rational writer, has left an indelible mark on the literary landscape through his timeless works. Particularly renowned for two literary masterpieces, "Animal Farm" (1945) and "Nineteen Eighty-Four" (1949), Orwell's insights into critical analyses of fascism, communism, and imperialism have positioned him prominently in the modern world. In addition to his well-known books, Orwell is a sharp thinker, as evidenced by his essays "Shooting an Elephant" and "Politics and the English Language." His examination of dystopian literature, which is distinguished by paradoxical language, catchphrases, and melodies, explores themes of social injustice, class struggle, and manipulation while highlighting Marxist principles. Marxist theory is fundamentally revealed in "Animal Farm," where the theme of manipulative discourse shows how language becomes a tool for enslaving and controlling the proletariat. Pigs are a symbol of the ruling class, and they use manipulation to control the thoughts and behaviors of other animals and to justify their own actions (Chomsky, 2017, p. 36). The catchphrase "Four legs good, Two legs bad," the Beasts of England song, and the modified Ten Commandments are just a few examples of the iconic components that highlight the subtleties of discourse contrivance.

At first, when they are no longer subject to human tyranny, the animals cooperate and split the profits from their work. Nevertheless, the pigs, posing as "mind workers," progressively gain control and evolve into despots who employ fear and manipulation in order to stay in power. Throughout the story, Napoleon, the pigs' leader, uses psychological manipulation to trick the other animals into following his increasingly strict rules. The animals eventually have to face the harsh truth that their revolution has failed and that they have been reduced from freedom to a state of servitude.

In the investigation that follows, we will examine the discourse manipulation dynamics in "Animal Farm," paying special attention to the tagline "Four legs good, Two legs bad." Through the prism of Marxism, this analysis seeks to expose the more general socio-political undertones underlying George Orwell's story by dissecting the minute details of manipulative language. Discovering how the pigs, as representatives of the ruling class, use language to maintain control is our goal as we read through "Animal Farm." By doing so, we hope to shed light on the long-lasting effects of Orwell's investigation into the manipulative forces

that create societal structures.

## **Literature Review**

Scholars have investigated how language plays a significant role in maintaining social hierarchies and power structures. Bloor and Bloor (2015) highlight how people in positions of authority deliberately use deceptive language to uphold the status quo and oppress marginalized groups. According to Steiner (2018), power and exploitation are at the core of social and economic interactions, highlighting the importance of Marxist theory in comprehending, maintaining, and challenging power structures within societal frameworks (Seageant, 2014).

Within the context of Marxist theory, George Orwell's "Animal Farm" provides an engaging case study for examining the use of deceptive language. The propaganda used by the ruling class, symbolized by the pigs, to subjugate the working class animals is summed up in the slogan "Two Legs Good, Four Legs Bad." The song "Beasts of England," in which Old Major declares that humans are evil oppressors, creates the framework for an animal revolution that appears to be acceptable. But the same tunes and catchphrases end up serving as instruments in the animal culture's oppressive power structures. Through pretending to be equal and tricking emotionally weak animals, the bourgeoisie, represented by the pigs, maintains control (Foucault, 1980).

The analysis is further enhanced by Foucault's investigation of power and knowledge. According to Foucault's 1980 essay "Power and Knowledge," power and knowledge are intrinsically related, with power depending on a particular discourse to generate knowledge. Dominant scientific knowledge reflects interpersonal interactions and power dynamics, thereby strengthening control through deliberate manipulation of information. When analyzed through the prism of Marxism, this viewpoint aligns with the manipulative language and power structures present in "Animal Farm" (Foucault, 1980, p. 52).

Furthermore, the idea that "knowledge is power" encapsulates the mutually beneficial relationship that Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault assert between power and knowledge. This paradigm sheds light on the methods used by totalitarian governments, such as the ones portrayed in "Animal Farm," to impose their will on the populace. They contend that power and knowledge are closely related, resulting in a situation where power increases as knowledge increases (Elaref, 2022).

Although previous studies have examined the manipulative discourse in "Animal Farm" from a Marxist standpoint, there is still a deficiency in the examination of the manipulative language present in the tagline "Two Legs Good and Four Legs Bad." In an effort to close this knowledge gap, this research paper provides a thoughtful analysis of deceptive language within the framework of

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*Marxist theory. The study hopes to further our understanding of manipulative language's role in modern contexts, where it is employed as a tool to maintain and strengthen power structures.*

### **Research Objectives**

- *To examine the utilization of manipulative language within the narrative of "Animal Farm."*
- *To investigate the thematic elements of manipulation through the lens of Marxist beliefs in "Animal Farm."*

### **Theoretical Framework**

*The political and economic theory known as Marxism was developed by German philosopher Karl Marx. Marxists shed light on the means by which the bourgeoisie establishes and maintains its power over the proletariat through economic exploitation. The bourgeoisie, who own the means of production, subjugate the working class, which provides labor and services. stutely observed ideology as a tool through which the ruling class imposes a belief system on the working class, fostering the perception that they are inherently destined for exploitation. Additionally, Marx (1970) emphasizes the internalization of ruling class beliefs by the working class, thereby diminishing their capacity to resist authoritative figures.*

*Marx also highlights how the bourgeoisie carefully manipulates language to hide the real source of their wealth and power, giving the impression that these come from their own hard work and intelligence rather than from the toil of the working class. Marx (1963) argues that languages in societies are driven by social dynamics that are entwined with consciousness, highlighting the crucial role that language plays in forming societal structures.*

*The Marxist viewpoint clarifies the expression and maintenance of power relations through language and provides a deep understanding of the power dynamics inherent in language. According to Chiluwá (2018, p. 842), discourse contrivance is not just a tool for oppression but also a strategy for resistance against the systems of power establishment. This manipulative discourse permeates many aspects of society; it appears implicitly in social norms, customs, and media language. It also appears in advertisements, newspapers, billboards, signboards, and even in speeches made by politicians, influencers, parents, and educators who encourage their kids to adopt certain viewpoints (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 34). According to Bourdieu (1991), discourse is recognized by Marxism as a tactic used by dominant classes to subjugate their less powerful counterparts and maintain and legitimize their hegemony (p. 46).*

*Essentially, the Marxist interpretation of language and power relations*

*illuminates how discourse – far from being an impartial instrument – becomes a theater of conflict where social structures are both maintained and subverted. This understanding of the complex relationships that exist between language, power, and resistance greatly advances our understanding of social dynamics and the many ways that people and groups negotiate power dynamics within a particular society.*

### **Research methodology**

*The present investigation utilizes a qualitative research methodology, which is consistent with the thematic examination of language, power relations, and manipulation found in George Orwell's "Animal Farm." The study is grounded in textual analysis, revealing the hidden levels of language use through the application of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method. The text is examined through a methodological lens called critical discourse analysis (CDA), which breaks down the text's strategic use of language and looks at different communication channels to reveal the underlying ideologies and values. According to Van Dijk (2017), the goal of critical discourse analysis is to uncover the complex interplay between interests and power in institutional and socio-historical contexts. Through a detailed analysis of each person's language use, this methodology aims to reveal the minute details that go into how power structures are portrayed and maintained in the story. This method makes sure that the manipulative language in "Animal Farm" is thoroughly examined from a Marxist standpoint, which advances our knowledge of how discourse works as a tool in power relations.*

### **Textual Analysis**

*This section of the study explores a complex analysis of "Animal Farm" by George Orwell from a Marxist viewpoint, focusing on manipulative discourse in particular. The animals' pursuit of freedom, happiness, and a life devoid of oppression serves as the backdrop against which the story is told. As they take in the Major's declaration that humans, their oppressors, take advantage of their labor and treat them like worthless beings, the seeds of revolution are sown. The anthem "The Beast of England, the Beast of Ireland" and the chant "Two Legs good and Four Legs Bad" express the revolutionary cry to free themselves from human masters, envisioning control over the means of production and the abolition of labor and slavery. These symbolic gestures serve as the impetus for the animals' shared fantasy of a happy life freed from the oppressive rule of two-legged rulers.*

*The animals initially enthusiastically accept Major's idealistic description of a life filled with freedom. That idealistic vision begins to deteriorate, though, as the pigs take over as leaders following Major's death. The story that follows shows*

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*how the animals gradually change and find it harder to oppose the pigs without sacrificing their core beliefs about rebellion. This developing situation highlights an important realization: oppression is deeply ingrained in power dynamics and is not primarily related to a person's leg count. The overriding theme is always the same, regardless of whether Mr. Jones is in charge or the animals have taken over: the expression of power dynamics as the impetus for oppression. This careful examination helps to reveal the many levels of discourse manipulation and illuminates the intricate dynamics of power within the novella's setting.*

*As the story progresses, the Pigs are shown to be continuously using deceptive language, as evidenced by their catchphrase, "Comrades! He cried... we pigs are the brainworkers."*

*This proclamation exemplifies the skill of enigmatic language use, fabricating a story to support their exemption from manual labor and allowance of privileges like milk and apples—items that the pigs do not naturally prefer but are considered necessary for their psychological welfare. The Pigs who are assigned the role of overseers do not work in the field; instead, they concentrate on duties such as assignment, work distribution, farm management, guidelines, and giving orders in order to maintain and establish their dominance. By carefully crafting their language, the pigs portray themselves as essential "brainworkers" in charge of the "management and organization" of the farm, deceiving others into believing that their leadership is essential to their survival. It provides a clear example of how misleading language can be used to gain consent even when the rhetoric goes against the interests of the people being persuaded.*

*The novella culminates with Squealer's shrill pronouncement of the revised seven commandments, which serves to validate the tactics employed by the mentally ill animals. The principle of equality for all, a foundational tenet, is egregiously violated as the pigs assert that "all animals are equal, yet some are more equal than others."<sup>1</sup> The narrative follows the pigs as their ideas of equality and cunning grow more audacious. An in-depth examination of the novella's layers is prompted by Orwell's compelling depiction of this linguistic manipulation. In "Animal Farm," the recurring theme of people being corrupted by power is central, and omens are used to great effect—especially in the first chapter, which foreshadows the events that will determine the course of the story. The storyline is enhanced by the theme of corruption, which presents the subtle effects of power on people through a complex web of deceitful speech and manipulation of language.*

*It seems inevitable that Napoleon would become emperor, and the story makes a strong case that any ruler could have ended up just as despotic. Even with*

Napoleon's lofty goals, Snowball presents himself as a potentially corrupt leader with equally unsettling characteristics. Prior to his exile, Snowball consents to the pigs keeping their milk and apples, defending their decision with the claim that they serve as "mind workers" who perform harder jobs. The results of their labors, though, never seem to show up. In addition, Snowball presents the concept of the windmill, an endeavor that ultimately fails. The story emphasizes that not even the first visionary, Old Major, is immune to corruption. Even as he advocates for the idea that "all animals are equal," Old Major quietly displays a sense of superiority in his passionate speech, which is given from a raised platform.

A reunion of pigs and humans in the novel's epilogue highlights a recurrent theme: the subordinate class is exploited, a historical pattern that has persisted for centuries regardless of whether humans or animals are in power. Regardless of the species in power, this final tableau highlights the perpetual cycle of exploitation and control. The story emphasizes the universality of the portrayed struggle for dominance and the exploitation of the subordinate by gently hinting that the corrupting nature of power is inherent and does not only exist within species.

The novella's overarching goals, which center on the examination of deceptive language within the context of Marxism, provide a backdrop against which this cycle of exploitation and corruption plays out. As representatives of the ruling class, the pigs skillfully use language to create stories that support their superior status and dominance over the animals of the working class. The pigs' reinterpretation of the fundamentals of equality heightens the manipulation and demonstrates the degree to which language can be perverted to advance the agendas of those in positions of authority.

As the narrative progresses, the objectives of the research come sharply into focus. Analyzing "Animal Farm's" deceptive language reveals a nuanced interaction between discourse and power relations. The pigs' skillful language use both validates and solidifies their authority. "Two Legs Good, Four Legs Bad" becomes a powerful tool for control, quietly reiterating the animal society's hierarchical structure. This is in line with the goal of the research, which is to examine how the novella uses manipulative language, particularly in relation to the designated slogan. Furthermore, the examination of manipulation from the standpoint of Marxist beliefs deepens as the pigs use linguistic deceit to maintain a cycle of oppression by manipulating the working-class animals' internal beliefs in addition to their external perception.

To sum up, this analysis explores the corrupting effect of power as demonstrated by the pigs' behavior and emphasizes the role language plays as a means of maintaining and expanding that power. The study's goals are supported

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*by the careful analysis of manipulative discourse, which sheds light on the complex interplay between language, power, and social structures. The novella, serving as a microcosm of societal struggles, becomes a rich terrain for exploring the multifaceted dimensions of manipulation within a Marxist framework.*

### **Discussion**

*Karl Marx's seminal teachings on power dynamics and class struggle find poignant resonance in George Orwell's "Animal Farm." An effective allegory for societal structures is the metaphorical depiction of classes through animals, especially the difference between two and four legs. Marx's fundamental insight is that power, when concentrated in the hands of the privileged class, becomes an instrument of exploitation and subjugation. In this critically acclaimed work of art, Orwell deftly incorporates Marxian ideas into the story to highlight the destructive effects of power on social dynamics.*

*In the context of power corruption, the seemingly innocent slogan "Two Legs Good, Four Legs Bad" assumes significant meaning. The pigs' manipulation of this slogan serves as a powerful example of how the ruling class can use language to oppress and demoralize the working class. The manipulation becomes a tool for reshaping societal norms and perceptions, going beyond simple linguistic devices. By means of his story, Orwell demonstrates how the tainting of authority has a psychological effect on individuals who are manipulated in addition to resulting in the establishment of new standards.*

*The analysis of power's influence encompasses the capacity to manipulate thoughts and behaviors via deceptive speech. The pigs, as the ruling class, masterfully employ language to shape the narrative, perpetuating a distorted reality that serves their interests. Marx's emphasis on the ruling class dominating the working class through ideological means is vividly reflected in the pigs' manipulation of discourse. The animals, initially united in their quest for freedom, fall prey to the insidious tactics of the pigs, highlighting the vulnerability of the working class to ideological control.*

*Essentially, the conversation emphasizes how deeply applicable Marx's theories are to understanding the power dynamics in "Animal Farm." The novella serves as a cautionary tale about the corrosive nature of power, its ability to manipulate language, and the far-reaching consequences of such manipulation on the working class. Orwell's investigation reveals how manipulative discourse becomes a means of dehumanizing and exploiting the working masses, which is in line with Marx's critique of the bourgeoisie.*

### **Conclusion**

*Words have the penultimate power to reshape perceptions, educate minds, and*



sometimes even imprison thoughts. Deceptive language is a powerful tool used by the working class to control the working class's thoughts in the complex web of social dynamics. The work animals are first enthralled with Old Major's song, which describes their escape from injustice and the Beast of England, but they soon discover that they are victims of another kind of enslavement. Assuming the role of mind manipulators, the pigs use discursive manipulation to expand their power and redefine reality while projecting an image of themselves as a higher social class.

The paradox arises when the working class, desperate for freedom, unintentionally gets caught up in a web of lies. The working class is persuaded that their oppression is not only acceptable but also normal and justified by the pigs' deft use of language. From a Marxist perspective, this tactic used by the ruling class is a reflection of a methodical attempt to keep total control over the masses. The proletariat, misled into accepting their conditions, finds their way of seeing the world and their minds enveloped in the subtle art of manipulation.

Thus, the storyline of "Animal Farm" becomes a clear representation of the disastrous consequences of linguistic deception in society, in line with Marxist principles. With its emphasis on the profound reality of power dynamics as seen through the prism of Marxist ideology, Orwell's masterwork serves as a warning to readers, asking them to carefully examine the stories offered by those in positions of authority. Ultimately, "Animal Farm" serves as evidence of the continuing applicability of Marx's theories in dissecting the many levels of social control and exploitation.



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