

The ways in which Orwell presents and structures *Old Major's* essay



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There are many different aspects of Old Major's speech that are presented and structured by Orwell to create an intended effect on the audience of animals which were listening, as well as the readers of 'Animal Farm'.

In his speech, Old Major raises the concern that "[animals] are not allowed to reach their natural span" by humans, and thus jumping on the bandwagon to generalise his cause with the concerns of the listeners, the other animals, who would be extremely worried about their life span due to their "laborious" lifestyle; even though Old Major describes himself as one of the "lucky ones" to have lived for "over twelve years". By doing this Orwell presents Old Major as a great leader, who empathises with, and knows the problems of the general population, even if they are not his. However the fact that Old Major is called "Willington Beauty" by Orwell, and boasts of his superior lifestyle also presents him as a character who thinks of himself as a cut above the rest; and therefore Orwell plants the seeds of the flaw in the idea of equality between the animals straight away. It can therefore be evaluated that Orwell presents old Major as a good leader through the 'empathy' of old Major, but shows flaws in his idea, for the readers, foreshadowing the fact that equality will never be possible. Additionally, Orwell structures old Major's speech as such that the speech starts with old Major saying he will not live much longer. This builds up sympathy for old Major for the farm animals, right at the beginning of the speech.

By doing this Orwell presents old Major as a mature and wise character, and creates belief for Major's hyperbolic statements. To round off presenting old Major as a great speaker, he ends his speech with a song, which he supposedly heard in his dreams. This song presents old Major as a man who

made tremendous use of methods available to him to get his point across to the audience, much like the Karl Marx, the thinker behind the principles of Marxism. It can therefore be said that the reader see old Major as a wise and a clever character, who has built up his respect, not through fear, but through his great ideas and wisdom. Old Major generalises ' man' by saying man is a threat, not just to the wellbeing of the animals but to their very lives as ' no animal escapes the cruel knife in the end'. The hens' eggs do not hatch into chickens, the pigs will ' scream' their lives out at the block, when Boxer's muscles give out he will be sent to the knacker and when the dogs grow old ' Jones ties a brick round their necks and drowns them'.

This idea is threatening towards the animals which gives them one more reason to agree to the revolution as they would feel threatened an un easy if they did nothing to prevent their fate that the Old Major described. This use of emotive language used by Orwell in the speech makes the reader sympathise with animalism/ Marxism, however presents the current democratic system as the way the farm is being currently run, which is totally unfair for the animals/ploratariat in the democratic system. I believe that it can be evaluated that Orwell is very succesful in adjoining old Major's views with the concerns of the animals, and through the emotive language is able to put across old Major as a wise, well natured but not perfect; just as Orwell would have seen Karl Marx as a socialist in the 1940's.