

Old major essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Old Major was a well-respected figure in the farm before he passed away. As the father of 400 odd pigs in the farm and a prize Middle White boar boosted his reputation and won the respect from other animals. Therefore, he could drive any ideas into the animals with much ease and few obstacles, unlike Snowball and Napoleon later in the story, when the two prominent powers were in control.

Also, Old Major is an eloquent speaker with mastery over various speaking tactics, for example, employing rhetorical questions to emphasize his stand; appealing to emotions by referring to how Clover's new-born babies were taken away; and inspiring fear by his mention of how man would dispose of Boxer when he no longer had any use. Of course, as the story progresses, we saw how ironic and prophetic his words were when Napoleon sent Boxer to the knackers. Besides his dazzling display of oratory, his charisma was another factor that helped him to rouse the excitement, joy, rage and hatred of the animals.

The way George Orwell conveyed the event was through personification, when the animals seemed to possess human feeling to sense these emotions. His idea of "animalism" promises to break the vicious cycle of man's control and lead to a Utopian road for the animals should they adopt Old Major's idea. Therefore, the animals were greatly inspired by images of a beautiful future and a life of liberation, in contrast with their enslavement by man. Old Major's speech started well, seizing the attention of the animals with hints of his impending death.

With his vast experience, he felt, and was recognized to be qualified to talk about issues so serious like “ the nature of life”. Throughout his speech, he had always been emphasizing the importance of a rebellion and of overthrowing man in order to eradicate the tyrant from their world. This, as the story progresses, turned out to be a profound irony. Well-planned and elegantly executed, Old Major’s speech achieved every effect he had intended, from the urgency of the gathering because he was at death’s door, to the emotions he roused in the animals.

The singing of “ Beasts Of England” further instilled the idea of rebellion, filling their hearts with hope and anticipation of the Utopian dream. Another important factor was the way the speech ended. Jones got up and fired a gunshot, during the time in which the animals were engrossed in the singing, at the peak of their excitement of the prospect of rebellion. The animals dispersed and turned in soon, but their emotions did not rest, and the fact that they did not had the chance to see Old Major again fuelled their passion to translate this dream into reality.

Like any revolution, it would have a cause – the source of this revolution, and an incident that could spark off the revolution. In the story of Animal Farm, the cause would be Old Major’s speech, the inspiration of the rebellion, and the incident would no doubt be triggered by hunger due to Jones’ negligence. Likewise, historical evidence has it that the idea of communism originated by Karl Marx, was spread by Lenin into the minds of the people before they turned against the Tsar later.

Wise and noble the Old Major might be, but the concepts delineated in his speech contained many flaws, which led to the manipulation of the animals by a power-hungry tyrant more foreboding than Jones. Throughout his speech, Old Major made constant mention to Man – the culprit and the cause of the animals' hunger and sufferings. He vehemently denounced humans and beseeched the animals to get rid of them. However, what he had failed to pinpoint was tyranny, the force acting on the oppressed working class.

Hence, the animals were unwittingly misled into thinking they had to expel man and only man. Humans became the focus of the animals' revolution, as well as the fear that lingered in their hearts forever. The pigs capitalised on this fear to justify their acts of corruption and the violation of commandments. This becomes very ironic when Jones, whom the animals were most afraid of, was no longer present and the pigs, which the animals placed their faith on, betrayed them. Indisputably, this is due to the fact that Old Major's speech gave them the idea that every animal in the farm was equal.

Foolishly thinking that every species was just like them, innocent and simple-minded, the animals did not expect any other animal to betray them. Little did they realize that temptation could lead even the most noble into the heart and darkness of corruption. Their unwavering faith in the revolution and in the pigs was also another factor contributing to the failure of the Utopian dream. Being a prized pig, Old Major was naturally treasured by Jones and thus, he would have dwelled in the loftiness of pleasure and luxury.

Where he had derived the idea of animalism was not known, but one could easily assume that he had witnessed the tragedies in the farm and therefore, conceptualised the idea of rebellion. However, it was only theoretical knowledge for him because he himself had not experienced the abuse the other animals were subjected to. Therefore, his idea could not be practical. This also explains his myopic conclusion that man was the “ common enemy”. In his eyes, only men were tyrants. He had not realized that tyranny can take shape in non-humanly forms as well.

Consequently, Old Major empathetically warned animals against adopting human traits, and this became the premise for the commandments which complemented the concept of Animalism. We witness eventually how Napoleon and the pigs violated each and every commandment. It can be argued that forbidden fruit tasted better: as a result of Old Major’s forewarning, human activities became more observed and more attractive than usual. One could easily imagine an animal, out of curiosity, putting on clothes, sleeping in a bed, or even taking a few sips of alcohol, just to have an idea what it was like to be a human.

Once they realised that these activities did not suit animals, they would abandon the idea. However, with Old Major forbidding them from attempting to be like man, the prospect of acclimatizing to these human traits had taken root and the pigs indulged in human pleasures which gave them a sense of supremacy. The rebellion that Old Major stirred in their hearts also brought about a secret wish to rebel against what Animalism stood for. This clearly

illustrates how Old Major's speech planted the seeds of failure of the utopian dream.

Without the shadow of a doubt, the failure of the utopian dream was due to the simplicity of the animals' mind and the cunning strategies of the pigs; however, Old Major's speech also played an important role in this dystopia. His inference that only man is tyrannical and his lack of physically experiencing the animals' long-suffering lives made the idea of animalism just an empty dream. While his speech caused rebellion to take root, it also prophesized failure. No one is perfect, and that also applies to Old Major, one that possessed great wisdom and far-sight.