

Incentives to Rebellion: A Reading of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*

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Abstract: A high number of clashes and fights carried on within the causes of their causes. The current paper centres on the novella by George Orwell to highlight the self-contained causes of rebellion addressed in *Animal Farm*.

The current article adopts a semiotic approach, which is a trend that considers Peirce's observation, where an index is linked to referents. In this view, signs indicate the existence or the process of revealing a matter. Signs in this perspective are predictive elements, from which analysing indices leads to a conclusion.

The current work shows that each participant in a process has used favourable circumstances regarding time and space to launch their project.

Keywords: *Circumstances, Incentive, People, Rebellion, Ruler.*

Résumé : Un nombre élevé de conflits et de combats porte en leur sein les causes de leur survenue. Le présent article se concentre sur le roman de George Orwell afin de mettre en évidence les causes de la rébellion abordées dans *Animal Farm*.

Le présent article adopte une approche sémiotique, qui tient compte de l'observation de Peirce, selon laquelle un indice est lié à des référents. Dans cette optique, les signes indiquent l'existence ou le processus de révélation d'une question. Les signes dans cette perspective sont des éléments prédictifs, à partir desquels l'analyse des indices permet de tirer une conclusion.

Le présent travail montre que chaque participant à un processus a exploité des circonstances favorables en termes de temps et d'espace pour lancer son projet.

Mots clés : circonstances, dirigeant, peuple, rébellion, stimulant

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Introduction

No action prompts from the vacuum (J. Donne, 1959, p.108-9). Whence there is a need to have a close look at events from the perspective to come out with the causes hidden within each successful action. The following article lays emphasis upon George Orwell's *Animal Farm* with a close observation of the direct causes of the collapse of Jones' Manor Farm into *Animal Farm*.

In fact, the rebellion kindled by Old Major and later fuelled by Napoleon and his fellow Snowball could not have taken place without a series of mistakes by many actors, namely the material fact and the intentional one. As for the material fact, one can refer to the careless behaviour of Jones, the owner of the Manor farm, while the intentional fact is related to the strong will of independence of the animals led by the pigs.

The current study considers clues from human mistakes to the awakening of the animals that give way to the successful occurrence of the rebellion of the animals following a semiotic approach, which holds that signs carry beyond everything the meaning within language. For a sign is the vehicle that carries the

meaning. It could be a word, a sound, an image, an object, or anything that can be interpreted as standing for something else. In fact, according to Peirce, references and deduction are all about likeness, symbol, or index, while an index is a sign that has a direct connection to its object. He puts,

In an argument, the premisses form are presentation of the conclusion, because they indicate the interpretant of the argument, or representation representing it to represent its object. The premisses may afford a likeness, index, or symbol of the conclusion. In deductive argument, the conclusion is represented by the premisses as by a general sign under which it is contained. In hypotheses, something like the conclusion is proved, that is, the premisses form a likeness of the conclusion.

(C. S. PEIRCE, 1868, p. 297)

In this perspective, the current article handles *Animal Farm* to find out all the possible clues that foreshadow the rebellion by bending the first concern on the action and omission of man and the second concern on the animal's longing for freedom.

Ruler's Partake

Privilege and Rebellion

George Orwell's novel has depicted many situations that stand as the forerunners of the rebellion. The case of privileged treatment of some pets is such a resounding in in the farm. In consequence, one can mention the relationship between Jones, the owner of the Manor Farm, and a boar, he admirably calls Willingdon Beauty though he was commonly called old Major, "(...)" so he was always called, though the name under which he had been exhibited was Willingdon Beauty". (AF, p.15).

It takes no time to realise that Mr. Jones has a special affection for Major. A simple glance at the name he is called, compounded with a positive adjective 'beauty', leaves no doubt about the fact that Major was the embodiment of the pride of the Manor Farm. And Jones has a good esteem for him.

This esteem, from Mr Jones, can be taken as the reason for the care given to the boar beyond its status of a common animal bred for a delicious soup. Old Major is promoted to the status of the pride of the Manor Farm. Such a treatment, which raised a common board to a status of a fellow man beside Jones' family, has resorted to old Major's long life and especially his preservation from the evil of a knife. Old Major has lived longer than any other boar taken care of until death. "He was twelve years old and had lately grown rather stout (...)". (AF. p.1). Twelve years is announced by the narrator with pride as if Old Major were a human being and is concerned with long life. What generally matters for a farmer about an animal is its weight. The weight determines its cost. But things are different for Major. To show the human-like treatment given to Major, the narrator uses the adverb 'peacefully' to euphemise the death of the boar, which denotes the care given to its dead body. He puts, "...old Major died peacefully in his sleep. His body was buried at the foot of the orchard. This was early in March" (AF, p.21).

A common boar would have been sold to butchers for food, but the love and the honour given to old Major made it be treated like a human being and be given even a burial in the orchard. The place is even symbolic. An orchard embodies not only natural beauty but also a special tranquillity, which people would like to offer to their dear ones by burying them in an orchard, as it offers the comfort that they wish for the deceased. Besides the comfort, the burial of a beloved one in the orchard keeps him part of the family and, keeps vivid his memory amongst his people. An orchard is then an ideal setting for commemoration.

Major is not an animal in the conception of Jones, but a fellow far beyond a common pet. The attachment between Jones and Major can be said to be strong and real. Especially at the side of Mr. Jones, who has all the abilities and prerogatives to use the boar to his free will. He could eat it or turn it into an article to gain money. But such use was not part of his agenda. Instead, Major's memory should be kept as a member of Jones' family, as a matter of fact, it enjoys good care even up to its twelve years. The narrator puts, "(...)" he was still a majestic-looking pig, with a wise and benevolent appearance in spite of the fact that his tushes had never been cut." Besides this, care can also be mentioned that fact of have a private room, especially arranged with a bed like which ranks him high to have a panoramic view of the farm as a privileged animal. He even has a lantern, and even when Jones'

lantern is turned off in the night, that of Major is still on. He certainly has a pre-eminence over the animal. For he dwells "(...)" on a sort of raised platform, Major was already ensconced on his bed of straw, under a lantern which hung from a beam." (AF. p.1.)

This special treatment can be seen as a sign of autonomy given to old Major. He has then become the model of his fellow animals that see in him a respectable elder. It can then be deduced from this perspective that Major was an uncommon animal in the Manor Farm. This privileged status made him highly respected by his fellow animals. Whence he could call a meeting which can resound great in the ears of animals of the Manor Farm (AF. p.1). "Word had gone round during the day that old Major, the prize Middle White boar, had had a strange dream on the previous night and wished to communicate it to the other animals. It had been agreed that they should all meet in the big barn as soon as Mr. Jones was safely out of the way."

Even though the purpose of the meeting was given as a meeting to listen to a dream. The mobilisation is exceptional as to show that everything from Old Major is precious and worth being taken carefully. Even the wild animals, such as rats and rabbits, feel concerned to finally be admitted as friends... "'Comrades," he said, "here is a point that must be settled. The wild creatures, such as rats and rabbits-are they our friends or our enemies? Let us put it to the vote. I propose this question to the meeting: Are rats comrades?" The vote was taken at once, and it was agreed by an overwhelming majority that rats were comrades." (AF. p. 19).

The high privilege bestowed on Major made him a source of inspiration for the rebellion. For he took that advantage to spark and fun rebellion against his benefactor, Mr. Jones. This is a dreadful betrayal. Besides the privilege bestowed upon Major, can be added that of Napoleon, Snowball, and Squealer, which has given them a natural leadership of the fight after old Major (AF. p.21).

This situation cannot be taken to be the only soft ground for the rebellion. There are also the carelessness and the mismanagement of the master of the farm, which is worth discussing.

Carelessness and Rebellion

Another soft ground for rebellion connected to man is the mismanagement of the farm. In the premises, there is a need to raise the fact that the farm is specialised in breeding animals. This requires close care, especially related to feeding them on time and cleaning their stables regularly.

The fact that old Major was such beautiful can be related to the care given by Mr Jones and to the animals. This assumption stands as the animals could compare their current situation to the former one, showing the big difference in the care of the Manor Farm before and after the judicial challenges of Mr. Jones.

In past years Mr. Jones, although a hard master, had been a capable farmer, but of late he had fallen on evil days. He had become much disheartened after losing money in a lawsuit, and had taken to drinking more than was good for him. For whole days at a time he would lounge in his Windsor chair in the kitchen, reading the newspapers, drinking, and occasionally feeding Moses on crusts of bread soaked in beer. His men were idle and dishonest, the fields were full of weeds, the buildings wanted

roofing, the hedges were neglected, and the animals were underfed.

(AF. p. 23).

This passage provides a reason for Mr. Jones' change of habit but still highlights his weakness when facing life's challenges. Indeed, his ownership of the Manor Farm is acknowledged, and his property is also recognized. What is not clearly stated is what is denied, but one can observe that his status as a farmer is not denied.

However, his weakness towards life challenges has led him to overlook his profession to concentrate on the lost case, which is indeed a great mistake. By overlooking his profession, which surely would have provided the benefit to compensate for the loss, Mr. Jones has not been able to value his source of income.

Surprisingly, Mr. Jones's depression over the lost lawsuit and, more importantly, over the money he lost has caused him to become a drunkard. This is another way of losing money. By excessively drinking beer, Mr Jones, besides losing his potential for management, has been losing money by spending the minimal savings intended for his family and farm. Although this depression has not resulted in suicide, it has led to the loss of his nobility and personality.

The weakness of Jones to be past-focused instead of future-focused exhibits his inconstancy and lack of personality, which has naturally favoured his men's negligence, who are said to be such idle and dishonest (AF. p.23).

Besides Mr Jones's failure to organise his life after the lawsuit, one can underscore the role of his workers. It is worth noting that the lawsuit did not cancel the jobs of his men or collaborators, but the latter took advantage of their master's depression to enjoy their freedom much more than their assigned roles as collaborators. Indeed, with good collaborators, the farm would not have collapsed, because the immediate cause of the rebellion was hunger due to the negligence of the animals by both Jones and his men.

Another aspect linked to Mr Jones's weakness is his wife's lack of concern for her husband's condition. This is evident in the opening paragraph, where the narrator mentions

MR. JONES, of the Manor Farm, had locked the hen-houses for the night, but was too drunk to remember to shut the popholes. With the ring of light from his lantern dancing from side to side, he lurched across the yard, kicked off his boots at the back door, drew himself a last glass of beer from the barrel in the scullery, and made his way up to bed, where Mrs. Jones was already snoring. (AF, p.1).

This passage reveals a catastrophic situation not only about Mr Jones but also about his wife. While the man is still aware of his duty related to the care of the animals, which he does partially due to his drunkenness, the wife seems less concerned by the lot of his husband as she is the first to sleep, unmindful of whether Jones will sleep outside or get to the room.

This behaviour of Mrs Jones indicates her immaturity and her lack of concern for her husband's depression. She was sound asleep while her drunken husband was still out. Consequently, Mrs. Jones appears to have lost interest in her husband's well-being, leaving

Mr Jones alone. This situation is highly destabilising for depressed individuals like Jones.

By standing beside her husband, she could have readjusted the least light of responsibility left in Jones. The popholes would have been shut. Nevertheless, even the beloved wife of Jones is not concerned with his depressive state, or she takes it for granted.

In this section, inattention is evident at every level among the people on the farm. Jones's negligence has simply been replaced by that of his men and his wife. He receives no support from his peers in his depression. Surprisingly, on Manor Farm, while no one cares for his fellow men, animals do.

Animals' Partake

Ambition and rebellion

While men were losing their taste for life as it is with Mr Jones, and for development and honesty, which is the sad case of Mr Jones' workers, the animals of the Manor Farm have been nurturing a strong desire for freedom and self-determination from human rule.

This wish is sparked by old Major, the twelve-year-old boar dearly loved by Mr Jones. His great notoriety as the beloved boar of the master has earned him respect from his fellow animals. While his closeness with the man has led him to study man's weaknesses, this has boosted his desire to overthrow his benefactor. He seems dissatisfied with the lot of his fellow animals despite his personal better living conditions.

At the beginning of the novel, the narrator emphasises the notoriety of Old Major before his fellow animals by illustrating how eager they are to gather around him at night to listen to the dream (AF. p.1). "Word had gone round during the day that old Major, the prize Middle White boar, had had a strange dream on the previous night and wished to communicate it to the other animals. It had been agreed that they should all meet in the big barn as soon as Mr. Jones was safely out of the way." The dream, in fact, reflects Old Major's perspective and vision for his fellow animals, showing that he does not want them to take for granted their current situation as being subjected to men.

He has, in fact, raised his fellow animals' awareness of their ability to self-govern and rule, thereby sparking their thoughts of revolt against human rule and authority. To be effective, he referenced his parents' unfulfilled dream in line with which stands his current dream. In so doing, Major is turning the vision into a generational longing for the animals that could be traced back to their ancestors. He declares,

It was a dream of the earth as it will be when Man has vanished. But it reminded me of something that I had long forgotten. Many years ago, when I was a little pig, my mother and the other sows used to sing an old song of which they knew only the tune and the first three words. I had known that tune in my infancy, but it had long since passed out of my mind. Last night, however, it came back to me in my dream. And what is more, the words of the song also came back-words, I am certain, which were sung by the animals of long ago and have been lost to memory for generations.

(AF.p.19.)

The boldness of Old Major in this passage has awakened the animals' ambition, especially the pigs', who have taken on the business in memory of the cherished dreams of their beloved ancestors.

Whence it can be seen that, although Old Major's speech ignited the desire for rebellion, it took the commitment of Snowball, Napoleon, and Squealer, along with the cooperation of the other pigs, to cultivate and develop that ideology of Animalism.

But the eagerness for the success of the rebellion lies in the hands of both Napoleon and Snowball. (AF.p.21.) "The work of teaching and organising the others fell naturally upon the pigs, who were generally recognised as being the cleverest of the animals. Pre-eminent among the pigs were two young boars named Snowball and Napoleon," together with Squealer, (AF.p.21.) "elaborated old Major's teachings into a complete system of thought, to which they gave the name of Animalism. Several nights a week, after Mr Jones was asleep, they held secret meetings in the barn and expounded the principles of Animalism to the others."

From the dream of Old Major, which could not lead the rebellion, a strategy has been implemented by the young boars. The dream is beyond a simple dream, a motivational speech or more a call for freedom by Old Major. This call, which sounds and keeps on resounding, has become a theory woven following rigorous principles added to a prospective plan after the rebellion. The matter left is the event that will occasion the rebellion.

In this section, it has been found that the call for rebellion of Old Major has led to an ideology scientifically woven by the youth who used their intellect to the profit of the community. From the commitment of three main protagonists, namely Snowball, Napoleon, and Squealer, other animals have been taught and convinced to stand together for the common cause referred to as 'Animalism'. The reticence of some animals to the rebellion exhibits the efficient leadership by the pigs, who have been able to get the consent and the participation of all the animals in the fight.

Unity and rebellion

Beyond the speeches and the commitment stands the collective action of the animals to achieve the overthrow of man from the Manor Farm. The process is about the expulsion of Jones and his men from the Manor Farm. They were to be expelled from their property as if they were illegal immigrants on the farm they owned and tilled for years.

This process is simply a brutal expropriation without compensation, which proves to be a usurpation of property. From their perspective of overthrowing man, animals tend to justify their action as the embodiment of their natural right to long for freedom and independence. Even though this claim of the animals of the Manor Farm looks odd and irrational, it has conquered their hearts, and they are unanimously ready to action at the slightest occasion.

There is a need to point out that though the pigs are the initiators of the wave of freedom amongst the animals of the Manor Farm, they are still aware that success is impossible without collective action. Therefore, the involvement of every animal has been requested even the weakest, is involved in the policy of Animalism.

It is the consent of the animals that can be the real engine of the rebellion for (AF. p.23.), "(...) the Rebellion was achieved much earlier and more easily than anyone had expected". Without even a

special planning of the last action, the cows instinctively launch the action to the surprise of any observer. In fact,

One of the cows broke in the door of the store-shed with her horn and all the animals began to help themselves from the bins. It was just then that Mr. Jones woke up. The next moment he and his four men were in the store-shed with whips in their hands, lashing out in all directions. This was more than the hungry animals could bear. With one accord, though nothing of the kind had been planned beforehand, they flung themselves upon their tormentors.

(AF, p. 23.)

Though spontaneously launched, the move is followed by all the animals. As if other animals were unanimously waiting for a signal to express their anger and disapproval towards the comportment of men in the Manor Farm. The cows prove to be the most courageous and lead the fight. This spontaneous reaction of the cows can be traced back not only to the hunger that every animal is experiencing, but also to the extreme hunger of the cows who have been milked in the morning (AF, p.23). By milking them, the cows have been greatly diminished, especially without being fed in compensation. Consequently, it is not surprising that the fight is opened by the cows.

The involvement of all the animals in the fight has surely determined the successful outcome of the rebellion. indeed, the rebellion long for has come true in a while. This situation illustrates clearly the saying that goes, "together we stand, divided we fall"

Conclusion

Throughout George Orwell's novel, it has been found that the occurrence of the rebellion in the Manor Farm can be traced back to many factors, especially those woven by men, whether consciously or not, and those implemented by the animals. That is to say that every rebellion or revolution has, in the light of Orwell's work, two main origins the one of the oppressive side and one of the oppressed sides.

The current study has come out with the fact that, in the Manor Farm, the men have given way to their brutal expulsion from their land on two grounds. The first is the privilege given to some animals. The special care and treatment given to Old Major and even Snowball and Napoleon have opened their eyes to the weaknesses of man instead of making them faithful to the master. Their discovery of the weaknesses of man has kindled in them the desire to take over the farm from man, as they make themselves capable of running it better than man.

The next discovery is the egotism of the master and his thought that animals lack science and are then weak and cannot think of liberty. This thought has made man to second-class the care of the animals, leaving them hungry. Which attitude ignited the feeling of rebellion amongst the animals of the Manor Farm. Consequently, leaders should not take the submission and the obedience of their people for granted, for things can change rapidly to their surprise.

Another finding is related to the active role of the oppressed. In George Orwell's work, the animals are the ones depicted as the oppressed. The awareness of the animals about their oppression

leads them to react. The first reaction was the desire for freedom, which raised a collective awareness of their bad living conditions with the rise of committed leaders (J.J. Rousseau, 1992, p.79). The second active reaction is the unity constructed on three main grounds, the first being the homage to their ancestors' longings, the second being the adherence to the principle of animality, which cements the unity, and finally, the collective action.

All in all, this article has worked out the steps of the occurrence of rebellion and revolt in *Animal Farm* that could be transposed to real life.

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