

# The Prose Writings of George Orwell

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to highlight the major works of one of the most popular modern English writers, George Orwell. Through this paper, the readers can get a glimpse into the writings styles as well as the themes and objectives of Orwell's writings. He is one of those writers who has the capacity to engage the readers through some of the most wonderfully written and narrated stories. In fact, his essays are also equally engaging and there is a constant interaction between the writer and his readers in his works. This paper highlights some of the major works of the writer and also attempts to establish him as a great literary figure in the world of literature as a whole and in English prose writings in particular.

**KEY-WORDS:** prose, essay, society, politics, criticism, personal experience etc.

## INTRODUCTION

George Orwell (1903-50) is the pen name of Eric Arthur Blair, an English novelist, essayist, journalist and critic. He was an Indian-born English writer known for writing on a wide range of subjects dealing with a wide range of issues. His subjects included novels, critical essays, satirical works, literary criticism, democratic socialism, anti-Fascism etc. He was an active writer during the period from 1928-50. Orwell is remarkable for his use of lucid language and expressions. He intends to write for the mass and his works mostly talk about social injustice and raise a voice of protest or try to spread awareness against the ills of society.

## MAJOR WORKS OF ORWELL AND THE THEMES AND ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED THERE

Orwell wrote a wide variety of topics as well as multiples genres of writing. He wrote literary criticisms, poetry, fiction as well as journalistic works. His prose works are very much popular. He is perhaps best known for his novel **Nineteen Eighty-Four** (1949) and the allegorical fiction **Animal Farm** (1945). Apart from these two, there are other popular novels such as **Burmese Days**, **A Clergyman's Daughter**, **Coming Up for Air** etc. Among the non-fictional works of Orwell, the most famous ones are **The Road to Wigan Pier**, **Homage to Catalonia** etc.

Orwell is also famous for his essays and many of his essays are widely acclaimed. His essays were mainly based on politics, literature, language, culture etc. In these essays Orwell tries to put forward his ideas regarding politics, literature and language and also tries to give an account of the social condition of his time. Some of his popular essays include 'Boy's Weeklies', 'A Nice Cup of Tea', 'Picture Postcards', 'Homage to Gandhi', 'Why I Write' etc.

George Orwell created some of the sharpest satirical works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with such works as **Animal Farm** and **Nineteen Eighty-Four**. He was a man of strong opinions who addressed some of the major political movements of his time, including imperialism, fascism and communism.

## PERSONAL LIFE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON HIS WRITING

Orwell, being the son of a British civil servant, spent his first days in India, where his father was stationed. His mother brought him to England with his sister and he completed his schooling in Eton in England. Orwell was a writer in the making right from the beginning, and reportedly composed his first poem at an early age of four years. His first major success was a poem written by him at the age of 11 which was published in the local newspaper. However, his success as a man of literature mostly came as a prose writer.

After completing his schooling he joined the Indian Imperial Police Force in 1922, as he had no money to continue his university education. He was posted in Burma where he worked or served the force for five years and after that went back to England, being intent on making it as a successful writer. However, he did have to struggle initially to achieve success as a literary writer. His first major work **Down and Out in Paris and London** was written in the year 1933 which seek to explore his time out living in these two cities. This work gives the readers a glimpse into the life and struggles of Orwell during that time. He was frank enough to admit the kinds of struggle he had to do. Orwell mentions about all the sorts of jobs that he opted for to make ends meet, including being a dishwasher. The book provided a brutal look at the lives of the working poor. Not wishing to embarrass his family, he published the book under the pseudonym George Orwell.

This period in Burma holds a very important place in the life as well as in the writings of Orwell. The overseas experience that he gathered in Burma being an Englishman was explored nicely in his next work **Burmese Days**, published in the year 1934. The novel offered a dark look at British colonialism in Burma, then part of the country's Indian empire. This novel is important because it seeks to present before the readers the real picture of British imperialism and colonialism, how it affected the people and their workings. In fact, Orwell's interest in politics and political matters grew rapidly after the publication of this novel.

In December 1936, he joined the Spanish Civil War and was badly injured in the war. During that time he suffered from other health problems and in 1938 he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. In order to support himself during that period, Orwell took on all sorts of writing. He wrote numerous essays and reviews over the year, developing a reputation as a well-crafted literary critic capable of producing good quality works on criticism.

## MASTER PIECES OF ORWELL

Orwell is best known for two novels, **Animal Farm** and **Nineteen Eighty-Four**, both of which were published towards the end of his life. In fact, these two novels are the seminal works of his later period of life. **Animal Farm** is one of the finest satirical works in English literature. It was an anti-Soviet satire in a pastoral setting featuring two pigs as its main protagonists. These pigs were said to represent Stalin and Trotsky. The novel brought Orwell great acclaim as a novelist and also helped him in securing financial rewards.

In 1949, Orwell published another masterwork, **Nineteen Eighty-Four**. This novel provided a bleak vision of the world divided into three oppressive nations. However, this led to some criticism as it stirred up controversy among the literary reviewers who found the future presented through this fictional work too despairing. Orwell gave the readers a glimpse into what would happen if the government controlled every detail of a person's life, down to their own private thoughts. The novel proved to be another huge success for Orwell. However, he had little time to enjoy his success as he was in the last stages of his battle with tuberculosis and ultimately died the next year. Orwell died in the year 1950 and after his death both these two exceptional works were turned into films, which became very successful and enjoyed tremendous popularity over the years.

## CONCLUSION

In fine, we can say that he was a novelist of considerable reputation or fame. However, novels were not the only popular works of Orwell. His essays were equally popular and interesting. Orwell's essays covered a wide range of subjects and each was unique for its theme as well as the mode of presentation. In fact, Orwell was one writer whose works were able to attract the attention of his readers. Whether it was some serious political or social matter or a simple topic like how to make a good cup of tea, almost all the diverse aspects of human life found its place in his essays. There is the presence of the allegorical tone in almost all his works. One of his most remarkable essays was '**Politics and the English Language**' where he discusses about the English language and the way it is used or misused by some writers. Orwell advocates the use of simple language and points out his own set of rules of a perfectly written essay. Another very popular and widely read essay is, of course, '**Shooting an Elephant**'. The essay is written almost in the form of a story and it covers his experience in Burma as a British officer. It makes him appear to be a good narrator. The essay is also a commentary on the ills of Imperialism which Orwell never approved of.

We can conclude by saying that Orwell is a writer par excellence. His style as well as his mode of expression makes him truly a remarkable figure in English literature as a prose writer.

## REFERENCES:

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