George Orwell As A Criticist Of Totalitarian Governments

George Orwell has earned the right to be called one of the finer writers in the English language through such novels as 1984, Animal Farm, and Down and Out in Paris and London. Orwell heavily criticized totalitarian governments in his writing and carried that same passion when it came to describing good writing. George Orwell believed that most works of writing in that time period was inaccurate and merely served as a method of deception. In Orwell's point of view, modern English authors wrote without the use of concrete terms. This allows the truth to be open and vulnerable to manipulation which can create difficulty with interpreting the true meaning of something.

Political authors are known to use euphemisms and pretentious language which help add a perspective and informational sound to the writing. One example Orwell mentioned was the way political authors like to use the word 'elimination'. This word was used by fascist schemes during World War Two in effort to justify all the horrors of that time period such as the exploitation and mass murders of millions of innocent people. In Orwell's opinion, the English language was unpolished and brutish and took away people's freedom to think for themselves, allowing people to have corrupt thoughts. Orwell's personal beliefs regarding the topic of the English language are revealed in his literary works Animal Farm and 1984. In both novels, language is a reoccurring theme that is of central importance in order for successful manipulation and control to be obtained. Manipulation through language is observed in Animal Farm through the pigs. The pigs cleverly exert propaganda, songs, and obscuring figures of speech, which makes it easy to twist the meanings of words and triumphantly deceive the other animals into a sense of patriotism.

In the novel 1984, language is extremely restricted. The government takes control of society and watches their every move, making it very difficult for people to say what they truly want to say because even people's thoughts are constantly monitored. Newspeak is used by the government to control what people can and can't say in effort to censor unpopular opinions. Newspeak is a language that is constantly being revised and edited down to limit the options people have when using their vocabulary. A way to get a better idea of what it was like in the society presented in 1984 is to imagine a carefully and thoughtfully curated sculpture. The sculpture is meant to represent freedom of thought. With each word that is removed from vocabulary through the commands of Winston's comrade, Syme, of the Ministry of Truth's Research Department, a small piece of the sculpture is broken off, the endless possibility of words that can be used to describe or express feelings, thoughts, and ideas shrinks, and along with it, so does freedom of thought. Language controls what can or cannot be talked about, but it also controls how people talk about them. Contemporary debates such as those regarding abortion display the importance of word choice and the influence it can have on the audience. Pro-life advocates show a tendency to use the "baby" when protesting knowing that this word is emotionally loaded, instead of the pro-choice word, "fetus", which is scientifically correct and unlinked to emotion. In many cases, words act as what literary theorist Kenneth Burke calls "terministic screens." Words carry the ability to shape perception and Orwell was very much aware of it and unveiled this truth in his writing.

Orwell was a big fan of writing that was clear and concise. In Politics and the English Language,

an essay about the issues with the English language and possible solutions, Orwell offers six rules that any writer can use as a tool to improve their writing and avoid the corruption of the modern English language. The list poses as a solution to the problem with constant temptation to use meaningless diction. This can be threatening to the writer because it restrains their real intellectual capabilities from being embedded into their writing. Orwell harshly criticizes people who use language as a tool to perplex, rather than present the truth, arguing that language, though political, should never be used as a weapon with the purpose of to take advantage of vulnerable audiences.

In chapter three of 1984, George Orwell expressed the idea that “it is impossible to found a civilization on fear and hatred and cruelty.” He follows with saying that this type of civilization would lack liveliness, never last and eventually fall to pieces. People take language for granted. They take for granted the power words have, the power being people’s ability to express themselves in the ways that they desire. The last two years, cultures of fear and hatred have been seen over and over again, courtesy of the President-Elect. The eloquence of fear and hate that Donald Trump’s campaign was founded on is undisputable. Although Trump’s regime does not have complete and total control like Big Brother’s Party in the novel, Trump’s election has already led to an alarmingly dangerous increase in hate crimes. Much like the perpetual war in Oceania, there is no end in sight for the conflicts surrounding Trump’s presidential status. Big Brother’s creed of inciting hatred and fear resembles Trump’s tactics in certain aspects. For the sake of society, hopefully George Orwell was right about hate and fear founded civilizations never seeing the light of day. It is society’s responsibility to not allow for something like the Big Brother Party to ever take control.