

Tuesday, September 6, 2011

Soapstone of George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant"

The subject of George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant" is anti-imperialism. His hatred for colonial Britain is illustrated through his inner conflict of whether or not he should actually shoot the elephant. He feels trapped by his animosity for Britain but then by the animosity of the natives towards because of his superior ruling power. In his essay, he writes, "...but in reality was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro." This once again shows how he can't decide but he knows must eventually pick a side, the only question is which one.

"Shooting an Elephant" was written during 1963 and it told Orwell's encounters during his visit in Burma. The essays time of creation is conveyed by Orwell's hatred of Britain, but within right considering that during the 1930's Britain still controlled many countries and only a short year after the publication, 1964, a socialist party called the Labour Party gained power in Britain furthering the imperialist movement. The place of George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant" is unclear, but one can assume it was written during his time in Burma. Burma is assumed to be the birthplace of the essay because it is illustrated very vividly in the essay, like no details were spared so it is safe to assume that he wrote the happenings as soon as he could as to not forget anything. Orwell uses very precise detail like, "a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts, thatched with palm leaf, winding all over a steep hillside." Suggesting that he was remembering the vent otherwise he may not have been so in-depth with his descriptions.

George Orwell's specific audience for "Shooting an Elephant" is the English people as a whole. The author's target audience is revealed through Orwell's inner conflict of whether the elephant should be killed or not. He feels that whatever decision he makes, give into Britain or the natives, there will always be controversy which shows that sometimes doing what is legally enforced and doing what is ethical are not always compatible. The author's general audience for this essay is all of humanity. The author's general audience is shown through the details he uses to create deeper thoughts than the literal one on the surface. He wants all to know that you will always question yourself and others will question you whenever you have a decision to make and although that may sway you, those negative comments need to be thrown out because sometimes neither is right.

George Orwell's purpose in "Shooting an Elephant" is that when one turns tyrant, he only destroys his freedom. Turning oppressive is illustrated when Orwell states, "imperialism was an evil thing...sooner I got out of it the better." Imperialism is the idea that a country has power over and other countries and has the ability to control, govern, and oppress said country. The purpose is further revealed by Orwell's reluctance to shoot the elephant, not wanting to give into imperialistic desires knowing that once he does, he will lose himself and his freedom.

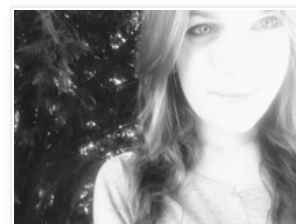
George Orwell, born in India, believes that only evil comes from imperialism. This value is illustrated by his direct quote in which he bluntly states imperialism is an evil thing. One can only assume that if Orwell wrote it, he must believe it considering the essay has no sarcastic tone whatsoever. George Orwell's use of diction is evident in his statement, "only evil comes from imperialism" and it enhances his purpose because instead of weaving around the thought, he just states it point blank so his audience understands that that is he point which he wants to get across.

George Orwell exhibits an aggressive and determined attitude about imperialism and its evils in "Shooting an Elephant" These attitudes are expressed by Orwell's structure of his essay, arranged chronologically to create suspense as to his next actions and his sentence formation, very blunt phrases, very openly expressing his passionate hatred. The author's tone serves the purpose of the essay because the essay did tell a story, it felt as if Orwell was trying to persuade us to share his views through his anecdotes. With his determination, Orwell deeply embeds persuasive fragments into the text as to where we as the audience may not completely grasp it while reading, but yet they still serve their purpose because they get the audience thinking and questioning what they would do in a similar situation.

Posted by Lusi Lukova at 7:51 PM



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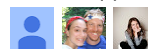
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1 comment:


AmyKoutsunis September 8, 2011 at 8:08 AM

Thanks for being so thoughtful in this analysis. Your content is great.

Remember that if you have two complete sentences, you need to have a period, question mark, or exclamation point between them. You cannot join two complete sentences with a comma. (This mistake is called a comma splice.)

"This once again shows how he can't decide but he knows must eventually pick a side, [period instead of comma] the only question is which one."