George Orwell And The English Language Essay, Research Paper

Orwell and the English language

George Orwell, the author of ?Politics and the English language? believes in the traditional style of the English language and that there is a definite correlation between language and action. Orwell highly believes that proper English can be cured by never using slang and never using a long word where a short one will do. It is the citizen?s moral responsibility to use the English language with clarity. Most important, people must earn the English language and learn to use it the correct way. Orwell would be upset if he saw a modern day newspaper; every article has a flaw. In an article from the Tri Valley Herald titled ?Pint-size pundits document campaigns,? Dole uses a metaphor and slang that would infuriate Orwell. Dole compared Forbes to a ?new restaurant that packs customers in at first but loses them once folks realize the food isn?t so good.? Language such as this creates unnecessary ambiguity and causes unclarity to the reader.

Curing the English language of its? slang and ambiguity is an extreme belief of Orwell. Large words are simple statements dressed up to attract the reader?s attention. Many large words are used to dignify certain classes of words such as politics, science, and culture oriented people. These words may sound elegant and sophisticated when in reality they are confusing and useless to society. Use of such meaningless words are used to also deceive the public and cover up real intentions. When a politician speaks we hear that he is talking but do not really understand. If he used words the common society understood, he would also understand himself too. Most politicians speak in this language because it is part of political conformity.

Many slang words have disappeared over the years due to the common people choosing not to use them. It is a conscious action to do this. One must always be aware of the words they use and that they use them with clarity. Languages such as French and the scientific language, need to be discarded from the English language. Latin and Greek must also be used at a minimum.

A citizen?s moral responsibility should be of language clarity. Orwell stated it best when saying ?A mass of Latin words fall upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outlines and covering up all the details. The great enemy of clear language is insincerity?(paragraph 15). To speak clearly one must speak from their heart and be sincere with every word. Only by doing this will everyone fully understand. Latin words may sound appealing but only block the true meaning of the phrase or words behind it. One who could get rid of bad habits and speak from the heart, will then think and understand with clarity. As will those who are reading or listening. Orwell once said,? to think clearly is a necessary step toward political regeneration? (paragraph 2). A person not interested in what they are saying will use large appealing words without knowing their true meaning or may even use incompatible metaphors and slang.

All people must earn the English language and learn to use it the correct way. Political language is the worst of them all. Political language consists of so many faults such as euphemism, ambiguity, and vagueness. Even people who should and do know better of the English language can subject themselves to bad usage. It is said that thought destroys language but language may also destroy thought. Bad usage of the English language can spread by imitation and sometimes tradition.

English can begin to heal by discarding every word or idiom which is no longer useful in any way. People must then use the fewest and shortest words that will cover the meaning being discussed. Orwell believes the worst thing one could do with words is to surrender to them. People also need rules to rely on when instinct fails. Orwell has constructed six simple rules that will help cover most cases. This is not an exact quote of Orwell rules. However, they basically consist of (1) never use a common metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech. (2) Do not use a long word when a short one will work. (3) Always get rid of excess words. (4) Never use the passive when you can use the active. (5) Never use a foreign or scientific word when there is an English equivalent. And finally, (6) Break any of these rules before you do something outright stupid. Orwell has taught the English language to so many but there are still so many to teach. Language is a tool for expressing thought not concealing or preventing it. When a person finally earns the English language and uses it with clarity will they then make a stupid remark. The stupidity will be obvious, even to themselves. Only then have they learned to respect and use the English language properly. Tossing all needless English words and phrases where it belongs- in the trash.

To Orwell, the bad usage of English is inevitably curable. There are many steps to completing this and they can be done. People cannot change this country?s problem with the English language in a short period of time, but one can change their own use of the language. By doing this, eventually the country will be cured of unclarity and ambiguity. English is simple and quicker once one has earned the English language. One will then make sense of every word with clarity and understanding.