

George orwell essay sample



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George Orwell's childhood days were spent in Crossgates School, where he suffered from the habit of bed wetting and felt extremely terrified of its consequences. He was verbally warned first and then beaten for this.

Although he knew it was well out of his control, he felt guilty for it. He recalls this by saying " lesson of my boyhood: that I was in a world where it was not possible for me to be good" (" Such, Such were the Joys"). Once when the headmaster had beaten him for wetting his bed, he proudly told the other kids that it did not pain. The headmaster severely punished him again after hearing this, which led Orwell to learn that it was better to silently accept it when one's luck is good.

When serving in Burma as a police officer, he realized that the Burmese people really did not like the presence of Europeans. He also passionately hated his job and was idealistically against the British imperialistic occupation of Burma. He was caught up between guilt of working for the British Empire and frustration of being looked down upon by prisoners. Orwell experienced a moment of truth, when an elephant had gone out of control. A large crowd had gathered to witness this and he felt compelled to shoot the beast just to stand up to their expectations. He felt that British officers tyrannizing people on Burmese soil were just dummies trying to live up a white man's reputation. He also witnessed hanging a prisoner in a Burmese jail, which made him feel helpless and inhumane. He was also deeply disturbed when everyone else went about minding their own business after the execution, as if nothing had happened.

When Orwell was admitted in the general ward of a Paris hospital, he experienced first hand how lesser-privileged people were treated like beasts

in a hospital. The equipments were not sterilized and the patient beds were really close to one another. Doctors never even bothered speaking a few calming words to sick patients, while nurses took their sweet time to move the corpses from the ward. These conditions were blaring realities faced by people who could not afford proper healthcare. When Orwell was wandering as a tramp, he went around looking for scraps for food and accommodation. Not even an ounce of human dignity was left in these scraps, as everyone forced to be completely naked during medical inspection.

When he worked in a second-hand bookshop in London, he came across students, collectors and people who pretended to buy books but never paid for them. He says “ it gave them, I suppose, the illusion that they were spending real money” (“ Bookshop Memories”). He also found it amusing that the bookstore had a no-deposit policy for lending, in spite of active book thieves. The constant sight of old books made him lose interest for buying such books. Orwell’s experiences in the Spanish War are haunted by dirty toilets, hunger and boredom, although the war was supposed to defend democracy. He recalls “ one of the essential experiences of war is never being able to escape from disgusting smells of human origin” (“ Looking Back on The Spanish War”). He witnessed extreme poverty in Marrakech where even a proper burial was a luxury to the poor, which gave a lot of perspective about life. He also humbly admits that his work is selfish and lacked political depth, but acknowledges that being useful to society has always been one of his writings’ important motives.

Orwell’s famous quote “ every line of serious work I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for

democratic socialism, as I understand it" (" Why I Write") was largely influenced by his experiences when he served as a police officer and soldier for the British Empire. As a minion employed by imperialistic masters to serve their own ends and having witnessed human tyranny, he felt totalitarianism sucked the life out of human spirit and freedom.

Works Cited

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