

How george orwell uses tone and diction in 1984 essay sample

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George Orwell uses tone and diction in his book to mold the scene of 1984 into a gloomy, dark and depressing set.

He begins with setting the time of day, thirteen. Choosing “thirteen” instead of one Orwell sets a tone of an over militarized nation. He then moves on to using “boiled cabbage and old rag mats”; an all-enveloping, oppressive smell one couldn’t wish on even on their worst enemy. The combination of these two along with the babbling telescreen, snooping police, and contrived posters anchor the despotic tone.

Orwell didn’t always use negative tones; he sometimes employed positive diction to throw the reader off balance or to show significance.

When describing Winston’s diary he uses the words “beautiful, creamy paper.” This is the second instance Orwell uses positive diction. It brings out the importance of the book in the oppressive world of Oceania where even thinking about writing down thoughts would be an extreme crime. Orwell describes Winston’s writing as small clumsy letters. This diction was more effective back when Orwell had first written this book because the people back then would’ve thought that by 1984 everyone should be able to read and handwrite.

The first time Orwell uses positive diction is when he is describing the Ministry of Truth. He calls it “...an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, three hundred meters into the air.” It sounds majestic, it sounds wonderful, and it sounds wrong. Just seconds before that he was describing the city as, “sordid colonies” and “chicken houses.” This is showing the reader that the government doesn’t

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care about their people enough to fix the city, but they care enough to keep the white concrete beaming. Orwell also uses the word pyramidal structure to describe the building. It may provoke some of the readers to think about the Pharaohs of Egypt's tyrannical rule over their people.

Orwell manipulated something that many people do today and enjoy into something that is cloyingly foul. That something would be drinking. "...It gave off a sickly, oily smell, as of Chinese rice-spirit...gulped it down like a dose of medicine." The way this was worded would make alcoholics think twice. That was the effect he was going for, as the drinkers of that age that read would find it extremely detestable. Sickly and oily, the "Victory" Gin was the only alcohol the outer-party could get.

Many things that the parties made were referred to as "Victory _____" Orwell decides to do this to illustrate how the party manipulates their people at even this level.

Orwell chose carefully how he wanted to name his ministries. He chose to name the war-branch of the government the Ministry of Peace to illustrate how skewed the definitions of "war" and "peace" have become to the masses of Oceania; as well the Ministry of Love dealing with law and order. The other two ministries, the Ministry of Truth and the Ministry of Plenty, had a different purpose for their naming. To be called Truthful doesn't mean they are truthful; but the masses (for the most part) will assume differently. In the same sense that people think a diet soda is better for you than a regular soda. They may not be the same type of "bad" but they are both ungoodplus for you.

To truly make an impact on a reader, an author must carefully consider his words and the light in which he presents them. The tone an author sets creates a high-definition picture. Without it, the words are just a plain charcoal sketch.