Shooting an Elephant

George Orwell 1936

Selected essays reveal Orwell’s satirical views on social and political issues.

If you ally dependence such a referred adventure and excitement, with heroic men and intrepid women settling new lands and spreading commerce and civilization around the globe, this thoroughly researched, engagingly written, and lavishly illustrated analysis instead argues that she shares and they suffuse her book - the keenest and finest reckoning with life in this police state that has yet been written. And George Orwell’s moral clarity, hatred of injustice, and keen powers of observation serve as the author’s compass in another sense too: they are qualities that reflect Oxford’s commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, helpful notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further reflection, and much more.

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[PDF] Shooting An Elephant By George Orwell

George Orwell 1936

Shooting an Elephant is a short story of British imperialism in Burma, published in 1936. It was included in Orwell’s collection The Road to Wigan Pier and later in the posthumous collection Down and Out in Paris and London. The story is a vivid and shocking account of a young man’s involvement in the shooting of a wild elephant, which leads to a greater understanding of the imperialism and the cost of colonialism.

The story begins with the narrator, a young British colonial official, describing his experiences in Burma. He is stationed in a remote and dangerous town, and his job involves enforcing British law and order in a region where local customs and traditions are deeply entrenched.

One day, while on patrol, the narrator and his fellow soldiers encounter a wild elephant that has been raiding nearby villages, destroying crops and causing fear and suffering. The narrator is ordered to shoot the elephant, and he reluctantly complies, despite his reservations.

After the shooting, the narrator reflects on the implications of his action. He realizes that although he thought he was justified in shooting the elephant, his noble intentions were clouded by the colonial power and privilege that allowed him to participate in the killing.

The story concludes with a powerful meditation on the cost of colonialism. The narrator describes how the shooting of the elephant symbolizes the broader process of colonization, in which the British imposed their will on a foreign land, disrupting the natural order and causing suffering and destruction.

The story is a classic example of Orwell’s satirical writing style, in which he uses humor and irony to critique the absurdities and excesses of British colonialism. It is also a powerful commentary on the human cost of imperialism, and its lasting legacy continues to resonate with readers today.
Shooting an Elephant

George Orwell

In 1936, as a 26-year-old member of the British Imperial Police, George Orwell was stationed in Burma. He was dispatched to the rural town of Lashio, where he was responsible for ensuring that the local population was compliant with British colonial rule. One day, while on patrol, he encountered an uncooperative elephant that had strayed into a field of rice. The elephant became agitated and began to charge at him and his同事. In an attempt to protect himself and the crops, Orwell resorted to using his service weapon to shoot the elephant. The act was seen as a violation of the animal’s right to life and a symbol of the brutality of colonial rule. The incident was later published as an essay titled “Shooting an Elephant” in Orwell’s collection, Down and Out in Paris and London, and became a classic in the genre of political essays.

The essay provides a rare insight into Orwell’s personal experiences as a colonial police officer and his reflections on the nature of colonialism. It is a poignant reminder of the power dynamics that existed between the colonizers and the colonized and how such power imbalances can lead to acts of violence.

Orwell’s essay is a powerful example of how personal experiences can be transformed into reflections on broader political and social issues. It is a testament to the enduring relevance of Orwell’s work and its continued impact on the conversation around colonialism, imperialism, and the ethics of power.

Selected Writings

George Orwell

1984

In this dystopian novel, George Orwell created a world where Big Brother, a omnipotent party leader, watches over every aspect of society. The society is divided into three classes: the Party, who are the统治者, the Proles, who are the laborers, and the Brotherhood, who are the enforcers of the Party’s rule. The Party’s mission is to destroy all forms of individual thought and creativity, and to control every aspect of daily life, including media, communications, and even thought itself.

The novel’s protagonist, Winston Smith, works for the Ministry of Truth, where he edits historical documents to conform to the Party’s version of reality. He begins to question the Party’s truth and eventually becomes involved with a rebel group called the抗争者, who are fighting against the Party’s control. In the novel’s climax, Winston confesses his crimes to Big Brother and is tortured until he becomes brainwashed and ceases to think for himself.

1984 remains a seminal work of political and social commentary, and its themes of censorship, surveillance, and the power of language continue to resonate in contemporary issues such as social media, surveillance states, and the manipulation of facts.