Orwell Seminar (Day 1): A2

Absent: None

TJ: Write clearly, stress this in a way that everyone can understand.

Logan: Biggest thing we focus on in journalism: Simplicity is more important than your ethos, trying to make yourself sound smart.

Smith: Thought it was “kind of dumb” I had to re-read it.

* Eble: Where?
* Smith: Pretentious diction, Meaningless words.
* Eble: What made it difficult?
* Smith: Krauthammer… stated his point, made his position clear, showed why…
* Chase Hawkins: Pretentious diction—using “big words” to make them sound pretentious; meaningless words (read from the text). Long passages almost completely lacking in meaning.
* Harrison: End, list of rules…never use a long word where a short word will do… I would challenge that…
* Jake: Not what Orwell is trying to say… don’t use a big word just to use a big word. Be descriptive, but…
* Smith: Don’t get a thesaurus to make your work sound cool.
* Sam W.: Get your point across… mumbled at the end…
* Logan: Be weary of oversimplifying… stay away from overused phrases… you have to figure out what exactly you’re trying to say, what words fit that best. Be exact…
* Aidan: Cited rule six: “Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.” Words have many connotations… say that you’re writing something funny…
* Eble: Does that get down to purpose?
* Aidan: Different authors, different purposes…

Eble: According to Orwell, what other forces constrict thought?

* Harrison: Trying to impress people…
* Smith: Find your own writing…

Eble: What else?

* TJ: Audience… purpose…
* Aidan: Where they are… against communism… government restricts thought…
* Jake Wermes: Look at *Animal Farm:* Orwell puts his money where his mouth is. He could have made an argument against Soviet totalitarianism. Instead, he “dumbed it down” with a simple allegory.
* Eble: What about *1984*?
* Aidan: *1984*, shit hit the fan when they discovered what Winston was writing… even his inner thoughts weren’t free…
* Eble: so… are there any thought police today?
* Zane: Today, the TSA monitor everything…
* Logan: Thought police can also be taken as societal influences… court of public opinion?
* Eble: Examples of the court of public opinion?
* Aidan: GOP Primaries… Ron Paul…
* Alex Gruber: The Bill of Rights, freedom of speech. Someone calls a judge “lazy and inept.” The judge tried to get that person to go to jail. Endangering the rights of others… One way that America tries to get rid of the thought police.

Eble: Read from paragraph 13 (pages 713-14).

* Gruber: Presidents say what people want to hear…
* Aidan: If you become too passionate about something, another may see it as a weakness.
* Smith: I don’t know if this goes off Aidan… conservative / liberal… passion = you have to choose one.
* Eble: Asked for clarity…
* Aidan: clarity…
* Eble: So, as a Catholic, what party do I choose? Is there one for me?
* Andrew: Views on health care have to go in line with views on balancing the budget.
* Eble: What does that mean?
* Andrew: should be conservative on all that that say…
* Eble: Challenge…
* Andrew: As a candidate…
* Gruber: You have to mold your ideas according to your party. You have to mold your thoughts. To start off, though, you have to think a certain way.
* Wermes: Political writing, speeches = appealing to an audience. Example that transcends partisan politics: Bush in the ruins of the twin towers. Discusses “the steel of American resolve.”
* Eble talked… during times of war, truth is the biggest casualty.
* Logan Cooper: Politicians not writing their beliefs… political speeches fit the “cookie cutter” writing. It’s easy to give the same speech, and the audience likes to hear these ideas. We like patriotic talk… people like to hear “stand shoulder to shoulder”
* Eble: Thoughts? (clarified)
* Spencer: Uttering thoughts in Church. People often respond without knowing what they’re saying. Cited the text…
* Andrew Smith: The majority of people believe what they’re hearing…
* Aidan: Health care reform, promises…
* Eble: Read from paragraph 14… euphemism…
* Aidan: Painting something in a different image so it doesn’t sound so bad.
* Spencer: using big words, thoughts to get what they want done…
* Logan: We cover up things to make it seem peaceable
* Chase: Explained the simile… literally covers it with snow, figuratively with Latin words…
* Jake, Harrison, Alex

Orwell’s Claims

* Fact: Purpose of language is to convey meaning. Too much language clouds meaning.
* Value: Status of language in his time = endangered by vague meanings
* Policy: Ways in which we should use language.

**CONTINUATION: DAY #2 (September 22)**

Absent: Logan Cooper, Aiden Dalton, Alex Gruber, Elijah Proffitt, Chase Hawkins

Eble reviewed…

TJ Peloquin: I wouldn’t change this today, as communication has become more condensed. Twitter, Social Media makes thought shorter. Don’t want people to pontificate; people just want the facts.

* Eble asked for clarity
* Smith: We’re the “now generation” that doesn’t want to wait; we just want the headlines.
* Eble: What effect does that have on important issues?
* Smith: Politicians can more easily get across ideas. Presented a hypothetical situation for people voting based on singular political traits.
* Zane Cooper: I kind of disagree… Nowadays, we want that instant gratification. Back then, that was the reason for headlines. That happened then with boys standing on the street corners yelling “extra, extra.” Most people will go with the article.
* Smith: Not everybody is like this, but people want the condensed news.
* Jake Wermes: Harder to get people’s attention; you have to do more. Advertisers go out of their way to be weird.
* Smith: LBJ’s commercial.
* Eble: Connected Orwell with fallacies…
* Spencer: Twitter = 140 characters; no one reads the links.
* Eble: Orwell wants clarity, brevity. Wouldn’t he like Twitter?
* Harrison: If you can be brief, yes. But to get a big headline, then sure…
* Zane Cooper: He wouldn’t like it. Cited “worn-out metaphors, useless phrases.” Twitter accelerates it.
* Wermes: You need to be clear, but people need to talk about issues.

Andrew Smith (after some silence): Keeping on that Twitter conversation… Orwell would be fine with Twitter, but supporting details are lacking.

Eble: So… why do we use it?

* Spencer Ballard: Finding quick news…
* Andrew Smith: Helpful, but you cannot rely upon Twitter. Mixed messages for politics…
* Spencer Ballard: With the Braden Thornberry situation… I had to text about that…
* Eble: Asked for some clarity about Twitter.
* Ballard: Much useless crap there…
* Andrew Smith: Twitter… friends…
* TJ Peloquin: Like a newspaper… can search, find things… form your own newspaper.
* Ballard: Can form your own newspaper.
* Eble: Inherent problems in selecting one’s own news?
* Andrew Smith: Fox News, MSNBC…
* TJ Peloquin: We listen to what we want to hear. People can have their own personal views reinforced.
* Zane: Affects the bias… but not a huge change.

Eble: So… where would you get information?

* Spencer Ballard: Search in Google. Stuff just happening…
* Smith: Searching the big news event, searching the hashtag.
* Jake W: Following an actual journalist on Twitter helps. I completely disagree; I never go to Twitter. I just Google it. I go to outside America for media.
* Zane Cooper: People can decide…
* Eble: Is society equipped to read between the lines?
* Zane: People can, but they don’t…
* Andrew Smith: I go to my main news source, won’t go to an opposing view. Gave an example of his uncle, who works on dissecting news for the White House. Different views, so hard to dissect the truth.
* Jake Wermes: Our modern culture with news… the game telephone. Example = the Trayvon Martin case. “George Zimmerman Shoots Treyvon Martin”
* Andrew Smith: Read the facts…
* Eble: So… prefabricated hen houses (like in Orwell) are loud.
* Smith: So… can we get to the truth?
* Eble: Ethics of journalism…
* Zane: People have already made up their minds…
* Eble: That sounds like the cuttlefish / ink simile
* Zane: Sure… media uses the straw man fallacy.
* Smith: People screaming at the camera…