

15 Astute Observations by George Orwell

In 1903, Eric Arthur Blair, better known as George Orwell, was born in British India. The following year, he moved to England with his mother and sister while his father, who worked in the Opium Department as a civil servant, remained in India. He started writing at the age of 4 and was published in a newspaper by age 11. Orwell attended boarding school at St. Cyprian's and eventually won scholarships to continue his studies at Wellington and Eton colleges. He became interested in politics after his first book, [Down and out in Paris and London](#), was published.

Orwell married Eileen O'Shaughnessy in 1936. She died in 1945 from cardiac arrest during uterine surgery. He then married Sonia Brownell in 1949.

Orwell was an accomplished writer and wrote many books and articles during his lengthy literary career. He battled tuberculosis for most of his life and succumbed to the chronic illness in 1950. Today, he is best known for his books, [Nineteen Eighty-Four and Animal Farm](#).

1. "It is a mysterious thing, the loss of faith-as mysterious as faith itself. Like faith, it is ultimately not rooted in logic; it is a change in the climate of the mind." - *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1935)
2. "The past is a curious thing. It's with you all the time. I suppose an hour never passes without your thinking of things that happened ten or twenty years ago, and yet most of the time it's got no reality, it's just a set of facts that you've learned, like a lot of stuff in a history book. Then some chance sight or sound or smell, especially smell, sets you going, and the past doesn't merely come back to you, you're actually in the past." - *Coming Up for Air* (1939)
3. "It is not possible for any thinking person to live in such a society as our own without wanting to change it." - *Why I Joined the Independent Labor Party* (1939)
4. "So much of left-wing thought is a kind of playing with fire by people who don't even know that fire is hot." - *Inside the Whale* (1940)
5. "Even as it stands, the Home Guard could only exist in a country where men feel themselves free. The totalitarian states can do great things, but there is one thing they cannot do: they cannot give the factory-worker a rifle and tell him to take it home and keep it in his bedroom. That rifle hanging on the wall of the working-class flat or laborer's cottage, is the symbol of democracy. It is our job to see that it stays there." - "Don't Let Colonel Blimp Ruin the Home Guard" article (1941)

6. "Nearly all creators of Utopia have resembled the man who has a toothache, and therefore thinks happiness consists in not having a toothache." - "*Why Socialists Don't Believe in Fun*" article (1943)
7. "Each generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it. This is an illusion, and one should recognize it as such, but one ought also to stick to one's own world-view, even at the price of seeming old-fashioned: for that world-view springs out of experiences that the younger generation has not had, and to abandon it is to kill one's intellectual roots." - Review of "*A Coat of Many Colors: Occasional Essays by Herbert Read*" (1945)
8. "The word ancient emphasizes the fact that intellectual freedom is a deep-rooted tradition without which our characteristic western culture could only doubtfully exist. From that tradition many of our intellectuals are visibly turning away. They have accepted the principle that a book should be published or suppressed, praised or damned, not on its merits but according to political expediency. And others who do not actually hold this view assent to it from sheer cowardice." - Original preface to *Animal Farm* (1945)
9. "If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear." - Original preface to *Animal Farm* (1945)
10. "Threats to freedom of speech, writing and action, though often trivial in isolation, are cumulative in their effect and, unless checked, lead to a general disrespect for the rights of the citizen." - "*The Freedom Defense Committee*" (1948)
11. "It is difficult for a statesman who still has a political future to reveal everything that he knows: and in a profession in which one is a baby at 50 and middle-aged at seventy-five, it is natural that anyone who has not actually been disgraced should feel that he still has a future." - Review of *Their Finest Hour* by Winston Churchill (1949)
12. "So long as I remain alive and well I shall continue to feel strongly about prose style, to love the surface of the Earth, and to take pleasure in solid objects and scraps of useless information." - *Why I Write* (1946)
13. "The point is that we are all capable of believing things which we know to be untrue, and then, when we are finally proved wrong, impudently twisting the facts so as to show that we were right." - "*In Front of Your Nose*" article (1946)
14. "In a Society in which there is no law, and in theory no compulsion, the only arbiter of behavior is public opinion. But public opinion, because of the tremendous urge to conformity in gregarious animals, is less tolerant than any system of law." - "*Politics vs. Literature: An*

Examination of Gulliver's Travels" (1946)

15. "Within certain limits, it is actually true that the less money you have, the less you worry." -
Down and Out in Paris and London (1933)

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