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Writing About Writing

A pen is such a simple piece of technology; it doesn't require batteries, it's cheap and easy to acquire, and it's nonchalantly used by almost every person above the age of five every day. It's allowed us to do something considered as a simple task, but a task that has changed the course of history.

Writing is one of the only reasons we've progressed as far as we have as a species. I see writing as being the most important mode of communication. It's the only way for mankind from the far past to communicate with us. I also see it as being many other things: a beautiful form of artistic expression, a method of making an argument or persuasion, and an effective way of educating. I was able to largely agree with the points made in the excerpt from George Orwell's essay, "Why I Write", because I think he highlighted all of the primary reasons that writers find motivation for their writing.

Orwell gave four main motivations that a writer usually has for writing: "sheer egoism", "aesthetic enthusiasm", "historical impulse", and "political purpose". Aside from earning a living, I think a writer's motivation to write usually falls into one or more of these four categories. When writers write out of egoism, they write because they want to be perceived as clever or intelligent and they want to be talked about and remembered. I think that even if this isn't ever the *only* reason a writer would write, it is a prominent characteristic in many writers. Orwell mentioned that "The great mass of human beings are not acutely selfish", and I can honestly say that I agree. I think a great deal of writers write with "aesthetic enthusiasm", meaning that they find

enjoyment and fulfillment in writing because they enjoy the flow of words or the impact of a story. They want to convey their art and to share it with everyone else. They might hope that their writing inspires others to write, they might want their writing to do something emotionally for the reader, or they may just want others to find an appreciation in writing, because it's such a vast and diverse way of reaching people.

Another reason for writing is "historical impulse". I think it makes sense that people would have the desire to store information and record knowledge for the future use of themselves and others. The last motivation is "political purpose", or when someone wants others to believe in what they believe, so they write with the intent of altering others' viewpoints.

A writer's motivation for writing may not *always* correspond with the main points made by Orwell, but I felt relatively confident after reading the excerpt that he had done a good generalization. After reading the excerpt, I asked myself: "What were George Orwell's motivations for writing this essay?"¹, and I came to the undeveloped conclusion that they were a combination of every motive. Throughout the essay, Orwell seems like he enjoys making various points about writers, he seems kind of self-absorbed while doing it, and like he just wants to document his understanding of something. He also wouldn't be writing the essay if he didn't want other people to consider his points and be somewhat persuaded of them. There could be infinite other sub-reasons that writers do what they do, but I think that Orwell manages to tie them all up into four neat categories nicely.

¹ I also asked myself the same question as I began typing this writing piece, other than the fact that my first grade for the class depends on it.

