

Quotations

(1) What I have most wanted to do throughout the past ten years is to make political writing into an art. My starting point is always a feeling of partisanship, a sense of injustice. When I sit down to write a book I do not say to myself, 'I am going to produce a work of art'. I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing.

George Orwell, "Why I Write," *Decline of the English Murder and Other Essays*, Penguin Books, 1988, p. 186.

(2) But every writer, especially every novelist, has a "message", whether he admits it or not, and the minutest details of his work are influenced by it.

George Orwell, "Charles Dickens," *Critical Essays*, Secker and Warburg, 1954, p. 45.

(3) It seems that in every attack Dickens makes upon society he is always pointing to a change of spirit rather than a change of structure. It is hopeless to try and pin him down to any definite remedy, still more to any political doctrine. His approach is always along the moral plane, and his attitude is sufficiently summed up in that remark about Strong's school being as different from Creakle's "as good is from evil". Two things can be very much alike and yet abysmally different. Heaven and Hell are in the same place. Useless to change institutions without a "change of heart"--that, essentially, is what he is always saying.

Ibid., pp. 17-18.

(4) The thing that cannot be imitated is his fertility of invention, which is invention not so much of characters, still less of "situations", as of turns of phrase and concrete details. The outstanding, unmistakable mark of Dickens's writing is the unnecessary detail.

Ibid, p. 47.

(5) The thing that drove Dickens forward into a form of art for which he was not really suited, and at the same time caused us to remember him, was simply the fact that he was a moralist the consciousness of having something to say". He is always preaching a sermon, and that is the final secret of his inventiveness.

Ibid., p. 56.

Texts

(1) George Orwell, "Charles Dickens," *Inside the Whales*, London: Gollancz, 1940

(2) Edmund Wilson, "Dickens: The Two Scrooges," *The Wound and the Bow*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1941.

(3) Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Charles Dickens*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1913.

(4) George Henry Lewes, "Dickens in Relation to Criticism," *Fortnightly Review*, Feb. 1872.

(George H. Ford and Lauriat Lane Jr. eds. *The Dickens Critics*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1961, pp. 54-74)