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The Power of Words

Greek philosopher Socrates clearly defined the line between power and insolence when he once said, "There is only one good, that is knowledge; and there is only one evil, that is ignorance." This line between knowledge and ignorance has been proven throughout history even into modern times. Socrates' argument that knowledge and the use of words does make one successful while ignorance and bigotry ultimately mark failure.

Author of Native Son and Black Boy, Richard Wright, greatly agreed with Socrates' philosophy. Experiencing and writing about American ignorance in the 1900's, he fully came to acknowledge that the power of words and knowledge is the ultimate and only way to a successful life. Wright illustrates in his novels the factors that make one absent minded. The factor that made the majority of America ignorant in the 1900's was racism and xenophobia, the fear of accepting and letting in foreign factors into one's life. Throughout Richard Wright's experience with racism, xenophobia, and even poverty, he was able to defeat these factors in life with the power of words. As a young child he had always wanted to attend school and to learn as much as possible. Through perseverance and the aid of knowledge, Richard Wright grew up to become a successful writer and an icon to the world, that felicity and success can only be achieved through hard work and the power of words.

The power of words has proven to the world that it can ultimately liberate anyone from hostility, injustices, and corruptness. Political essayist and author of Animal Farm and 1984, George Orwell, would also have to agree with Socrates' philosophy of knowledge and ignorance.

In Animal Farm and 1984, Orwell parallels the extremity of ignorance, both socially and politically. In both novels, there is one powerful group that takes over and rules over the masses. This group can be seen as successful and happy, due to the execution of their knowledge over everyone else. The "masses" whom consist of the ignorant people in society are doomed for eternity because they lack a lot of knowledge. In 1984, the protagonist decides that his ignorance had become outdated, therefore he began defying the laws of his "utopia" and began to learn more than he

was allowed. Orwell's portrayal of this character proves that knowledge is good. Even though ultimately the protagonist is unsuccessful in his revolution, he proves that his knowledge sparked felicity and to a point, some success.

Ignorance at times seems inevitable, however, it is not merely the only option one has. Socrates stated that knowledge and ignorance exist, however, it is up to one's mentality and power to decide on which end of the spectrum of success and failure to be. Marked failure is all over society, nonetheless, so is the power of words, and the success that follows.