



FANTASY AND REALITY IN THE WORKS OF GEORGE ORWELL

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Abstract

The article "Fantasy and Reality in the Works of George Orwell" explores the fusion of fantastical and realistic elements in the writings of the renowned English author. Special focus is given to the novels "1984" and "Animal Farm", where Orwell employs dystopian settings and talking animals as literary devices to intensify the depiction of real political and social issues of his time. The article examines how Orwell uses elements of fantasy to express criticism of totalitarianism, mind control, and the erosion of individual freedom. It concludes that fantasy in Orwell's works is not an end in itself, but a powerful means to reveal the deeper mechanisms of power and to warn society about the dangers of political apathy and blind ideological obedience.

Introduction

George Orwell is one of the most vivid and incisive writers of the 20th century, whose works remain relevant and influential to this day. His writing balances on the edge between fiction and reality, presenting dystopian worlds that, despite being imaginary, reflect the anxieties and social issues of the real world. Orwell did not write science fiction in the traditional sense—with space travel or magical creatures—but his work is rightly classified as speculative fiction due to its deep immersion in alternative and imagined worlds created to analyze reality. Orwell uses fiction to expose the hidden mechanisms of power, mind control, and the suppression of freedom that exist in real-life regimes. For him, fiction is not entertainment but a tool of social critique.

Orwell was familiar with the works of other science fiction and dystopian authors, such as **Aldous Huxley** (Brave New World) and **Yevgeny Zamyatin** (We). His work fits within the tradition of science fiction where the future or parallel realities are used to explore important questions of human nature and society. As Eduard



Vyacheslavovich wrote in his article “State Control over Science in George Orwell’s Novel ‘1984’”:

“Technological innovations and other elements that seemed unusual and even fantastic to a mid-20th-century reader play a huge role in creating the image of a totalitarian state.”

Orwell lived and wrote during a time when the world was experiencing the horrors of **World War II**, and the rise of totalitarian regimes in the **Soviet Union**, **Nazi Germany**, and other countries. His personal experiences—participating in the Spanish Civil War, observing Soviet bureaucracy, and criticizing propaganda—directly influenced his literary vision.

“**Animal Farm**” (1945) is an allegory of the Russian Revolution and the subsequent Stalinist dictatorship, in which pigs symbolize the leaders who betrayed the ideals of the revolution for their own power.

Orwell’s most famous works, “**1984**” and “**Animal Farm**”, belong to the dystopian genre. These books create grim alternative realities where totalitarianism, mind control, and the suppression of freedom are taken to the extreme. At first glance, this might seem like fiction—plots far from real life, with characters living in worlds where “**Big Brother**” watches every step, and language and thought are manipulated. Yet within these fictional depictions lies a deep reality. Drawing on his own life experience and observations of 20th-century political regimes, including **Stalinism** and **fascism**, Orwell shows how society can devolve into totalitarian control.

His fiction is not mere imagination, but a mirror reflecting the threats to freedom and human dignity. In “1984”, Orwell introduces the concept of **Newspeak**—an artificially simplified language designed to limit a person’s ability to think. In the novel, language becomes a tool of political manipulation, reducing vocabulary and eliminating opportunities for critical thinking:

“It’s a beautiful thing, the destruction of words. Of course, the great wastage is in the verbs and adjectives, but there are hundreds of nouns that can be got rid of as well.”

This literary device draws on real practices of totalitarian regimes, where propaganda and censorship served to suppress dissent. Newspeak is a symbol not only of linguistic limitations but also of mental ones, illustrating how power seeks to control not just actions, but thoughts.



The protagonist of “1984”, **Winston Smith**, represents an individual trying to preserve his capacity for independent thought and desire for freedom in a world where any disobedience is severely punished. His inner turmoil, doubts, and resistance highlight the tragedy of the individual under total control:

“Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two makes four. If that is granted, all else follows.”

In “Animal Farm”, the animals who initially fight for justice gradually become new oppressors—pigs led by Napoleon. This is a metaphor for the betrayal of revolutionary ideals and the transformation of leaders into tyrannical dictators.

One of the most striking episodes in “1984” is the “**Two Minutes Hate**”—a daily ritual in which the population expresses rage and disgust toward the enemies of the Party, particularly Emmanuel Goldstein. This scene demonstrates how power manipulates mass emotions to maintain control:

“At this moment the entire group of people broke into a deep, slow, rhythmical chant of ‘B-B... B-B...’—over and over again, very slowly, with a long pause between the first ‘B’ and the second—a heavy, murmurous sound, somehow curiously savage.”

Through this episode, Orwell shows that totalitarian power not only suppresses dissent but actively shapes people’s thinking and emotions, turning them into tools for maintaining the regime. Here, the “fantasy” of mass psychological manipulation reflects real methods of political propaganda, mass mobilization, and ideological pressure in actual dictatorships.

The climactic moment of the novel is Winston Smith’s **interrogation and “re-education”**, especially the scene in **Room 101**, where he confronts his deepest fears. The breaking of his personality, forcing him to renounce love and even truth itself, vividly illustrates the extent of total control over a human being:

“Freedom is the freedom to realize you are not free.”

“Two and two make five.”

These quotes reflect the absurdity and tragedy of the protagonist’s situation, where reality becomes malleable and subject to the Party’s will. Orwell demonstrates that under a totalitarian regime, not only physical freedom but also **truth itself becomes a target of manipulation.**

In the first half of “Animal Farm”, the animals succeed in overthrowing the human dictator, hoping to build a just society. But over time, the pigs, led by Napoleon,



gradually adopt the habits and behavior of the previous rulers. In a key chapter, Orwell describes how the new leaders become indistinguishable from the old:

“All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.”

This paradoxical slogan summarizes the main idea of the work—that a revolution meant to liberate the oppressed often results in **one set of tyrants replacing another**. The fictional element—anthropomorphic animals—is used to deliver a very real message: a warning about how power and corruption can destroy any ideal. In the ending of “Animal Farm”, the animals can no longer tell the pigs apart from the humans, their former enemies. This symbolizes the complete betrayal of the revolution’s original goals:

“The pigs were walking on their hind legs, wearing clothes, and even began carrying whips.”

This transformation is a powerful image of history’s cyclical nature and how, in the struggle for power, the brightest ideals are often lost. Here, fiction becomes a potent symbol of **political betrayal**.

Today, Orwell’s works are read not as mere fiction, but as a **warning**. Modern surveillance technologies, the spread of disinformation, and political manipulation make his worlds frighteningly close to reality. Practices of mass surveillance, control over personal information, censorship, and propaganda remind us that the dangers Orwell described remain very real. **George Orwell masterfully uses fiction to expose deep social and political issues of both his time and ours**. His works are a blend of imagination and reality, inseparable from one another. They continue to serve as an important reminder of the value of freedom and the dangers of totalitarianism, making Orwell’s legacy timeless and profoundly significant.

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