



THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ORWELL'S '1984' AND OUR REALITY

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Abstract: This study examines the startling similarities between the socio-political climate of the twenty-first century and George Orwell's dystopian novel 1984. Orwell's prescient essay, published in 1949, described a totalitarian state that manipulated information, suppressed opposition, and maintained widespread surveillance. This abstract explores the unsettling parallels between the actual world and the science fiction film "1984", exploring the ramifications for personal liberties, the authority of the state, and the influence of technology on social standards.

Key words: Orwell's 1984, Dystopian novel, Totalitarianism, Surveillance, Manipulation of information, Technology, Orwellian dystopia

Аннотация: В этом исследовании исследуется поразительное сходство между социально-политическим климатом XXI века и романом-антиутопией Джорджа Оруэлла "1984". Пророческое эссе Оруэлла, опубликованное в 1949 году, описывало тоталитарное государство, которое манипулировало информацией, подавляло оппозицию и поддерживало повсеместную слежку. В этом реферате исследуются тревожные параллели между реальным миром и научно-фантастическим фильмом "1984", исследуются последствия для личных свобод, авторитета государства и влияния технологий на социальные стандарты.

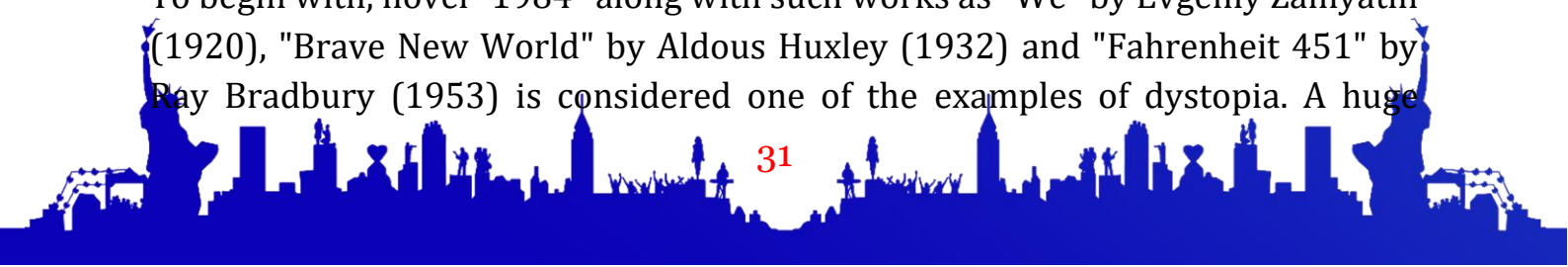
Ключевые слова: "1984" Оруэлла, роман-антиутопия, тоталитаризм, слежка, Манипулирование информацией, Технология, оруэлловская антиутопия

Introduction

This article is devoted to the analysis of relevance of George Orwell's book "1984". In my paper I am going to give some reasons why this book is still popular and, sometimes, even predicting our future.

Literature review

To begin with, novel "1984" along with such works as "We" by Evgeniy Zamyatin (1920), "Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley (1932) and "Fahrenheit 451" by Ray Bradbury (1953) is considered one of the examples of dystopia. A huge





numbers of linguists and literary critics reviewed this work and I am going to illustrate some of their articles and books.

For example, Jean Seaton in her article, published on the BBC Culture website provides us with sufficient reasons why Orwell's "1984" could be about now. "...but 1984 is also handbook for difficult times. Knowledge is a kind of strength and we are all being tested...."¹ Our understanding of oppression is shaped by more than just the fact that we live in a world that has been altered by Orwell's discoveries. However, 1984 also serves as a guide for difficult times. We are all put to the test, and knowledge is a form of strength.

Edmond van Den Bossche tells us about Orwell's message for today. He analyses if there is hidden message to people in the future in his book. "...however, the warnings of George Orwell are more than ever relevant.... ...however, in a large part of our world, he did succeed, through the management of the news and the censorship of the written and spoken word, in severely impairing man's ability to think freely...."²

We question ourselves, as we approach the actual year 1984, how much of Orwell's imagined world has come to pass and what the chances are for a more reasonable society.

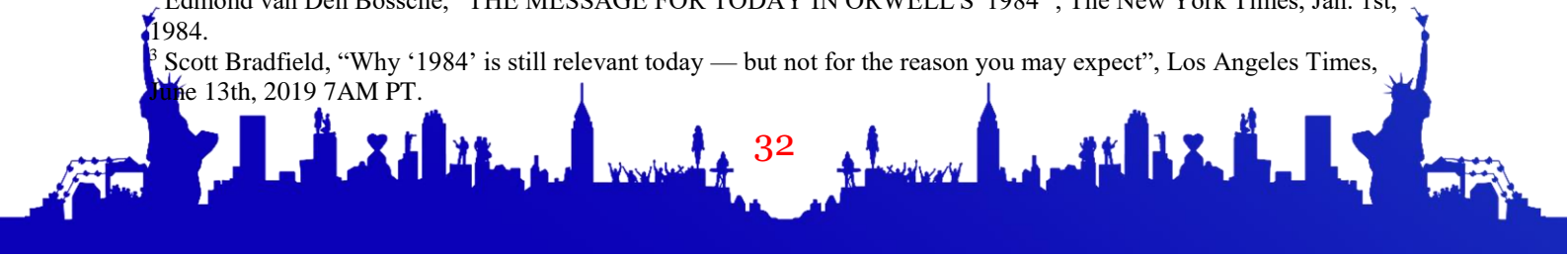
Big Brother won't rule the planet in our 1984. But George Orwell's cautions are more important than ever. There is no Oceania, Eurasia, or Eastasia, and Big Brother did not succeed in eradicating individual thought. He did, however, succeed in severely limiting man's capacity for free thought in a significant portion of our world through the control of the news and the censorship of both the written and spoken word.

Scott Bradfield in his article "Why '1984' is still relevant today — but not for the reason you may expect" claims that besides social surveillance and censorship, there is also one more factor why this book is about today. "...in many ways, Orwell's genius was best exemplified by his essays and journalism — and the success of his most famous novels (it may be impossible to avoid either "1984" or "Animal Farm" in most high school curricula) has often obscured the impact of the things he said...."³ The success of his most well-known novels (it may be impossible to ignore either "1984" or "Animal Farm" in most high school curricula) has frequently hidden the effect of the things he said. In many ways,

¹ Seaton, Jean. "Why Orwell's 1984 could be about now". BBC. 16th August 2018. Retrieved 3rd December 2019.

² Edmond van Den Bossche, "THE MESSAGE FOR TODAY IN ORWELL'S '1984'", The New York Times, Jan. 1st, 1984.

³ Scott Bradfield, "Why '1984' is still relevant today — but not for the reason you may expect", Los Angeles Times, June 13th, 2019 7AM PT.





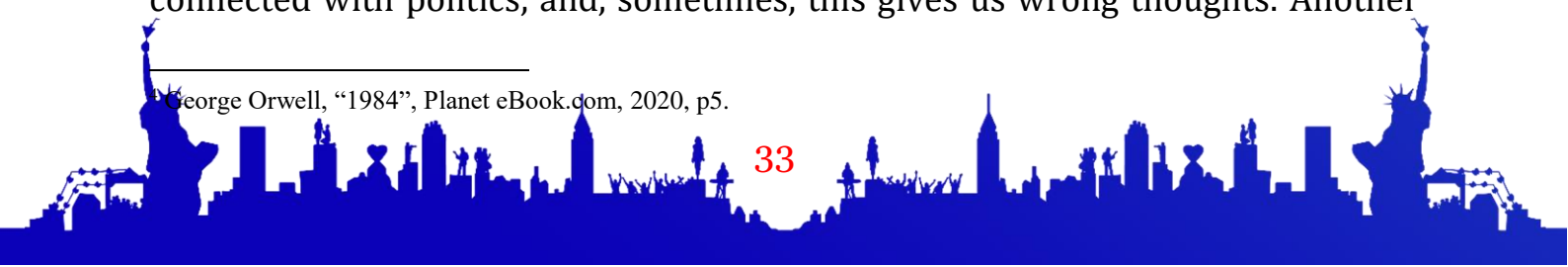
Orwell's genius was best illustrated by his writings and journalism. For instance, he wasn't just concerned with the oppressive forces of Stalin or "socialism," as students are frequently led to believe, but with virtually every "ism" that distorted reality via the use of deceptive terminology and political propaganda. Even more perplexing, "1984's" message has frequently been taken by the very groups that Orwell detested, making it a book that virtually any political group might claim. It has been hailed as a warning against the dangers of imperialism, capitalism, socialism, and fascism. Both the John Birch Society, whose phone number ended in the numbers 1-9-8-4, and the Black Panthers, who instructed Orwell in their Oakland Community School, have praised it.

Analysis

It should be noted that only one key feature differentiates "1984" from others dystopias. London is governed by propaganda and censorship, history is constantly being rewritten, so we cannot even be sure of the date from the title. Telescreens watch every move and every step in that book . "...the telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment...It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinised...."⁴ (5) The telescreen simultaneously sent and received information. Of course, there was no way to tell if you were being monitored at any one time. Even the possibility that they constantly observed everyone was a possibility. However, they were free to plug in your cable anytime they choose. You had to live—and did live—under the presumption that every sound you made was being heard and, except in complete darkness, every movement was being watched. I believe that this is quite similar to our own world, where people are being observed by cameras nearly everywhere. On the street, inside and outside the bank, at school – cameras are everywhere. Now this is our daily routine and they are installed for our own safety, but who knows what will happen in the future and where technologies will lead us.

Second important aspect is that the world in "1984" is controlled by censorship and propaganda. If we think deeply, TV and media are actually under some restrictions. For example, in some social medias one may not publish something connected with politics, and, sometimes, this gives us wrong thoughts. Another

⁴George Orwell, "1984", Planet eBook.com, 2020, p5.





good example may be propaganda. I admit that it is not as huge as in this book, however, it still exists in many countries, and denying it is a very big mistake. People who are not interested in politics and do not search for an additional information may believe in everything they see on TV and do not accept other opinions about particular events. This Party's slogan part perfectly describes such situation: "...who controls the past ... controls the future; who controls the present controls the past..."⁵ (37)

Third example, unfortunately, existed and, probably, still exists in our world is totalitarianism. According to Britannica, "Totalitarianism, form of government that theoretically permits no individual freedom and that seeks to subordinate all aspects of individual life to the authority of the state."⁶ One great example would be a police of thought, special governmental organisation, whose main aim is to control everything, especially, every person's mind. "...there was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to..."⁷(5) Everyone now has their own privacy, at least in their minds, however, it is not a secret that one may want to read our minds and use them for controlling our society. This, in the long term, may lead to catastrophic aftermath, and, thus, repeat the faith of the "1984". I am pretty sure that no one wants this scenario to happen in real life.

The protagonist works in organization called The Ministry of Truth "The Ministry of Truth—Minitrue,... ...the three slogans of the Party:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH ..."⁸

This slogan is not clear for us as we live in the world, where the term "freedom" has become clear for everyone, and it is totally not a slavery. Freedom today may be described in several meanings:

- 1) The ability to speak, act and think as person wants
- 2) The state of feeling not imprisoned or enslaved

None of these definitions suit so called "freedom" in minds of the government in that book. Ministry of Truth writes its own history, and this is quite sad, as even

⁵ The same source, 2020, p34.

⁶ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "totalitarianism". Encyclopedia Britannica, Invalid Date, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/totalitarianism>. Accessed 22 May 2023.

⁷ The same source, p5.

⁸ The same source, 2020, p6.





in our modern world there is a tendency in politics to “rewrite” the history as those people need. This is why we cannot trust everything in the Internet or on TV.

Discussion

In my discussion part, I would like to set the record straight, and talk through some enticing concepts that author used in his work.

First of all, it is, of course, “telescreens”⁹ are special devices that government used to spy on people, their actions and even thoughts. Nowadays we also have similar devices that can track our position, personality and voice. These are called “security cameras”. We adjusted to them as they have been implied in our daily life and seem logical in our society. However, the author believes that telescreens are negative development, as they prevent people from developing their thoughts. Good example may be famous phrase: “BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU”¹⁰ (4). “Big brother” means the head of the government, The Party, who is watching your every step and word.

One more interesting quotation is “ $2+2=5$ ”¹¹ (367). This was announced by The party nearly at the end of the book. Although ‘ $2+2=5$ ’ itself doesn’t have any meaning in the text, it has deeper meaning in the head of the writer. He used this mathematically wrong problem in order to show that power has huge impact on society’s opinion and makes them believe even in something, that is logically incorrect and I may even say stupid. However, people could do nothing, but accept their own fate and live with such burden of injustice in their souls hearts and souls. This may seem sad, but, on the other hand, people could try to fight against such strict rules that fully ignore the rights of people. Maybe they would lose, but their deeds would not be forgotten in the future, and passed from one generation to another one.

Conclusion

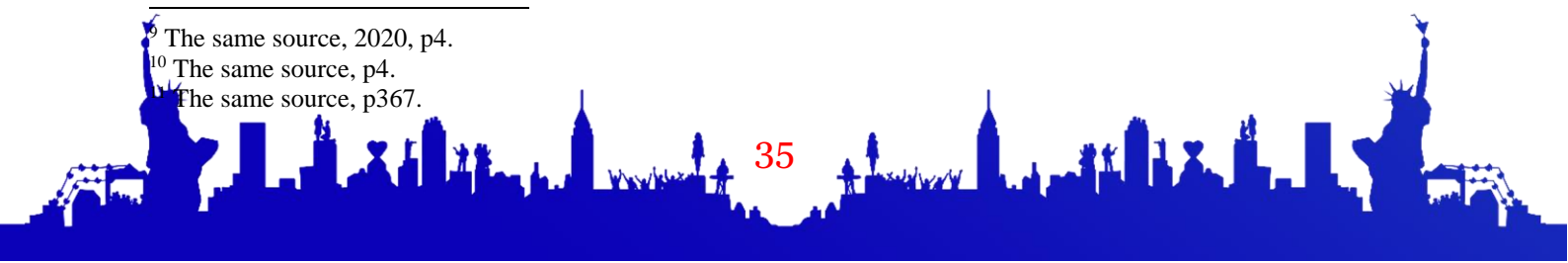
In conclusion I would like to mention that “1984” is one of the most interesting books of all the history. It describes how our world can change in the future and be manipulated by the system. In my article I told why this book may be close to our present and discussed some of the terms used in this work.

The genre of this book is dystopia and it can be said even from reading the first chapter, as world seems dark and lonely in this novel.

⁹ The same source, 2020, p4.

¹⁰ The same source, p4.

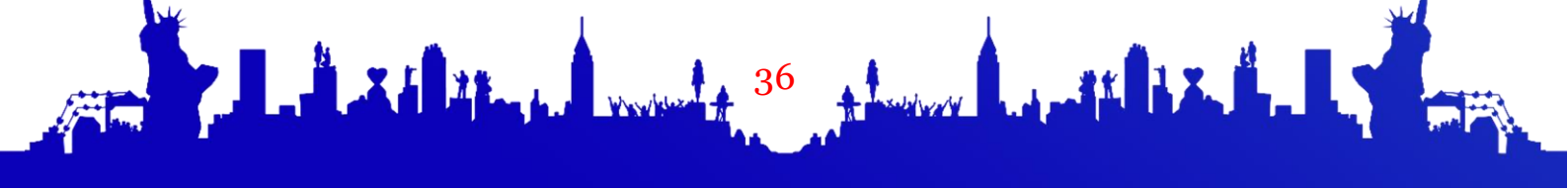
¹¹ The same source, p367.





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