

GEORGE ORWELL'S *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR* IN CONTEXT

Roxana Airini

Universitatea 1 Decembrie 1918, Alba Iulia

In this day and age, when literature seems to be turning once more towards dystopian fiction on the basis of an increasingly tense global political background, we consider it necessary to return to what can be considered one of the cornerstones of dystopian literature. Nineteen Eighty-Four still represents one of the most influential dystopias and the world it presented its readers with resonates with us today as well. Keeping in mind the fact that a work of literature only reveals its secrets when read in the light of the numerous contextual factors that led to its creation, the present articles strives to shed some light on what exactly were the circumstances surrounding the writing of Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. We will thus be looking at elements pertaining to the author's life as well as various social and political elements that are relevant to us in this endeavour, such as his experiences in the Spanish Civil War, or the characteristics of Stalin's rule and Hitler's Nazi Germany. We will then attempt to draw parallels between the reality of Orwell's time and that of his fictional universe, with the purpose of granting the reader a more in-depth understanding of the context surrounding Orwell's novel and, consequently, of the novel itself.

Key words: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell, historical context, political context, dystopia.

References

- Claeys, G. (2010). *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gracheva, E. (n.d.). Of Russian origin: Stalin's Purges. Retrieved October 20, 2017, from <http://russiapedia.rt.com/of-russian-origin/stalins-purges/>
- Hastings, M. (n.d.). Traitors in the family: Stalin's informers. *The Daily Mail*. Retrieved October 27, 2017, from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/columnists/article-483230/Traitors-family-Stalins-informers.html>
- Huxley, A. (1949). Personal letter to George Orwell. Retrieved 18 July, 2015, from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2111440/Aldous-Huxley-letter-George-Orwell-1984-sheds-light-different-ideas.html#ixzz3gm8216rp>
- Huxley, A. (2006). *Brave New World*. Reprint edition. London: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.
- Irvine, C. (2008, October 22). Adolf Hitler 'planned propaganda cable TV'. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved October 25, 2017, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/3239289/Adolf-Hitler-planned-propaganda-cable-TV.html>
- Kakutani, M. (2017, January 26). Why '1984' Is a 2017 Must-Read. *The Daily Mail*. Retrieved September 20, 2017, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/26/books/why-1984-is-a-2017-must-read.html>
- Kellner, D. (1990). *From 1984 to One-Dimensional Man: Critical Reflections on Orwell and Marcuse*. Retrieved July 18, 2015, from <https://pages.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/Illumina%20Folder/kell13.htm>

- King, D. (1999). *The Commissar Vanishes: the Falsification of Photographs and Art in Stalin's Russia*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Larkin, E. (2016, November 18). Introduction to *Burmese Days*. Retrieved October 21, 2017, from <https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/resources/emma-larkin-introduction-to-burmese-days/>
- Orwell, G. (1945). *Notes on Nationalism*. Retrieved July 17, 2015, from <http://www.resort.com/~prime8/Orwell/nationalism.html>
- Orwell, G. (1946). Review of 'WE' by E. I. Zamyatin. Retrieved July 20, 2015, from http://orwell.ru/library/reviews/zamyatin/english/e_zamy
- Orwell, G. (1997, May 21). Why I Write. Retrieved October 19, 2017, from http://orwell.ru/library/essays/wiw/english/e_wiw
- Orwell, G. (2000, May 18). Looking Back on the Spanish War. Retrieved October 27, 2017, from http://orwell.ru/library/essays/Spanish_War/english/esw_1
- Orwell, G. (2002, July 12). Such, Such Were The Joys. Retrieved September 27, 2017, from http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/joys/english/e_joys
- Orwell, G. (2004). *1984*. Reprint edition. London: Penguin Classic.
- Orwell, G. (2010). *Homage to Catalonia; Down and out in Paris and London*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Orwell, G. (n.d.). *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Retrieved October 23, 2017, from <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/o/orwell/george/o79r/chapter9.html>
- Simkin, J. (1997, September). Hitler Youth. Retrieved October 25, 2017, from <http://spartacus-educational.com/GERyouth.html>
- The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica (2016, July 26). Gestapo. Retrieved October 27, 2017, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Gestapo>
- Zamyatin, Y. (1983). *We*. Reprint edition. London: Harper Voyager.

How to cite this article: Airini, R. (2016). George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in Context. *Buletinul sesiunii studenților și masteranzilor filologi - Bssmf, 1*, 7-24. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29302/bssmf.2016.1>