

SATIRICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF HAPPINESS AND CONTROL IN ALDOUS HUXLEY AND GEORGE ORWELL

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to a comparative analysis of satirical models of happiness and social control in the dystopian works of Aldous Huxley and George Orwell. The novels *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are examined as two distinct yet conceptually interconnected versions of a critique of modern society. The analysis focuses on how satire is employed to expose the mechanisms of power that shape conceptions of happiness, freedom, and human nature. The study concludes that there is a fundamental difference between Huxley's model of soft, hedonistic control and Orwell's model of repressive, traumatic control, despite their shared ethical orientation.

Keywords: Satire, dystopia, happiness, social control, Huxley, Orwell, power, ideology.

АННОТАЦИЯ

статья посвящена сравнительному анализу сатирических моделей счастья и социального контроля в антиутопических произведениях Олдос Хаксли и Джордж Оруэлл. Рассматриваются романы *О дивный новый мир* и *1984* как две различные, но концептуально связанные версии критики современного общества. Анализ фокусируется на том, каким образом сатира используется для разоблачения механизмов власти, формирующих представления о счастье, свободе и человеческой природе. Делается вывод о принципиальном различии между моделью мягкого, гедонистического контроля у Хаксли и моделью репрессивного, травматического контроля у Оруэлла, при их общей этической направленности.

Ключевые слова: сатира, антиутопия, счастье, социальный контроль, Хаксли, Оруэлл, власть, идеология.

INTRODUCTION

Twentieth-century dystopia emerges as a response to the crisis of the Enlightenment belief in progress and rationality. In the conditions of mass society, technological acceleration, and ideological experimentation, literature increasingly turns to satire as a tool for criticizing a future that is already present in the contemporary world. A special place in this context is occupied by Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which offer two different models of a total society.

Both authors use satire to analyze the mechanisms of social control, yet the object of satirical representation in their works is fundamentally different. Huxley offers a satirical interpretation of a society in which control is exercised through happiness, comfort, and pleasure. Orwell, by contrast, depicts a world in which control is based on fear, pain, and the destruction of the individual. A comparative analysis of these models makes it possible to gain

a deeper understanding not only of the writers' artistic strategies, but also of the philosophical foundations of their critique.

Satire in dystopian literature performs a dual function. On the one hand, it exposes the absurdity of social practices by pushing them to their logical extreme. On the other hand, it maintains a moral distance between the author and the depicted world, allowing the reader to recognize hidden forms of violence and manipulation.

Unlike realist satire, dystopian satire is directed not so much at specific institutions as at the principles of social organization themselves. It constructs closed systems in which happiness, freedom, and truth are redefined in the interests of power. For this reason, the key categories of analysis are not individual characters, but abstract concepts embodied in social practice.

In *Brave New World*, Huxley creates a society in which happiness becomes a state-imposed obligation. The satirical effect is achieved through a radical redefinition of the very concept of happiness. It is reduced to physiological comfort, consumption, and the absence of negative emotions.

The mechanisms of control in this world are based on:

- biological programming;
- conditioned upbringing;
- pharmacological suppression of anxiety;
- a culture of entertainment.

Huxley's satire is directed not against violence in its explicit form, but against the voluntary renunciation of freedom. Society has no need for repression, since individuals feel no desire to resist. Happiness thus becomes an instrument of depersonalization.

Language plays a particularly important role in this context. Deprived of tragic and metaphysical dimensions, it makes the very comprehension of unhappiness impossible. Huxley's satirical irony is revealed in the fact that harmony is achieved at the cost of the loss of human depth. The reader is invited to question the value of a form of happiness that excludes choice and suffering.

In George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, satire takes on a bleak, almost irony-free character. Here happiness is not merely absent; it is declared suspicious and dangerous. Control is exercised through fear, the constant threat of punishment, and the destruction of personal bonds.

The main instruments of power are:

- total surveillance;
- ideological restructuring of language;
- systematic falsification of the past;
- physical and psychological violence.

In Orwell's work, the satirical effect is built on the extreme rationalization of cruelty. Power does not conceal its aim: the total subjugation of the individual. Unlike the Huxleyan world, where control is disguised as care, here it is openly proclaimed as an end in itself.

Happiness in Orwell's dystopia is incompatible with the existence of the system. Any form of joy is perceived as an act of resistance. Satire is directed at exposing a logic of power for which truth and emotions exist solely as instruments of control.

In the works of both authors, language plays a key role in the system of control. However, its functions differ significantly.

In Huxley's novel, language is impoverished and standardized, yet it preserves an illusion of neutrality. It serves consumption and does not encourage critical thinking. The satirical force here lies in the depiction of a society in which language ceases to be a means of self-knowledge. In Orwell's work, language becomes a direct object of violence. Newspeak deliberately restricts the possibilities of thought, destroying the very categories of dissent. Satirical denunciation is aimed at the idea that control over words is equivalent to control over reality.

Thus, while in Huxley's dystopia consciousness dissolves in pleasure, in Orwell's it is broken under the pressure of pain.

A comparison of Huxley and Orwell reveals two poles of satirical dystopia.

Common features:

- critique of the total society;
- rejection of the idea of neutral progress;
- use of satire as an ethical instrument;
- a pessimistic vision of the future.

Differences:

- in Huxley, control is exercised through pleasure, whereas in Orwell it is exercised through suffering;
- Huxleyan satire is ironic and paradoxical, while Orwellian satire is harsh and tragic;
- in Huxley, individuals lose their freedom imperceptibly, whereas in Orwell this loss is violent and coercive.

These differences do not negate but rather complement one another. Together they form a coherent picture of the threats associated with modern forms of power.

The satirical representations of happiness and control in the works of Aldous Huxley and George Orwell constitute two versions of a critique of a society in which human freedom is under threat. Huxley warns against the danger of comfort transformed into ideology, while Orwell warns against the danger of violence legitimized by power.

Their works remain relevant in the contemporary world, where control is increasingly exercised not only through coercion, but also through the management of desires. Satire in these novels functions as a moral signal, reminding the reader that happiness devoid of freedom and order based on fear are equally dangerous to human dignity.

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