



THE FICTIONAL FORTE OF GEORGE ORWELL IN PROJECTING POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND ROMANTIC VISION :AN APPRAISAL

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to present George Orwell's novels as the perfect revelation of his idealistic and romantic notions of political expediency. Analyzing his novels, this paper presents how he designed his characters and plot in a way to criticize and mock his contemporary political affairs. His structuring of stories and the reasons for his story lines were justified in this paper by analyzing his mentality and courageous presentation. Thus, this paper glorifies Orwell for his courage, individuality and timely criticisms.

Key Words: *Individuality, social consciousness, political problems, socialism, criticism.*

INTRODUCTION

George Orwell was a great man and writer who constantly holds a unique place in English literary scenario. He has made a remarkable and noticeable impression on his generation. Pritchett calls him as 'the conscience of his generation' among his contemporaries. He has the talent of writing well on any area and so he gained appreciations from many. The areas he opted were common and ordinary so he had many readers across the world. And above all, he was 'an individualist'. He tried his best to maintain his individuality. He left Paris and London due to his discomfort and poverty. All his words are spelt out with his own personal knowledge.

He is highly intelligent and simple in examining the social and political problems with much clarity. He belongs to the class of seers so he could sense the possibility of revolution in

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society which helped him to examine the trends and situations with greater care. His final book '1984' is almost a tragic statement of his feelings. He always stuck close to reality however unpleasant it might be. Hence, it is considered more privilege to study the works of Orwell as he was the conscience of his age. Orwell's literary career covers the period of 1930's and 1940's Orwell affirms,

"... I don't think one can assess a writer's motives without knowing something of his early development" (P 25).

George Orwell was born on June 25, 1903 at Motihavi in Bengal. He was taken to England in 1907 and was educated at a St. Cyprion school. Orwell was not happy throughout the stay as he suffered the agonies of Scottish Snobbery and that made him a sense of hatred towards Scotland. He changed his name as George Orwell in 1932. As he was good at his studies, he won scholarship from Wellington and Eton, two famous public schools. Out of these two, he chose Eton and he was much popular at Eton. He extensively read Shaw and Wells, Galsworthy and Webbs and he described himself as a 'Socialist'. After completing his education at Eton, he took a job in the Indian Police Service. After serving for five years as a policeman, he returned to England in 1927. He described his experience in Burma vividly in his first novel *Burmese Days* (1934) and in essays like *Shooting an Elephant and A Hanging*. He has made some literary creations like 1. *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), 2. *Clergyman's Daughter* (1935), 3. *Keep the Aspistris Flying* (1936), 4. *Homage to Catalonia* (1937), *Coming up for Air* (1938), 6. *Animal Farm* (1945) and 7. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

He made review fictions for the "New English Weekly" and extended his reviews to "Horizon", "Partisan Review", "Tribune", "The New Statesman" etc., Orwell decided and led a purposeful life. He was aware and understood the political implications of his time. He used prose to express his mind with freedom of writing. Orwell went to the island of Jura. Though being ill, he concentrated on his excellent novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. He also wrote essays "Writers and Leviathan" and "Reflections on Gandhi". He was admitted to Cotswold Sanatorium, Grafton in 1949 when he fell too ill. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published in June 1949 by Secker and Warburg during his treatment in hospital. Later, Orwell was transferred to University College Hospital. At this crucial stage, he married Sonia Bronwell. On January 21, 1950, Orwell died of pulmonary tuberculosis at his forty-six. Considering his special wish, his body was buried in the church of All Saints Suffon Courtenay, Berkshire.

In literary history, the period of 1930's was considered as the 'political decade'. It was actually the period of totalitarianism in Russia, Germany and Italy and an era when the concentration camps, Secret police and framed political trials were made. During this time,



the democratic values were destroyed due to the rise of Communism, Nazism and Fascism. Orwell calls the pure aesthetic writing in the thirties and the forties as anachronism:

“This is a political age, War, Fascism, concentrationCamps, rubber truncheons, atomic bombs, etc... arewhat we daily think about, and therefore, toa great extent what we write about, evenwhen we do not name them openly. We cannothelp this. When you are on a sinking ship,your thoughts will be about sinking ships” (CEJL 463)

Orwell wrote with simplicity and with the faith in decency, justice and liberty. His way of rising problems makes us to feel ourselves in the stories. In *Down and Out in Paris and London*, it is evident that how poverty affects a sensitive spirit of this scientific age. *Burmese Days* reveals the shock of the Westerner. *A clergyman’s Daughter* explores the fear of religion in England. *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* examines the sensitive soul which should come over money to overcome greed and fear. *The Road to Wigan Pier* is written with the idea to understand that socialism with common decency. *Homage to Catalonia* is the actual cry of a socialist. *Coming up for Air* is the homage turned into warning. *Animal Farm* is the example to his good writing skills. Through this work his brought out his Utopian mind in Animal characters.

Even the great writers like T.S.Eliot, W.B.Yeats and Virginia Wolf did not give importance to the problems of the time. Even in Russia, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky were given importance and not revolutionaries like Lenin. They gave importance to form than to content. Orwell made his comment on the major post-war writers:

“Eliot’s pessimism on implies a certain indifference to human misery, partly a lament overthe decadence of western civilization – whichfinally leads him to Sweeney Agonists forinstance to achieve the different feat ofmaking modern life and to be worsethan it is. With Strachey, it is merely a polite eighteenth century skepticismmixed up with the taste for debunkingwith Maugham, it is a kind of stoical resignation.... Lawrence at first stage does not seembe a pessimistic writer ... But what he isdemanding is a movement away frommechanized civilization, which is notgoing to happen” (P 556).

Orwell criticized them because they were not socialists and avoided the problems of the day. Jeffrey Meyers says thus, “Orwell’s works deal with two main themes – poverty and politics”. *A Clergyman’s Daughter* actually deals with the theme of poverty. *Coming up for Air* is clearly an apocalyptic novel. *Burmese Days*, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* deal with the theme of politics and society and so these novels were considered as the



major achievement of Orwell. To understand him fully, it is essential to understand the term ‘political purpose’:

“political purpose – using the word ‘politics’ in the wider possible sense. Desire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people’s idea of the kind of society that they should strive after” (P 26)

Animal Farm is his greatest political satire which has the attachment on the Russian Revolution. He had a greater courage as every praised Russia, he criticized Russia. Hence *Animal Farm* is his greater political satire.

With the publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell’s reputation and achievement gradually increased. The novel “... has given the word ‘Orwellian’ to the English language, as a term denoting nightmare oppression and thought control. The little itself is known to many thousands simply by hearsay, as a synonym for the regimentation and despotism of the monolithic state” (Hammond 183).

To conclude, it is evident that Orwell saw power politics as a major threat to mankind than science. He felt that if human absurdities were not removed, ‘... the peculiar forces of oppression, characteristic of a capitalist totalitarian system would switch over to the socialist system ...’ (Bal 176) as shown in *Animal Farm*. In fact, the excellence of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has portrayed of human vulnerability in the face of political power and shaping the history.

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