



"SATIRE ACROSS ERAS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GEORGE ORWELL AND TAYLOR BUCKLEY'S CRITIQUES OF SOCIETY AND POWER"

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a comprehensive exploration of how satire has evolved from Orwell's political critique of totalitarianism to Buckley's cultural commentary on the internet age, showing how the medium and tone of satire reflect the changing dynamics of societal power structures.

Introduction

Satire is a potent type of social commentary, and both George Orwell and Taylor Buckley have utilized it expertly to criticize political and societal standards, albeit in very different ways. Orwell, a writer whose legacy spans decades, utilized satire to illustrate the perils of authoritarianism, propaganda, and political manipulation, particularly in works such as *1984* and *Animal Farm*. Taylor Buckley, on the other hand, is a contemporary artist who uses internet platforms, visual art, and social media to comment on the absurdities of modern society, such as materialism, online culture, and political division. This article compares and contrasts Orwell's and Buckley's methods to satire, focusing on variations in tone, methodology, target audience, and cultural context.

Orwell's Written Satire: Allegory and Political Narrative

George Orwell (1903-1950) is most known for his literary works, which blend allegory, political commentary, and dystopian fiction. His two famous satirical novels, *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1949), are sharp indictments of totalitarian regimes, particularly the Soviet Union under Stalin. Orwell's satire is based on narrative structure, with fictitious representations of real-world events or individuals used to show the absurdity of political ideology and the manipulation of facts.

In *Animal Farm*, Orwell's use of animal characters as stand-ins for historical personalities from the Russian Revolution is a caustic condemnation of Stalin's government and the failure of communist ideals. Similarly, *1984* satirizes the risks of an omnipotent state that exerts control over every area of human existence through technologies such as surveillance, mind control, and reality distortion. Orwell's satire employs dark humor and

irony to highlight the dehumanizing implications of power, showing totalitarianism as more than just a political system, but a method of controlling reality itself.

Orwell's writing is noted for its directness and seriousness. His critique is frequently strong and clear, with the goal of warning readers about the very real dangers posed by unbridled political authority. His art aims to encourage action or contemplation on the status of politics and society, rather than just entertaining.

Buckley's Visual Satire: Digital Art and Social Commentary

Taylor Buckley, a modern digital artist, takes a unique approach to satire. Utilizing visual art, social media, and memes, Buckley interacts with contemporary culture. His artwork frequently critiques consumerism, political division, and the hyperreal aspects of social media and online culture. While Orwell's satire was based in the tangible realm of politics, Buckley's functions within the digital landscape, leveraging the internet for both the production and spread of his creations.

Unlike Orwell's extensive literary critiques, Buckley's satire is generally more direct and visual. His pieces frequently depend on brief, easily understandable images, employing formats such as memes to highlight the ridiculousness of modern life. Through this approach, Buckley participates in a critique that allows the audience to share, remix, and react to the work nearly in real-time, fostering a more engaging style of satire.

Buckley's digital art frequently embraces a playful, absurd, and irreverent style, inspired by the aesthetics of pop culture, advertising, and online trends. While Orwell's satire aimed to reveal the threats posed by government control, Buckley typically targets the commercialization of identity in the digital era, the emergence of influencer culture, and the distortion of truth in media and politics.

Orwell's Serious Irony: A Warning About Power

One significant characteristic of Orwell's satire is its gravity. Although Orwell employs irony and absurd scenarios to criticize political systems, the overall tone of his work remains bleak and pressing. For instance, the universe of 1984 is so dystopian that it feels nightmarish, with individuals facing oppression not only physically but also mentally. Orwell's satire serves as a cautionary tale regarding the decline of truth, the extinction of free will, and the degradation of power. Whenever humor is present, it is often dry, dark, and acerbic, typically making a pointed observation about the repercussions of totalitarian authority.

Orwell's employment of irony is crucial to his satirical approach. The paradoxes found in the Party's slogans, like "War is Peace" and "Freedom is Slavery," effectively highlight the manipulation of language and the alteration of reality. By utilizing these ironic elements, Orwell emphasizes the totalitarian government's power to govern not only behavior but also beliefs. Consequently, his satire serves as a warning to remain alert against the encroaching threats of tyranny.

Buckley's Absurdist Playfulness: Critique with Humor

Buckley's satire, by contrast, is whimsical, weird, and frequently surreal. His use of digital tools, memes, and modern art is typically based on the hyperreal—the display of exaggerated, fractured, or overstated depictions of reality in order to generate fun through contrast. While Orwell's satire, with its bleak outlook on political repression, cuts deeply into the human spirit, Buckley's style is far more adaptive, sardonic, and grounded in the hilarious aspects of our digital lives.

Buckley's absurdist humor is often **nonlinear** and **fragmented**, reflecting the fractured nature of modern life, where information comes at us in unpredictable and sometimes nonsensical ways. For example, his work might highlight the absurdity of **influencer culture**, where individuals commodify their personal lives and personalities, or the bizarre ways in which social media distorts the truth. His use of humor to critique culture serves not only as entertainment but also as a **commentary on the absurdity** of the very systems that produce it.

Orwell's Focus: Political Power and Totalitarianism

Orwell's satirical works primarily criticize tyranny and abuses of political authority. He criticizes political systems that use propaganda, surveillance, and thought control to silence opposition and alter reality. In *Animal Farm*, Orwell criticizes the perversion of revolutionary ideals through the rise of Stalinism, but in 1984, he criticizes the ubiquitous governmental monitoring and propaganda machine that molds every element of the individual's life.

Orwell's satire is centered on the dangerous consolidation of power—whether political, social, or economic. He portrays a gloomy picture of what happens when a small group controls the flow of knowledge, leaving citizens to rely exclusively on state-created narratives. Orwell's books underline the dehumanization that occurs when humans are deprived of their autonomy and forced to live in a state of eternal obedience.

Buckley's Focus: Consumerism, Technology, and the Digital Age

Buckley's satire, on the other hand, focuses on consumerism and how technology and digital culture influence modern life. Where Orwell warns about the perils of tyranny, Buckley criticizes how modern capitalism has permeated every area of our lives, from how we establish our identities to how we interact with political debate and media.

Buckley's work frequently addresses the commodification of personal experiences, especially through the prism of social media and online personas. His criticisms center on how humans are being reduced to consumer products or brands in the digital age. Whether it's the way individuals commodify themselves on Instagram or the ridiculousness of viral political events, Buckley's satire highlights the shallow quality of modern life in a world where attention and likes have become the currency of value.

Conclusion

Both George Orwell and Taylor Buckley utilize satire to critique their respective civilizations, but they do it in different ways, mediums, and concerns. Orwell's satirical works, written in the mid-twentieth century, address the omnipresent risks of authoritarianism, state monitoring, and political manipulation. His serious, narrative-driven style serves as a sharp reminder of the dehumanizing effects of unbridled governmental authority. Orwell uses irony and allegory to criticize not only power institutions, but also the control systems that mold individual thought and reality.

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