



The Historical Context of Evgeniy Zamyatin's Novel "We"

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Annotation: In order to fully appreciate and understand Evgeniy Zamyatin's masterpiece "We," it is crucial to explore its historical context. This dystopian novel, published in 1921, offers a scathing critique of totalitarianism and the dangers of an overly regimented society. By examining the era in which the novel was written, we can gain insight into the events and ideologies that influenced Zamyatin's work.

Keywords: famous work, writing style, words, fantasy, characters.

Introduction

"We" is a dystopian novel by Evgeniy Zamyatin, written in 1920. It was not published in the USSR until 1988, because it was considered "ideologically hostile" and "slandorous". He influenced the work of many famous writers of the 20th century, including Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, Kurt Vonnegut and Vladimir Nabokov.

The action takes place around the thirty-second century. This novel describes a society of rigid totalitarian control over personality (first and last names are replaced by letters and numbers, the state controls even intimate life), ideologically based on Taylorism, scientism and denial of fantasy, ruled by an "elected" on an uncontested basis "Benefactor".

The novel is constructed as a diary of one of the key figures of a hypothetical society of the future. He is a brilliant mathematician and one of the builders of the latest achievement of technical thought — the Integral spacecraft. The state Newspaper called on everyone to contribute to writing a message to the inhabitants of distant planets, who should meet the future crew of the Integral.

The message should include agitation for the creation of the same brilliant, absolute and perfect society on their planet, which has already been created in the person of a Single State on Earth. As a conscious citizen, D-503 (there are no more names — people are called "numbers", smoothly shave their heads and wear "uniform", that is, the same clothes, and only a vowel or consonant letter at the beginning of the "number" indicates belonging to the female or male sex, respectively) clearly and in detail describes life under totalitarianism using the example of his own.

In the beginning, he writes as a person who is blissfully unaware of any other way of life and social order, except for those established by the authorities in his country, usually thinks. It is obvious that the United State has existed in an unshakable form for more than one hundred years; and everything seems to be verified with unerring accuracy. The "Green Wall" separates the giant city-state from the surrounding nature; the "Clock Tablet" regulates the regime of society minute by minute; all apartments are exactly the same with their glass walls and an ascetic set of furniture; the law of "pink tickets" and "sexual hour" is in force, which guarantees the right of everyone to everyone (so that no one has there was not the slightest attachment to anyone); The "Bureau of Guardians" ensures state security and, in case of execution, destroys the criminal with the help of a special machine instantly, by turning into a puddle of water; the almighty ruler, called the "Benefactor", is



elected unanimously on an uncontested basis; art entirely serves the cause of glorification of a Single State.

From the very beginning, it is clear that the state still could not completely eradicate the human from people. So, there is still affection for loved ones. In particular, the main character prefers to spend his "sexual hours" with O-90, a rosy—cheeked, buxom and short girl who herself does not seek to apply for someone other than D-503. However, she also has another sexual partner, a poet (a propagandist who writes and reads his eloquent propaganda poems) R-13. But they are friends with D-503, and in his diary the main character calls O and R his family.

After meeting with the female number I-330 (a thin, dark-eyed actress with "unusually white and sharp teeth"; her job is, for example, to play live instruments to enlighten the numbers who are accustomed to music that musical machines write according to programs; as well as to depict various characters in propaganda plays), life it changes a lot.

From the first acquaintance with her, the hero feels an unconscious threat to his former life. I-330 is persistent, and their meetings are happening more often — including at the wrong time (when everyone is at work).

The hero violates other laws of the Unified State by the magnetic will of I.: in the "Ancient House" (an open—air museum - an apartment of the XX century preserved in its original form), she gives him a taste of alcohol and tobacco (in the Unified State, any addictive substances are strictly prohibited).

In the course of further communication with her, the main character realizes that he fell in love absolutely in the "ancient" sense of the word — "he cannot live without her", obeys her instructions, although their criminality is obvious to him (according to the laws of a Single State). She admits that she is working in the interests of the revolution.

To the hero's exclamation that the last revolution happened a long time ago and led to the formation of a Single State, I vehemently objects that there can be no last revolution, as well as the last number. It turns out that not only the old woman is an employee of the museum, but also a doctor (and even some of the Curators!) they cover up revolutionaries. All these numbers somehow contribute to the meetings of D. with I.

O suddenly appears to D without a ticket and demands to give her a child (in a Single State — "child care", children study in schools where teachers are robots; every adult who has the right to children must comply with certain "Paternal and Maternal Norms", and O is "10 centimeters lower"). O-90 becomes pregnant by D-503, knowing in advance that she will be tortured and executed.

Shaken by the seemingly unthinkable events of recent times, D-503 decides to be examined by doctors — and as a result it turns out that, according to a psychotherapist from the Medical Bureau, he has "formed a soul." Moreover, the doctor notes that recently there have been more and more such cases.

Meanwhile, I-330 confides in the secrets of the revolution. She leads him behind a Green Wall, where, as it turns out, people also live — "savages" with unnaturally long hair. This happened as a result of the historical development of the Earth, when the establishment of a Single State was preceded by the Great Two-Hundred-Year War.

Then billions of people died of hunger, disease and directly during the war. The last few million have adapted to a fundamentally new life, when even food is a product of oil distillation and is distributed equally among all in the form of identical cubes.



Races have ceased to exist, and only certain anthropological features give out certain ancestral features in numbers. For example, D-503 has increased body hair, and his friend R-13 has thick, "Negro" lips.

The novel influenced the work of Aldous Huxley (the novel "Brave New World") and George Orwell (the novel "1984").

Kurt Vonnegut said that when writing "Mechanical Piano" he "merrily plagiarized" the plot of the novel "Brave New World", the plot of which was, in turn, "merrily plagiarized" by Zamyatin. Vladimir Nabokov's novel "Invitation to Execution" represents a dystopian society that has similarities with Zamyatinsky: Nabokov read "We" while working on "Invitation to Execution".

The Anthem (1938) by Ayn Rand is similar in many ways to "We".

The 2022 studio album by the Canadian band Arcade Fire is named after the novel: "We".

In 2022, Moscow singer Alexandra Arbatskaya released the album "We" based on Zamyatin's work of the same name. The singer calls the album a one-man show, a musical and a musical drama.

Conclusion

Evaluating the historical context of Zamyatin's "We" provides valuable insights into the author's motivations and the societal forces that shaped the novel. The Russian Revolution, the rise of totalitarianism, the influence of Western literature, and Zamyatin's own experiences all contributed to the creation of this seminal work. By examining these factors, we can better appreciate the significance of "We" as a powerful critique of oppressive regimes and a testament to the enduring importance of individual freedom.

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