

Literature in Politics: The Appropriation of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in contemporary British parliamentary debate

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Abstract

The relationship between English Literature and Politics has, historically, been understated and underexplored in academia. This article recognises the value of this relationship, significantly contributing to the field through original research which explores the political appropriation of literature. Using politicians' references to George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four in parliamentary debate as a precedent, this research shows how fiction is used as a strategy of political argument. In supporting this claim, this research engages with the rising approach of Rhetorical Political Analysis, and wider theory which views political rhetoric as argumentation.

Keywords: English literature; Nineteen Eighty-Four; Orwell; Orwellian; parliamentary debate; rhetorical political analysis

Introduction

There is a significant amount of literature about the importance of rhetoric in politics (e.g., Atkins, 2010; Finlayson, 2004; Ilie, 2013). Prominent scholars who view political rhetoric as argumentation stress the importance of studying political rhetoric through an interdisciplinary lens with discourse analysts (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). Yet, for a field of thought which is rooted in the interdisciplinary, few have explored in depth the effect of literature in advancing political speech. As US theorist Murray Edelman (1995: 2) argued nearly three decades ago art, particularly literature, 'is the fountainhead from which political discourse, belief about politics and consequent actions ultimately spring'. However, in Britain, the study of the relationship between politics and fiction has rather trailed behind even the modest progress in the USA (Fielding, 2011). Fielding is one of few scholars who make progress in discussing this relationship (see also Bailey, 2011), but there still remains a lack of studies that observe the relationship in British politics. This article makes a distinctive contribution through research which looks at the use of one of the most famous and influential pieces of British fiction, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in contemporary British parliamentary debate. In doing so, it demonstrates how undertaking interdisciplinary research is key to unlocking new insights about our culture and politics, while helping to shine a light on the appropriation of a novel and its author who continue to be so commonly quoted in modern day.

The lack of research into the relationship between literature and politics is puzzling. A great deal of existing literature in the academic field discusses the prevalence of Aristotelian deliberative rhetoric, a strategy which politicians employ to encourage, or deter from, a course of action to show its potential advantage or harm (Finlayson, 2007). As Finlayson articulates, it is concerned with things that *could* happen and that we *could make* happen (Ibid: 556) [own emphasis added]. Literature, especially fiction, has the special ability to provide a means for politicians to show what could happen, for fiction offers a 'pre-packaged' vision of an alternative reality. This is true of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a dystopian reality which portrays multiple methods of government totalitarian control set in a future London. Politicians across the political spectrum will attempt to accuse the policy of their opponents to bringing us closer to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, whilst strongly striving away from accusations in their own actions.

Since Finlayson originally conjectured Rhetorical Political Analysis (RPA) as an approach to politicians' rhetoric in 2007, it has become a lively field of inquiry (Casiraghi & Testini, 2021). RPA observes the dissemination of concepts, words and ideas showing how they pass through institutions,

getting promoted, destroyed, redefined and redeployed and identifies replicated patterns of political argument (Finlayson, 2007: 560). This research contributes to this rising school of thought through using a rigorous discourse analysis of Hansard archives across the last decade to fully comprehend how *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is appropriated in parliament. In studying these archives, the use of the literature of Dickens, Kafka, Shakespeare, and Austen in political debate have all been identified as possible areas for further research.¹ All will help push to appreciate literature as one of the styles and strategies of political argument which RPA, and wider theory on political rhetoric as argumentation, seek to identify.

The Relationship between Literature and Politics

Scholars of both English Literature and Political Science touch upon the relationship between literature and politics, regardless of whether it is explicitly acknowledged. Political themes pervade the great novels, whilst in politics some such as Edelman (1995: 3) even go as far as stating ‘art shapes, displaces, and sometimes supersedes cherished influences upon public policy like voting and lobbying’. Such a statement requires justification, which Edelman provides, that literature contributes to the ‘confidence that the political scene is understandable, as opposed to the disorder, murkiness, and contradictions that characterise much of everyday experience’ (Edelman, 1995: 4). Harvie (1991) supports Edelman’s assertion in identifying that the political novel played a significant role in incorporating newly enfranchised voters into the existing political system. In acknowledging literature as a form of entertainment, they identify how the influence of the political novel may be due to accessibility, but the question remains – why literature?

A key reason this article identifies why literature so permeates politics, is that literature is an adaptable and mouldable art form. Richards (1998) expresses how fiction is given meaning by the contexts of the reader, consisting of their interrelated background knowledge, beliefs and culture. Edelman (1995: 5) also recognises this, expressing that ‘works of art and literature offer conceptions and perceptions that can be adopted or changed to fit needs, fears, interests or aspirations’. The individual can take the warnings and moral messages present in the great works of fiction and choose where the lessons should be applied in reality. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell’s key concept lends itself to a clear warning, as articulated by Posner (1999: 200): ‘The political significance of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*... is to depict with riveting clarity the logic of totalitarianism’. An opinion of popular consensus, Mann (2006: 286) echoes this, concluding that ‘Orwell’s only theme is the totalitarian danger that lies within ourselves and in all the political systems of our time’. Orwell’s

depiction of totalitarianism is a clear warning capable of reaching almost all across the mainstream political spectrum because he captures the overarching, shared, and powerful fear of democratic society – the alternative: totalitarianism. Where interpretation hence varies is where those of different political orientation identify totalitarian behaviour at large. The logic of totalitarianism can be expressed so well in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as it is a dystopian novel, which permits Orwell creative license to produce an alternate fictive society. Yet through maintaining eerie similarities in his future vision of London, Orwell's novel can align with deliberative rhetoric in showing what could happen. As Pfeiffer (1994: 237) stated of the novel, 'it is not about future actual, but about future potential'. This potential is compelling: studies such as Jones and Paris' (2018) have already demonstrated that the totalitarian-dystopian genre can affect real-world political attitudes with the fear it produces.

What is more is that Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has been granted a rather unique ability to reach and affect the political attitudes of numerous generations. As Rodden (1991: 221) articulates, Orwell has an important place in the school curricula, with the novel 'fairly widely taught in Anglo-American schools'. This prevalence continues into present day, with the novel still featuring in the further education curriculum (Kronbergs, 2017). Due to this, Orwell's 'elite' literature is more accessible and relatable to a notable portion of the public, who are exposed to Orwell's warnings of totalitarianism from a young age. Further research which would supplement this piece would be an exploration into how a key figure in Orwell's novel, Big Brother, has been appropriated by the popular British reality television show of the same name, and if this has exposed a greater amount of the public to Orwell's work and messages. ⁱⁱ

Whilst this article seeks to distinguish literature, specifically fiction, in its own right, many who view literature as part of our wider culture have made important contributions to the relationship on this basis. Phenomena often occur first in culture, before transitioning into politics. As Somers (1999: 125) affirms, 'claims to knowledge and truth are always transmitted to us via some kind of cultural schema; they are culturally embedded'. Somers continues to assert how metaphors, stories, and analogies are just some of the devices which can facilitate this. The existing literature has already recognised the power of metaphors in political speech (see Charteris-Black, 2005), in addition to non-fiction colloquial stories and analogies (see Atkins & Finlayson, 2012). Charteris-Black (2005) shows how metaphors are effective in enabling the speaker to construct complex arguments in a relatable fashion: this research identifies that the same ability is true of references to fiction. Metaphors are also linked to this research as they develop first in societal culture and then transition to be used in the political arena. The creation of the word

Orwellian to appropriate Orwell's name took place in twentieth-century society. Orwellian is defined by dictionaries in present day as synonymous with his novel *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* (see **Merriam Webster, 2022; Cambridge Dictionary, 2022**), and is used in parliamentary debate accordingly.

Finlayson himself explores the relationship between literature and politics in his work with Frazer on the plays of Shakespeare (2011), though they focus primarily on the politics of the theatre. Their contextualisation of the relationship is useful, emphasising how historically it goes back to Plato, and since 'arguments about the moral and political qualities and effects of fiction and drama have ebbed and flowed' (Finlayson & Frazer, 2011: 236). Since Kant, the argumentative capacity of literature has been realised, having been used in various political causes throughout time (Finlayson & Frazer, 2011). Finlayson does not explicitly articulate it, but this context sets up the premise for how literature can be viewed as a style and strategy of argument. However, like many of the voices leading the way in discussing the relationship, as seen with Edelman and Harvie too, they have a tendency to centre the fictional representation of politics to explore how literature can mobilise political participation. Whilst this is an important line of enquiry, it has meant discussion often stops right before we see how literature truly integrates into the political arena. This article readdresses this balance to see how literature is used as a strategy by the existing political elites in parliament. Further, through focusing on the moral, Finlayson and Frazer can overlook how literature can be appropriated, in a rather exploitative way, by politicians as part of strategy. In his seminal paper on RPA (2007: 552-553), Finlayson situates himself apart from scholars like Fairclough, who he states that, in their studies of political oratory are 'fixated on exposing evasions and occlusions rather than attending to argumentative content'. Whilst this article attends to the argumentative content in line with RPA, it will develop to have an element of 'exposure' in being critical of the current appropriation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* due to the research results.

Entering into the Political Arena

The UK House of Commons is often criticised 'as a place of theatre rather than a serious working body' where rhetorical abilities may be valued over real substance or policy knowledge (Gallagher, Laver, & Mair, 2006: 63; cited in Proksch & Slapin, 2014). Whilst this is a valid and important criticism, for the purpose of this article, it demonstrates how effective rhetoric is vital for politicians to advance their arguments. As expected, parliament's own website has a more honourable view of parliamentary debate, stating its purpose is 'to assist MPs and Lords to reach an informed decision on a subject' (UK Parliament, 2022). In this process, politicians

will listen to the opinion of their peers, some who may use facts, some who may use rhetorical strategies (for example, as seen, metaphors), but all of them unified in their aim to persuade their audience of their cause. It is difficult to see how political rhetoric in this setting may be viewed as anything other than argumentation.

When parliamentary debate is about policy, to reach the outcome, there are contests over meaning, struggles between different ways of tactically framing the interpretation of an issue (**Alonso-Curbelo, 2022; Loizides, 2009**). To get your perception heard, understood, and acted upon is a relatively difficult task. In developing RPA, Finlayson and Atkins (**2014**) have already established the appeal of using the words or work of somebody else in exploring the use of quotation in political rhetoric. Applicable to this research, they state that ‘in citing particular forms of culture we assume that our audience will be moved and affected in the way we hope’ (**Atkins and Finlayson, 2014: 171**). As this article has established through Posner’s insight, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* evokes fear, an emotional response which certainly has the ability to move and affect an audience. This capability of literature will be discussed in relation to the results, just one aspect of many identified that makes literature an effective strategy to use in parliamentary debate.

Of note, as Ilie (**2017**) highlights, the audience of parliamentary debate also comprises of the public and the media. If politicians can widen their audience beyond the walls of parliament and reach the public through the media, they can gain extra support for their argument and have a means to put extra pressure on policy makers. Perhaps for their own self-gain, they can also raise their public profile. In a setting of constant argumentation, standing out is incredibly difficult, and Orwell’s novel can provide an ideal soundbite to be picked up by mainstream news. For example, one MP made the headlines for calling gay marriage ‘Orwellian’ during a debate, with BBC News (**2013**) including a clip of their speech, helping to publicise the politician’s argument. Though in-depth exploration is beyond the scope of this research which focuses on literature in the political arena, it will take into account that the persuasion in political rhetoric in parliament can extend to the public audience.

Methodology

The data for this research has been extracted from online archive Hansard, the official report of all UK parliamentary debates. Searching the keywords ‘Orwellian’ and ‘Nineteen Eighty-Four’ in Hansard allowed for every direct reference and its surrounding context to be extrapolated.ⁱⁱⁱ In addition, the political party of the speaker and the topic of the debate in which they made the reference was recorded. Owing in part to the originality of this research, it was necessary to deduce quantitative facts to build a

foundation of the current dynamics of usage of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by politicians. If it was found that one political party dominated references, or they predominately occurred in certain topics, this would change the assertions made about the place of literature in parliamentary debate. From identifying patterns in the data during the analysis process, such as a tendency for some politicians to add a caveat to lessen the impact of Orwellian, the research also determined quantitative facts about these to ensure an accurate overall picture of the place and nature of literature in politics.

In the 'Symbolic Uses of Politics', Edelman (1964: 130) asserted that the meanings of language are 'always a function of the context from which it issues'. In developing RPA, Finlayson echoed this sentiment, highlighting that for an approach to be capable of analysing the meanings of actions, we need an interpretivist approach (Finlayson, 2007). This justified the main body of data of this research, a rigorous discourse analysis which prioritised the meaning and intention in the sentence of a reference to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Casiraghi and Testini's (2021) study on politicians' use of Machiavelli in the Italian Parliament, as the most similar research and method located, supported this approach. The authors coded direct references to the political thinker into positive, neutral, and negative categories. They divided the references into 'republican', 'revolutionary' and, 'realist' variables depending on how Machiavelli was used, using their background knowledge of Machiavelli and the Italian political landscape. They further coded individual variables into additional categories dependent on the speaker's rhetorical purpose, helping to fulfil their goal in exploring how appeals to authority are met in parliamentary debate. This similar approach to studying political speeches provided validity and a foundation for this research, however while the authors focused on Machiavelli as a political thinker, this research needed to be designed in a way which appreciated literature and its qualities, and the unique plot of Orwell's novel. For example, as Orwell's and his novel's authority as a respected author and piece of elite literature are generally not contested in Britain, such positive and negative characterisation was not required.^{iv} Yet as the warnings and moral messages of literature are more open to interpretation, a greater number of primary categories and a further interpretivist approach in determining the categories was needed.

This research's approach thus centred the literary, breaking down references to determine which aspect of totalitarian control portrayed in the novel the reference related to. Categories were established after repeated close examination of all references, using primary and secondary

knowledge of the novel. These categories can be seen in Table 2 and Table 3 in the following results section. ^v

Whilst the approach of this research could be criticised as more subjective, supported by literature which views political rhetoric as argumentation, a speaker's use was quite obvious when in context of speech. Politicians are aiming to advance their argument so tend to be focused and clear in their reasoning. An issue in more complex coding categories can be overlap (see **Bryman, 2016**). To prevent overlap, I formed a clear criterion in coding, focusing on what aspect of totalitarian control in the novel inclined the speaker to use 'Orwellian' or 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' specifically in the sentence. These cases were relatively rare, but to show one example, a reference in a debate on Human Rights (North Korea) to the 'the regime's rather Orwellian- sounding Organisation and Guidance Department' could be seen to be coded into a 'Display of totalitarian control by a foreign power' if judging from the title alone (**UK Parliament, 2014a**). However, the reference was coded into the category 'Spin and propaganda in naming/ phrasing/language/narrative' as the speaker used 'Orwellian' to describe the paradoxical name of the department. Using this method, references were double-checked, and ultimately, I ensured the categorisation was correct through illuminating with the context of the reference in speech. For an accurate and transparent portrayal, an expanded results table in Appendix 1 and 2 provide another column contextualising the use in debate.

As this research focuses on contemporary UK politics to provide a foundation for looking to the future, the time frame for the references was from 10/01/2012 to 16/12/21, approximately a ten-year period, based on when the two houses rose for recess and returned. I discarded any references that were irrelevant as they did not relate to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* directly. Out of 167 references, 14 references to 'Orwellian' were excluded from the sample, 12 as they referred to Orwell's other work (such as a play on the infamous *Animal Farm* quote, 'four legs good, two legs bad') and two as they were a repeated reference in error. All 32 references to 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' were relevant. Thus, there were a total of 185 references in the sample.

Contextualising within the framework of RPA, and wider theory which views political speech as argumentation, reveals why politicians appropriate *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as literature has become a strategy of political argument. I use a non-probability sample of references to support the research findings, aiming to be representative of the wider trends determined through discourse analysis. While further research could be conducted on the data from this project, the most significant findings are

discussed in relation to literature as a strategy, and the specific power of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a novel.^{vi}

Results and Discussion

Exploring the appropriation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in political debate has provided insight on two key elements needed to help identify literature as part of political argumentation: the current place of literature in politics, including its prevalence and versatile use in debate, and the nature of literature in politics, specifically how the novel is used when referenced. The findings of this research also shaped a third section on the future of literature in politics, from identifying a trend for politicians to be critical of the use of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The Place of Literature in Politics

The number of references to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* proves that literature is prevalent in political debate. There is a lack of consensus among political scholars of what constitutes a significant sample size, yet 185 references in a decade stemming from one novel shows a clear presence of the literary.^{vii} Casiraghi and Testini's similar study (2021) based the prevalence of Machiavelli on 241 references over a period of roughly fifty years, only 56 more references than those to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* despite a time frame five times as long.

Yet how *Nineteen Eighty-Four* most significantly demonstrates the place of literature in politics, as a common strategy and style of argument, is in the versatility of its use. This research has identified three separate areas where versatility is demonstrated: its use by politicians across the political spectrum, its use across varying topics of debate, and its use in the different argumentative contexts of political debate. Each reinforces literature as a strategy of *political* argument, not to be dismissed as a partisan argument, or as limited in its scope.

A multitude of politicians across the political spectrum have appropriated *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, an observation demonstrated by its use in debate by both the former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn and former Conservative Party Leader Sir Iain Duncan-Smith. Table 1 shows the cross-party appropriation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Table 1: Usage of Orwellian and Nineteen Eighty-Four in the Houses of Parliament

Political Party	Total number of references*	Percentage (%)
Labour	79	42.7
Conservative	49	26.5
Liberal Democrat	21	11.4
SNP	12	6.5
Green	5	2.7
Crossbench	14	7.6
Plaid Cymru	1	0.5
DUP	1	0.5
Alliance	1	0.5
Bishops	1	0.5
Non-affiliated	1	0.5

*Sum total of all references: 185.

The finding that the Labour Party most frequently referenced *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was expected, as they were the opposition for the entirety of the research’s timeframe. As existing literature on the framing of political issues helps illuminate (see **Kuypers, 2006; Faucher & Boussaguet, 2018**), likening the policies and actions of the sitting government to the totalitarian government in Orwell’s novel is not a surprising strategy. Yet, what is significant is that references by Labour (42.7%) are not the absolute majority of references. A substantial 26.5% of references were made by the Conservative government, with a further 11.4% and 6.5% spoken by the Liberal Democrats and SNP respectively.^{viii} This article has so far determined that the references are made in such different ways and contexts, and this extends to within political parties themselves: to understand why there is cross-party appropriation we need to focus on what makes fiction appealing to all of these groups. Since its publication, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has been continuously used as a tool in the political causes of the left, the centre and the right (**Rodden, 1990**). Orwell and his work have been praised, and claimed, by ‘prominent Labour supporters and democratic socialists, liberals and neoliberals, conservatives and neoconservatives’ and more (**Ibid: 21-22**). Fiction has frequently been used to argue for an individual’s or party’s pre-existing political views. And it certainly has been in British parliamentary debate. Jeremy Corbyn used *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to supplement his criticism of the Tory government’s lack of fair funding in schools (**UK Parliament, 2019a**), whilst Duncan-Smith’s reference added emphasis to his argument that the European Commission had an excess of power (**UK Parliament, 2013a**). The existing literature may have focused its attention on how literature can create or influence public political opinion. However, exploring direct references in parliament gives due emphasis to how fiction is used to support the

existing political intentions of individuals and groups: this is what makes fiction an irresistible contribution to argument.

From identifying a significant range of topical debates which *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was referenced in, this research can highlight that literature has the ability to enhance argument in important matters. References were present in key topics of Brexit, economic policy, foreign policy, education, social issues, healthcare, human rights, immigration, and technology (an exhaustive list can be found in Appendix 3). For example, in a debate over Brexit, one MP argued that it was not possible for three promises the government made to different groups to be simultaneously possible, adding emphasis through citing Orwell's novel. Setting up their argument, they stated:

In his dystopian novel "Nineteen Eighty-Four", George Orwell described "doublethink" as "holding simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them". Instead of reading the book as a cautionary tale, the Prime Minister seems to have taken it as an instruction manual. (UK Parliament, 2019b)

In the area of healthcare, another MP criticised 'the Government's Orwellian Success regime, which include the closure of scores of community hospital beds' (UK Parliament, 2016a), to highlight the totalitarian spin on the situation.

In these key topical issues, which are contested across the political spectrum, and crucially by the individual too, framing is of the utmost importance and literature lends itself to this cause. Both the interpretation of fiction's messages and the framing of political issues stem from the individual's own background, traditions, and political orientation. Further, many of these topics are ones of emotion as policy is often life-changing for the public affected by its implications. In these topics of emotion, arguments which invoke pathos are common, a key concept in theory on political rhetoric defined as 'the evocation of feelings and emotions in the audience' (Finlayson & Martin, 2014: 7). The general threat of totalitarianism displayed has the potential of evoking an emotional response of fear and concern, particularly from a public audience. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is so 'permeated in our collective consciousness' that 'even people who have never read the book will admit to having paused momentarily in vague anxiety at [its] mere mention' (Rodden, 1990: 17). Through reframing issues in the context of this threat in parliamentary debate, politicians can get closer to fulfilling the task 'of convincing others to see things in the same light as we do' (Finlayson, 2007: 550), even through a mere reference to Orwell's novel.

A final proof of literature's place in political argumentation is this research's identification of the novels use in different types of argument itself. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has been used in arguments of definition, centring on the names of things and how they are defined (**Finlayson, 2007**): for example, one reference used the novel to dispute naming an EU Withdrawal Bill the 'Great Repeal', which they described as a 'thoroughly Orwellian title', as they claimed this contradicted the contents which cut and paste EU law into UK law (**UK Parliament, 2018a**). The novel has been frequently used in arguments of quality, concerning the nature of an act and how it should be judged (**Finlayson, 2007**). *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was used to argue the implementation of Facial Recognition Technology was dangerous, due to discriminatory automated facial recognition algorithms, with the Lord stating that 'without regulation and oversight there is the potential for Nineteen Eighty-Four to become a reality, albeit 34 years later than originally envisaged' (**UK Government, 2018b**). In another debate, an MP stated, 'I want to touch on the Secretary of State's Orwellian proposal effectively to take charge of all council communications across the country' (**UK Parliament, 2013b**), framing this act as totalitarian. Orwell's novel has even been used in arguments of place, attempts to set the boundaries of political argument (**Finlayson, 2007**), in references where politicians criticise framing an issue in relation to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. All help prove the novel is a versatile tool in helping politicians advance their argument.

The Nature of Literature in Politics

The following section has been formed from a perspective which centres the novel in order to deduce appropriation. Table 2 identifies that politicians' use of 'Orwellian' covers a multitude of different aspects of the totalitarian control portrayed in the novel, with a similar pattern identified in direct references to 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' (Table 3). Each of the references framed 'Orwellian' in a way which emphasised some kind of totalitarian threat, reaffirming it can be seen in accordance with the plot of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Table 2: Usage of Orwellian in the Houses of Parliament

Aspect of totalitarian control portrayed in <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> the use of Orwellian relates to	Total number of references*	Percentage (%)
Centralised control (threat to individual autonomy)	6	3.9
Freedom of speech	4	2.6
Limiting information (issues of transparency)	5	3.3
(Re)Education	3	2.0
Spin and propaganda in naming/ phrasing/language/narrative	99	64.7
Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)	15	9.8
Threat to components of democracy	3	2.0
Display of totalitarian control by foreign power	4	2.6
Critical of terms use (term specifically)	10	6.5
Critical of terms use (does not apply)	2	1.3
General applicability of Orwellian in Politics	2	1.3

*Sum total number of all references: 153.

*Table 3: Usage of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the Houses of Parliament*

Aspect of totalitarian control portrayed in <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> speakers reference relates to	Total number of references*	Percentage (%)
Freedom of speech	2	6.3
Limiting information (issues of transparency)	1	3.1
Spin and propaganda in naming/ phrasing/language/narrative	9	28.1
Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)**	7	21.9
Threat to components of democracy	1	3.1
Display of totalitarian control by foreign power	4	12.5
Criticises use of 1984 (does not apply)	5	15.6
General applicability of 1984	3	9.4

*Sum total number of all references: 32.

**Includes one repeated reference to Orwellian and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in same phrase

There are two aspects of totalitarian control portrayed in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to which politicians predominately refer. As seen in Table 2 and Table 3, references to 'Orwellian' and 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' both have the same top two categories. First is its use in relation to 'Spin and propaganda in naming/ phrasing/language/narrative'.^{ix}In Orwell's novel, the government have an entire ministry, The Ministry of Truth, dedicated to spin and propaganda. Framing another's actions in relation to this hyperbolic depiction of spin and propaganda must be particularly tempting for politicians: one MP retorts during a debate, 'on the minimum wage, can we just stop the Orwellian language?' (**UK Parliament 2021a**), while another asserted 'it is Orwellian to say that there has been a cut in funding when there has not' (**UK Parliament 2017a**). Yet, this alone cannot suitably explain this category's prevalence, for each aspect of totalitarian control in the novel is depicted in a similar hyperbolic manner.

This article has discussed how individuals take fiction's warnings and moral messages and choose where the lessons should be applied in reality, influenced by political orientation. For politicians in parliamentary debate, this process will also be heavily influenced by which matters are of debate at the given time, not necessarily just which topic is on the set agenda but what key issues are dominating political discourse. This shows how this category's prevalence can be seen to be reflective of the modern political climate. Since the dawn of the twenty-first century, attention to political spin and propaganda has increased, in what some attribute to communications professionals becoming the news story (**see de Vreese & Elenbaas, 2009**). Derry (**2005: 122**) stated that 'every day public opinion is the target of rewritten history, official amnesia and outright lying', a bold claim but one which demonstrates the growing attention, and hostile attitude, to political spin.

Parallel to the presidency of Donald Trump in 2016, a new era of political spin has gained prominence, embodied in the phrase, 'fake news'.^x This is the idea that any information contradicting one's ideology is automatically illegitimate or fake (**Journell, 2017**). One reference in the sample articulated this phenomenon, making the link between Orwell and Trump by citing the 'Orwellian world that is unfolding before us, where the theme that has been put forward by Trump is that lies are the truth, good is bad, war is peace and fantasy is fact' (**UK Parliament, 2017b**). This link has been recognised by scholars too: Rodden wittily quotes of a news article, 'George Orwell and Donald Trump literally say the same thing: it is all fake news' (**Rodden, 2020: 263**). Hence, there develops the question of why *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is still so commonly used in argument, when ultimately the novel was written over seventy years ago, and there exists more modern takes on the same matters. Applying the theory of political rhetoric regarding different sources of authority substantiates the

sustained appeal of Orwell's novel. In their work on quotation in political speech, Atkins and Finlayson (2014: 167) stated that 'quotation works only to the extent that it, or its source, is recognised and approved of by the audience that is to be persuaded by it'. In viewing references to literature in speech as like a quotation, we can see how Orwell as a respected author, and by consequence his novel as a piece of respected literature, contrast the echoes of populist interpretation of political spin by divisive figures such as Donald Trump. The appeal of using literature to enhance argument is evident: the speaker also receives the intellectual kudos of quoting what can be viewed as a cultural source of authority, for both the novel and Orwell have been described as being increasingly extolled as artifacts of popular culture (Strub, 2004). Other authors this research has identified, such as Shakespeare, can be viewed as equal artefacts of culture, upholding that literature as a whole is an effective strategy of political argument.

The second most popular category is references to 'Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)'. This category's prevalence can also be reflective of the political climate, as the increasing powers of technology increase worries about the implications on the privacy of the individual, reflected by a reference made by one MP that 'signing up for pan-European data sharing on every ordinary citizen is Orwellian and dangerous' (UK Parliament, 2013c). When politicians are attempting to argue their case for or against technological policy that may have implications upon privacy, they are limited by only being able to articulate potential harm, a prediction of what is to come. They can use past examples of where policy has failed or current occurrences in foreign countries, but also significantly, a vision of alternative reality in the form of Orwell's dystopian novel where technology enables the government to always watch their citizens. The references indeed stress the potential: for example, politicians have referenced how facial recognition software *may* lead us to an Orwellian state (see UK Parliament, 2020; UK Parliament, 2019c) [own emphasis added]. This is direct proof that fiction indeed has a place in deliberative rhetoric in being used to show what could happen.

References to literature are an apt strategy of deliberative rhetoric in the context of parliamentary debate especially, which requires succinct, persuasive, and informed contributions. Here, Charteris-Black's assertions (2005) about metaphors can illuminate. He has argued that when the outcomes are too uncertain for politicians to know what to do, metaphors provide quick and cognitively accessible ways of thinking (Ibid). Like metaphors, as part of culture, fiction enhances argument in a relatable and accessible manner, capable of reaching the public audience. A reference to fiction serves to inform when comprehensive information about outcomes is not available, which can clearly be necessary in debates

regarding technology. Theory on metaphor can also further illuminate the appeal of references to 'Spin and propaganda in naming/phrasing/language/narrative', where in succinct speech, it can be difficult to otherwise quickly articulate where such manipulation has taken place.

Whilst effectively enhancing argument in these two key issues, evidently, there are other important issues in the modern political climate that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does not and cannot represent. However, this leads to the question of if there are other pieces of literature which can. The work of Dickens certainly has the potential for enhancing argument on socio-economic issues. Further research into literature as political strategy is undoubtedly needed.

To evaluate *Nineteen Eighty-Four's* appropriation in a holistic manner, it is important to look at the overview of both tables. Breaking down the aspects of totalitarian control is the product of this research, something not often considered by the audience when politicians use it in their argument in parliamentary debate. This brings about possible problematic implications. In Table 2, there are seven separate aspects of totalitarian control depicted in the novel to which references to 'Orwellian' relate (see the first seven categories of Table 2). In Table 3, there are five separate aspects of totalitarian control depicted in the novel which references to 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' relate to (see the first five categories of Table 3). In his essay 'Politics and The English Language', Orwell (1946) himself passionately addressed the issue of key words in politics encompassing too much. He describes the abuse of words such as fascism, which he states, 'has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies 'something not desirable' (Ibid: 9). He continues that 'the words *democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice*, have each of them several different meanings' (Ibid: 9). One reference in this research spoke of Orwell 'turn[ing] in his grave' in relation to the increase in CCTV (UK Parliament, 2015a), but he may in fact be doing so as his name has become appropriated in a manner in which he explicitly condemned.

Edelman and Finlayson, key voices which have contributed significantly to this article, have equally identified and voiced the issue of political words being too open to interpretation in their work. Edelman talks of the 'diverse pictures [that] may be in the minds of the various respondents to such cues', of words like communism and tyranny (Edelman, 1964: 116-7). Finlayson sees how terms like freedom, choice, democracy and even poverty are 'concepts whose meaning cannot be established independently of contestation' (Finlayson, 2007: 551). Considering these key voices, it is only right to in turn be critical of the current nature of literature in parliamentary debate: the number of categories seen in the

tables clearly show that politicians are each assuming multiple different meanings of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In this context, it is likely Orwellian would be a word all three would criticise.

Being critical of the nature of literature in politics is an important line of enquiry for moving towards improving literature as a style/strategy of argument, ultimately, fulfilling Finlayson's goal in RPA, 'to ensure not less argumentation but more and better' (Finlayson, 2007: 559).

Engaging with narrative, a key concept in political rhetoric, is a means to pursue critical evaluation. Bevir and Rhodes (2003: 26) emphasise the importance of narrative as a feature of political argumentation, an 'organising perspective', which 'signals the distinctive nature of explanation'. In political debate where politicians are restricted to relatively short speeches, a reference *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has an instantaneous ability in fulfilling this function, for fiction already exists as a complete narrative. In exploring debates on technology, this article has already identified the appeal of fiction as being like a fix to fill in gaps in a narrative, but through applying a critical lens, it can appreciate the danger of this. One reference can have the effect of embodying all of the totalitarian control displayed in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This can be problematic and has the potential to become even more so when exploring the nature of how 'Orwellian' in particular is appropriated in parliamentary debate.

After observing a trend during the discourse analysis process for politicians to simply drop Orwellian in a clause in speech, I explored how many of the references to both 'Orwellian' and 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' expanded beyond a brief reference to mention a specific plot point, concept/neologism, or direct quote. For references to 'Orwellian', less than a fifth of references expanded further, with only three references quoting directly from the novel. In contrast, half of references to 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' expand further, including six direct quotations, double the amount in 'Orwellian', in a sample nearly five times smaller. As established, the appropriation of Orwell's name to embody *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, took place decades ago outside the political arena and was perhaps therefore always more prone to disconnect from the substance of novel in this research. But when Orwellian is simply dropped in a clause in speech, the effect of embodying the entire totalitarian narrative of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* remains.

Undeniably, some of these references to the novel are appropriate. One politician uses 'Orwellian' in regard to China developing gait and facial technology, given China's recent history of human rights abuses (UK Parliament, 2021b). The same politician also uses 'Orwellian' in a debate on the treatment of Uyghur Women in Xinjiang Detention Camps (UK

Parliament, 2021c). Yet, another politician equally uses ‘Orwellian’ to critique a trainline’s bicycle policy, stating, ‘it seemed to me to be ridiculous—Orwellian, even—that if people turned up at a station with a bicycle and there were spaces in the carriage designed for carrying bicycles, they should not be allowed to take their bicycle with them’ (**UK Parliament, 2016b**). The reference to Bicycle Policy is representative of a small but significant number of references only tentatively applying to the theme of the novel.^{xi} This article has so far seen the interpretive quality of literature as positive in adding to its existence as a strategy. However, this comparison displays how interpretation can be problematic when politicians can interpret the novel’s depiction of totalitarianism to illuminate on vastly different topic matters. Though the reference to bicycle policy could be interpreted by us almost humorously, the politician intended it to advance their argument, in what can be seen as an inappropriate topic.

There is a noticeable piece of discourse in the sample of references where difference in interpretation is explicit. A politician questions if a peer who referenced *Nineteen Eighty-Four* had even read it: he states, ‘My charitable view is that it demonstrates that my noble friend has never read *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’, on the basis it is misleading that there are cameras in every bedroom (**UK Parliament, 2016c**). The peer responds defending his comparison, referring to GCHQ intercepting webcams which is his interpretation of CCTV in every bedroom in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (**UK Parliament, 2016d**). This exchange can be perceived as fairly harmless, but it demonstrates how a difference in interpretation can be harmful in eroding the clarity of meaning needed in argumentation in parliament. In their debates, others may not have the opportunity to clarify in rebuttal and excerpts can later be taken out of context when presented to the public audience through different media outlets.

Of note, upon identifying a tendency for politicians to add a caveat in relation to a reference to ‘Orwellian’, this research deduced the total references which lessen the impact of Orwellian. Less than a fifth of references consciously minimised their references to the term, oft supplemented beforehand with descriptors such as ‘somewhat’, ‘slightly’ or ‘quite’. None were able to be quantifiably identified for references to ‘*Nineteen Eighty-Four*’. It can be determined that the majority of politicians do not attempt to negate the full force of the dystopian reality of totalitarian control embodied in their references. The implications discussed still stand.

The Future of Literature in Politics

This article has considered how the current nature of literature in parliamentary debate can be problematic. However, in identifying the presence of politicians criticising the use of Orwellian, the question is raised of if fiction should continue to be a style/ strategy of political argument in parliamentary debate. Whilst it was expected to find references criticising the term for not applying, the case for references to 'Nineteen Eighty-Four', in references to 'Orwellian' it was criticisms of the term specifically which accounted to the third most popular category (see Table 2). The reasons for criticising the appropriation of Orwellian differed significantly. One politician criticised the term as a piece of 'effective and emotive' language (**UK Parliament, 2014b**). Another politician criticised it as a cliché (**UK Parliament, 2015b**). A third referenced how the term was insufficient in describing the Chinese government's detention facilities and that the style of novelist Franz Kafka was more applicable (**UK Parliament, 2019d**).

These criticisms do not suggest literature should cease to be a style/strategy of political argument. They actually help prove that literature is effective as a strategy: the first criticism even directly acknowledges how the use of 'Orwellian' is effective. It continues to aptly criticise 'Orwellian' as emotive, for this article has already identified this concern in relation to the pathos tied to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. However, it should be reiterated that this research has identified pathos as a *strategy* of political argument: a strategy may be effective, oft dependent on the context. Whether references were effective in terms of successfully persuading fellow politicians in evoking pathos, would be impossible to determine. We expect politicians to be rational, and therefore inappropriate evocations of pathos may indeed not affect them, though could move the public audience. In regard to the second criticism, the work of Ilie (**2007**) shows that dismissing an argument as a cliché is a classic critical response in parliamentary debate, not exclusive to, or a result of, references to fiction. Finally, the third reference shows that literature does have a place in politics, that simply a different piece of literature may be better for articulation in the context.

This article has recognised the issue of 'Orwellian' in particular encompassing too much in one word, but this does not mean we should give it disproportionate criticism. Tyranny and freedom are just some of the many words (**Finlayson, 2007; Edelman, 1964**) which, as they are interpreted differently, can also be harmful in eroding the clarity of meaning needed in argumentation when used in parliamentary debate. And this is unlikely to change, a feature of political rhetoric which Orwell identified in his essay on, 'Politics and the English Language', before he

even wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Orwell, 1946). The most problematic concern this research identified was how different interpretations of what is classed as totalitarianism facilitated the novel being appropriated in both debates over genocide and trainline bicycle policy. Yet, this has an evidently simple solution: for politicians to stop using the novel in inappropriate topics or contexts. Politicians can use it where it is appropriate to emphasise the dangers of totalitarian control, the alternative, to protect democracy. This would ensure better argumentation, the aim of RPA (Finlayson, 2007).

Conclusion

This article set out to prove literature as a style/ strategy of political rhetoric, which RPA, and wider theory on political rhetoric as argumentation, aim to identify. Using George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a representation, it has shown how fiction can be used as a strategy in argument in parliamentary debate. In doing so, this research has fulfilled its intention to help enlighten the appropriation of Orwell and his work, while signposting and advocating for further exploration. It has also given due attention to the relationship between English Literature and Politics which has been historically underexplored by scholars. Edelman in particular has made a significant contribution in discussing the relationship, but this research explicitly showcases how literature integrates into the key political arena of parliament.

Throughout, this article has ensured to value the specific abilities of fiction, to illuminate why it is used as strategy. It has seen how the lessons we take from literature are open to interpretation in their application, and therefore can be used in arguments made across the political spectrum, in different topics and contexts. It has acknowledged literature's power as a means for politicians to show what could happen, in line with deliberative rhetoric, for fiction can provide a thorough vision of an alternative reality. This research has also ensured accuracy through appreciating the effectiveness of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in its own right, an infamous novel in our culture, whose plot displays a dystopian reality of government totalitarian control. It has explored the timeless quality of the novel, with themes that are still relevant and are used by politicians to illuminate upon the modern political climate.

In engaging with key established aspects of political rhetoric throughout the results, such as pathos, narrative and appeals to authority, this article has shown literatures alignment and its place in this academic field.

I have identified where future research could be carried out, in addition to building upon Casiraghi and Testini's (2021) study to provide a transparent and clear method which centres the literary, alongside a dataset which can be repurposed, to reaffirm that literature is a strategy of political argument. This initial research has helped to illuminate both the place and nature of literature in politics, in addition to providing implications about the future of this relationship. In looking to the future, this article has been critical of the current use of literature as a strategy, in order to improve its application, and ensure better argumentation.

When British society, culture, and politics cannot be separated from one another, but all influence each other in ways that may not be immediately apparent, the way forward must be prioritising interdisciplinary research.

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Appendix 1: Extended Version of Table 2

An extended version of (Table 2) to include context of the use in debate.

Aspect of totalitarian control portrayed in <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> the use of Orwellian relates to	Context. Topic/Issue which inclines politician to reference Orwellian in this manner	Total number of references*	Percentage(%) of total references
Centralised control (threat to individual autonomy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralised control (issue of threat to individual autonomy)- Clause in Ivory bill- speaker argues for the independence of the citizen and right to retain private property- argues this is not a matter for Parliament • Centralised control (issue of threat to individual autonomy)- Government control of local council communications • Centralised control (issue of threat to individual autonomy)- Great Western Railway's Bicycle Policy of not being able to use space designed for carrying bicycles- requirement to reserve • Centralised control (issue of threat to individual autonomy)- pattern books in planning and house building preventing innovation, imagination, and variety • Centralised control (issue of threat to individual autonomy)- standardisation of hospital expectations/policy • Centralised control (issue of threat to individual autonomy)-Orwellian consensus in church on issues of assisted dying 	6	3.9
Freedom of speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of speech- Censorship- of publications produced by local authorities, likens secretary of state to Big Brother • Freedom of speech- claim that government do not want to hear facts or responses which are critical- advocating for fair free speech and freedom of the press • Freedom of speech- Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) 	4	2.6

	<p>Bill necessary to prevent indoctrination in restricting free debate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of speech- In Higher Education Freedom of Speech bill, issue of government/individual deciding what is acceptable 		
Limiting information (issues of transparency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting information (issues of transparency)- accusing Treasury department of "Ignorance is strength" in not conducting finance study • Limiting information (issues of transparency)- amendment in Telecommunications (Security) Bill causing situations where people do not know why they are in an adverse legal position • Limiting information (issues of transparency)- Government unit the clearing house that withholds sensitive information from public • Limiting information (issues of transparency)- issue of limiting council's publication for local useful information to a quarterly basis in areas where there is not local newspapers • Limiting information (issues of transparency)- unknown to individual their name may be on criminal offences database in incidents victims define as hostile 	5	3.3
(Re)Education-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Re)education- criticises diversity course for those denounced as racist (in context of Rotherham child sex abuse) • (Re)Education- of civil servants in accordance with complying with the law and justice • (Re)Education- government imposing British values in education, tarring Muslim community in process with language taken from counterterrorism strategies 	3	2
Spin and propaganda in naming/phrasing/language/narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Chinese government- creating an alternative narrative in subverting words- e.g., 'those who tell truth are liars' • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- North Korea new leaders speeches terminology and philosophy • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- 	99	64.7

	<p>Russia using Orwellian logic to facilitate human rights abuses and undemocratic referendums in Crimea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-directed at EU Commission-phrase harmonisation-transferring power to Commission • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-phrase 'adverse incidents' in health service- does not reflect higher number • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-concept of 'Collective mind' in form of one minister on cybersecurity threats • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-concept of 'peoples vote' in Brexit, overturning the vote of the people • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-concept of 'peoples vote' in Brexit, reversing the vote of the people • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-concept of 'peoples vote'-agreeing with earlier speaker • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-Daesh (sometimes calls itself ISIS)- naming of ministry of antiquities- turning cultural property into income streams and exporting and selling stolen precious items abroad • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-phrase fair funding formula dividing communities further • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-framing of 'connection' in immigration bill overstated • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-general titles of monetary funds, cites national prosperity fund or shared prosperity fund, in reality of 'moth-eaten' strategic funding • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-phrase 'common rulebook'- Labour policy in school system 		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- North Korea naming of the 'Organisation and Guidance Department' • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- naming of bill title 'Great Repeal' withdrawing from EU, but content inside reverted • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- phrase 'implementation phase' in European Union (Withdrawal) Bill • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative)- phrase 'implementation phase' in European Union (Withdrawal) Bill • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- phrase 'fair funding' whilst cutting funding • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- phrase 'the machinery of government' • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Portugal- name 'dissuasion committee for drugs' • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- phrase 'pre-crime' space in prevent strategy • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- title of 'prosperity fund' in debate on whether to replace or join Erasmus • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- redefining marriage to include same sex couples • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- term 'registered parents' in education bill • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Saudi Arabia- name of the 'Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice' • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- name of the 'surveillance authority'- highlights media likely to pick up on • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- 		
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	<p>phrase 'sustainability and transformation plans' in health and social care- reality the opposite</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-term 'Office for students' potentially not focused on outcomes for students • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-the name of the 'European Research Group' • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-name of 'the productivity commission'- makes reference to Stalin and Fidel Castro • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- to describe Minister's (incorrect) use of the term 'over-indexing' in debate • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-phrase 'transforming legal aid' in context of lack of budget to legal aid • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-title 'Transforming Legal Aid: Delivering a More Credible and Efficient System' in context of cuts • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-phrase 'War on Terror) • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-title 'Great Repeal Bill' which 'cuts and pastes EU law into UK law' • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-defining 'affordable housing' as costing 80% of market rent- not afforded by ordinary people • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-concept of 'affordable rent' trapping families into paying higher proportion of income in social rented accommodation • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-concept of 'affordable rent' being 80% of market rent and not affordable • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-concept of 'people's vote' 		
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	<p>overturning previous referendum in 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-reiterating Lord who described the concept of 'people's vote' as Orwellian • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-describing Bill as devolved power surge to Scotland when are limiting power • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-directed at supporters of Trade Union Bill citing modernisation but denying trade union members the right to use e-balloting. • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-claiming a commitment to transparency when keeping information confidential • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-Donald Trump's influence of putting forward that words mean their opposite • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-'doublespeak' of Minister's opening remarks in debate in journalists' access in lobby and media briefings • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-'doublespeak' throughout Data Retention and Investigatory Powers Bill • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-doublespeak, misleading information about increase in pupil budget • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-'doublespeak' in environmental agency document stating they have decided when they have not • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-concept of 'affordable rents' deemed to be 80% of private rents and therefore unaffordable to those on middle/lower incomes • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-description of 'fairest funding 		
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	<p>formula' in context of some of the poorest schools losing out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-name of the 'global restructuring group' in context of harming businesses • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative--government claim allowing locals to have more say over their community but approach not reflecting • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-government claim that bill to reunite refugees with families will make their lives harder • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-name of Government's 'success regime' in healthcare, in context of local hospital closures • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-government suggesting they wish to protect workers' rights but Trade Union Act and current regulations contradict • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- in relation to property purchase schemes being posed as affordable when they will need an income of £70,000 • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- In relation to government justifying proposal putting youth on equal start in Welfare Reform Bill as a simplification when needing to take into account their diverse situations • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-'Doublespeak' in meaning of localism in planning reform not reflecting giving power back to local people • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-'doublespeak' of phrase 'measures to modernise' when not the aim of changes • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-that the minimum wage is not a living wage • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative-Minister claiming Trade Union Act is a modernising act in 		
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	<p>context of only allowing postal balloting for industrial action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- not acknowledging shifting profits to tax havens through describing problem as base erosion and profit shifting • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- of sincere health administrators in context of deficit • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Opposition saying there have been funding cuts when there have not • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- phrase another 'people's referendum' implying would be more democratic than first • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- propaganda versus reality in regards to government support for NHS in context of failing trusts • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- redefining marriage to include same sex couples • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- constituents' view of heading 'Shaping a healthier future' in context of loss of all consultant-led emergency services in constituency • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- 'Shaping a healthier future' healthcare plan in context of loss of beds • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- titles of things no longer represent their reality- specifically Office for Students • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- naming of transparency bill (of lobbying) when it restricts freedom of speech • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- name of Labour's urban reinvention programme in context of post office closures under Labour • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- 		
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	<p>language used in Sustainability and Transformation healthcare plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Government response to international students report-rhetoric- government acted, no longer a problem and no further work is required. • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- interrupts government speaker defending imposing lockdown a week later than advised by SAGE during Covid-19 pandemic • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Covid-19 pandemic- argues Leader of House is pretending that barring members from participating online will enhance ability to scrutinise the government when it will reduce it • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Criticising minister for how he has made Labour proposal to stage fair and impartial leaders debate on a statutory footing sound • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- diminishing argument that subsidy to council tenants from the taxpayer increased by private landlord rent increase • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- European Commission's language in general, specifically in relation to legal challenge from the European Commission because UK 'habitual residence test states that people must prove they live in the UK habitually' • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- European Commission- what they believe to be happening versus what is happening is different • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- government arguing those opposing pension bill are removing the choice to address capital poverty in the name of simplicity • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- 		
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	<p>government reaction to Labour proposal about private rents-called it Venezuelan-style rent controls. Second reference to concept of 'affordable' rents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Government setting up alternative arrangements group for Brexit when there is no alternative arrangements • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Logic of not reducing VAT for wind/water turbines due to (assumed) government argument they are not energy saving but energy producing • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- measures in bill make lawful previously unlawful stripping- real purpose of bill to introduce measures that remove the right to appeal • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- ministers pretending to care about retirement age increasing and saying there is not enough money despite silence on tax abuses and corporate profits • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- 'partly' due to confusion and contradictory messages over Great Western Railway's Bicycle policy • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- PM position on EU referendum, doing in interest to create Conservative unity, but would be shocked/disappointed if it actually happened • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Glorifying the past- British history in debate on Black History Month • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Retelling of the past- Conservative party confining pre-election promises on website • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- retelling of the past- Experience of listening to debate (on Exiting the EU and Workers' Rights), reference to Conservative glory 		
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	<p>days in 1802 despite socioeconomic state</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Section of press and media creating 'Orwellian nightmare' in regard to Covid-19 pandemic • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- relating to phrase 'Post-truth' but diminishes its presence in society • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- describing general government style of distinction between what is said and actions, in context of inconsistency of the treatment of onshore wind against solar in energy bill • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- to describe phrase 'Post-truth politics'- in context of unrepresentative voting system • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- to describe phrase 'Post-truth politics'- in context of unrepresentative voting system • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Government stating as fact things which have not happened in skills White Paper (T Levels) • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- government pushing narrative onto councils of non-collection of council tax from low-waged payers in context of not helping take poorest out of council tax liability 		
<p>Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- China and North Korea- totalitarian government monitoring Christians • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- China- surveillance in Xinjiang. Criticising government blocking meaningful genocide amendment to Trade Bill • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- China- building an surveillance state in Xinjiang • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- China- surveillance in Xinjiang 	<p>15</p>	<p>9.8</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- describing draft investigatory powers bill • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- foreign totalitarian government surveillance technology • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- Huawei helping build up infrastructure for greater state control • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- old Investigatory Powers Act- information about public's internet usage • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- quoting Metropolitan Police on facial recognition software • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- Quoting Metropolitan Police on facial recognition software • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- Quoting Metropolitan Police on facial recognition software again • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- risk of duties diverting from monitoring terrorism to extremism too- issue of vague definition of extremism • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- signing up for pan-European data sharing on citizens • Technology/intelligence (issues of privacy)- China- developing gait and facial technology means potential to become Orwellian state • Technology/intelligence (issues of privacy)- China- surveillance- totalitarian government in Xinjiang 		
Threat to components of democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat to democracy- Bill proposing wording of poll questions to be governed by a state-established body • Threat to democracy- Bill requiring photographic ID to vote • Threat to democracy- Describing general government behaviour, focus on banning books in prisons 	3	2
Display of totalitarian control by foreign power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign government's totalitarian control- past Russian communist government in Poland 	4	2.6

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign government's totalitarian control- Past Russian communist government in Poland • Foreign government's totalitarian control- Russia- Past communist government in Poland • Foreign government's totalitarian control- UAE- a statute that criminalises electronic abuse and leads to human rights violations 		
Critical of terms use (term specifically)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical of terms use (term specifically) 1) Criticises overuse of Orwellian 2) Then uses in terms of language/wording (spin and propaganda)- consent agreement • Critical of terms use (term specifically)- adjectives after literary writers as a way of framing issues, acknowledges wide use • Critical of terms use (term specifically)- as a cliché- in investigatory powers report • Critical of terms use (term specifically)- as not far enough to describe Chinese government's detention facilities- Kafka more appropriate • Critical of terms use (term specifically)- cliché that does not go far enough to describe North Korea • Critical of terms use (term specifically)- Conscious attempt to not use adjectives like Orwellian or Kafkaesque • Critical of terms use (term specifically)- Mocks the idea of an 'Orwellian nightmare' in investigatory powers • Critical of terms use (term specifically)- mocks the idea of the People's Vote Media Hub sounding Orwellian to opposer • Critical of terms use (term specifically)- that we are not in an Orwellian world • Critical of terms use (term specifically)- as a piece of effective and emotive language in data retention and investigatory powers bill 	10	6.5
Critical of terms use (does not apply)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical of terms use (does not apply)- negating the idea of parliament attempting to stop freedom of press 	2	1.3

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical of terms use (does not apply)- those who portrayed presentation on mastering the internet enabling people to use search engines better as plot to dominate cyberspace 		
General applicability of Orwellian in Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General applicability of Orwellian in politics- self-critical of response to 'some Orwellian concept' General applicability of Orwellian in politics- using/manipulating Orwellian language to say data is power 	2	1.3

*Sum total of all references: 153.

Appendix 2: Extended Version of Table 3

An extended version of (Table 3) which includes context of the use in debate.

Aspect of totalitarian control portrayed in <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> speakers reference relates to	Context. Topic/ issue which inclines politician to reference <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> in this manner	Total number of references*	Percentage (%) of total references
Freedom of speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom of speech- government creating a culture akin to the Ministry of Love where university vice-chancellors cannot speak out Freedom of speech- maintaining freedom of expression in journalism 	2	6.3
Limiting information (issues of transparency)-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limiting information (issues of transparency)- ambiguous position of 'assurer' in Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill- makes link to 1984 note maker in committees 	1	3.1
Spin and propaganda in naming/ phrasing/language/narrative-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- 1984 and doublethink in governments arguments in United Kingdom Internal Market Bill, specifically that it is a safety net for Northern Ireland when they are undermining the Good Friday agreement Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- affordable housing equating to 80% of market rent- not affordable Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- an Electoral Integrity Bill when there is a 'virtually non-existent threat' Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- definition of 'affordable housing' 	9	28.1

	<p>not affordable to large numbers of people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Government saying “As long as you don’t break the law, you have nothing to fear from the Home Office”, despite Windrush scandal, hostile environment against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- likening PM's speeches to Big Brother Figure • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- Ministerial and other Maternal Allowances Bill that intends to remove words 'mother' and 'woman' in the law- stresses importance of language, refers to Newspeak • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- PM doublethink- not possible for three promises made about Brexit to all be true • Spin and propaganda in phrasing/language/narrative- refers to Newspeak- wider control of language in relation to issues of definition in Ministerial and Maternity Allowances Bill 		
<p>Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- advertising online, people thinking 1984 was still to come • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- China- artificial intelligence- totalitarian government in Xinjiang** • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- current state of issues surrounding personal privacy and accessibility of information beyond what 1984 portrays • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- facial recognition algorithms leading to potential for 1984 to come true without regulation • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- general reflection about increase of CCTV and threat to privacy, that may make Orwell 'turn in his grave' • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- increase in technology a threat to freedom, 	<p>7</p>	<p>21.9</p>

	<p>but sees importance of intelligence too</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology and intelligence (issues of privacy)- referring to GCHQ intercepting webcams, his interpretation of CCTV in every bedroom in 1984 		
Threat to components of democracy-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat to components of democracy- powers of European Union (Withdrawal) Bill a threat to parliamentary sovereignty by allowing Ministers to bypass parliamentary scrutiny 	1	3.1
Display of totalitarian control by foreign power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign governments totalitarian control- reality of life in North Korea even worse • Foreign government's totalitarian control- China- 'de-extremification' in Xinjiang (genocide) • Foreign government's totalitarian control- China- genocide. Echoing earlier comparison. • Foreign government's totalitarian control- China- points out irony that one of the best sellers for Communist Party officials is 1984 in context of lack of freedoms 	4	12.5
Criticises use of 1984 (does not apply)-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criticises use of 1984 (does not apply)- his interpretation of Lord Lipsey's speech reminding him of Ministry of Truth and Ministry of Peace • Criticises use of 1984 (does not apply)- in earlier debate. Misleading that there is cameras in every bedroom and have a 'Room 101' alike 1984. • Criticises use of 1984 (does not apply)- Investigatory Powers Bill not a blueprint • Criticises use of 1984 (does not apply)- to policing and crime bill • Criticises use of 1984 (does not apply)- feeling that internet is controlling/ manipulated overreacting 	5	15.6
General applicability of 1984-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General applicability of 1984- identifies Lords will be familiar, uses to refer to parallels to new book by Ian McEwan. Refers to doublespeak to highlight free trade already exists with EU to diminish Brexit argument • General applicability of 1984- 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' argument about how much power should be given to the state and how much you risk if you take those powers away and leave yourself at risk from the activities of other 	3	9.4

	groups' in Data and Retention and Investigatory Powers Bill		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General applicability of 1984-praises its versatility on state surveillance, the abuse of linguistics, and (relevant to the debate on defence spending) shifting conflicts between blocs of countries		

*Sum total of all references: 32.

*Repeated reference to Orwellian and Nineteen Eighty-Four in same phrase

Appendix 3: Topical Debates Referencing Nineteen Eighty-Four

List of topical debates in parliamentary debate in which Nineteen Eighty-Four has been referenced (10/01/2012 to 16/12/21).

- Aircraft policy
- Animal welfare
- Bodily autonomy (including drugs)
- Border security
- Brexit
- Business of the House/ Queens Speech/Engagements
- Climate
- Domestic issues, economic (housing, pensions, budgets, employment)
- Domestic issues, socioeconomic issues (poverty)
- Economic policy
- Education
- EU
- Foreign relations
- Freedom of speech
- Healthcare
- Human rights (foreign)
- Human rights (UK)
- Immigration
- Legal sector
- Media/journalists
- Police/crime/order

- Political system issues- Electoral Reform, televised debates
- Social issues- equality (race, sex, marriage)
- Technology and intelligence
- Trade
- Train policy
- Widening of powers (devolution, local government)

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Endnotes

ⁱ All these are authors observed as popular, though all have less references than those to Orwell's fiction, justifying the research focus.

ⁱⁱ This research did not explore the neologisms and concepts of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, including Big Brother, in isolation and therefore such consideration was not necessary in this piece.

ⁱⁱⁱ As previously established, Orwellian is viewed as synonymous to the dystopian reality of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. For clarity, in the results section I refer to both together as *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, clearly identifying if I am discussing the terms exclusively of each other.

^{iv} Any references to 'Orwellian' and 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' which could be seen as negative through criticising their use, were reflected in the following separate categories as part of the coding process: 'Critical of terms use (term specifically)', 'Critical of terms use (does not apply)' and 'Criticises use of 1984 (does not apply)'.

^v Out of eleven categories, seven directly relate to aspects of the novel. A further category 'Display of totalitarian control by foreign power' relates to politicians implying the novel is occurring in a foreign country, without referring to a specific aspect of totalitarian control. A further two categories are critical of terms use, either as they argue it does not apply or criticise the term specifically. The final category was created due to some references commenting on the general applicability of Orwellian and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in politics.

^{vi} A further piece of research which would supplement this article would be exploring the use of references to the neologisms Orwell coined in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, such as 'doublethink' or 'Thought Police', in parliamentary debate.

^{vii} As aforementioned, research into other literary figures who embody their novels would also prove the presence of the literary. As a search in Hansard shows, in the same ten-year time period, there were 142 references to Dickensian, 129 references to Kafkaesque and 31 to Shakespearean.

^{viii} As similarly expected, few of the Conservative references directly called government policy Orwellian, with the exception of a couple of backbenchers.

^{ix} 'Spin and propaganda in naming/ phrasing/language/narrative' comprises the majority of references to 'Orwellian'. In contrast references to 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' were more dispersed across categories. This section progresses to include quantitative backing to the specific appeal of using Orwellian in popular argument, as it can be quickly dropped in during speech.

^x There is lots of evidence of the ‘fake news’ phenomenon spreading over to the UK. In January 2017, the UK’s Parliament’s Culture, Media and Sport Committee set up its Fake News enquiry to investigate ‘the growing phenomenon of widespread dissemination’ (**Bakir & McStay, 2017**).

^{xi} This reference was coded into the category ‘Centralised control (threat to individual autonomy)’.