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Nineteen Eighty-Four's Dystopian Vision

Power and the Individual

Roar Hole

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***Nineteen Eighty-Four's Dystopian Vision:
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Abstract:

Name: Roar Hole

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Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is by many known for, and consequently discussed in terms of, its "predictions" of the future, and its political satire. This thesis does not aim at discussing Orwell's political ambitions, nor the alleged "prophecy" of the novel. Rather, this thesis focuses on and discusses the dystopian nightmare of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which is characterised by totalitarianism and its power discourse. The novel's society is emphasised by O'Brien's statement of "the boot stamping on a human face." I have used Foucault's theory on Pastoral power to explain the power discourse of the Party. Furthermore, I have explained the society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by Lois Althusser's concepts of Ideological State Apparatuses and Repressive State Apparatuses. Goldstein's Book serves as a handbook for describing and unveiling the blunt mysteries of the novel, and in this thesis works in tandem with Foucault and Althusser to disclose the dystopian qualities of the novel. A major characteristic of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the Telescreen and the omnipresent surveillance, which is similar to Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon as discussed in Foucault's *Birth of the Prison*. In this context, I have discussed *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a Panoptic society, a society which functions as a disciplinary institution that gathers knowledge, which works reciprocally with power. The Panopticon, totalitarianism and the power discourse of the Party have great effects on the individual. The final aspect of this thesis consequently focuses on the Party's negation of the individual, and Winston's struggle to liberate himself and sustain his autonomy in a society devoid of human contact, and where the great masses of individuals are mere automatons shaped by the Party to serve the demise of humanity. In this horrific image of a loss of autonomy, an all-pervading surveillance, and the abuse of power, the warnings Orwell asserted in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are growing increasingly nearer as we are entering a world characterised by its escalating discourse of technology, where individuals are alienated from each other by the use of media and an ever-increasing surveilled world after 9/11.

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Introduction

In the aftermath of 9/11, the attack on the World Trade Center in New York, a “Harris Poll” has revealed that a majority of Americans approve of increased surveillance, but fear the consequences on privacy.¹ Today’s society is characterised by an escalating use of technology, which is also applied to redefine surveillance. Cameras observe the streets, restaurants, shops, and in more extreme cases, your very homes. New technologies in surveillance techniques can pierce the heart of any organisation, or any individual. They are there to make you feel safe, or are they? Could it not be that the very presence of surveillance will make you conscious of the gaze that is always upon you? Wherever you go in the streets of any larger city, cameras can watch your every step. London is currently the capital with most surveillance cameras in the world. “[T]here are at least 500,000 cameras in the city, and one study showed that in a single day a person could expect to be filmed 300 times.”² Surveillance protects you and keep you safe from an ever growing more violent world. But at the same time, they also make sure you do not engage in any acts that may be deemed deviant or threatening. The protective gaze ensures a consciousness of your actions, and your overall demeanour. While standing in front of a camera, or walking into a fully surveilled bank, one may develop an explicit acuteness of bodily movements, not otherwise discernible. Surveillance can create a certain edginess amongst people. Their uncertainty of what is being recorded and what is deemed inappropriate is part of what keeps you conscious of yourself when observed. The other part is the promise of punishment for the threatening behaviour that can be recorded by the cameras. The threat of punishment is accepted as necessary in society. Foreign and domestic threats must be dealt with to protect the nation and the citizens. Free speech is an accepted and appreciated law in Western countries. All actions, however, are not free, nor is speech in some cases. Threatening actions and speech are threats to the security of the nation, and thus cannot be tolerated.

The foreign threat of the West is epitomized by the presence of Osama Bin Laden. He is alleged to have been the architect behind 9/11. He is also held up as the reason why the world is currently engaged in a “war on terror.” During this war, all must be scrutinized. Security has increased in airports and most other public places. “According to the Fourth Amendment, the state cannot search a person or property without first acquiring a warrant

¹ “Harris Poll,” http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp?PID=643, last accessed 06.05.2007

² Stecklow, Steve, “Wall Street Journal,” http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB112077340647880052-cKyZgAb0T3asU4UDEFVNPWrOAqCY_20060708.html, last accessed 04.05.2007

based on probable cause.”³ After 9/11, however, the American Patriot Act gives the government “authority to intercept wire, oral, and electronic communications relating to terrorism [and the] authority to intercept wire, oral, and electronic communications relating to computer fraud and abuse offenses.”⁴ The old norm of innocent until proven otherwise is threatened under such laws. The war against terror is most likely a perpetual war. It is a war with no clear winner, nor can there ever be one. The war on terror signifies the colliding forces of two ideologies standing on each side of a great gulf emphasised by a clear notion of “us” versus “them.”

George Orwell envisioned such a war in his last novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. We recognize Osama Bin Laden as representative for the character of Goldstein. “Goldstein and his heresies will live forever. Every day, at every moment, they will be defeated, discredited, ridiculed, spat upon – and yet they will always survive.”⁵ Goldstein is the excuse to wage a war. More importantly, he is an excuse for which the state must put in place precautions and procedures to defend against the threat. In “the war on terror”, Osama Bin Laden is never found, but he is always defeated; but even in his defeat we can never assume we are safe from him, and hence precautions such as more surveillance, and more “misinformation” regarding threats on the western world, are incorporated into our daily lives. We experience a situation of “us” versus “them,” and where there are only a few great ideologies, which are emphasized by “ours” and “theirs.”

The society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a society of few, but consequently great, ideological powers. Orwell wrote *Nineteen Eighty Four* as a warning against such tendencies. He argued against his fears of totalitarianism in such grand ideologies, but he also warned against a technological society where all would be victims of surveillance, homogeny and the loss of autonomy. According to William Staples, such a society is descending upon us.

We seem to be entering a state of permanent visibility where attempts to control and shape our behaviour, in essence our bodies, are accomplished not so much by the threat of punishment and physical force but by the act of being watched – continuously, anonymously, and automatically.⁶

³ Freeman, Lee(Editor). *Information Ethics : Privacy and Intellectual Property*. Hershey, PA, USA: Information Science Publishing, 2004.

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/agder/Doc?id=10066753&ppg=182>, p 166.

⁴ Trandall, Jeff, Clerk, “USA Patriot Act,” <http://www.epic.org/privacy/terrorism/hr3162.html>, last accessed 09.05.2007

⁵ Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Penguin Books, London 1987, p 281

⁶ Staples, William G, *Everyday surveillance : vigilance and visibility in postmodern life*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC, Oxford, 2000, p 5

Orwell's warnings of the future were based on the tendencies he observed in the years following World War Two. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was written as a warning against the Cold War and what it could do to the people. Now that the Cold War is over, and the year 1984 is in the past, his nightmare society still remains as vivid as ever before in the wake of a new, never-ending "war on terror".

Big Brother, the Telescreen, the Thought Police and the deceptive war, are all to be found in the world in the present day. Big Brother and the Telescreens are emphasised by the ever-increasing surveillance. Thought Crime is emphasised by those who are *believed* to constitute a threat to the state, and who are consequently punished for the ostensible crime they are committing. You are guilty until proven otherwise. The Orwellian war against Eurasia, or East Asia, is emphasised by the present-day war on Iraq, which was initiated on false premises, such as the war Oceania is engaged in. The war also epitomizes the superiority of ideology over ideology.

Orwell's dystopian vision is thus closer than ever. In the analysis that follows, this thesis acknowledges that Orwell's base for the dystopian society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, is a society driven by power. Orwell's conception of power goes hand in hand with the concepts of power created by Michel Foucault and Louis Althusser's concepts of how power is diffused throughout society, and Althusser's concepts of State Apparatuses are fruitful in describing this Orwellian landscape.

The Orwellian landscape is identified by despair, an utmost bleakness, and loss of hope. For the sake of contrast, I compare *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with *Brave New World*, another literary work on a dystopian society. This comparison of two dystopian concepts gives more depth to the understanding of Orwell's design of a dystopian society.

The Telescreen, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is reminiscent of Jeremy Bentham's design for what he titled "the Panopticon." This comparison is interesting for two reasons. The first being that it illustrates society as a prison and thus the dystopian characteristics are illuminated by the despairing institution a penitentiary must be. Secondly, it illustrates his genius as a political satirist, as well as his practical imagination in architecting a device so all-pervasive, effective and horrific.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is a satirical novel. "Extrapolation is the key. The satirist criticizes repulsive tendencies in his society by providing an imaginative picture of the logical

outcome of those tendencies.”⁷ Winston Smith is the requisite satirist point of view in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the one who shows us the underlying vices of society.

The satirist is thus a kind of self-appointed guardian of standards, ideals and truth; of moral as well as aesthetic values. He is a man... who takes upon himself to correct censure and ridicule the follies and vices of society and thus bring contempt and derision upon aberrations from a desirable and civilized norm. Thus satire is a form of protest, a sublimation and refinement of anger and indignation.⁸

Orwell wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a warning, and as a protest, against the tendencies that troubled him. It is in this sense that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a powerful satirist novel, which does not, because of the genre, aim at predicting the future⁹, but rather warns us about the dangers of a world Orwell is showing us.

To examine this I have selected three broad aspects to focus on and discuss. The first part focuses on examining *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s dystopian characteristics. My focus here has been to discuss the impact of totalitarianism on society. To focus this discussion, I have further selected four more succinct parts to emphasise the importance of various components of the dystopian society. First I discuss power and totalitarianism as the overarching elements of the dystopia. Here I have used Michel Foucault's theory of "Pastoral Power" to examine and accentuate the power discourse of the Party. Secondly, I discuss the perpetual war Oceania is engaged in as another pillar in the base that constitutes the dystopian society. Thirdly, I explain the character of power in the society of Oceania by using Louis Althusser's concepts of Ideological State Apparatuses and Repressive State Apparatuses. Finally, I describe the many characteristics of Oceania in comparison with *Brave New World*. In this section, I also discuss the dystopia and utopia Winston struggles with.

In the second chapter I further rely on Foucault, and his analysis of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, and how that is applicable to describe the society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a Panoptic Society. This chapter explains the society of Oceania as analogous to a prison where technology is invading the private sphere.

The final chapter discusses Winston Smith as "the Last Man" and the death of the liberal individual. Subsequently this chapter also discusses the implications of Orwell's dystopia on the individual. Humanity battles the collective's drowning of individual cries.

⁷ Posner, Richard A, "Orwell versus Huxley: Economics, Technology, Privacy, and Satire", in *On Nineteen Eighty-Four*, (Ed) Abbot Gleason, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2005, p 190

⁸ Cuddon, J. A., *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, Penguin Books, London, 1999, p 780

⁹ Posner, 2005, p 191

Because of his individuality, Winston embarks on a quest to further increase his individual enlightenment, but also on a quest to destroy the oppression of the Party. I have therefore discussed Winston and his individuality, his rebellion, his ambiguous relationship with O'Brien, and his ultimate failure at the hands of O'Brien. Here I have also discussed the implications of Winston's surrender, and how that defeat is important today as it reminds us that even though Winston failed, and totalitarianism thus reigns supreme, his legacy is fulfilled by other literary characters.

The Dystopian Nightmare

Nineteen Eighty-Four is characterised by its dystopian nightmare. Orwell's portrayal of the many vivid, but shocking, dystopian characteristics strikes the reader with terror. As Fredric Warburg wrote in "Publisher's Report" in 1948, "[*Nineteen Eighty-Four*] is amongst the most terrifying books I have ever read."¹⁰ But as Julian Symons expresses in "Times Literary Supplement" in 1949, "[t]he picture of society in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has an awful plausibility which is not present in other modern projections of our future."¹¹ The first part of this chapter concerns itself with explaining the base for the dystopian society, where I have identified three parts that constitute the dystopian society: power, totalitarianism and war. I then direct my focus on explaining the society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by using Louis Althusser's theory on Ideological State Apparatuses and Repressive State Apparatuses. The last aspect of this chapter emphasises *Nineteen Eighty-Four's* dystopian characteristics in comparison with Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. It also discusses the dystopian, but also utopian, qualities in Orwell's novel.

George Orwell's societal vision in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is characterised by the despotic power regime, the Party. The Party's most recognizable characteristic is the totalitarian paradigm personified by its dictator Big Brother. The Party further exercises totalitarianism through its quest and use of power. One definition of power by Edgar and Sedgewick states that "Most usually, power is taken to mean the exercise of force or control over individuals or particular groups by other individuals or groups."¹² Michael Mann "... emphasises 'four sources of social power: ideological, economic, military and political power'."¹³ We can relate these sources of power in a network where, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, we recognize these social powers through the use and abuse of Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses, where ideological power belongs to the former, and economic and military power belongs to the latter, and where political power positions itself both as ideological and repressive in nature. The power of the Party is diffused throughout the bureaucratic ministries. The Ministry of Truth concerns itself with the ideological power, the Ministry of Plenty with the economic power, the Ministry of Peace with the military power, and the Ministry of Love with the judicial power. All ministries are concerned with sustaining the political power.

¹⁰ Warburg, Fredric, "Publisher's Report," 1948, in (ed) Meyers, Jeffrey, *George Orwell the Critical Heritage*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, London, 1975, p 247

¹¹ Symons, Julian, "Times Literary Supplement," 1949, in (ed) Meyers, Jeffrey, *George Orwell the Critical Heritage*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, London, 1975, p 247

¹² Edgar & Sedgewick, p 304

¹³ Bilton, Tony. Et al. *Introductory sociology*, 4th edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p 195

A definition of government and its exercises is necessary to understand the political power situation of Oceania. According to Michel Foucault,

‘Government’ refers... to certain less spontaneous exercises of power over others (to those exercises that are more calculated and considered) and, particularly, to the use and invention of technologies for the regulation of conduct... government, as Foucault describes it, aims to regulate the *conduct* of others or oneself.¹⁴

“The regulation of conduct” is the quintessential element of Party politics. The government “manages” the people of Oceania on the “macro” and “micro” levels. As Foucault argues, “the principles of political action and those of personal conduct can be seen as being intimately related.”¹⁵ The government constructs a reality where the population, in the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, can only choose to accept the absolutism of the Party or else commit “Thought Crime.”

The Party exercises a distorted pastoral power. In Foucault’s terminology there are four stages to pastoral power. Firstly, “[i]t is a form of power whose ultimate aim is to assure individual salvation in the next world.”¹⁶ The Party incorporates individuals into the collective, and thus sets them “free” from the pain of individual failure. Timothy Melley terms this “postmodern transference, the moment in which the power of individual agents is imaginatively shifted to corporate entities.”¹⁷ In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the collective “frees” the subject from individual restraints through an imposed postmodern transference. Secondly, “[p]astoral power is not merely a form of power which commands; it must also sacrifice itself for the life and salvation of the flock.”¹⁸ The Party’s engagement in the perpetual world war is their contribution to the salvation of the population. The Party is “saving” the people from the foreign and domestic threats. Thirdly, “[pastoral power] is a form of power which does not look after just the whole community but each individual in particular, during his entire life.”¹⁹ The Party looks after the community and all individuals through the omnipresent surveillance. The population is always watched everywhere.

Finally, this form of power cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people’s minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their

¹⁴ Hindess, Barry, *Discourses of Power: from Hobbes to Foucault*, 1996, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 108 Cowley Road Oxford, p 106, italics in original

¹⁵ Ibid, p 105

¹⁶ Foucault, the Subject and Power, *Critical Inquiry*, 1982, p 783

¹⁷ Melley, Timothy, *Empire of Conspiracy, the Culture of Paranoia in Postwar America*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 2000, p 197

¹⁸ Foucault, 1982, p 783

¹⁹ Ibid, p 783

innermost secrets. It implies a knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it.²⁰

In this sense, knowledge over others becomes power over others. But what truly constitutes the power discourse of Oceania as a pastoral power is the Party's seeming ability to extend the repression without giving anything back. "Pastoral power... is concerned more with the welfare of its subjects than with their liberty."²¹ This is also true of how the Party positions itself outward to its subjects. However, the distorted pastoral power of the Party is concerned with the *abolishment* of welfare of its subjects as well as the complete surrender of liberty.

"According to Foucault, power works through discourse to shape popular attitudes... discourses can be used as a powerful tool to restrict alternative ways of thinking or speaking."²² Power is, then, shaped by the leading social discourse. In this sense, "... power becomes much like the Althusserian concept of ideology; it apparently has no history and there is no confusing outside it."²³ Power is thus historical and part of the historical discourse – but it is important to remember that power shapes history, and history shapes power. Where once the power discourse demanded a facilitation of power through democracy, and thus amongst the people, the Party has secured a totalitarian power discourse. The Party has secured an extensive knowledge of prior discourses of power. They know how power worked in the Middle Ages, Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia. More importantly, they know why these previous power discourses failed. O'Brien explains how the Party has studied the tyrants of the past, discovered their weaknesses, and thus improved. O'Brien explains

In the Middle Ages there was the Inquisition. It was a failure. It set out to eradicate heresy, and ended by perpetuating it... There were the German Nazis and the Russian Communists... they knew, at any rate, that one must not make martyrs... [however] The dead men had become martyrs and their degradation was forgotten... because the confessions that they had made were obviously extorted and untrue. We do not make mistakes of that kind. All the confessions that are uttered here are true. We make them true. And above all we do not allow the dead to rise up against us.²⁴

By studying the despotic regimes of the past, the Party has constructed an impenetrable defence for securing its existence.

²⁰ Foucault, 1982, p 783

²¹ Hindess, 1996, p 118

²² Giddens, Anthony. *Sociology*, 4th edition, Polity Press, 2001, p 675-676

²³ Childer & Hentzi, p 239

²⁴ Orwell, 1987, p 266

O'Brien, who is our guide to understanding power in the eyes of the Party, explains the brutal, yet simple, power discourse of the Party; they desire power for the sake of power. "We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means, it is an end... The object of power is power."²⁵ The exercise of power is thus power to undermine and destroy. Power in the eyes of the Party is there to inflict an utter despotic and nightmare version of society. Power, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is only exercised against the population, while the population only exists to further accumulate the Party's power, which again is forced upon the population in the most brutal and inhumane methods possible. There is no genuine pastoral concern in the Party's regime, only terror. "Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation. Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your choosing."²⁶

The State, or the Party, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is totalitarian. According to Foucault, "the state is envisioned as a kind of political power which ignores individuals, looking only at the interests of the totality or, should I say, of a class or a group among the citizens."²⁷ The Party only looks after their own interests. The population suffers under the despotic nightmare constructed by the Party, in which the population only exists to empower the Party. Outer Party members suffer from long working hours, no leisure time, nor any room to gather their strength or thoughts.

Totalitarianism is the major characteristic of Orwell's dystopian nightmare. The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy characterises totalitarianism as

[t]he principle of government according to which all institutional and private arrangements are subject to control by the state. There are thus no autonomous associations, nor is there any principled or legally recognized private/public distinction²⁸

We recognise these characteristics in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The private sphere is dissolved; self-governing associations and autonomous people are steadily vanishing from the surface of Oceania. Freedom is a vanishing element in Oceania as an inevitable by-product of totalitarianism. In this context, Hannah Arendt argues that

²⁵ Ibid, p 276

²⁶ Ibid, 1987, p 279

²⁷ Foucault, 1982, p 782

²⁸ Blackburn, Simon, "The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy, Oxford Reference Online" Oxford University Press, 1996. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t98.e2378>, last accessed 06.05.2007

Totalitarian domination... aims at abolishing freedom, even at eliminating human spontaneity in general, and by no means at a restriction of freedom no matter how tyrannical.²⁹

Nineteen Eighty-Four amplifies the repression in Arendt's conception of a totalitarian regime, as the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also aims at restricting freedom. Therefore, the Party is more tyrannical than any other regime. Restricting the freedom of Party members is essential for the Party to sustain itself. There can be no freedom amongst Party members, as freedom of action can also create freedom of thought. The power of the Party hinges on an ever-increasing restriction of freedom, which is facilitated by the use of the omnipresent surveillance of the telescreens. In this despotic society, autonomy dwindles and is discouraged.

A totalitarian government uses a wide array of controlling mechanisms to control society. Arendt writes:

Totalitarianism in power uses the state administration for its long-range goal of world conquest and for the direction of the branches of the movement; it establishes the secret police as the executors and guardians of its domestic experiment in constantly transforming reality into fiction; and it finally erects concentration camps as special laboratories to carry through its experiment in total domination.³⁰

The state administration is identified through the bureaucracy of the ministries. The secret police is recognized as the Thought Police, and concentration camps and laboratories exist in Oceania for torture and punishment for deviants, under the control of the Ministry of Love. The Party will go to extreme lengths to ensure its dominion. "Orwell's conception of totalitarianism emphasizes the conjunction of the will to power of a ruling class and the imposition of bureaucratic control over the whole of society..."³¹ Everything in Oceania is governed by the Party, even the former "private institutions" such as the family, religion and also schools are now incorporated into the state. We can, then, safely assume that the totalitarian regime in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the scaffold for the dystopian society.

The Party and the bureaucracy of the ministries constitute the totalitarian and ironic feature of Oceania's society. "[W]e find the contradictories of bureaucratic state power to be

²⁹ Arendt, Hannah, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Schocken, Random House, New York, p 525

³⁰ Ibid, p 511

³¹ Resch, Robert Paul, "Utopia, Dystopia, and the Middle Class in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*," *Boundary 2* 24:1, Duke University Press, 1997, p 152

liberty, individual freedom, and political democracy, and the contradictories of party dictatorship to be justice, moral community, and social equality.”³²

A dystopian society is characterized by a nightmare vision of society (opp. utopia), often as one dominated by a totalitarian or technological state... [T]wo of the best-known examples are Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949) and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*...³³

A dystopian society can, then, be characterized by Oceania’s distinguishing features, such as the Party, the panoptic society (which I will discuss in the chapter “the Panoptic society), newspeak, Thoughtcrime, the thought police, doublethink, and the general bleakness of society. These dystopian characteristics are facilitated, in large, by the perpetual war Oceania is engaged in.

War

Goldstein’s Book discloses the rationale for the war; “It is a warfare of limited aims between combatants who are unable to destroy one another, have no material cause for fighting and are not divided by any genuine ideological difference.”³⁴ All previous reasons for war are nonexistent. Instead, war in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is an imposture and a perpetuation of the dysfunctional society. “In the centres of civilisation war means no more than a continuous shortage of consumption goods, and the occasional crash of a rocket bomb which may cause a few scores of deaths.”³⁵ The few scores of deaths are insignificant to the Party, as individuals are easily disposable. The collective is characterised as the highest ideal in Oceania, and thus an individual death means little in the big context of the Party. O’Brien argues that “... power is collective. The individual only has power in so far as he ceases to be an individual.”³⁶ The war is a powerful instrument in ensuring the loss of individuality. War is a device to ensure unity and orthodoxy, and by making war literally continuous, the Party has created a device to maintain and facilitate their regime.

Goldstein’s Book discloses the frame for the war: “The problem was how to keep the wheels of industry turning without increasing the real wealth of the world. Goods must be

³² Ibid, p 145

³³ Deverson, Tony, “The New Zealand Oxford Dictionary, Oxford Reference Online,” Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t186.e15959>, last accessed 06.05.2007

³⁴ Orwell, 1987, p 193

³⁵ Ibid, p 194

³⁶ Ibid, p 276-277

produced, but they must not be distributed.”³⁷ There must be a deliberate deception to the people for the wheels of industry to turn, and thus sustain the Party, which is ultimately why Oceania is engaged in a war. The industry of Oceania aims at a continuous reproduction of the means of production. The vast majority of what is produced is destroyed, creating a continuous demand for consumer goods. Althusser explains how “the demand for means of production (for reproduction) can be satisfied by the supply.”³⁸ Because of the Party’s monopoly on all production in Oceania, they can facilitate the means for reproduction according to their needs. This, in turn, allows them to keep the wheels of industry turning.

The war also secures a stabilization of society. The people are homogenized by the perpetual shortage of products, which forces a society of equality of the lowest terms. Furthermore, this homogenized society facilitates the process of incorporating the masses into the ruling ideology. In this context, Althusser argues that a reproduction of the means of production is necessary, and the reproduction of labour power is essential

The reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation.³⁹

Goldstein’s Book supports this statement. “In so far as the war has a direct economic purpose, it is a war for labour power.”⁴⁰ Moreover, “[t]he essential act of war is destruction, not necessarily of human lives, but of the products of human labour.”⁴¹ The war, then, is equally important to the Party as the Thought Police or automatons like Parsons. The war facilitates the perpetual destruction and reproduction of the means of production and labour power. The war incorporates the labourers into the Party dogma through devices such as the “Two Minutes Hate” and “Hate Week”.

The Two Minutes Hate is a regular event where Party members are involved in directing their hate towards Emmanuel Goldstein.

Goldstein was the renegade and backslider who once, long ago...had been one of the leading figures of the Party, almost on level with Big Brother himself, and then had

³⁷ Ibid, p 198

³⁸ Althusser, Lois, *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1971, p 129

³⁹ ibid, p 132-133

⁴⁰ Orwell, 1987, p 194

⁴¹ Ibid, p 198

engaged in counter-revolutionary activities, had been condemned to death and had mysteriously escaped and disappeared.⁴²

Goldstein is the scapegoat for the Party. He is the reason why the People of Oceania live in shortage. He is the terrorist who makes the streets perilous. He is the character who is blamed for all the mischief performed by the Party. Moreover, more than merely identifying the villain, the Two Minutes Hate also incorporates the individuals into a collective. The event also takes all the bad feelings and hate that inevitably builds up in Party members and re-directs it away from the Party. During the Two Minutes Hate Party members are indoctrinated into knowing their enemies, which is Goldstein and which ever country Oceania is currently at war with, but also knowing, at the same time, that Big Brother is their saviour. Hate Week is a prolongation of the Two Minutes Hate. It is the closest thing to a national holiday in Oceania. However, as with all other things there, the holiday is distorted. During Hate Week everyone must work even harder than before. "Winston's working week was sixty hours, Julia's was even longer."⁴³ The general fatigue in accordance with the intense facilitation of the Party's doctrine further incorporates Party members into the Oceanic collective, and away from hating or rebelling against the Party.

The Two Minutes Hate alone is, however, not sufficient in strengthening the Party's power regime. Independent people like Winston and Julia still pose a threat, however insignificant that threat may be, as they fail to indulge themselves completely in the propaganda directed at them. However, the Party is aware of these flaws as O'Brien explains:

We have cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman. No one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer. But in the future there will be no wives and no friends. Children will be taken from their mothers at birth, as one takes egg from a hen. The sex instinct will be eradicated. Procreation will be an annual formality like the renewal of a ration card. We shall abolish the orgasm... There will be no loyalty, except loyalty towards the Party. There will be no love, except the love of Big Brother... If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face – for ever.⁴⁴

All the things that gave hope to Winston will be destroyed by the Party. Julia's promiscuity will fade away from the surface of the earth as it will be erased from human physiology. The

⁴² Ibid, p 13

⁴³ Ibid, p 135

⁴⁴ Ibid, p 280

loyalty between men will be erased by use of the Panoptic system. There will be no escaping the fear of insecurity and the feeling of utter loneliness in the society without humanity.

The continuous war waged on one of the two other super powers is the worst occupation the population of Oceania could ever dream of. Had people realised their misery, they would wage a war for losing the war. However, in this sense, Party members are as docile as Proles are conceived to be. As Winston explains concerning the consciousness of the Proles

*Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious.*⁴⁵

This is the “catch-22” of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and it does not merely concern the Proles. All Party members, with the possible exception of inner-Party members, cannot realize their powers until they become consciously aware. However, by becoming consciously aware they are facing an impending death. By daring to live, any citizen of Oceania will risk certain death. This is the horror of Oceania. As Winston explains, “*Thoughtcrime does not entail death: Thoughtcrime IS death.*”⁴⁶

Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses: Explaining the society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Louis Althusser’s concepts of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) and Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) can explain the society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as it explains the ideology, the regime in power, and the terror that is induced from the ideology through the violent state organs. Althusser suggests a division of society, where he divides society into two parts. First there are the ideologies of society, which is “... the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group.”⁴⁷ Then there is the state, or the Repressive State Apparatuses. These are not separate entities. Rather, they are intertwined and work together for mutual benefit, or in the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, they work together to subdue the population.

“Ideological State Apparatuses [are] a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Ibid, p 74

⁴⁶ Ibid, p 30, italics in original

⁴⁷ Althusser, 1971, p 158

⁴⁸ Ibid, p 143

The Ideological State Apparatuses are concerned with, as the name implies, the ideology of society. In the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, they indoctrinate, rather than teach, the individuals into the ideological paradigm of the Party. Althusser argues that the “ideology `transforms´ the individuals into subjects.”⁴⁹ The most powerful function of the Ideological State Apparatuses, then, is that they induce an ideology over the population, which, in turn, ensures uniformity and a consequent loss of individuality. The ISAs function through indoctrination and propaganda, and are thus not passive apparatuses.

The school is the most prominent and powerful tool in the ideological paradigm. According to Althusser, “... the school... teaches `know how,´ but in forms which ensure subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its `practice´.”⁵⁰ The school is not explicitly present in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, except briefly through the Parsons children. However, the entire society of Oceania is a disciplinary school with its pervading mastery of indoctrination and propaganda. The telescreen is the ultimate “teacher,” the device which teaches “know how,” and ensures the full attention of the population. The most important practice in the school, as emphasised by the Parsons children, is to devote yourself to Big Brother, and at the same time resolve your ties with your family and your friends. The ideological abolishment of the family negates the Ideological State Apparatuses as part of the private sphere. Althusser argues that ISAs are conceived as private institutions through institutions such as the family, various private newspapers, some private schools, etc., but in the dogma of the Party these institutions have been absorbed by the state. Subsequently, the only ideology in Oceania, INGSOC, derives from the Party, and thus the ISAs of Oceania stand in a position to facilitate the dystopian society.

The falsification, and destruction, of historical documents and facts illustrate the Party’s desire to control the ideologies induced on the population. The Party ideology is totalitarian in that “[w]ho controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.”⁵¹ Goldstein’s Book discloses the necessity for the falsification and alteration of the past.

The alteration of the past is necessary for two reasons, one of which is subsidiary and, so to speak, precautionary. The subsidiary reason is that the Party member, like the proletarian, tolerates present-day conditions partly because he has no standards of

⁴⁹ Ibid, p 174

⁵⁰ Ibid, p 133

⁵¹ Orwell, 1987, p 260

comparison... But by far the most important reason for the readjustment of the past is the need to safeguard the infallibility of the Party.⁵²

The infallibility of the Party is illuminated by Big Brother. He is omnipotent and infallible, which is supported by the falsification and rewriting of documents. His infallibility is comparable to that of a God. Big Brother is presented as a transcendental figure, a visible shadow that orchestrates the society of Oceania. He is the creator, the manipulator, the torturer and the saviour, and is consequently emphasised by his supremacy and omnipresence. He is the sovereign of the hierarchy of the Ideological State Apparatuses, but his authority exceeds that of the ISAs. He is also the supreme ruler of the Repressive State Apparatuses.

The Ideological State Apparatuses facilitate the dystopian society, but the dystopian characteristics are exercised by the state, or the Repressive State Apparatuses. Althusser argues that the "... State (and its existence in apparatus) has no meaning except as a function of *State Power*."⁵³ The state, then, executes the ideology proclaimed by the ISAs. The RSAs control by the use of violence. The ISAs represent the philosophies of society, and the RSAs represent the existence and culmination of these philosophies. Althusser explains how, by an intertwined use of ISAs and RSAs, the ruling class can gain absolute power in society.

Given the fact that the `ruling` class in principle holds State Power... and therefore has at its disposal the (Repressive) State Apparatus, we can accept the fact that this same ruling class is active in the Ideological State Apparatuses in so far as it is ultimately the ruling ideology which is realized in the Ideological State Apparatuses.⁵⁴

The ruling class in Oceania, the inner-Party, exercises sovereignty over the population of Oceania. Because there are no contesting ideologies to that of the Party, the probability for Outer-Party members, or Proles, to ever gain real power is small. The reciprocal relationship of Ideological State Apparatuses and Repressive State Apparatuses work in tandem to further "atomize" individuals and disentangle any individual ideologies or actions.

Dystopia and Utopia

Nineteen Eighty-Four and *Brave New World* both characterise dystopian societies, but the approaches are quite different. However, there are many similarities, as Mario Varricchio points out:

⁵² Ibid, p 221

⁵³ Althusser, 1971, p 140

⁵⁴ Ibid, p 146

In the Standardized societies depicted in both novels the media uphold conformity, denying individuals their own privacy and personal feelings. Simultaneously, they strengthen powers capable of controlling every single facet of their subjects' life by depriving them of all critical attitudes. Both societies have been emptied of a sense of history and of memory of the past. In *Airstrip One*, the emptiness is filled by a host of images of propaganda whereas in the Fordian world it is shallowness and sensationalism which nullify any possible counteraction, acting as disabling drugs.⁵⁵

Both novels are futuristic and technological, but *Brave New World* much more explicitly so. In *Brave New World*, as in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, all subjects are conditioned into a specific place in society. In *Brave New World*, however, the conditioning is a technological process. First all individuals are "grown," then they are genetically modified in terms of intelligence and physical attributes. Secondly, they are modified hypnopaedically, which basically is an advanced form of sleep hypnosis. Thirdly, the invention of the drug soma, which is a happiness pill "similar to our Prozac, but nonprescriptive and taken continually by everyone,"⁵⁶ ensures compliance and stability amongst the citizens. "These technological advances are represented as having profound effects. They induce mindless contentment."⁵⁷ The "mindless contentment" of Party members is induced by less technological inventions, but equally effective. Propaganda and indoctrination are the most vital apparatuses for the Party to secure homogenous citizens.

In *Brave New World*, individuals are bred by design to fit their class on a genetic level, as explained above. The lower classes, Deltas and Epsilons, are moreover "Bokanovskified". The Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning (the DHC) explains

... [A] bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every embryo into a full-sized adult. Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress.⁵⁸

Deltas and Epsilons have literally lost their individuality, as they may have up to ninety-five similar subjects. The DHC further explains that "... Bokanovsky's Process is one of the major instruments of social stability."⁵⁹ Social stability in *Brave New World* largely depends on the happiness of people. All people engage in mindless sex games, an excessive consummation of

⁵⁵ Varricchio, Mario, "Power of Images / Images of Power in *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*," *Utopian Studies*, 1999, Vol 10 Issue 1, p 98

⁵⁶ Posner, 2005, p 192

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Huxley, Aldous, *A Brave New World*, Longman Group Ltd, Essex, England, 2005, p3

⁵⁹ Ibid, p 4

goods, and “religious” participation.⁶⁰ People in *Brave New World* are never alone, as solitude could make individuals reflect on their lives. The aim of soma is to induce a feeling of happiness. The society of *Brave New World* is characterised by how “everyone is happy nowadays.” *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is characterised by “the boot stamping on a human face.” Victory Gin also secures social stability, but through a demoralization of subjects. In Oceania, people are discouraged from following any instinct, especially the sex-instinct. No interaction is encouraged by the Party. People live their lives in solitude, as personal relationships are regarded as threats to the Party.

Although *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a technological novel, the Party does not encourage technology. Science has come to a halt. “In Oceania at the present day, Science, in the old sense, has almost ceased to exist.”⁶¹ Because technology would facilitate the means for higher living standards, it reflects as a threat to the Party because of the plausible possibilities of destabilization of society. According to Goldstein’s Book, “[i]n all the useful arts the world is either standing still or going backwards.”⁶² Due to the nature of Oceania’s society, genuine utopian ideals can only be found outside the paradigm of the Party. In the age of the Party, humanity is only going backwards and the human spirit is deteriorating, and subsequently the intentions of the Party are increasingly clearer. When the intentions of the Party are made more explicit, they are also concealed from the public because of the people’s inability to realize truth from propaganda, and thus they are locked into a situation where they cannot, and dare not, oppose the Party.

Winston Smith, the protagonist of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, is one of the few who dare opposing the Party. We see Oceania through his eyes, beliefs, and actions. He is a common middle-aged man with no great intellect. He is physically inferior, and suffers from a drinking problem. In terms of appearance and intellect he is the quintessential Outer Party member. Intellectual and physical mediocrity are desirable characteristics for Outer Party members because of the then implausible realization of the falsifications composed by the Party. Moreover, mediocrity is desirable because the Party does not seek progress; rather they work towards a stabilization of the austere society we witness, as it is that society which empowers the Party. Because Outer Party members essentially run Oceania on a day-to-day basis, they must not realize the discrepancies of Party propaganda and the actual situation of society. Paradoxically, Winston too fails to see the power in Outer Party members. Because they

⁶⁰ “Religious” in this context refers to how Henry Ford is characterised as a religious persona.

⁶¹ Orwell, 1987, p 201

⁶² Ibid, p 201

operate the country to such a great extent, their control is equally great. However, Outer Party members' submissiveness and mediocre intellect refrain them from discovering the greater truths.

“In the background of every utopia there is an anti-utopia, the existing world seen through the critical eyes of the utopia-composer, one might say conversely that in the background of a dystopia there is a secret utopia.”⁶³ The secret utopia of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* exists in Winston's memories of the past. Even his idealist rebellion with Julia is emphasised by his longing for history and his dreams as his very own utopia. “[F]or Orwell, the ‘best,’ or more accurately, the least bad, imaginable arrangement of human affairs can be found only in the *past*... In this way, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* becomes an example of Mannheim's “conservative utopia.”⁶⁴ Winston's personal utopian vision is embedded in his memories, and expressed in his opposition to the Party. The utopia he seeks is not a utopia in the sense of great ideals or a moral high ground.

His heart leapt. Scores of times [Julia] had done it: he wished it had been hundreds – thousands. Anything that hinted at corruption always filled him with a wild hope... Anything to rot, to weaken, to undermine!⁶⁵

Rather, his utopia is that of a pre- and post totalitarian, and simultaneously a pre- and post-Party ideal. Winston finds a utopia in his memory and his dream of a non-totalitarian future. For Winston, memory and free thought, combined with a world void of the Party or any other repressive regime constitute the most important factors of his utopia. In his diary, Winston explains the utopia he dreams of

*To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone – to a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone.*⁶⁶

In Winston's longing for heterogeneity, the past and free thought constitute part of his utopia. Although he didn't have a happy childhood and he only remember bits and pieces from it, his utopia reaches out to a similar world. This world is his belief in the future without the Party.

The post totalitarian space of the “author” is truly utopian – it is a “no-place” that cannot exist given the sociological reality of Oceania but at the same time does exist

⁶³ Manuel, Frank E., and Manuel, Fritzie P., *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979, p 6

⁶⁴ Wegner, 2002, p 197,

⁶⁵ Orwell, 1987, p 131-132

⁶⁶ Ibid, p 30, italics in original

and, by fact of its existence, asserts that a revolutionary overthrow of totalitarianism has taken place.⁶⁷

The overthrow of the Party characterises a contradictory statement to the dystopian society. As Resch argues

Orwell's utopian frame negates the pessimistic "end of history" presented from within the dystopian frame of Oceania, but it does so by an ideological leap of faith rather than by advancing a plausible theory of historical transition.⁶⁸

The leap of faith is that there are more men like Winston and Julia. The hope is that the Proles and Outer Party members will awaken from their submissiveness. However, the post-totalitarian utopia of Winston is not vivid enough to displace the explicitly dismal world he lives in. Oceania in the year of 1984 is a sad and grimy world.

Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black-moustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner.⁶⁹

The dust is all that is left of the history Winston so longs for. The colour is gone and has been replaced by a world of darkness, amplified by the "dark eyes" of Big Brother. The greyness of the landscape signifies the soulless, austere, and bleak world of the masses. Orwell's dystopian nightmare is like the land of the living dead. There is no longer any explicit individuality. No one dares to be different. Party members go about their daily routines as grey masses, never questioning their lives. A world of utter homogeneity is a world of absolute lifelessness. "The ideological project of Nineteen Eighty-Four is to represent the destruction of human individuality and human community by a totalitarian state."⁷⁰

Winston's physical and mental health illustrates the conditions of society. He suffers from a "varicose ulcer above his right knee"⁷¹ and a drinking problem. His physical condition is as poor as the condition of Airstrip One. All outer-Party members suffer from poor living quarters and a wide-ranging necessity of consumer goods. Even so, the quintessential characteristic of Orwell's nightmare is not the desolate and grey landscape the people of Oceania live in. In *Homage to Catalonia*, where Orwell chronicled his experiences from his

⁶⁷ Resch, 1997, p 158

⁶⁸ Ibid, p 159

⁶⁹ Orwell, 1987, p 4

⁷⁰ Resch, 1997, p 141

⁷¹ Orwell, 1987, p 3

involvement in the Spanish Civil War, Orwell finds a near utopia in the war-marked streets of Barcelona.

The town had a gaunt untidy look, roads and buildings were in poor repair, the streets at night were dimly lit for fear of air-raids, the shops were mostly shabby and half-empty. Meat was scarce and milk practically unobtainable, there was a shortage of coal sugar, and petrol, and a really serious shortage of bread... Yet so far as one could judge the people were contented and hopeful... Human beings were trying to behave as human beings and not as cogs in the capitalist machine.⁷²

To Orwell, the run-down and austere landscape of the early war-marked Barcelona was paradoxically encouraging. He emphasised the humanity and equality that arose under those conditions as noteworthy and heartening, despite the shortage of various consumer goods. The despairing society in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* should thus not pose a threat to Orwell, but the dismantled human consciousness and the leading regime would be utterly frightening to him. Orwell, like Winston, believed in the human spirit over the collective forces. The soulless landscape of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a literal interpretation is not all-powerful to Orwell, but as an allegory for the soulless masses that inhabits that landscape it is utterly horrific.

⁷² Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, Penguin Books, Suffolk, 2003, p 4

The Panoptic Society

Oceania is similar to Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon as described by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* in terms of its structure, how it works, what effects it induces on the subjects, and how it sustains itself. To expand this paradigm in Orwellian terms, I have used Goldstein's Book to discover similarities between Oceania and a Panoptic penitentiary. Bentham developed a theoretical model for the Panopticon, while Orwell presents a literary manifestation in the "Panopticon" in practice; showing us the effects of the Panopticon as society.

Many of the dystopian qualities of Oceania's society, such as the omnipresent surveillance, the continuous Party propaganda, the indoctrination of the masses, and the invisible but palpable fear, all relate back to the Panopticon. The Panoptic society is, in short, a society of intense surveillance and information gathering along with an alienation of human relationships, which is similar to the alienation of Bentham's Panopticon, induced on the subjects by the surveillance tower, and also by the enclosed space each subject is confined to.

However, the surveillance tower in Bentham's Panopticon must be regarded as an anachronism compared to the Telescreen. The Panopticon, in relation with a penitentiary, requires an explicit location and cells for the inmates. With the invention of the telescreens, the Party has invented a device that has created a society that is in effect a technological Panoptic prison.

The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well.⁷³

The telescreen watched you in your home as you were eating, bathing, sleeping, or more importantly, thinking. Big Brother was indeed watching you, always.

In his 1989 article "*The Theory of Panoptical Control: Bentham's Panopticon and Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four*", Harry Strub argues that "[t]he purpose of surveillance [in Oceania] was the same as Bentham intended for his Panopticon penitentiary – to produce complete obedience to the governing authority."⁷⁴ However, Strub has not fully explored the implications of a panoptic society on the individual and on the collective in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The panoptic society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* works in a tripartite division, which

⁷³ Orwell, 1987, p 4

⁷⁴ Harry Strub, *The Theory of Panoptical Control: Bentham's Panopticon and Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *The Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* Volume 25, January 25 1989, p 40

culminates in the facilitation of power for the Party, and a horrific outlook for the masses. In this sense the society of Oceania functions as an

enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located [and] examined...⁷⁵

Outer Party members are thus subjected to a confined area, although perhaps larger than that of any prison. But they never meet people outside of Oceania, except to see them executed. Oceania is, in this sense, one vast prison.

However, the Panoptic society does not merely observe the inmates, it also observes itself.⁷⁶ When Winston and Julia visit O'Brien they are stunned because he can turn off the telescreen. It is a privilege given to Inner Party members. However, O'Brien asserts that "[i]t is unwise even for members of the Inner Party to turn off their telescreen for more than half an hour..."⁷⁷ Even the "watchers" are observed. There is a possibility that Inner Party members can even deviate from the Party propaganda, and thus there must be a safety net to catch those deviants who will receive punishment in accordance with the intended crime. The image of the Panoptic society, elaborated by Orwell, is that everyone is controlled and the controlling mechanism is themselves and everyone around them who constitutes society.

When Winston is arrested by the Thought Police, he is startled by the appearance of O'Brien walking in the door. "They've got you too!" he cried. "They got me a long time ago," said O'Brien with a mild, almost regretful irony."⁷⁸ O'Brien has not actually been caught by the Thought Police, but rather has been "caught" by his perfection of Doublethink. This scene illustrates that all are caught by the system one way or the other. If you commit a Thoughtcrime, there is no escape. The intensity and omnipresence of the Panoptic society in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* leaves no room for any undetected behaviour. The "inmates" of the "prison" of Oceania are always watched, but they can never know *who* is watching them or *when* they are being watched. According to Bentham, "power should be visible and unverifiable."⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Foucault, Michel, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1995, p 197

⁷⁶ Ibid, p 204

⁷⁷ Orwell, 1987, p 179

⁷⁸ Ibid, p 250

⁷⁹ Foucault, 1995, p 201

There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment... It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to.⁸⁰

This description is almost identical to the practice of power in the panoptic institution. Although there are no walls to physically separate the inmates of Oceania, their distrust for each other creates invisible, but highly effective walls.

Winston explains the cynical and friendless sphere induced by the Panopticon. "It was his friend Syme, who worked in the Research Department. Perhaps 'friend' was not exactly the right word. You did not have friends nowadays, you had comrades."⁸¹ Comrades are not friends; rather they are someone to identify oneself with. What discourage Party members from having friendships are feelings of resentments, hate, guilt, and the general distrust for each other. Winston's dislike for women also suggests the pervading distrust amongst Party members.

[Winston] disliked nearly all women, and especially the young and pretty ones. It was always the women, and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted adherents of the Party, the swallowers of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers-out of orthodoxy."⁸²

Winston hates women because of their, assumed, relentless orthodoxy.⁸³ He, ironically, resents all who are different from him. However, Winston has, at least, recognized the invading uniformity on individuals, and how most succumb to this pressure from the collective.

The panoptic society functions as a disciplinary institution where individuals are subjected to perpetual scrutiny by an all-pervading observation.

[Disciplinary power] is a power exercised over one or more individuals in order to provide them with particular skills and attributes, to develop their capacity for self-control, to promote their ability to act in concert, to render them amenable to instruction, or to mould their characters in other ways. In [Foucault's] view, discipline is a productive power par excellence: it aims not only to constrain those over whom it is exercised, but also to enhance and make use of their capacities.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Orwell, 1987, p 4-5

⁸¹ Ibid, p 51

⁸² Ibid, p 12

⁸³ "Assumed relentless orthodoxy" as Winston also believed Julia to be a "bigoted adherent of the Party."

⁸⁴ Hindess, 1996, p 113

In the enclosed space of the Panopticon, disciplinary power, in Foucault's terms, would be more easily accomplished. "Bentham believed that the Panopticon's prisoners would be well behaved because they would quickly learn the futility of escaping detection."⁸⁵ Orwell offers a similar experience where Outer Party members would be well behaved because of their fear of punishment, inevitable for those who did not comply with society's dehumanising orthodoxy.

All Party members know that engaging in any relationship with another individual is perilous. When Winston meets with Syme in the cafeteria, they are seated at a table under a telescreen, so that none of what they discuss could be deemed private. Moreover, their conversations quickly turn into a discussion on Newspeak. Their fear of the telescreen is ultimately what leads them in front of it and dictates their conversations. Personal conversations are non-existent, mostly because no Party member has a personal life, but also because they know the dangers private thoughts entail. Party members, therefore, cannot trust each other with private emotions, discussions and general small talk outside the sphere of the Party. Because of this exclusion of the private, Party members are alienated from each other, and a general mistrust is created. In this sense, the Panopticon "atomizes" the individual.

Hannah Arendt writes:

The truth is that the masses grew out of the fragments of a highly atomized society whose competitive structure and concomitant loneliness of the individual had been held in check only through membership in a class. The chief characteristic of the mass man is not brutality and backwardness, but his isolation and lack of social relationships.⁸⁶

The citizen of Oceania lives isolated, away from contact with other people – both domestic and foreign. Goldstein's Book asserts this as necessary in the absolutism of the Party.

Cut off from contact with the outer world, and with the past, the citizen of Oceania is like a man in interstellar space, who has no way of knowing which direction is up and which is down. The rulers of such a state are absolute, as the Pharaohs or the Caesars could not be.⁸⁷

The atomized individual is confined to a solitary existence cut off from any real human contact. Winston finds that he cannot trust others, nor can he identify himself with others. He is utterly alone – a fragment in the dystopian universe.

⁸⁵ Strub, Harry, p 44

⁸⁶ Arendt, 2004, s 421

⁸⁷ Orwell, 1987, p 207

When Winston and Julia manage to escape the city and get some alone time, Winston explains to her the emotions of revulsion he felt towards her

‘I hated the sight of you,’ he said. ‘I wanted to rape you and then murder you afterwards. Two weeks ago I thought seriously of smashing your head in with a cobble stone. If you really want to know, I imagined that you had something to do with the Thought Police.’⁸⁸

His initial feelings towards Julia, and the belief that she could, and ultimately does, endanger his existence, illustrate this. The invisible barrier between people due to distrust is similar to the physical walls of the Panopticon. Although Party members can see the bodily contours of each other, they cannot see the human values once inherent in them. Because they do not share their private lives, or take part in each others private spheres, the invisible walls that are thus growing are as alienating as those in the Panoptic penitentiary. This is also suggested in the private domain where Mrs. Parsons fear her children because of their ability, and indeed responsibility, to denounce her to the Thought Police. The general mistrust turns into paranoia where they believe that everyone is out to get them. Winston explains how “the amateur spy... was the greatest danger of all.” He is on the verge of suspecting everyone of working directly, or indirectly as spies for the Party. All Party members can be regarded as functioning as a less technologically advanced telescreen, but from the viewpoint of society, a great device in the Panopticon. The Panoptic society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* offers an intelligence gathering as a base for knowledge. By enclosing the individuals into transparent lives, the controlling organisms of the Party are transcended in the eyes of Outer Party members. They do not know how things work, nor what is being done to them.

”New developments in science, technology, and medical knowledge are making the human body infinitely more accessible to official scrutiny and assessment.”⁸⁹ In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the telescreen is the quintessential device in making the human body more accessible. It reaches into the core of Party members’ private spheres and discloses the otherwise closed off environment void of official interference. Because the population fears the telescreens, they do not dare trying to escape them. Thus, the masses are always exposed to the telescreens, which are in turn perpetually observing.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p 127

⁸⁹ Staples, 2000, p 94

By knowing the inmates, the Panoptic society is "... a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men."⁹⁰ The Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has access to all Party members. Because they can observe them at any given point, they can predict the loyalty of the inmates as well as their behavioural patterns. The telescreen is thus a useful device in gathering knowledge and using it to facilitate their power.

Staples argues that "[k]nowledge is not equal to power, nor is power the same as knowledge; each presupposes the other."⁹¹ Knowledge and power work reciprocally. The power of the Party necessitates control of both elements. The Party presupposes knowledge of Party members, as this knowledge will increase their power over the population. Power, in turn, is required for the Party to gain the knowledge they seek to further facilitate their power. The instruments of the Panopticon induce power over the population: "That State apparatus [of which the Panopticon is vital for the Party], which defines the State as a force of repressive execution and intervention `in the interests of the ruling classes."⁹² The Panopticon is thus a major instrument as a Repressive State Apparatus. Althusser further argues that "... the Repressive State Apparatuses functions `by violence."⁹³ Therefore, as a Repressive State Apparatus, the Panoptic society of Oceania promise punishment for deviant behaviour. In Winston's interrogation he is repeatedly exposed to torture of various forms. When the Panopticon fails, as it did with Winston, interrogation and torture in room 101 is the contingency plan. Here individuals are subjected to thorough use of mental and physical violence to shape their body and mind to fit the dogma of the Party.

Power in the Panoptic society "... acts directly on individuals; it gives `power of mind over mind`."⁹⁴ The conscious knowledge of always being watched reduces individuals into a mental state of compliance, where they realize themselves in terms of the power structure they are engaged in.

The Bureaucracy of the Ministries

The Ministries of the Party also function as Panoptic devices. All four ministries use the Telescreen. The Ministry of Truth uses the Telescreen to inform the population of recent events, often mediated from the Ministry of Plenty or the Ministry of Peace. The Ministry of

⁹⁰ Foucault, p 205

⁹¹ Staples, 1997, p 26

⁹² Althusser, 1971, p 137

⁹³ Ibid, 1971, p 145

⁹⁴ Foucault, p 206

Love uses the Telescreens as surveillance. Moreover, the ministries are always visible in the landscape of Oceania, and thus functions as towers in the Panopticon.

The Ministry of Truth... was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, three hundred metres into the air...

Scattered about London there were just three other buildings of similar appearance and size. So completely did they dwarf the surrounding architecture that from the roof of Victory Mansions you could see all four of them simultaneously.⁹⁵

Their structural visibility emphasises their role in the Panoptic society, as visibility is the quintessence of the Panopticon. The architecture of the ministries, then, is also part of the Panoptic society. However, more than being mere landmarks in the Panopticon, the ministries work interrelatedly and systematically to form the bureaucracy of the Party. According to Hannah Arendt, bureaucracy is vital to facilitate and secure power in a totalitarian regime, like that of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Totalitarianism in power uses the state administration for its long-range goal of world conquest and for the direction of the branches of the movement; it establishes the secret police as the executors and guardians of its domestic experiment in constantly transforming reality into fiction; and it finally erects concentration camps as special laboratories to carry through its experiment in total domination.⁹⁶

Power, the destruction of humanity, and the loss of individual thoughts are facilitated through the four ministries of the Party. According to Foucault “power is diffused throughout social institutions... It operates through the daily disciplines and routines to which bodies are subjected.”⁹⁷ Power is, in other words, distributed through various organisations as we see in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. “An institution [according to Foucault]... subordinates individuals to institutional demands, examines and watches over all subjects, and punishes deviants.”⁹⁸

According to Foucault this power discourse is prominent in modern societies. The need to exercise power and to intervene in individual lives is the epitome of the society of Oceania. Although the Party emphasises the omnipotence of Big Brother, it is the supremacy of the combined ministries that define the real threat to the people of Oceania, because it is through the ministries that power is exercised.

⁹⁵ Orwell, 1987, p 6

⁹⁶ Arendt, p 511

⁹⁷ Leitch, Vincent B, *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, W. W., Norton & Company Inc., London, 2001, p 1618

⁹⁸ Ibid

“The Ministry of Truth... concerned itself with news, entertainment, education and the fine arts.”⁹⁹ However, the ministry truly concerns itself with *forging* the cultural values of society. The ministry is effectively producing a new language, Newspeak, which will further dominate the power discourse of society. Newspeak is a language that will ultimately prevent people from thinking rebellious thoughts due to the lack of words to express them. Newspeak is full of abbreviations and opposite meanings of the original – as illustrated by the ministries. It is also a diminished language. According to Syme “It’s a beautiful thing, the destruction of words.”¹⁰⁰ Individual thought must be restricted. The Party believes that when you have no language to articulate such thoughts, they cannot be expressed. As Syme expresses, “Don’t you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make Thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it.”¹⁰¹ Ultimately there will be no need for self-discipline or thought control, since Newspeak effectively performs those acts for you. The implementation of Newspeak will result in the death of free thought.

Ironically, Winston works in the Ministry of Truth and consequently takes part in altering history, destroying evidence of the falsities of the Party, and he takes part in creating Newspeak. Although he criticizes it, he is nonetheless fascinated by it. Winston’s creation of the fictional character Comrade Ogilvy transfers Winston, for a moment, into a part of Big Brother. “It was true that there was no such person as Comrade Ogilvy, but a few lines of print and a couple of faked photographs would soon bring him into existence.”¹⁰² By creating an identity and forging the existence of an individual, Winston is unveiling his existence as being in the hands of the Party, and their ability to alter it. “Comrade Ogilvy, unimagined an hour ago, was now a fact. It struck him as curious that you could create dead men but not living ones.”¹⁰³

The Ministry of Truth creates propaganda, and the general discourse for Oceania’s society. Here is where history is replaced, books are remade to fit the Party propaganda, and here is where the outward face of Big Brother is visualised.

“The Ministry of Peace... concerns itself with war.” The name of “the Ministry of Peace” is perhaps the most explicit reference to doublethink as it is in actuality the ministry of war, and consequently the consequence of the omnipotent fear amongst the people. War is the

⁹⁹ Orwell, 1987, p 6

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p 54

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p 55

¹⁰² ibid, p 50

¹⁰³ ibid, p 50

Party's best excuse for the perpetual shortage of goods all outer Party members suffer from. According to Goldstein's book, "The essential act of war is destruction, not necessarily of human lives, but of the products of human labour."¹⁰⁴ Oceania has a great industry, but the goods are destroyed before they reach the citizens. The act of war becomes a means to control the people through a perpetual shortage of necessary products.

"The Ministry of Plenty... was responsible for economic affairs."¹⁰⁵ Contradictory to the name, nothing in Oceania comes in plenty. There are no commodities in Oceania in abundance. People live in homes with no hot water. People search for razor blades in the black markets. The apartments where outer Party members live are worn down and with no luxuries except for the paradoxical telescreen. The hallways smelt "of boiled cabbage and old rug mats."¹⁰⁶ This description being an allusion to Communist Russia under Stalin, of whom Big Brother is an allusion with his "heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features."¹⁰⁷ The Ministry of Plenty's main function is to subject the people to a life of wantonness where they know no abundance or luxury. It effectively controls the daily sphere of people's lives by refusing them of much needed products. The deprivation of products exercised by the Ministry of Plenty is therefore a powerful tool in ensuring power over the population.

The truth of the Party is omnipotent, and there is no one who can challenge it. O'Brien explains to Winston how "[t]he Earth is as old as we are, no older. How could it be older? Nothing exists... except through human consciousness... Outside man there is nothing."¹⁰⁸ Accordingly, the Party has to be embodied in the human consciousness – Big Brother. The doctrines ostensibly stipulated by Big Brother are results of the human consciousness. The Party has thus secured a cover where they are protecting humanity and sustaining it in Big Brother – the big brother of the people. However, deviating from Big Brother's doctrine must subsequently be punished to protect the human consciousness. The infallibility of Big Brother is facilitated by the bureaucracy of the ministries.

The Ministry of Truth, the Ministry of Peace, and the Ministry of Plenty work in a reciprocal relationship. They depend on each other to escalate their influence. All three ministries empower each other. The scarcity of society asserted by the Ministry of Plenty has been facilitated by the war, and subsequently the Ministry of Peace. Because media is so vital

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p 198

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p 6

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p 3

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p 3

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p 278

for the Party, the Ministry of Truth is central in conveying the propaganda from the Ministry of Peace and the Ministry of Plenty. The Ministry of Peace needs the Ministry of Truth to misguide the population on news concerning the war. The Ministry of Plenty requires the Ministry of Truth to mediate the proclamations on the reasons for the dystopian characteristics of society. The Ministry of Love, however, works independently, as mystery epitomizes the threat “love” induces, and also how mystery emphasises the implicit authority of the Thought Police.

“The Ministry of Love... maintained law and order.” In other words, it protects the human consciousness personified with the image of Big Brother. The single most frightening thing, next to the Thought-Police, is love amongst Party members. The Ministry of Love imprisons and tortures those who deviate from the strict party propaganda, which demands total loyalty to Big Brother. When Winston exclaims that “The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one” he states how love, once to be sought for and cherished, has become the quintessential paradigm of deviate and treacherous behaviour. Love is the most frightening thing in Oceania – both for the people and for the Party. Love also means “promise” and suggests an allegiance other than to Big Brother, which is intolerable to a totalitarian regime. As safeguarding, the Party explicitly parodies the meaning of love. Foucault terms such a discourse a “ ‘régime of truth.’ ”¹⁰⁹ The truth is controlled by the regime. When the Party proclaims that “Freedom is Slavery” and love is treachery that is the truth. The truth is in the eye of the beholder, and in Oceania the beholder is always the Party.

¹⁰⁹ Leitch, Vincent B, 2001, p 1669

The Last Man

"Oranges and lemons" say the Bells of St. Clement's
"You owe me five farthings" say the Bells of St. Martin's
"When will you pay me?" say the Bells of Old Bailey
"When I grow rich" say the Bells of Shoreditch
"When will that be?" say the Bells of Stepney
"I do not know" say the Great Bells of Bow
"Here comes a Candle to light you to Bed
Here comes a Chopper to Chop off your Head
Chip chop chip chop - *the Last Man's Dead*."¹¹⁰

Winston personifies humanity, and embodies the values of man. These virtues are illustrated in Winston's actions and his writing in his diary. This chapter also discusses the father and son, tormentor and tormented relationship that exists between O'Brien and Winston. In the last part of this chapter I will conclude my arguments, and show how Winston's failure as a hero and as a man was inevitable.

Nineteen Eighty-Four was originally titled "The Last man of Europe," which suggests humanity, individuality and freedom. These concepts are shown through Winston who is the last man. He is recognized by the liberal utopia he harbours consisting of freedom and individual thought, but he is also identified by his inability to apply Doublethink. Winston as "man" is guided by his ability to reason. He believes in what he sees – not what the Party tells him to see. He believes in his own experiences over the experiences he is told to have, and this is also what being the last man entails – a recognition of yourself as an autonomous individual in opposition to the forces of the collective. Individuality creates men and women instead of the automatons of the collective, who are so explicitly present in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

James A. Tyner points out that "Winston has repeatedly engaged in small acts of resistance."¹¹¹ This is true due to his committing Thought Crimes and his persistent belief in humanity, both of which in turn are, in part, due to his memories. Winston engaged in acts of rebellion upon beginning his diary. He explained how "[i]t was now... because of this other incident that he had suddenly decided to come home and begin the diary today."¹¹² The incident he is referring to is the Two Minutes Hate session where O'Brien is present. This meeting, for some unexplored reason, is what encourages Winston to begin writing the diary.

¹¹⁰ Oranges and Lemon Rhymes, http://www.rhymes.org.uk/oranges_and_lemons.htm, last accessed 30.04.07, my italics

¹¹¹ Tyner, James, A, "Self and space, resistance and discipline: a Foucauldian reading of George Orwell's 1984," *Social & Cultural Geography*, Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2004, p 134

¹¹² Orwell, 1987, p 11

Up until this point there is little to suggest that Winston has engaged in any significant acts of rebellion. Daring to write in his diary is thus the catalyst into his rebellious struggle against the Party.

The things that make Winston stand out against the incorporated masses of Oceania are his writing and his memories. Winston concludes that

[h]e was a lonely ghost uttering a truth that nobody could ever hear. But so long as he uttered it, in some obscure way the continuity was not broken. It was not by making yourself heard but by staying sane that you carried on the human heritage.¹¹³

Winston's writing enables him to express and examine the thoughts that occupy his stream of consciousness. Writing becomes a form of meditation where a "happy" consequence is to stay sane. Moreover, his writing facilitates his individuality as he is able to distance himself from the masses by creating something private for him alone. By writing, Winston resists the Party dogma of no privacy. Moreover, by writing the diary, Winston finds a way of expressing himself and hence knowing himself better. By reading his thoughts he is better equipped to understand and realize himself. Also, by writing he is creating something, which implicitly empowers him in a society where all that is created is destroyed, material as well as history. His work in the Ministry of Truth has enabled him to see the falsifications of historical documents, and thus he has, through experience, seen the falsities of the Party. By writing, he is expressing what he has seen and experienced.

Winston writes in his diary on a regular basis. In so doing, he is creating a world of his own where he is the master of his personal dreams in the same way that the Party is the master of the day-to-day events of Oceania. He is the creator and the master of the message he is creating. Winston's world is no less real than the one created by the Party, only that Winston's offers a different version of it. Since Winston is, as far as the reader knows, the only competitor to the overwhelming media of the Party, Winston's character is given more pathos and complexity. Orwell writes in "Why I write"

The great mass of human beings are not acutely selfish. After the age of about thirty they abandon the sense of being individuals at all – and live chiefly for others, or are simply smothered under drudgery. But there is also the minority of gifted, wilful people who are determined to live their own lives to the end, and writers belong in this class.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Ibid, p 30

¹¹⁴ Orwell, 2003, p 4

Winston as an author is characterised as a liberal individual, or an “inner-directed person” in that he is “... the sole proprietor of his own person and capacities.”¹¹⁵ while most people in Oceania belong to the other group of people who “live chiefly for others.” In Oceania, these people live exclusively for the Party. They are born for the Party, they are educated by and for the Party, they work for the Party, and eventually they die for the Party.

The second thing that separates Winston from the masses is his feeling of uniqueness. These feelings leave him adrift in the stratified society of Oceania. He considers himself superior to other Outer Party members such as Parsons and Syme. He also considers himself superior to the Proles because of their inability to recognize themselves as a force. However, he is able to identify himself with O’Brien. Resch argues that “[a]s he is unconsciously repelled by the inferiority of the Proles and other members of the Outer Party, Winston is unconsciously attracted to O’Brien, from whom he seeks recognition as a fellow superior individual.”¹¹⁶

Winston’s agenda is to refuse to spend his life as an automaton under the mercy of the Party. His relationship with Julia epitomizes his individual quest, but also his search for family values. He realizes that the Party’s agenda is to refuse him these freedoms. However, Resch argues that Winston’s rebellion can also be read as one driven by egoistical factors.

Winston’s quest for individual freedom has been not a moral quest for a universal human freedom but an egoistical search for his own personal freedom, a desire to escape from the oppressive domination of the Inner Party above him without slipping into the ranks of the inferior masses of the Proles below.¹¹⁷

Some degree of egoistical quest for freedom would be near impossible to avoid. However, there is little to suggest that he is driven by these feelings. Winston’s initial response to writing the diary was to whom was he writing it. Moreover, he recognizes himself as dead once he begins writing, and thus part of his intention of writing the diary was to leave a legacy for further generations to read. Winston is writing “[f]or the future, for the unborn.”¹¹⁸ He recognizes that the Party seeks to destroy him and all who choose to differ from the orthodoxy constructed by the Party. Writing the diary, and commencing on the course of rebellion is his way of fighting this orthodoxy that is imposed on him.

¹¹⁵ Melley, 2005, p 53

¹¹⁶ Resch, 1997, p 170

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p 172

¹¹⁸ Orwell, 1987, p 9

In this sense, Winston recognizes a conspiracy, which "... has come to signify a broad array of social controls."¹¹⁹ I have discussed these social controls in the previous chapters, and thus here it is only necessary to mention that the conspiracy set forth by the Party seeks to eliminate all Party members' freedom, with little differences between Inner Party members and Outer Party members, except in the way of access to material goods such as chocolate, wine, and good housing. By realizing the conspiracy and what it does, and consequently taking action in accordance to the conspiracy, Winston attains a higher level of individual autonomy. Winston is amongst the few in Oceania who understand that the Party seeks to undermine the individual and thus destroy any form of autonomy. In Oceania this loss is so transparent that all should recognize it. However, by the installation of Doublethink in the unconsciousness of Party members, they fail to identify the controlling mechanisms of the Party, or rather their self-control transferred to the Party. Winston's strong sense of individuality enables him to see himself in opposition to the Party. He realizes a situation of him versus them. Furthermore, his conspiratorial beliefs enable him to further strengthen his autonomy. He understands the indoctrination the Party imposes on Party members, and refuses to part-take in it.

Winston as the "Last Man" is thus a critical reflection of a growing tendency of what Orwell saw as a consequence of a totalitarian regime – a transfer of agency to the organisation. In this sense, Orwell warned against what Melley terms a postmodern transference "... in which agency is "transferred" from the autonomous individual to a discursive or social system."¹²⁰ Orwell's experiences in "Shooting an Elephant," describes how individual power is easily transformed to the forces of the collective.

[S]uddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly... Seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind."¹²¹

Orwell became conscious of the transference of his agency to the collective, much like Winston is conscious of the forces that are trying to turn him into "an absurd puppet." The element of postmodern transference in Oceania is supported by O'Brien who asserts that an individual should merge "... himself in the Party so that he is the Party, then he is all-

¹¹⁹ Melley, 2003, p 8

¹²⁰ Ibid, p 41

¹²¹ Orwell, 2003, p 36

powerful and immortal.”¹²² The Party is thus conscious of encroaching on the individuality of Party members, and moreover that they are proud of it and regard it as a positive and natural development for any individual.

Winston’s distinct feelings of segmentation, and quest for individual liberty, are direct results of his autonomy in a society that does not tolerate individual freedom. Furthermore, by realizing that there is a conspiracy and that it seeks to destroy his individuality and his freedom, Winston finds that he must fight the organisation behind this. It is in this context that Winston declares a silent opposition against the Party carried forth by the ideals of a better world found in the past and in the post Party future. “To understand one’s relation to the social order through conspiracy theory, in other words, is to see oneself in opposition to `society.’”¹²³

By seeing himself in opposition to society, Winston is embarking on a journey in which the result is an inevitable alienation from his “comrades.” Because most other Party members are “successfully” incorporated into the collective, Winston chooses relative solitude, except for his relationship with Julia. She is, however, not of the rebellious character Winston is. Her rebelliousness is based on a practical mode of surviving, and indeed keeping her individuality.

She spent an astonishing amount of time in attending lectures and demonstrations, distributing literature for the Junior Anti-Sex League, preparing banners for Hate Week, making collections for the savings campaign, and such-like activities. It paid, she said; it was camouflage. If you kept the small rules you could break the big ones.¹²⁴

She does not believe that the Party can ever be overpowered, nor is she governed by a personal utopian vision like Winston. Although she hates the Party, she is not a hero in the sense of Winston. *Her* drive is truly egoistical as her rebellion is of an individual nature. She has no particular interest in the Brotherhood, or in the utopian ideals of Winston. “Any kind of organised revolt against the Party, which was bound to be a failure, struck her as stupid. The clever thing was to break the rules and stay alive all the same.”¹²⁵ Julia is driven by an egoistical and practical discourse, whereas Winston is governed by his ideals.

¹²² Orwell, 1987, p 277

¹²³ Melley, 2003, p 10

¹²⁴ Orwell, 1987, p 135

¹²⁵ Ibid, p 138

Foucault argues that “Where there is power, there is resistance; and this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.”¹²⁶ Winston’s resistance is thus a direct, and inevitable, result of the society constructed by the Party. He, as the Last Man, is trying to maintain his autonomy, but ultimately and inevitably fails. Ironically, his resistance is no more than a charade. Winston’s rebellion has been dictated and facilitated by O’Brien from when Winston commenced writing in his diary. O’Brien exclaims that he has been watching Winston for seven years, but it is only recently that Winston has committed acts momentous enough for the Thought Police to handle him. Winston was no more than O’Brien’s Guinea pig, his project of the last man.

Winston is ultimately identified as the “last man” by O’Brien: “If you are a man, Winston, you are the last man.”¹²⁷ O’Brien further culminates this declaration by showing Winston the terrible state he is. Winston as the last man is a terrible sight. “Except for his hands and a circle of his face, his body was grey all over with ancient, ingrained dirt.”¹²⁸ He has become as lifeless as the grey landscape described in the opening paragraphs of the novel. Winston, and consequently the last man, is rotting away. Moreover, his moral standards are presented as being as low as those of the Party as O’Brien plays for him a tape where Winston “... heard himself promising to lie, to steal, to forge, to murder, to encourage drug-taking and prostitution, to disseminate venereal diseases, to throw vitriol in a child’s face.”¹²⁹ Winston’s physical condition is an allegory for the condition of humanity – the humanity which Orwell so greatly feared would terminate under a totalitarian rule. The “ancient, ingrained dirt” on Winston’s body indeed symbolizes the Last Man, and consequently humanity, under totalitarian rule as a relic from the past.

Winston was most likely always a rebellious character as he was never totally indoctrinated into the collective. Writing in his diary was an outlet for all the rebellious thoughts that had occupied his mind for the last seven years, which is the time O’Brien has observed him.

‘Don’t worry, Winston; you are in my keeping. For seven years I have watched over you. Now the turning-point has come. I shall save you, I shall make you perfect.’

[Winston] was not sure whether it was O’Brien’s voice; but it was the same voice that

¹²⁶ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, New York, Vintage Books, 1990, p 95

¹²⁷ Orwell, 1987, p 282-283

¹²⁸ Ibid, p 284

¹²⁹ Ibid, p 283

had said to him, 'we shall meet in the place where there is no darkness,' in that other dream, seven years ago.¹³⁰

Somehow O'Brien managed, seven years ago, to make such a strong impact on Winston that he is having recurrent dreams of him, and also experiencing great admiration towards O'Brien as an Inner Party member and intellectual superior, but also as a conspirator, where Winston imagines O'Brien as an unorthodox character – a part of the Brotherhood. In the treacherous society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it is inevitable that Winston will be betrayed, interrogated and tortured by O'Brien. It is in this sense that O'Brien steps forward as Winston's nemesis in that he is able to exploit Winston's feelings of admiration and love, and utilize those feelings to destroy Winston.

Winston as man is negated and destroyed by O'Brien's presence in room 101, the interrogation room. However, Raymond Williams argues that Winston never was a man.

Winston Smith is not like a man at all – in consciousness, in relationships, in the capacity for love and protection and endurance and loyalty. He is the last of the cut-down figures – less experienced, less intelligent, less loyal, less courageous than his creator – through whom rejection and defeat can be mediated.¹³¹

However, if Winston is Orwell, as James A. Tyner argues¹³², then Orwell's portrayal of Winston as "less experienced, less intelligent, less loyal, less courageous," epitomizes the ultimate, and inevitable, failure of the autonomous individual under totalitarian rule.

Williams' surrender only further illuminates the hopelessness of Winston as a tragic character, and his impossible quest for freedom, which is further shown by the superiority of O'Brien as the personification of Party ideals.

O'Brien is an ambiguous character for both Winston and the reader. Winston regards him as his protector and somewhat of a father figure, but also as his tormentor. Paradoxically these roles are intertwined, and appear natural to Winston. He accepts O'Brien as his tormentor, but still admires him. "The peculiar reverence for O'Brien, which nothing seemed able to destroy, flooded Winston's heart again. How intelligent, he thought, how intelligent."¹³³ O'Brien understands Winston, and there exists an implicit sympathy between the two characters, which also lends sympathy to O'Brien for the reader. Resch claims that "O'Brien's superiority negates rather than validates the tragic dimensions of Winston's defeat

¹³⁰ Ibid, p 256

¹³¹ Williams, Raymond, *Orwell*, Fontana Modern Masters, 1971, p 81

¹³² Tyner, 2004, p 144

¹³³ Orwell, 1987, p 286

precisely because he is not the antithesis of Winston, he is Winston – at a more advanced stage of development.”¹³⁴ O’Brien has observed Winston for seven years, and thus knows him almost better than Winston himself. O’Brien exhibits a great knowledge of Winston’s intellect and his reactions. Rather than negating Winston’s relationship with O’Brien, it further facilitates the admiration Winston feels towards him.

Winston does not remember his father. In his quest for family values, and utopian ideals outside the paradigm of the Party, he seeks O’Brien as a father figure. While imprisoned in the Ministry of Love, waiting for his doom, Winston finds himself dreaming.

He dreamed a great deal all through this time, and they were always happy dreams. He was in the Golden Country, or he was sitting among enormous, glorious, sunlit ruins, with his mother, with Julia, with O’Brien – not doing anything, merely sitting in the sun, talking of peaceful things.¹³⁵

The “glorious, sunlit ruins” symbolizes the ruins of totalitarianism and the Party, and hence the dream is Winston’s post totalitarian utopia. His dream is that of a family, another relic from the past, but of which O’Brien is a member along with Julia.

Winston’s physical relationship with Julia is also part of his awakening in terms of an explicit rebellious course. The sexual act constitutes a moment where Julia and Winston, as two individuals, collaborate on undermining the Party. Because of their jobs, they are able to learn from each other, and thus they are able to understand more of the elaborate dystopian qualities the Party presses upon the population. However, they are both undeniably convinced they cannot succeed in any endeavour to overthrow the Party, and that they will eventually be caught by the Thought Police. Winston’s heroism originates from his ideological belief in humanity, as all of Winston’s actions derive from ideology found in his memories, and belief in a better world. He believes in “[t]he spirit of Man,”¹³⁶ which is his belief in a principle that the Party cannot defeat – a belief in the human spirit as universal and unbeatable. He recognizes his inferiority to the Party, but still believes in asserting his self before the constructed doctrine of the Party imposed on him. His heroism is further facilitated by his ideological “martyrdom.” After writing in the diary, and after engaging in the physical relationship with Julia, he recognizes himself and Julia as dead. In this darkest hour he sets forth to entangle himself further in the web of rebellion by engaging the Brotherhood through O’Brien. This is the culmination of his rebellious quest, and also his ultimate failure.

¹³⁴ Resch, 1997, p 172

¹³⁵ Orwell, 1987, p 288

¹³⁶ Ibid, p 282

His heroism is negated by his obvious defeat by O'Brien, but also by introducing Julia to the Thought Police. In his rebellious course, he has made Julia his accomplice, and thus she must suffer the consequences of Winston's rebellion. Although Winston tries to rectify the situation by never stopping loving Julia, he fails in room 101 when, in order to save himself, he shouted "Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don't care what you do to her. Tear her face off, strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!"¹³⁷

Winston's surrender is complete. He is thrust into the arms of Big Brother. It is through this defeat that Resch argues that

[t]he fact is that Winston cares only about himself. His refusal to love Big Brother and his resistance to the party's domination is, at bottom an egoistic drive indistinguishable from O'Brien's submission to Big Brother and his pleasure in destroying Winston's individuality.¹³⁸

Clearly, the final act of surrender is driven by his egoistical desires. Also, Winston's inability to recognize himself with either Party members or the Proles separates him from everyone else. However, his initial martyrdom and desire to write his diary to the future negates the notion of a purely egoistical drive argued by Resch. Rather, all rebels are egoistical in part that they also wish the current situation to change for their benefit, but for Winston, he also wishes this for all. He longs for the freedom of Proles, but with intellect. His dream is of a utopian individual of Prole freedom and intellect of an Inner Party member!

Conclusion: The Last Man Resurrected

Orwell's nightmare conclusion epitomizes his dystopian frame. Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, however, suggests an alternate possibility. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* ends with Winston sitting in the Chestnut Café, drinking more than ever. He has finally learned to love Big Brother. In *Catch-22*, Yossarian sits in the chestnut tree, overlooking a funeral. He is naked, removed of his uniform. He has taken the physical and conscious step out of uniformity, which Winston never succeeded in doing. For Winston, the Chestnut Café is the culmination of his defeat. For Yossarian, the chestnut tree signifies "the tree of life... and of knowledge of good and evil, too."¹³⁹ Yossarian has managed to escape the dystopian society of the military as he makes the decisive step to leave it all behind. By so doing, Timothy Melley argues that

¹³⁷ Ibid, p 300

¹³⁸ Resch, 1997. p 171

¹³⁹ Heller, Joseph, *Catch-22*, Vintage Future Classics, Random House, London, 2005, p 301

“[Yossarian] merely abandons his social commitments. It is in this sense that Yossarian is an antisocial character.”¹⁴⁰ However, Melley has omitted Yossarian’s search for Kid Sister who functions as, sort of, the negation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s Big Brother.¹⁴¹

In Heller’s novel, the obvious contrast between the Orwellian Big Brother and “Kid Sister” iterates Yossarian as more of an individual than Winston. She is the embodiment of family, while Big Brother is the antithesis of family in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Yossarian, in this sense, is also more successfully connected to the collective than Winston who fails in all his exploits of a collective solidarity. Yossarian is furthermore driven by strong feelings of what Timothy Melley terms agency panic, which is an

intense anxiety about an apparent loss of autonomy or self control – the conviction that one’s actions are being controlled by someone else, that one has been “constructed” by powerful external agents.¹⁴²

Yossarian has realized that he, and everyone else, is being controlled by the military, and how they are neglected as individuals. Although Winston is also driven by his individual beliefs, he first succumbs to agency panic in room 101 when he realizes the extent of the controlling mechanisms. However, room 101 terminates Winston’s individuality. Here he finally embraced Big Brother; he has consciously surrendered his ideology, which formerly drove him. Yossarian’s search for Kid Sister culminates in a search for family values opposite of the “Big Brother society” of the army. It is in this sense that Yossarian carries forth the legacy started by Winston, but which Winston could never manage to fulfil. Yossarian is, in this sense, the “Last Man.”

Winston’s failure as an individual, as a man, and as a hero was inevitable. In Alan Moore’s *V for Vendetta*, V’s failure is also inevitable, because of society’s nature, which is much like that of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. However, V recognized himself as an idea. “Did you think to kill me? There’s no flesh or blood within this cloak to kill. There’s only an idea. Ideas are bullet proof.”¹⁴³ V was inevitably killed, but not ultimately. He lived on as an idea, but more importantly, he lived on in the exploits of the girl, Evey Hammond. Neither Heller nor Moore ended their novels conclusively. Both novels end with an ideological victory, but at the expense of something else. Yossarian abandoned his friends for them to fight for themselves, but he abandoned them to seek the values of family and humanity the military was stripping

¹⁴⁰ Melley, 2000, p 68

¹⁴¹ Prince, Michael J., “Lecture *Catch-22*,” Agder University College, Kristiansand, September 2006

¹⁴² Melley, 2000, p 12,

¹⁴³ Moore, Alan, *V for Vendetta*, DC Comics, Broadway, New York, 1990, p 236

him off. V as an individual and as a man died, but his victory was that of engaging the masses. He was an awakening. Winston, however, because of his complete surrender to the Party, surrendered himself as an idea and all that constituted him as a man. The only hope in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is in the appendix on Newspeak, where Newspeak and the Party are narrated as relics from the past, but the hope in Orwell's novel must be characterised by what Resch characterises as an "ideological leap of faith."¹⁴⁴

Winston's failure as the last man and as a hero is noteworthy. It signifies Orwell's despairing outlook on the future. Most memorable, however, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is Orwell's design of the omnipotent leader Big Brother. The term Big Brother has stayed with us into the 21st century. He has become the epitome of the Orwellian paradigm. But what was for Orwell the most horrific symbol of a regime of terror, has now come to signify a culture of reality television. Where Big Brother once personified evil and dehumanising tendencies of society, he now is celebrated as innovative and entertaining. In the reality-show "Big Brother" it is considered "cool" to be under the gaze of Big Brother – the all pervading surveillance and scrutiny. In this sense, perhaps we too are reaching the final act for Winston: We are learning to love Big Brother.

As we are learning to love Big Brother, we are failing to realize how the increasing surveillance, security, and indeed virtual reality pressing upon us via the Internet, is creating a forecast for a Panoptic society of our world. Traffic cameras function as Panopticons. They observe the roads, but it is impossible to know if they are observing all the time, or if the surveillance they offer is random. Through our ever-increasing use of media such as television and internet, we are subjected to the mercy of those who mediate. We cannot, or at least should not, be convinced that what is broadcasted to us is the only truth. Our use of the internet can be traced; our habits and our interests can easily be observed in the virtual reality. Consequently, our escalating use of technology and media directs us into a situation where we impose a virtual Panopticon. Orwell's design for the Panoptic society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is thus not as far fetched, albeit more horrific. Furthermore, Orwell's vision of a world in continuous war is also precariously close to the world situation today.

Today we are also learning to accept a state of war. After 9/11, the world has been engaged in a continuous war. We slowly learn that increased security is an "evil" necessity, and that everyone can be a threat to society. Bomb threats and bomb attacks occur randomly in the Western world today. Especially the US and the UK are subjected to these attacks,

¹⁴⁴ Resch, 1997, p 159

which are so difficult to defend against. The frequency of bomb attacks in Iraq is starting to sound like faint blows to the Western societies – a brief anecdote on the six o'clock news.

During the “war on terror” it is noticeable that governments become more absolute, although not totalitarian. The increased surveillance is one stage of this development. Risking the lives of soldiers fighting on alien ground, for a reason that is becoming more and more obscure is another. A recent survey revealed that 63% of the American people want all troops in Iraq home by the end of 2008.¹⁴⁵ President Bush, however, does not share these sentiments, and thus the “war on terror’s” purpose of protecting and serving the people seems distant. Rather, the “war on terror” resembles the Cold War, where the war was over ideology. The situation of “the war on terror” is growing progressively closer to Orwell’s projections of despotism and perpetual war.

People such as Winston who dare to question their existence, and the actions of the government are needed today also. Without individuality and humanity the world will stop progressing. Through complete uniformity there is no progress, as we can no longer learn from each other. Orwell’s vision of a future devoid of human relationships, autonomy and choice, should echo in the present so that we embrace the multifaceted society we currently live in, and instead of impoverishing that society, we should welcome those who have the courage to be different, and appreciate those who dare to speak their minds.

¹⁴⁵ Page, Susan, http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2007-02-12-troops-poll_x.htm, last accessed 06.05.2007

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