TEZĂ DE DOCTORAT

Freedom and History in George Orwell's Works

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ALBA IULIA

2025

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philology

SUMMARY

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CONTENTS:

The **theme of freedom** in literature derives from the many meanings it has accrued to itself in modernity at the end of a chain that goes back in history to classical times. Instead of an abstract and universalist definition, we adopt Heidegger's view of the palimpsest of language collecting from revised interpretations of words in relation to people's changing ideas about their condition and destiny. The limitations of the human can be linked to the metaphysical (derived from being unto death) but also historical experience of the human being. George Orwell's works can be a vast field of research on this topic since the writer always focused on the way in which human beings are confronted with the fragility of freedom, while, at the same time, being intensely aware of the changes undergone by humanity's historicized kind of being in the world as well as the artificial changes imposed by the power system through the archiving method (Newspeak: language under control, with meanings erased or imposed).

The reason behind our choice of topic is not only the importance of the concept of freedom as yardstick of the ideal human condition worldwide, whose paragon is the free human agent, but also for the need of its being defined or revisioned in post December 1989 Romania. It is especially after joining the European Union, whose law is based upon the Universal Charter of Human Rights, with its emphasis upon man being born free in the very first item, that the concept as such needs to be thoroughly understood and enforced.

Secondly, any concept of political philosophy needs to be contextualized. We have already stated that we take a Heideggerian, that is, historicized view of the concept. However, we are not having in mind a linear narrative as a historian will habitually proceed, that is, from ancient times to the present moment. There is no constant improvement through the ages, as there is in the history of technology or in the acquisition of knowledge. There is no universal law at work, but each society's capacity to ensure conditions for a participatory democracy. The forum in ancient Athens is superior, in this respect, to medieval patriarchy, let alone the totalitarian regimes of the last century. That is why we do not examine freedom in respect to time but in respect to the historical praxis.

The finality of our research is to collect data that may contribute to a deeper understanding of what freedom is supposed to mean in a state of individual rights, such as Romania, through the lens provided by political philosophy, existentialist phenomenology, sociology of personality and behaviour, critical discourse analysis, focused on the insights whereby George Orwell launched his most unsettling warning against the suppression of freedom. At the same time we gave a voice to those whose expectations need to be taken into account when shaping a society for the future. A survey on children's opinions on freedom has thus been conducted and interpreted.

An **interdisciplinary approach**, straddling history, ethics, literature, discourse studies, and philosophy of politics, fits well into the meaning structures of books which interrogate the basics of the human condition. Foucault's concepts of history, prison society, and power illustrated in the Orwellian dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* may serve examples of how a fictional text can reflect on a philosophical concept.

As any study of discourse, we undertook contextualization. Our research project surveys the background against which Orwell wrote his essays and novels, focusing on themes, such as totalitarianism, democracy, war, history, freedom, the freedom of the press, patriotism, and power. Gradually, Orwell progressed from being a rebel sympathetic to "the oppressed" to direct involvement in left-wing politics during the 1930s. He became more critical of the middle-class left-wing attitude of his time, which advocated solidarity with the lower class, but was hesitant to interfere with their lives. He also witnessed the rise of the cult of the Soviet Union, its Five-Year Plans, and Stalin among left-wing followers.

A search of Orwell's biography is likely to offer a key to the events which influenced his political views. The signing of the German-Soviet pact in 1939 and the subsequent invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany in 1941 shattered the faith of many of those who had supported the Soviet regime. Orwell noted that criticism of the Soviet regime from the left was difficult to get under the circumstances, seeing himself forced to rely upon his own experience in Spain where the Communist Party suppressed left-wing rivals.

We examine the political climate of the 1930s, with Orwell expressing his anger and disappointment with Stalinism, Marxism, and the political maneuvers of Stalin in Spain. These sentiments shaped his writing of "Animal Farm," a satire against totalitarian socialism. The chapter concludes by noting that Orwell's novel "Nineteen Eighty-Four" was published just after World War II, during a time when England allied with Stalin's Russia. It highlights Orwell's transition from socialist ideals to democratic socialism and his desire to caution his contemporaries against the dangers of totalitarian societies.

Most of Orwell's literary works revolve around contemporary socio-political matters. For instance*, Burmese Days* tackles the decline of British imperialism, while *Down and Out in Paris and London, A Clergyman's Daughter*, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, and *The Road to Wigan Pier* (all written during the Great Depression) address the issue of poverty. *Homage to Catalonia* is a result of Orwell's firsthand experience in the Spanish Civil War, *Coming Up for Air* predates World War II by three months, *Animal Farm* was published shortly after the Hiroshima bombing, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was released at the height of the Cold War. Additionally, Orwell wrote over seven hundred politically oriented articles in less than twenty years. His journalistic output, coupled with

his visits to economically depressed coal mining areas in England to investigate living conditions and his active involvement in the Spanish Civil War fighting for the Republican cause, demonstrates his keen interest and responsiveness to contemporary social, economic, and political issues. One could argue that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* would not have been possible without the backdrop of World War II and the subsequent Cold War. Freedom is not an object of philosophical debate in Orwell, but a topic approached from the perspective of a social critic and scientist. The notion functions like an attractor which brings together issues of colonial oppression, economic deprivation, social and political discrimination.

Economic issues and class consciousness are recurrent themes in Orwell's work. In novels like "Keep the Aspidistra Flying," he explores the consequences of economic inequality, the pressure to conform to societal expectations, and the dehumanizing effects of poverty. Orwell's first-hand experiences working in menial jobs and living in impoverished areas inform his portrayal of the hardships faced by the working class. His visit to the economically depressed coal mining regions of England and his participation in the Spanish Civil War further fueled his interest in social, economic, and political issues.

Orwell's socialist ideology emerges from his concern for the working class and his belief in fairness and democratic principles. He criticizes the capitalist system for perpetuating social injustice and economic exploitation. His writings from the 1930s, such as "The Road to Wigan Pier", reflect the prevailing unemployment and poverty during that period. Orwell's affiliation with left-wing publications and organizations focused on labor issues also demonstrates his left-leaning stance.

Regarding colonialism, Orwell condemns the exploitation of less powerful countries by Western powers. He reveals the hypocrisy of Europeans rationalizing their privileges and superiority over the colonized peoples, enjoying their free control at the expense of the colonials' enslavement.

Orwell's most famous novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, depicts a dystopian society ruled by a totalitarian regime that suppresses individual freedom and controls the thoughts and actions of its citizens. Orwell's opposition to totalitarianism stems from his belief in the protection of individual rights and freedom. His essays, such as "The Prevention of Literature", discuss the dangers of totalitarian control over literature and the suppression of intellectual honesty.

We explore Orwell's ideas about personal freedom and state authority, which developed during his time as a British colonial administrator in Burma. He observed the impact of colonialism on individuals and questioned the notion that the colonial oppressor exists for the good of the oppressed. Furthermore, we discuss Orwell's experiences in Spain and how they shaped his views on oppression and the manipulation of information. His time in Spain, his involvement in the POUM

militia, and his escape from arrest by the Comintern faction influenced his later works, such as *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*. The final subchapter is an attempt to place Orwell in the tradition of Stoic philosophy, which is typically concerned with the possibility of creating a free space under extreme conditions of political oppression.

The issue of power originates in Machiavelli's *The Prince*, written in the early 16th century, and in Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*, which appeared in the mid-17th century, says Elisheva Sadan, a teacher on the Faculty of the School of Social Work of The Hebrew University in Jerusalem in her book *Empowerment and Community Planning*.

The contrast between the two books represents the two main routes along which thought about power has continued up to now. Machiavelli and Hobbes are considered classics of political writing, Machiavelli representing the strategic and decentralized thinking about power and organization. For him power is a means, not a resource, and he seeks strategic advantages, such as military ones. Hobbes sees power as hegemony, his political discourse being centralized and focused on sovereignty.

It was French philosopher Michel Foucault, however, who turned the discussion of power and history into a widespread intellectual preoccupation. Foucault investigated the concepts in new fields: medicine, psychiatry, and human sexuality. Michel Foucault thinks, when dealing with history, that one should seek to reconstruct, not large "periods" or "centuries", that one should focus on "phenomena of rupture, of discontinuity" (Dino Felluga Web) instead of reading narratives of progress in the historical record. The problem, he argues, "is no longer one of tradition, of tracing a line, but one of division, of limits"

Instead of presenting a version of a given period, Foucault believes that we must reveal how any given period reveals "several pasts, several forms of connexion, several hierarchies of importance, several networks of determination, several teleologies, for one and the same science, as its present undergoes change: thus historical descriptions are necessarily ordered by the present state of knowledge, they increase with every transformation and never cease, in turn, to break with themselves."(3)

The term "archaeology" is adopted by Foucault to designate his historical method and to articulate what he means by that term by specifying how his method differs from both traditional history and the traditional history of ideas. In his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, he tries to define discourses themselves, as signifying practices obeying certain rules, not the thoughts, representations, images, themes, preoccupations that are concealed or revealed in discourses. Foucault does not examine historical documents in order to read in them "a sign of something else", for example the "truth" or "spirit" of a given historical period. He would rather try to make sense of

how a period's very approach to key terms such as "history," "oeuvre," or "subjectivity" affect that period's understanding of itself and its history. Archaeology does not seek to rediscover the continuous, insensible transition that relates discourses, on a gentle slope, to what precedes them, surrounds them, or follows them". Instead, Foucault wishes to understand how disparate discourses function by virtue of their own distinct sets of rules and strategies. Archaeology, Foucault continues his theory," does not wish to rediscover the enigmatic point at which the individual and the social are inverted into one another. It is neither a psychology, nor a sociology, nor more generally an anthropology of creation." (4) Archaeology does not seek to retrieve the "truth" of history but to look into the genesis of any period out of a series of discourses: "It is not a return to the innermost secret of the origin; it is the systematic description of a discourse-object." (5)

Michel Foucault was interested in the way our contemporary society is structured differently from the society that preceded us. He says that each process of modernization affects the power of the individual and it implies the control of the government. Contemporary society, portrayed by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, resembles George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Foucault explores the transition from a "culture of spectacle", which meant public displays of torture, to a "carceral culture", which means internalized punishment and discipline, directed to rehabilitation. Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon was a source of inspiration for Foucault in his understanding of the idea of power. The Panopticon becomes Foucault's model for the way institutions function: the Panopticon is an important mechanism, for it automatizes and disindividualizes power. "Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up". (Foucault 1979: 99) Foucault explores in his books how the creation of modern disciplines, with their principles of order and control, tends to "disindividualize" power, making it seem as if power inheres in the prison, the school, the factory, and so on. Bentham's purpose was to create an architectural idea that could function on its own: it did not matter who exactly operated the machine: "Any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine: in the absence of the director, his family, his friends, his visitors, even his servants" (2). The idea of discipline itself similarly functions as an abstraction of the idea of power from any individual: "Discipline may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a physics' or an 'anatomy' of power, a technology."

Foucault discusses the period between 1757 and 1830, when the practice of torturing prisoners was replaced by close surveillance by guards acting in accordance with strict prison rules. This change is not a humanizing of punishment, as it was commonly thought, but as a more correct

economy of power. The purpose of this change is the development of a new technology, which he named disciplinary power. Foucault is preoccupied with the expansion of the discipline in the governing system and the police, bodies for which the entire society is a field of action and an object of disciplinary action. He estimated that most of the major social institutions are already infected by discipline which proved to be an art of governing and manipulating people, of creating "docile bodies", ideal for the new economics, politics and warfare of the modern industrial age - bodies that function in factories, hospitals, prisons, ordered military regiments, and school classrooms. "The panoptic schema, without disappearing as such or losing any of its properties, was destined to spread throughout the social body," Foucault explains; "its vocation was to become a generalized function" The ultimate result is that we now live in the panoptic machine: "We are neither in the amphitheatre, nor on the stage, but in the panoptic machine, invested by its effects of power, which we bring to ourselves since we are part of its mechanism"

Foucault, like Orwell, is preoccupied with bureaucracy, which contributes to the same process of deindividuation. The bureaucrat's lack of action or freedom represents an effective and diffuse form of social control. Reading Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* one can have the feeling that we are powerless: "It is true that contemporary forms of disciplinary organization allow ever larger number of people to be controlled by ever smaller numbers of "specialists" (Dino Felluga: Web).

The types of power identified by Foucault are found, more or less, in Orwell's works, in direct relationship with the concepts of freedom and history.

Can historiography be considered a subgenre of literature? The truth is that history depicts itself as a story. A historian is a writer in the sense that he produces a narrative of events unfolding in time and linked through causes and effects. Narration makes from history a special form of literature, with a language of its own and following some rules close to a narrative text. On the other hand, the historical fact constitutes a vast material for literature. Writers themselves draw their inspiration mostly from near or distant history, the historical fact being considered important in the analysis of human behaviour, of individual destiny vs. power and state institutions. History can be seen as a literary theme which outlines the destiny of the human being. Man is necessarily dependent on history and influenced by it. We use the term in the broad sense of history as summing up events (annals), but also in the sense of an individual's reflection upon their nature and connectedness.

The historical consciousness may be defined also from the perspective of the individual consciousness, each man carrying inside a certain, *personal history*. Man can perceive more

intensely the abrupt changes of history through the way in which they affect him. The rough history is, for this reason, a record of moments linked by the cancellation of freedom, by the intimate perception of historical, catastrophes (political changes, aberrant forms of political power, abusive ideologies, etc.) It can be noticed that the history of the individual is connected to history, in general.

History and freedom are two categories which can be looked at in a common/ unified perspective as report on humanity. Man is determined, subject to historical circumstances. Freedom is the central element, in the structure of values, appreciated by man apparently only when he is on the point of losing it.

Because the loss of freedom (along other individual incidents) is caused by history and its catastrophes, we can talk about a confrontation of the human being with history, out of which emerges a common consciousness of freedom and history.

Foucault's concepts of history, prison society, and power illustrated in the Orwellian dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* may be examples of how a philosophical concept reflects in a fictional text. George Orwell predicted the dangers of policing and surveilling people in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. He describes accurately the mean mechanism of policing which finally leads to self-surveillance. Due to terror, people start to expose themselves, to betray their close relatives or their own mind.

The inhabitants of Oceania, particularly the party members, have no real privacy. Many of them live in apartments equipped with two-way telescreens, so that they may be watched or listened to at any time. Similar telescreens are found at workstations and in public places, along with hidden microphones. Written correspondence is routinely opened and read by the government before it is delivered. The Thought Police employ undercover agents, who pose as normal citizens and report any person with subversive tendencies. Children are encouraged to report suspicious persons to the government, and some even denounce their own parents. This surveillance allows for effective control of the citizenry. The smallest sign of rebellion, even something as small as a facial expression, can result in immediate arrest and imprisonment. Thus, citizens (and particularly party members) are compelled to absolute obedience at all times.

Police use the ubiquitous surveillance cameras in public and other spaces (airports, workplaces, supermarkets, banks), but their networking via the Internet has recently given rise to doubts about the totalizing, panoptic discipline, and control frequently of these technologies. These pervasive technologies, predicted by Orwell, may render everyday life as totally controlled as the cells in Bentham's prison.

Bentham's panopticon, the master of the surveillance mechanism, worked because prisoners could not see whether they were being watched by guards. In the twenty-first century, the central

tower is never manned, it is automated. Foucault reminds us that the state works much like the panopticon, but what would he say about a nation surveilled by learning networks? It no longer matters if the tower is manned or not because everything is recorded and available for instant replay. This over-surveillance will become a part of an individual's daily risk mitigation. This has already begun in counties that have installed red-light cameras at busy intersections. The citizens of war-torn countries will experience much greater consequences than expensive traffic tickets. They may be subject to perpetual surveillance that combines the inscrutable detail of sports coverage, with reality TV's fascination with the mundane.

These technologies use algorithms that are understood and controlled by few people but may affect billions of people. The "modern" dangers of using these gadgets, i.e. allowing surveillance, are manipulation, wilful ignorance, and new methods of control. Governments may use the limits of technology and policing, in excess of zeal, to increase power and annihilate freedom.

The surveillance mechanism has never been better described or imagined than it was in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. On coins, on stamps, on the covers of books, on banners, on posters, and on the wrappings of a cigarette Packet -everywhere. Always the eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, working or eating, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or in bed - no escape. "Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull" (George Orwell 2009: 14).

Foucault introduced another concept: *biopower*. In the French philosopher's view biopower is "a technology which appeared in the late eighteenth century for managing populations. It incorporates certain aspects of disciplinary power. If *disciplinary power i*s about training the actions of bodies, biopower is about managing the births, deaths, reproduction, and illnesses of a population" (Foucault: web). Applied to Orwell, the concept of biopower reveals the way in which the dystopian society man, sketched by means of fiction, can find himself in the modern world. Besides, the picture of Orwell's sketched individual corresponds perfectly to the manifest desire of any power to control the most palpable and fragile part of the human being: the body. In addition, the body becomes the most effective tool of thought suppression and therefore of freedom suppression.

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. 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 a 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 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 to 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 (George Orwell 2009: 14). 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 "the purpose of surveillance [in Oceania] was the same as Bentham intended for his Panopticon penitentiary – to produce complete obedience to the governing authority" (Harry Strub 1989: 40).

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. 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 try to escape them. Thus, the masses are always exposed to the telescreens, which are in turn perpetually observing. By knowing the inmates, the Panoptic society is "… a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men" (Michael Foucault 1995: 205).

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. 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.

The conscious knowledge of always being watched reduces individuals to a mental state of compliance, where they realize themselves in terms of the power structure they are engaged in.

At the heart of Orwell's vision lies the juxtaposition of utopian ideals with the harsh realities of autarchic power systems and their leaders. Rather than presenting a straightforward utopia, Orwell crafts a narrative that exposes the inherent contradictions and paradoxes within totalitarian regimes. Through the use of oxymorons such as "Freedom is slavery" and "War is peace," Orwell highlights the perversion of language and the manipulation of truth by those in power. These slogans serve as chilling reminders of the twisted logic employed to maintain control and suppress dissent in Oceania.

The transformation of Oceania from utopia to dystopia is emblematic of the dangers inherent in totalitarian ideologies. What begins as an ambitious vision for a better world descends into a nightmare of oppression and fear. The utopian ideals espoused by the ruling elite serve only to cloak their authoritarian agenda and justify their grip on power. In the process, the aspirations of the people are subverted, their dreams turned into a living nightmare.

Orwell's portrayal of Oceania serves as a chilling warning against the allure of utopian visions and the dangers of unchecked power. By exposing the inherent contradictions within totalitarian societies, Orwell challenges readers to question the nature of authority and resist the erosion of individual freedoms. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* stands as a powerful testament to the enduring relevance of Orwell's insights and the need to remain vigilant against the encroachment of tyranny in all its forms.

Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* presents a compelling exploration of the concept of the inverted utopia, where utopian ideals are perverted by autarchic power systems to create dystopian realities. Through the prism of Oceania, Orwell exposes the inherent dangers of totalitarianism and the erosion of individual freedom. The novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell presents a post-war dystopian world where freedom of speech is manipulated as a tool of control, and language is distorted to restrict thoughts and perceptions within a rigid present. Orwell's depiction of this future society serves as an allegory, reflecting real historical contexts and employing a Lacanian framework to illustrate a present devoid of meaning beyond immediate perception. Lacan (1973) posited that language structures our perception of reality and constructs our sense of self. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, cognitive metaphors like "Freedom is slavery" and "War is peace" are linguistic constructs that manipulate reality, reflecting the oppressive power of the Party. These metaphors distort truth and reinforce the dominant ideology, illustrating how language shapes societal norms and individual consciousness. Through cognitive metaphors, such as container metaphors for spatial limits and visual fields, Orwell emphasizes the characters' perceptions of boundaries and constraints.

The physical world, described in terms of decay and ephemerality, mirrors the moral and mental decay of the society under totalitarian rule. Time itself is metaphorically perceived as fluid and disintegrated, with memories distorted and manipulated by the Party to serve its agenda.

The interface of utopia and dystopia is most disturbing when the two are placed in superposition. Maria M. Tumarkin, a Russian emigrant from Gorbachev's Russia to Australia in the late eighties of the last century, coined the word "traumascape" for spaces which bear testimony to traumatic events. Sometimes it is the same building that in the beginning carried utopian connotations but in time it acquired sinister meanings. Such is Berlin, German's capital city, where, for instance, the ruins of Kaiser Wilhelm's Gedächtniskirche are reminiscent both of the glorious dreams of an empire and of the 2nd World War bombing which sealed the country's defeat.

Another story told by Tumarkin is that of the Christ the Saviour Church in Moscow, raised in celebration of the victory over Napoleon's army in 1812. The Bolshevik regime demolished it in view of erecting the biggest building in the world with Lenin's statue on top of it. The sliding of the terrain under the projected edifice put an end to the project, so that, instead of a monument of the Soviet Union spiralling up to the sky, a huge hole gaped grotesquely in the ground.

Post-Millennial Perceptions and Post-Pandemic Realities: Living Dystopian is a 2023 book published by academic Pradipta Mukherjee with Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Including narratives of the pandemic, we may say that dystopia has descended into the streets taking a suicidal leap into realism. Nor is this threat to dystopia's self-identity something new. By publishing the self-abjection confessions of political detainees under Stalin in the years of the purges, Igal Halfin (*Stalinist Confessions. Messianism and Terror at the Leningrad Communist University*), offered real lives parallels to the Parsons episode in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Dystopia turns real, reality turns fictitious. The book brought to light in 2009 what Orwell might have known or intuited at the time of writing his *Nineteen Eighty-Four.*

There is a true direction to the interrogation, impeccably presented in Halfin's work, which is also found in Orwell's novel. In this case, as in many others, we can speak of Orwellian visionarism that imagines dystopian scenarios, including hermeneutics of gestures that reveal the executioner-victim relationship from a dystopian perspective. Fiction surpasses reality, but in this case, it can be said that it perfectly anticipates it.

The first Article in the Universal Charter of Human Rights states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." As the opposite is rather the case, it is only natural that we should try to discover the mechanism that blocks the application of the first human right to the whole of humanity.

The first explanation that comes to mind is the political regime, offering citizens a democratic site for interrelationships with the state institutions and among themselves, or, on the contrary, keeping them in bondage.

Nevertheless, even under the same political rule, the power system gets different responses from citizens. In a totalitarian state, the number of opponents is usually small. The range of conduct goes from self-abjection, compliancy to overt resistance and rebellion. At the same time there is a striking similarity of attitudes, forms of address and interaction in any society at some moment in history. We may infer that social interaction leads to the appearance of certain patterns of behaviour in all the citizens, and, on the other hand, that differences of conduct originate in the distinct personality traits that distinguish citizens from one another.

All the characters in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* join the scapegoat show instrumented by Big Brother, follow strict dress codes, speak an artificially generated kind of language. Nevertheless, Winston Smith casts about for forms of resistance, whether by strolling into the proles' outskirts, who enjoy some degree of freedom, by trying to step outside of the Big Brother's telescreen, by keeping a diary or searching his mind for forbidden memories of the actual past. Beneath him is the brainwashed Parson who serves the system and even hails the tyrant who condemns him to death fitting into a pattern that brings together the Earl of Essex, who repents and worships Her Majesty the Queen before being beheaded, according to the *ars moriendi* of the Elizabethan Age, and the prisoners executed by Stalin who hailed him before being shot by the execution squad. There is also someone who stands above Winston on the ethical ladder of the characters, and that is Julia whose scar reveals to Winston, the last time they meet, that she had resisted to the end, accepting to be tortured by the rats rather than betray him.

As far as freedom is concerned, political philosopher Hannah Arendt stands in opposition to Isaiah Berlin, the climactic point of their disagreement being the meaning of freedom. As we have seen, Berlin insists on the limitation of individual freedom beyond the point where it can limit someone else's. According to Arendt, it precisely in relation to others that an individual can be free, can act in an interpersonal relationship.

For Berlin ("Two Concepts of Liberty"), negative liberty will be enough, and it implies absence of constraints, interference, being allowed full control of one's body and destiny.

Would Winston be satisfied with relief from O'Brien's demonic engineering of his soul through torture of his body? Actually, he needs infinitely more: family relationships, free love of Julia, recovery of the lost beautiful world of art and affections, bonding with humans (proles) in the absence of any constraints or exercise of power.

To this liberal concept of freedom, Arendt counterpoises political freedom: [...] a person is politically free in Arendt's sense when he is acting and interacting, and speaking and

deliberating with others about matters of public concern in a formally or informally institutionalised public realm. To be free is to exercise an opportunity for political participation. (Hiruta 2014, web)

The freedom Arendt has in view is enjoyed by those who are members of a participatory democracy. Even if spared any physical abuse, a woman condemned to domestic chores will be a slave of her subordinate, marginalised condition. One needs the exertion of one's will to create, to accomplish, to appear – to use Arendt's word - in the public sphere of social life. Freedom is not a matter of simply being allowed the choice of smoking or giving it up (Berlin's example), of gratifying someone's addictions, thereby manifesting personal features, such as strong will or absence of determination. A person feels to be standing on one's own when a place in the community is created for them, making one feel indispensable. But such an idea has far-reaching consequences. It is not personal traits that earn one freedom. It is the kind of world one is born into. People are affected in a concrete sense by the kind of interrelationships they get into.

The psychology of Orwell's characters in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be defined in terms of Spinoza's *Ethics* precisely because the power system has reduced them solely to events of the body. Thinking is crime, individual will has been extinguished and the mindset is reduced to one emotion: fear. Two objects have inscribed on their bodies the sense of terror: the screen wherefrom they are being watched by Big Brother and Room 101, where exposure to torture has exceeded all imagination. The characters in the novel fall into two categories: those who inflict pain on others and those who endure pain.

According to Spinoza, there is no such thing as free play of the mind, in separation from the body:" The first element, which constitutes the essence of the mind, is nothing else but the idea of the actually existent body." (Spinoza 2017, web). Confronted with Room 101, Winston is reduced to a somatic awareness, a critical one, in which bodily sensations no longer relate to emotions or thoughts.

Sensations, objects and persons are no longer levels of distinct ontological awareness. A mental decision and a bodily determined state are simultaneous, according to Spinoza. The great discovery of the totalitarian regime was the power of annihilating a man's personality by acting on the body. They called it engineering of the soul, but, in reality, it was extinction of the soul. O'Brien takes pride in the regime's replacement of" Thou shall not" of" the old despotism" and the totalitarians" Thou shalt" by the command" THOU ART." As only God can command something into existence ("Let there be ..."), the status claimed by the new despotism is divine. In" The Garden of Love," William Blake pits love against command. The flowers in the garden of love have been

replaced by a chapel with" Thou shall not" written on the door, by graves and priests. O Brien's pretense to torture dissidents into loving Big Brother runs against nature.

Nevertheless, this mechanistic picture of man reduced to a body affected by interaction with other bodies, which worked unfailingly under the communist dictatorship, only characterizes what Bradley Kaye calls the" Will to Power as the 'Primitive Form of Affects." In the sense of vital energy which impels all forms of life on the way to self-fulfillment, the will to power is not a destructive impulse, but under despotism it takes the form of will to power over others, where" a road to nonentity is the desideratum." (Nietzsche 1967, § 155).
Political dictatorship is a version of theocracy, or, as Kaye says, „religions tend to produce disciplinary practices that restrain in the hopes of extinguishing the affects, leaving the subject a docile, numbed zombie". (Kaye 2006, p. 54)

In a society of free individuals, each member is a Kraft-Punkt, a center of power, and the way the whole moves is the resultant of all forces. If" a quantum of power is designated by the effect it produces and by the effect it resists" (Nietzsche 1967, 634), normally" centers of willing just are the elements of a multiply constituted field of forces (or relations) [...] that by definition can never completely overlap or 'agree'." (Kaye 2006, 558). Each atom of will takes" a different window onto the world," which means that the summations will never yield a congruent world. If the center of willing is defined by the effect of its view and the effect it resists, then the imposition of one vision and the suppression of resistance will accomplish the dream of a psychotic subject whose perception changes everybody else into indifferent objects. People see Big Brother; he sees nobody. The real men, women and children are screened off from his field of vision. Orwell intuited primitive will to power, in the absence of all evolved feelings or refined emotions, to lie at the foundation of a society which has exited civilization, humanity.

What is the origin of our political attitudes, values, loyalties, conduct? "Political socialization describes the process by which citizens crystallize political identities, values and behavior that remain relatively persistent throughout later life." (Neundorf 2017, web). How important is the pre-adult influence on their generation and how consistent are they at various stages of our lives?

Dave Grey (*Liminal Thinking: Create the Change You Want by Changing the Way You Think*, 2017) sees beliefs as the very stuff of the shared world humans inhabit. People act according to their "pyramid of belief," their fellow human beings interpret their gestures, and their interpretations feed into their own beliefs, which become a sort of map guiding them in their progress through the world. This suprasensuous level of existence is more important to people than the objective, material ontological level. Beliefs create a certain version of reality which includes their own sense of identity and group solidarity. Conflicting beliefs are likely to emerge when the influencers occupy distinct positions in

matters of politics, for instance. Children and teenagers may hesitate when caught in between contradictory educational agents acting on them: family, school, social media, political institutions. It is customary in modern democracies to invite teenagers to informative meetings where the government's politics is explained (in the US, for instance, the Congress organizes such meetings which enjoy TV publicity, thereby expanding the audience).

Between a mother who is spiritually dead (as suggested by her passivity as well as by the improbable dust filling the wrinkles of her face) and a father who is completely enslaved by the system, the two children, a boy of nine and a girl of seven, find in their home, not an obstacle, but a bridge to the totalitarian machinery. What can be expected from the children of a man who "had managed to stay on in the Spies for a year beyond the statutory age" if not to enroll in the Spies themselves and become informants of deadly efficiency? Their militaristic education washes their brain, their knowledge being reduced to the notions demonized by the Party – with the name of a man in disgrace listed among the rest like a common noun (there was no other sign of identity apart from political identity, reduced to submissive member/ dissenter): traitor, thought-criminal, Eurasian spy, Goldstein. Mechanically repeated, they build the minimalistic identity frame of a psychotic political system.

There is no distinction between the way children and grown-ups are treated, there is no intimation of the latter being entitled to having personal opinions, values, attitudes. If we look into the etymology of Parsons, the prototype of totalitarianism's victim, we read his life as descent from what in medieval times meant preacher of faith (here, a satanic creed which seems to fire back in the character's downfall) to persona – nobody, a mask.

Ironically, the novel opens with what is supposed to be Winston's home-coming, but actually the Victoria mansions block has Big Brother's picture on every landing and the protagonist goes into a surveilled room, into a prison cell. Working, homing or imprisoned in torture chambers, characters live common not private lives. The way they act is also as members of a collective body, performing the same gestures, uttering or rather shouting the same words.

In Rukeyser's mid-century poem beginning like a sermon, "You will enter the world," there is an apprehension about the human condition being a prison, opening at birth and closing at death – a Heideggerian life towards death. Society as a prison is also Orwell's mega-metaphor, although he was not influenced by existentialism. A demonic history had summed up the human plight plagued by totalitarian societies, wars and tortures as a walled in mode of existence. Lack of freedom was feared even more than loss of life.

We get precisely this picture in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Part One, Section 2), where there are no children but only monstrous military bodies of slaves supporting the anti-human system and suppressing innocence, family, love, education as Bildung, formation, individuation.

Humans are born to the Being Watched, Being Spied social condition through the suppression of the family. Winston's image of his being raised to the brim of a well while his mother and sister are sinking in the abyss is a metaphor of being born, but in the reverse. While giving birth multiplies the mother's body, here it is its sacrifice, its suppression that ushers the child into the surrogate family of Big Brother. Winston feels that his life had been bought at the cost of his kin and biological progenitors. Orwell allegorizes a political theory which in Arendt's words absolutizes the social dimension of being born. Partum from the mother's body does not lead into an indifferent environment. Birth is a process conditioned on the pre-existing patterns of social relationships and possibilities of acting with others:

This belief is so strongly ingrained in Orwell's mind, that it does not apply only to dystopic spaces. In his short story, "Shooting an Elephant," it is the man in command, the governor, that is bound to the law of the land. He will not do what he feels inclined to – to spare the elephant – but, instead, he behaves the way he knows he is expected to. Arendt coins a phrase, the "space of appearance", for the site on which freedom is restricted according to a system of power operating above the actants.

Arendt makes an interesting distinction between strength – which is detained by a person in isolation – and power "which springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse." Strength is a measurable personality trait or quality, whereas power is a potential for action that exists in between individuals. Both colonizers and the colonized in the story obey the law of what must be done. The social contract demands that the police officer in Burma should kill the elephant which has taken several lives, and the officer, although reluctant and in the position of power, has to meet with their expectations. It is the crowd of natives that makes the protagonist into a hunter. He is sent into a downward spiral of alienation from his true self and desires: "I had no intention of shooting the elephant – I had merely sent for the rifle to defend myself if necessary – and it is always unnerving to have a crowd following you. hill, looking and feeling a fool, with the rifle over my shoulder and an ever-growing army of people jostling at my heels, feeling a fool, with the rifle over my shoulder and an ever-growing army of people jostling at my heels."

Arendt's historical survey is a very enlightening one in respect to the changing equation of freedom and power. In pre-modern times, the rules of the household were established by the head of the family. In modern times, the family decayed and, with the rise of society, of social groups,

the equals and non-equals were distinguished among themselves through status, through title. The one-man, monarchical rule, has been replaced with no-man rule, while effective action has descended to behaviour: "social beings and unanimously followed certain patterns of behavior, so that those who did not keep the rules could be considered to be asocial or abnormal." (Arendt 1958, 42). One may choose freedom but at the expense of socially accepted normality, with state and government turned to pure administration.

The protagonist of "Shooting an Elephant" thinks of the scene in terms of deontic modality: what should/ ought to/ must be done, what will inevitably be done, what may be avoided, etc., and, although he is a police officer, the irony is that it is not he who enforces the obligations. Word density shows that the scene of shooting the elephant is more a matter of his perception (looking, watching) of the crowd's expectations of his actions rather than of his own act of will.

Is there no space for freedom in Orwell's simulation model of the modern world? In *Coming up for Air*, as well as in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell opines that it is proles who enjoy a sense of freedom, but only after work.

The full sense of freedom, according to Orwell, is only available in language. In "Politics and the English Language", the essayist establishes an analogy between the decayed states of both language and politics. It is in the individual use of a collective code that Orwell seeks salvation.

In the latter half of the twentieth century suppression of language has been equated with suppression of freedom. In *Writing and Difference* (1978), Jacques Derrida speaks about the necessity of an archeology of silence meant to uncover what the power system has excluded from language along history. Such an example was the prevalence of the discourse of reason in the eighteenth century which muted the language of madness.

Another example of exclusion from logos is the colonial discourse in whose "ambivalence" Homi Bhabha identifies the strategy of avoiding what is politically inconvenient.

Under dictatorship, reality is always present only metonymically, fragmented, with truth erased under a superimposed fiction woven by the ideological apparatus of the rulers. Orwell's genius anticipated these philosophers of language practicing deconstruction and New Historicism. Whether in fiction (the Newspeak in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*) or in his essays on language, Orwell unraveled the manipulation of language as ideological operator. Beautifying reality was intended to fool the citizens, but sometimes the perpetrators themselves felt the need to suppress the gruesome facts of their doing. In his essay, "Politics and the English Language," Orwell defines his time as that which has become *innommable* impossible to be put into words. The language of his time did no longer signify or refer; it was paraphrase, hiding the truth *inter dicta,* silencing it altogether,

altering it in ambivalent discourse. Equations of unequal value are cast into deceiving phrases, such as:

People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot   =   *elimination of unreliable*
 in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in   *elements*
Arctic lumber camps

George Orwell, Evelyn Waugh or Graham Greene were critical of the modernists' aloofness from reality and history (although recent revaluations have proved the contrary), but they shared in their belief in language as the supreme ontological order. Orwell found an analogy between the decay in the use of language – conventional, emptied out of meaning – and the decay of the political order. An improvement in language could bring about a change for the better in the historical world. The meliorist project could, therefore, start "at the verbal end."

CONCLUSIONS

Our study of freedom in relation to history set out from the conviction that they should be put in equation. Freedom has changed its meaning along history depending precisely on the changing nature of power relationships.

By providing a paradigm of the asymmetrical power relationships culminating in old despotism, totalitarianism and new despotism which leaves behind the gruesome reality of Stalin's purges, Orwell may be said to have confronted the Sphinx of absolutist power and provided the requested questions.

We have focused on Orwell's intuitions of paradoxical aspects of the will to power which he was probably the first to grasp and expose.

Dystopia is probably the genre which has proved to be the most sensitive to changes within society and to the shifting priorities history deploys before humanity. Born in the late nineteenth century in the gloomy atmosphere created by theories of entropy and degeneration, the new genre was perceived as similar to science fiction through its focus on the threats posed by the technological and scientific revolution which seemed to generate alienation and alteration of man's mode of existence. The totalitarian societies made what had seemed to be the fantasies of mad scientists into a daily nightmare shared by the whole society.

Remarkable is also the depth of Orwell's understanding of the hidden similarity between the master and subject positions in the colonial world after the emergence of the modern world when a

common space of anonymous norms is shared by both. As Foucault has remarked, power is now nowhere and everywhere.

Original and insightful is also the remark that the exclusion from language, the archiving strategy, or paraphrasing do not serve only the deception of the masses but also the need of those in power to remove from language the mirror of the gruesome acts they perpetrate.

In "The Persecutory Civilization" (2024), Jeremy Adler provides an in-depth sociological and historical analysis of how persecution has been a central, recurring mechanism in Western civilization for over two thousand years. What better way is there to make sure a persecutory society is replaced with the state of individual rights (freedom for each individual, not just for the majority, as in bourgeois democracies) than the creation of conditions for a participatory democracy? Shaping free thinking individuals from their formative age, inviting the young ones to open their minds and say what they expect from the world they have been born into? Our survey has been intended, not as what Louis Althusser calls "interpellation" – the state's intrusive appeal to citizens to assume prescribed ideological positions – but as an instrument in a student-centred programme of education.

Following in the footsteps of Adler, we have built our argument persuaded that the study of dystopia is relevant, as it either remedies social wrongs or prevents them. The future belongs to those who, by understanding the shortcomings of contemporary society, can avert a slide into a dystopian reality, as has happened to humanity countless times throughout history.

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