THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL IDENTITY IN THE "1984" NOVEL

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Abstract: *The main focus of this article is the hazards and fallout from authoritarianism. And George Orwell's book "1984" will serve as an example for us as we discuss this subject. The article looks at particular facets of social life and development in humans.*

Key words: *nationalism, Oceanians, Stalinism, control, totalitarianism, reintegration, patriotism, middle and upper classes*

With the arrival of modernity and the scientific method, but most importantly, the twentieth century and the First and Second World Wars, anti- utopian and dystopian fiction became more prominent within the utopian genre. Anti-utopia differs from dystopia in that the former presents a similarly utopian society with terrible consequences, thus criticizing the utopian ideal, while the latter describes the worse society altogether. The best-known works of this subgenre were published during the first half of the twentieth century and expressed a criticism of modernity and the dehumanization of society, in Huxley's Brave New World, and of totalitarian regimes and vertical collectivism, in Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four.

After the golden age of capitalism and simultaneous recovery from World War II, a period of relative calm, the genre was revived in the 1970s with the emergence of new feminist utopias and postcolonial utopianism, and in the 1980s with the dystopias informed by changing socioeconomic circumstances and a sense of desperation; these trends allowed for the emergence of activism based on the criticism that informed these novels[1]

Nationalism

Nineteen Eighty-Four expands upon the subjects summarized in Orwell's essay "Notes on Nationalism" about the lack of vocabulary needed to explain the unrecognized phenomena behind certain political forces. In Nineteen Eighty-Four, the Party's artificial, minimalist language 'Newspeak' addresses the matter.

•   Positive nationalism: For instance, Oceanians' perpetual love for Big Brother. Orwell argues in the essay that ideologies such as Neo-Toryism and Celtic nationalism are defined by their obsessive sense of loyalty to some entity.

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[1] Baccolini and Tom Moylan, Routledge, 2003, pp. 1–12

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•   Negative nationalism: For instance, Oceanians' perpetual hatred for Emmanuel Goldstein. Orwell argues in the essay that ideologies such as Trotskyism and Antisemitism are defined by their obsessive hatred of some entity.

•   Transferred nationalism: For instance, when Oceania's enemy changes, an orator makes a change mid-sentence, and the crowd instantly transfers its hatred to the new enemy. Orwell argues that ideologies such as Stalinism and redirected feelings of racial animus and class superiority among wealthy intellectuals exemplify this. Transferred nationalism swiftly redirects emotions from one power unit to another. In the novel, it happens during Hate Week, a Party rally against the original enemy. The crowd goes wild and destroys the posters that are now against their new friend, and many say that they must be the act of an agent of their new enemy and former friend. Many of the crowd must have put up the posters before the rally but think that the state of affairs had always been the case.

O'Brien concludes: "The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power."[2]

There will be no curiosity, no enjoyment of the process of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed. But always—do not forget this, Winston—always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is helpless. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever.

One of the most notable themes in Nineteen Eighty-Four is censorship, especially in the Ministry of Truth, where photographs and public archives are manipulated to rid them of "unpersons" (people who have been erased from history by the Party). On the telescreens, almost all figures of production are grossly exaggerated or simply fabricated to indicate an ever-growing economy, even during times when the reality is the opposite. One small example of the endless censorship is Winston being charged with the task of eliminating a reference to an unperson in a newspaper course paper. He also proceeds to write a course paper about Comrade Ogilvy, a made-up party member who allegedly "displayed great heroism by leaping into the sea from a helicopter so that the dispatches he was carrying would not fall into enemy hands." [3]

Surveillance

In Oceania, the upper and middle classes have very little true privacy. All of their houses and apartments are equipped with 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

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[2] O'Brien, "1984", 1949, page 173
[3] Comrade Ogilvy, "1984", 1949, page 180-182

denounce their parents. Citizens are controlled, and the smallest sign of rebellion, even something as small as a suspicious facial expression, can result in immediate arrest and imprisonment. Thus, citizens are compelled to obedience.

According to Goldstein's book, almost the entire world lives in poverty; hunger, thirst, disease, and filth are the norms. Ruined cities and towns are common: the consequence of perpetual wars and extreme economic inefficiency. Social decay and wrecked buildings surround Winston; aside from the ministries' headquarters, little of London was rebuilt. Middle class citizens and proles consume synthetic foodstuffs and poor-quality "luxuries" such as oily gin and loosely-packed cigarettes, distributed under the "Victory" brand, a parody of the low-quality Indian-made "Victory" cigarettes, which British soldiers commonly smoked during World War II.

Winston describes something as simple as the repair of a broken window as requiring committee approval that can take several years and so most of those living in one of the blocks usually do the repairs themselves (Winston himself is called in by Mrs. Parsons to repair her blocked sink). All upper-class and middle-class residences include telescreens that serve both as outlets for propaganda and surveillance devices that allow the Thought Police to monitor them; they can be turned down, but the ones in middle-class residences cannot be turned off.

In contrast to their subordinates, the upper class of Oceanian society reside in clean and comfortable flats in their own quarters, with pantries well-stocked with foodstuffs such as wine, real coffee, real tea, real milk, and real sugar, all denied to the general populace. Winston is astonished that the lifts in O'Brien's building work, the telescreens can be completely turned off, and O'Brien has an Asian manservant, Martin. All upper classes citizens are attended to by slaves captured in the "disputed zone", and "The Book" suggests that many have their own cars or even helicopters.

However, despite their insulation and overt privileges, the upper class are still not exempt from the government's brutal restriction of thought and behaviour, even while lies and propaganda apparently originate from their own ranks. Instead, the Oceanian government offers the upper class their "luxuries" in exchange for them maintaining their loyalty to the state; non-conformant upper-class citizens can still be condemned, tortured, and executed just like any other individual. "The Book" makes clear that the upper class' living conditions are only "relatively" comfortable, and would be regarded as "austere" by those of the pre-revolutionary élite.

The proles live in poverty and are kept sedated with pornography, a national lottery whose winnings are rarely paid out, which fact is obscured by propaganda and the lack of communication within Oceania, and gin, "which the proles were not supposed to drink"[4] At the same time, the proles are freer and less intimidated than the upper classes:

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[4] Lines 29–35, p. 229, part II, chapter X, of the Penguin paperback edition of 1984: "The proles were immortal, you could not doubt it when you looked at that valiant figure in the yard. In the end their awakening would come. And until that happened, though it might be a thousand years, they would stay alive against all the odds, like birds, passing on from body to body the vitality which the Party did not share and could not kill".

they are not expected to be particularly patriotic and the levels of surveillance that they are subjected to are very low. They lack telescreens in their own homes and often jeer at the telescreens that they see. "The Book" indicates that because the middle class, not the lower class, traditionally starts revolutions, the model demands tight control of the middle class, with ambitious Outer-Party members neutralised via promotion to the Inner Party or "reintegration" by the Ministry of Love, and proles can be allowed intellectual freedom because they are deemed to lack intellect. Winston nonetheless believes that "the future belonged to the proles"[5]

The military technology in the novel differs little from that of World War II, but strategic bomber aeroplanes are replaced with rocket bombs, helicopters were heavily used as weapons of war (they were very minor in World War II) and surface combat units have been all but replaced by immense and unsinkable Floating Fortresses (island-like contraptions concentrating the firepower of a whole naval task force in a single, semi-mobile platform; in the novel, one is said to have been anchored between Iceland and the Faroe Islands, suggesting a preference for sea lane interdiction and denial).[6]

Conclusion

In the end, many may not view the ending of 1984 as positive, as the main character, Winston Smith, is subjected to intense psychological torture and ultimately becomes a loyal member of the Party, renouncing his rebellious thoughts and actions. However, others might interpret the ending as positive because Winston ultimately achieves a level of inner peace and acceptance of the Party's ideology. One possible interpretation is that Winston's final acceptance of the Party and its ideology represents a kind of victory for the Party, as it has successfully broken his spirit and made him a loyal member. From this perspective, the ending could be seen as positive in the sense that the Party has achieved its goal of total control over Winston's thoughts and actions.

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[5] https://prezi.com/8u5i33zrelg3/the-future-belonged-to-the-proleswhere-there-is-equalit/

[6] Collins, Suzanne. *Catching Fire*. Scholastic, 2009

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