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**THE FUNCTIONS OF THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IN *NINETEEN-
EIGHTY FOUR*: A LOOK INTO THE THREE-PART NOVEL AND ITS
RELATION TO THE AUTHOR'S WARNING MESSAGE**

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ABSTRACT

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The present extended paper is situated in the field of Literature, and aims to demonstrate the parallels between the content of each of the three parts of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and each one of the Party's slogans. The analysis will be conducted through the use of Christopher Hitchens' *Why Orwell Matters* (2002), a significant criticism on Orwell's career as both a fiction writer and an essayist, and will also be supported by Barthes' essay *The Death of the Author* (1967).

Keywords: George Orwell. Narratology. Roland Barthes. English Literature. Narrative Structure. Christopher Hitchens.

RESUMO

O presente trabalho se insere na área literária e tem por objetivo demonstrar a inter-relação entre o conteúdo de cada uma das três partes da obra *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) de George Orwell e cada um dos slogans do Partido. A análise será conduzida por meio do uso de Christopher Hitchens, com sua obra *Why Orwell Matters* (2002), acerca da carreira de Orwell tanto como escritor de ficção como ensaísta, e de Roland Barthes com o ensaio *The Death of the Author* (1967).

Palavras-chave: George Orwell. Narratologia. Roland Barthes. Literatura Inglesa. Estrutura Narrativa. Christopher Hitchens.

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1 CONTEXTUALIZATION

The 20th century started with many technological advances and improvements in people's lives, inventions such as the telephone and the advent of electricity. However, it also hosted World War I (1914-1918), a period in which millions were killed and which did not solve Europe's land and ethnic issues. Many writers in early 20th century like Ernest Hemingway, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien witnessed the horror brought up by wartime, and wrote about the pitiful condition in which humanity was found at the time in poems and novels.

In the political arena, the Russian Revolution of 1917 deposed the imperial autocracy known as "Czarism" (from the 17th to the early 20th century) and gave birth to the Communist Party, a political party heavily influenced by *The Communist Manifesto*¹ (1848), written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Thus, the Soviet Union began its development as a real world experiment of the theoretical work of Marxism². Although Marx and Engels' idealistic manuscript meant, at least theoretically, that a perfect society was possible, in reality it granted ways the government to control people's lives through the use of a strong political ideology while also keeping them from rioting against the Communist Party.

While on the one hand Marx's ideas in the field of economics and philosophy are highly acknowledged, on the other they were misused and suffered distortions³ from the communist regimes across the world. Still, it remains a landmark in some fields of study, as well as a powerful bibliographical corpus.

In Literature a lot of changes happened in the beginning of the last century as a consequence of variables such as the aforementioned⁴ political theory by Marx; the significant rise of capitalism in the west; deep social changes caused by WWI; the emergence of the

¹ "The *Communist Manifesto* proclaims that the history of all society hitherto has been the history of class struggles in which classes defined by economic relations of production come into conflict and either reconstitute society through revolution or destroy one another. In the age of capitalism, the struggle is one between the bourgeoisie, which owns the means of production, and the proletariat, which has nothing but the labour-power it is forced to sell in order to survive." (MACEY, 2001, p.242)

² "The body of thought associated with and inspired by the works of Karl Marx (1818-83) and Friedrich Engels (1820-95), comprising a system of political economy, a theory of politics and a materialist philosophy of history and nature." (MACEY, 1992, p.240).

³ In the sense of being regarded, by scholars, with caution instead of confidence, as it helped in the making of ideologies that led to many atrocities against millions of citizens in many countries.

⁴ Because it counterbalanced capitalism as a theory focused on social rather than in the economic issues.

Modernist movement in Europe. Because lives, social relations, and work relations were rapidly mutating and evolving at the time, writers have gotten overwhelmed by the amount of both information and Literary ideas that came to them in some way or another. Experimentation and freedom of form was imperative in Literature. Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) is one of the ground breaking works, along with Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), and Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1913-1927), among others.

George Orwell, the author of the novel analyzed in this paper, lived in a sort of literary limbo. He did not really fit into modernism, especially because of his resistance to break, change and experiment with form. In his essay *Why I Write*, he numbers four great motives for writing prose: sheer egoism, aesthetic enthusiasm, historical impulse, and political purpose (1981, p.312-313). That being said, his aesthetic pleasure is without a doubt a deviation from the relative liberty of form proposed by the modernists, and his historical and political writings were also affected by his strict rules regarding structure.

2 CRITICISM BY ORWELL IN 1984

Amidst all this turmoil and conflicts, Eric Arthur Blair, whom later adopted the pseudonym of George Orwell, was born in Motihari, India. He grew up at a time of major political and social changes in Europe, with the double mass massacre of the two world wars, along with many political, social and economic changes that had taken place in the first half of the 20th century. Orwell had quite a hard time in his youth, as he often got beaten and humiliated, so he later criticized the school system as a whole⁵. He worked for the Indian Imperial Police in Burma for five years, a job that gave him some knowledge on how oppression works in society⁶, and which also caused a critical change in his life, as a consequence of witnessing the horrors of the British Imperialism.

Later, he went to Spain and watched Fascism working at full scale. Since he was a very conscious critic, he could see through the ideals of totalitarianism, perceiving all the dominance, terror, and manipulation employed by fascists and communists altogether. His experience in Spain was so revealing and his principles were so disturbed, that he felt compelled to write a message in form of fiction, as he stated in his essay *Why I Write* (2004), first published in 1946. As a result, his masterpiece, the dystopian⁷ novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*⁸, took form and was published in 1949. In this work, Orwell presents the dangers any society may face when governed by totalitarian or dictatorial states. His book conveys a political message stating the power of the language as a tool towards complete domination of the masses.

⁵ This can be seen in his essay *Such, Such Were The Joys*.

⁶ “In *Burmese Days*, his first novel, Orwell lays the philosophical foundation for all of his later writing. Although fictional, and ostensibly confined to a particular time and place, the British colonial service in which he had worked, Orwell uses the experiences of a minor functionary in a colonial administration to broadly expose the cruel and tragic circumstances and outcomes of a society based on fear and domination by a minority “ruling class” in the service of the group and at the expense of all individuals, both the rulers and the ruled” (BURMESE..., 2013)

⁷ According to Holman and Harmon, the term dystopia can be applied “to accounts of imaginary worlds, usually in the future, in which present tendencies are carried out to their intensely unpleasant culminations” (1992, apud PASOLD, 1999, p.52)

⁸ Hitchens presents an interesting opinion regarding the significance of the book: “*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the only English contribution to the literature of twentieth century totalitarianism, (...). It is a summa of what Orwell learned about terror and conformism in Spain, what he learned about servility and sadism at school and in the Burma police, what he discovered about the squalor and degradation in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, what he learned about propaganda and falsity in decades of polemical battles. It contains absolutely no jokes. It is the first and only time that his efforts as a novelist rise to the level of his essays. (2002, p.157)

The novel tells the story of Winston Smith, a clerk in the Records Department at the *Minitrue*⁹. This ministry is one of the four ministries, along with *Miniluv* (Ministry of Love), *Minipax* (Ministry of Peace) and *Miniplenty* (Ministry of Plenty), and they are all ruled by one sole political organization: the Party. The novel portrays life in a totalitarian state that goes by the name of Oceania, with Big Brother as the “leader” (a dictator in reality) of the government. Through the course of the story, Winston develops some doubts as whether the monopoly of truth maintained by the Party is what it seems to be. As the novel progresses, so do his doubts. Later he meets Julia, a member of the Outer Party, with whom he has an intense romance (utterly forbidden by the Party), which later gives place to tragedy when they are both caught by the Party and thrown away in a room called 101 inside the *Miniluv*. There, Winston is thoroughly tortured until he has his emotions totally obliterated, thus becoming a true follower of the Party, ending the narrative.

The book is divided in three parts, each representing, through the events in the plot, one of the three slogans of the Party. This organization seems to serve Orwell’s political purpose in showing that once you get ruled by totalitarianism, there is no turning back, as one can see through many stories of torture and genocide along the path of the former USSR, as well as a great constrain of people’s freedom.

This project proposes to analyze how the narrative structure and organization of the novel works as a device to highlight the alarming message the author propagated. The aim is to examine the organization of the novel, relating each one of the the three slogans to each one of the three parts, while also commenting on consequences of language control, which is an important matter in *1984*.

⁹ Minitrue is Orwell’s manipulation of language, from which he creates the Newspeak language to enhance his positions about linguistic control. It actually means Ministry of Truth.

3 HITCHENS, BARTHES AND EAGLETON: A BALANCED APPROACH

The core of this study is composed mainly by Christopher Hitchens, with his work on Orwell's importance as a writer; by Roland Barthes with his theory on authorship; and by Terry Eagleton, who brings a research on Literary Theory and a useful criticism on the link between Literature and Politics.

The first and most important name here is Christopher Hitchens, a regarded critic of Orwell's work. He published *Why Orwell Matters* in 2002, just before the centenary of the writer's birth, and the book remains one of the most comprehensive and accepted account on the life and career of the British journalist/writer. Hitchens goes into history and facts to present examples of Orwell's actions, words and writings, to prove his points and thus reinforce the importance of Orwell in both his time and today's complex situation.

Hitchens states that the British writer did a lot of experimentation through his dense career as a journalist, which provided him with many opportunities to see things for himself. In *Why Orwell Matters*, Hitchens comments on the relevance of Orwell's works:

Orwell was perhaps the first among the intellectuals to show interest in the recreational aspects of mass literacy and the age of mass production. In his landmark essay 'Boys Weeklies' he not only made some shrewd points about the manipulation of taste by the press barons but also guessed - correctly as it turned out - that the output of 'Frank Richards', creator of Billy Bunter, was too vast and too homogenized to be the work of one man. (The soft porn for the proles, written by semi-automated machinery, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* owes something to this insight.) His study of vulgar seaside postcards and their relationship to music-hall humor discovered and artist and draughtsman in Donald McGill. He proposed writing a study of women's weekly magazines which he may or not have produced; it is sad to think of it being lost, possibly when his Islington home was blitzed in 1944. He monitored the rise of the ethnic joke, noticing that its targets fluctuated with political developments and registering the subtle distinction between jests at the expense of Jews and those which were at the expense of Scotsmen. As a cinema critic he developed a sharp eye for the increasing influence of American marketing techniques on British habits and manners, as well as on British culture in general. It would not be too much to say that he pioneered 'cultural studies' without giving the subject a name. (He might have preferred to say that the proper study of mankind is man.) Post-colonial studies owes something to Orwell also, which is why it is depressing, and I hope not significant, to find Edward Said, as well as Raymond Williams, treating him with such an apparent lack of generosity. (HITCHENS, 2002, p.54)¹⁰

¹⁰ From now on, most of the quotations will be long ones. This is due to the significance of showing the whole chain of thought expressed by Hitchens and Orwell. The latter usually is very detailed on his explanations, so it is necessary to present these details in order to understand the whole idea behind them.

The citation shows the many facets of Orwell's political engagement and social criticism. Therefore, the author remains as one of the most politically active writers of his time, as his particular combination of journalism essays and political novels entitled him such a place in society.

The second author to appear in this work is Roland Barthes, with his essay *The Death of the Author*, which will contribute to Orwell's treatment of language, in the sense that the essay may help detaching *1984*'s author from his political engagement, thus taking in consideration the text itself, rather than the influence of politics in the writer's life are going to appear in some points of the analysis, since he is only a support for Hitchens.

The last name is Terry Eagleton, whose *Literary Theory: An Introduction* is well known for its historical account of the evolution of Literary Theories. His contribution, because of the limited scope of this paper, is going to be a minor but concise one, focused on the author's comments on Literature and politics. This is the reason why it seems necessary to include him in the study, given that Orwell frequently combined political views and literary writings.

4 WAR IS PEACE - DOUBLETHINK AND WINSTON'S TROUBLES

It is necessary to open this section by explaining the concept of doublethink¹¹ to move forward, as it is inextricably connected not only to this slogan but to all three of them. The narrator of the novel gives a complete explanation of doublethink, which is:

[...] the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them. The Party intellectual knows in which direction his memories must be altered; he therefore knows that he is playing tricks with reality; but by the exercise of *doublethink* he also satisfies himself that reality is not violated. The process has to be conscious, or it would not be carried out with sufficient precision, but it also has to be unconscious, or it would bring with it a feeling of falsity and hence of guilt. *Doublethink* lies at the very heart of Ingsoc, since the essential act of the Party is to use conscious deception while retaining the firmness of purpose that goes with complete honesty. To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies - all this is indispensably necessary. Even in using the word *doublethink* it is necessary to exercise *doublethink*. (ORWELL, 2003, p.309)

Thus, it can be said that doublethink is not a traditional paradox, but one that does not really contradict the order of things because it has its own logical system to lead individuals to a state of profound unconsciousness and superficiality. This is one way to control language, which in turn leads to psychological domination of the society in *1984*. Another linguistic device designed for maintaining control over people is the slogan, characterized by a short but powerful phrase or political motto. The three slogans that appear in the novel, *War is Peace*, *Freedom is Slavery* and *Ignorance is Strength*, are going to be analyzed through textual examples and the theories mentioned in the previous chapter.

The first slogan - War is Peace - contains a clear message in the form of a logical paradox and uncertainty spread by the ominous Party. It states that war and peace are the same thing, while in fact they are usually regarded opposites. The never-ending war between the three superpowers of the novel's world¹² is the excuse for the Party to make society believe that although living conditions are austere, the country is producing more, improving standards of living and convincing people to sing war songs and shout swear words at the enemy.

¹¹ Which is base of Newspeak language in *1984*.

¹² Oceania, Eastasia and Eurasia.

Here is a passage that clearly demonstrates how the slogan works:

The war is waged by each ruling group against its own subjects, and the object of war is not to make or prevent conquests of territory, but to keep the structure of society intact. The very word “war”, therefore, has become misleading. It would probably be accurate to say that by becoming continuous war has ceased to exist. The peculiar pressure that it exerted on human beings between the Neolithic Age and the early twentieth century has disappeared and been replaced by something quite different. The effect would be much the same of the three superstates, instead of fighting one another, should agree to live in perpetual peace, each inviolate within its own boundaries. For in that case each would be a self-contained universe, freed forever from the sobering influence of external danger. A peace that was truly permanent would be the same as a permanent war. This - although the vast majority of Party members understand it only in a shallower sense - is the inner meaning of the Party slogan: WAR IS PEACE. (ORWELL, 2003, p.292-293)

The excerpt above thoroughly exposes the inner meaning of the slogan: war and peace are the same thing if there is either a permanent peace or war, and that is how Orwell takes out the contradiction from this otherwise paradoxical relationship. The issue with the slogan, however, is that the Party employs it in a very repressive manner, using fear, hatred and alertness to keep society in check.

The first part of the novel is closely related to the first slogan in a sometimes subtle manner, because of the subtlety of the narrator, who leaves some of the facts for the readers to infer and thus fill with their interpretations. There are not many war scenes in which *War is Peace* can be directly observed, however, there is an atmosphere of constant fear of being killed and suspicion over everything and everyone.

The following extract illustrates one more aspect of the slogan in everyday life in London:

“The voice from the telescreen paused. A trumpet call, clear and beautiful, floated into the stagnant air. The voice continued raspingly:

‘Attention! Your attention, please! A newsflash has this moment arrived from the Malabar front. Our forces in South India have won a glorious victory. I am authorized to say that the action we are now reporting may well bring the war within measurable distance of its end. Here is the newsflash —’

Bad news coming, thought Winston. And sure enough, following on a gory description of the annihilation of a Eurasian army, with stupendous figures of killed and

prisoners, came the announcement that, as from next week, the chocolate ration would be reduced from thirty grams to twenty.

Winston belched again. The gin was wearing off, leaving a deflated feeling. The telescreen — perhaps to celebrate the victory, perhaps to drown the memory of the lost chocolate — crashed into ‘Oceania, ’tis for thee’. You were supposed to stand to attention. However, in the present position he was invisible.

‘Oceania, ’tis for thee’ gave way to lighter music. Winston walked over to the window, keeping his back to the telescreen. The day was still cold and clear. Somewhere far away a rocket bomb exploded with a dull, reverberating roar. About twenty or thirty of them a week were falling on London at present.” (ORWELL, 2003, p.128-129)

Winston, as with everyone else in Oceania, is repeatedly influenced by war reports and, consequently, changes in ration, for example, come up as a result, which can be positive or negative depending on the news from the fronts. Those reports are intended to strengthen the Party’s bond with the collective society, so that they do not get “distracted” from their purpose of fueling the war with their support. This has a connection with the colonization that was still happening in the first part of last century in the world. India, where Orwell was born, became independent of the British Empire in 1947¹³, after two hundred years as a colony. The author engaged himself in writing essays about his views and experiences in both India and Burma (another nation under British ruling). Hitchens praised Orwell’s attitude towards colonialism by saying that:

It might not be too much to say that the clarity and courage of Orwell’s prose, which made him so readily translatable for Poles and Ukrainians, also played a part in making English a non-imperial lingua franca. In any event, his writings on colonialism are an indissoluble part of his lifelong engagement with the subjects of power and cruelty and force, and the crude yet subtle relationship between the dominator and the dominated. (HITCHENS, 2002, p.35)

In the novel, although Oceania is a superstate, people’s lives are comparable to that of most colonies under British, Portuguese and French rule, which usually means widespread poverty and limited civil rights. *War is Peace* promotes a way for the Party (dominator) to unceasingly undermine the individual’s freedom and power of thinking, as the

¹³ According to the British Library website. (<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelpregion/asia/india/indianindependence/>)

slogan intensively applies its somewhat paradoxical message. The excerpt points out the contradiction represented by Winston drinking gin calmly at home while a rocket bomb explodes far away, which is not a normal behavior during wartime. Usually people hide in safe places in order to survive the bombings, but Winston would listen to the bomb as if he was hearing an ordinary sound, not a fearful one as it is the case, and that indicates the normality provided by the never-ending war, since society had already gotten used to such situations that they did not react to it.

Such a mechanized attitude like that of the main character, may help the comprehension of the already mentioned underlying concepts of the seemingly illogical ideas posed by the Party's catchphrase. Therefore, through the use of well thought linguistic structures and a good deal of political propaganda, the Party can maintain its position at the top of the social pyramid by continuously manipulating people's minds. Orwell said something concerning this in his essay *Looking Back on the Spanish War*:

A British and a German historian would disagree deeply on many things, even on fundamentals, but there would still be that body of, as it were, neutral fact on which neither would seriously challenge the other. It is just this common basis of agreement, with its implication that human beings are all one species of animal, that totalitarianism destroys. Nazi theory indeed specifically denies that such thing as "the truth" exists. There is, for instance, no such thing as "Science". There is only 'German Science', Jewish Science', etc. The implied objective of this line of thought is a nightmare world in which the Leader, or some ruling clique, controls not only the future but *the past*. If the Leader says of such and such an event, 'It never happened' — well, it never happened. If he says that two and two are five — well, two and two are five. (ORWELL, 1981, p.224)

His statement validates the idea that the Party's grasp of the human consciousness by creating well-made mottos is a strong tool in changing lies into truths according to the government's goals. The comment about controlling the past as well as the future holds true when applied to the Party's influence over society, because when the first announces that two plus two are five, the latter has no choice but to believe it, since everything and everyone is under a tight mental manipulation.

Proceeding with the study, another excerpt from *1984* seems to work like a complement to the first one, as it offers another situation with respect to the pair war/peace discussed here:

“Suddenly the whole street was in commotion. There were yells of warning from all sides. People were shooting into the doorways like rabbits. A young woman leapt out of a doorway a little ahead of Winston, grabbed up a tiny child playing in a puddle, whipped her apron round it, and leapt back again, all in one movement. At the same instant a man in a concertina-like black suit, who had emerged from a side alley, ran toward Winston, pointing excitedly to the sky.

‘Steamer!’ he yelled. ‘Look out guv’nor! Bang over ’ead! Lay down quick!’

‘Steamer’ was a nickname which, for some reason, the proles applied to rocket bombs. Winston promptly flung himself on his face. The proles were nearly always right when they gave a warning of this kind. They seemed to possess some kind of instinct which told them several seconds in advance when a rocket was coming, although the rockets supposedly traveled faster than sound. Winston clasped his forearms about his head. There was a roar that seemed to make the pavement heave; a shower of light objects pattered onto his back. When he stood up he found that he was covered with fragments of glass from the nearest window.

He walked on. The bomb had demolished a group of houses two hundred meters up the street. A black plume of smoke hung in the sky, and below it a cloud of plaster dust in which a crowd was already forming round the ruins. There was a little pile of plaster lying on the pavement ahead of him, and in the middle of it he could see a bright red streak. When he got up to it he saw that it was a human hand severed at the wrist. Apart from the bloody stump, the hand was so completely whitened as to resemble a plaster cast.

He kicked the things into the gutter, and then, to avoid the crowd, turned down a side street to the right. Within three or four minutes he was out of the area which the bomb had affected, and the sordid swarming life of the streets was going on as though nothing had happened.” (ORWELL, 2003, p.183-184)

Winston finds himself wandering through the poor neighborhoods of the proles, and is surprised by the explosion of a rocket bomb nearby. In a country ruled by war, being caught by surprise by a bomb is common. Yet, it seems displaced when one starts questioning why

the bomb was treated as if it were not there¹⁴. How could life return to normal in such a short time, and how could Winston not be terrified by almost being hit by the explosive? The answer to these questions is quite simple: his (Winston's) mind is conditioned to a state of non-reaction in this kind of situation, while the proles, who were not politically or intellectually concerned about the neither ongoing war, nor the bombs and missiles, as they are a marginalized group whose interests are not even considered by the Party¹⁵.

Again, the ubiquitous presence of the doublethink-based slogan is marking an episode of Winston's daily life in the first part of the book. Even though this part is not all about the slogan's meaning, it has been clear, up to this point of the paper, that there are events throughout the chapters in this part which convey the idea of the motto *War is Peace*. So, the overall atmosphere of this part of the novel is close to wartime conditions, with bombings, surveillance, control over the media, political propaganda, and patriotic songs. All this apparatus seems to serve the sole purpose of controlling through fear, and one does not even know if the war is real or not, as the narrator states:

In some ways she was far more acute than Winston, and far less susceptible to Party propaganda. Once when he happened to in some connection to mention the war against Eurasia, she startled him by saying casually that in her opinion the war was not happening. The rocket bombs which fell daily on London were probably fired by the Government of Oceania itself, 'just to keep people frightened'. (ORWELL, 2003, p.249)

Back at the passage, Winston's wandering far from his neighborhood could be quite risky, considering the extensive network of the surveillance apparatus¹⁶. The point being that he very much restrained in his movements and in constant fear of death resulting from the seemingly endless war. The extract also deals with Winston's needs towards a relative freedom. His stray from his home's way to the proletarian quarter shows this inner struggle within his mind: he cannot avoid doing his obligations to the Party, and yet, he strives for liberty. This is a consequence of the psychological warfare to which one is subjected in order

¹⁴ The character's lack of reaction indicates his mental state of unawareness regarding the danger posed by the bomb. His worries are so directed towards not being caught by the Thought Police in an unwelcoming neighborhood, that he does not react against the physical threat of the bomb.

¹⁵ They were physically concerned, meaning they cared for their own safety and well being.

¹⁶ He was always afraid of being caught by the Thought Police while wandering far from his usual path.

to become loyal to Big Brother, the uninterrupted brainwashing brought by *War is Peace* in its deepest implication: turning one's mind into a living machine.

It is somewhat frightening to realize that more than half a century ago Orwell already had a good picture of how a totalitarian state works¹⁷. This acute perception of the British writer in grasping subtle, and oftentimes concealed meanings, is one of the reasons why Hitchens named his book after Orwell, as, after all, the latter was intensely affected by his experience in Spain, as it follows:

But the transcendent of crystallizing moment undoubtedly occurred in Spain, or at any rate in Catalonia. This was where Orwell suffered the premonitory pangs of a man living under a police regime: a police regime ruling in the name of socialism and the people. For a Westerner, at least, this epiphany was a relatively novel thing; it brushed the sleeves of many thoughtful and humane people, who barely allowed it to interrupt their preoccupation with the 'main enemy', fascism. But on Orwell it made a permanent impression. (HITCHENS, 2002, p.52)

The writer was so profoundly impacted by his vivid experience in the Spanish Civil War, that later he stated that since 1936, everything he wrote, may it be in a direct or an indirect way, was for democratic socialism and against totalitarianism (ORWELL, 1981, p. 351). Despite being a dystopia, *1984* could be considered an utopia in the hypothetical situation of being implemented exactly as the novel presents, in the sense that the way power is used in the book goes beyond human capacity, so it does not seem possible, thus utopian, to possess power for such an ultimate and endless control over society, as the men at the top would live their whole lives only working almost non-stop to maintain it¹⁸. On the other hand, being able to accomplish such an ambitious political goal¹⁹ could by itself become utopian, because an enterprise like this requires skilled politicians, an effective police, and also depends on external variables.

The point of discussing about dystopia and utopia, is that although the book is considered as dystopian literature, it could also be seen as utopian, in the sense of being a plan so complex that achieving it is almost unthinkable. When seen through this view, the novel

¹⁷ In *1984* the form of totalitarianism present is a good example of such a government, although it is exaggerated and fictional.

¹⁸ This happens in the fictional world of the novel.

¹⁹ The goal of total control over society.

itself may be regarded as another experience of *doublethink*²⁰, and serves as another support to this paper's thesis²¹.

Throughout human history, many nations gave the famous excuse that “We fight for a peaceful world”, but does that not seem contradictory? On the contrary, it is very logical in the light of *doublethink*, which is why contradiction does not affect the population's comprehension of the previously mentioned phrase. Thereby, having to kill so many (even the innocent) for a supposed peace does not deviate from one of the slogans Orwell created for his pessimist novel²². So, the painful and terrifying story of the book is not that far from reality, it is just under a more exaggerated context, meaning that *1984*'s society is ruled by an army of telescreens and a handful of Inner Party members who concern themselves solely with Outer Party members' lives, by dedicating the greatest part of their time to stake out the ordinary members, like a loop intended to keep the power of the Party in an eternal state of perpetuation, which is made possible through the maintenance of the hierarchical structure within the Party (ORWELL, 2003, p.304) .

²⁰ Although the story is set in a dark, poor, and almost hopeless world, which leads to dystopia, the Party's objective of keeping every aspect of life under its dominance throughout an endless cycle can be interpreted as utopian, given the pretty unreachable nature of this kind of target.

²¹ Every kind of exercise of *doublethink* is useful for this paper because it helps in the understanding of how otherwise paradoxical ideas can be put together logically, which is the case of the slogans.

²² Because in real life, killing for peace, in the way many governments employ, is usually very close to using *doublethink*. This is one example, out of many, of the danger of “playing” with language to manipulate people, as one can analogically conclude that anything close to *doublethink* should be faced carefully.

5 FREEDOM IS SLAVERY - LOVE AND CONTRADICTIONS WITH THE PARTY

This chapter is entitled after the second slogan presented in the story. In this part, the tone of the narrative is still dark, dry, and sour, (the fear is always present and the war goes on as well), but it has some cheerful and dreamful moments, like the scenes in which Winston is with Julia. His psychological state changes along this part, going, in a certain sense, from hopelessness and despair (consequence of life under the threatening rule of the Party), to a kind of happiness (shown in his time with Julia) and hope. The narrator gives details on Winston's state of mind:

The process of life has ceased to be intolerable, he had no longer any impulse to make faces at the telescreen or shout curses at the top of his voice. Now that they had a secure hiding place, almost a home, it did not even seem a hardship that they could only meet infrequently and for a couple of hours at a time. What mattered was that the room over the junk shop should exist. To know that it was there, inviolate, was almost the same as being in it. (ORWELL, 2003, p.246)

Although his mind and general appearance get better as he meets regularly with Julia, his conscience knows that he is going to get caught and thrown into a cell at the Ministry of Love to be tortured.

This part of the novel balances the contrast between the moments of freedom (although very limited) and love with the ones of slavery (his overworking for the Hate Week) to the Party's obligations and his mental state of fear against the imminent threat of getting caught by the Thought Police. For these reasons, this part represents an even fiercer example of doublethink under the guise of the slogan *Freedom is Slavery*.

In a talk between Winston and O'Brien later in the story, the latter reveals the core of the above mentioned motto:

You know the Party slogan: 'Freedom is Slavery.' Has it ever occurred to you that it is reversible? Slavery is freedom. Alone—free—the human being is always defeated. It must be so, because every human being is doomed to die, which is the greatest of all failures. But if he can make complete, utter submission, if he can escape from his identity, if he can merge himself in the Party so that he *is* the Party, then he is all-powerful and immortal. (ORWELL, 2003, p.355)

This explanation can be translated as a path to avoid death. Humans must surrender their minds to empower the Party, which makes them one with the Party, consequently leading

to its perpetuation. By 'merging' with the Party, as O'Brien says, one becomes a source of power that keeps the endless cycle of pure power that sustain the Party's structure intact over the passage of time, regardless of individuals. That is why collectivity is of utmost importance to the Party; it is also behind the concept of *Freedom is Slavery*, since individuals, metaphorically speaking, are 'slaves' of life because they are destined to die. The reverse of the catchphrase - Slavery is Freedom, by using *doublethink*, can lead to the Party's desire to enslave people through collectivization to give away their freedom by making their lives synchronized with the collective thought promoted by the Party, and so people's lives would no more subjected to end in death, because they would be part of the Party's eternal cycle of power.

Keeping in mind what is behind the slogan, this paper proceeds to the examination of a passage in which Winston meets with Julia in private for the first time, in the middle of the country, well away from people and telescreens. Nevertheless, even there they have to be careful, watching out for hidden microphones, which illustrate the difficulty of having "freedom"²³ even though they set up a date in an uninhabited area in Airstrip One²⁴. The scene goes like that:

"WINSTON PICKED HIS WAY up the lane through dappled light and shade, stepping out into pools of gold wherever the boughs parted. Under the trees to the left of them the ground was misty with bluebells. The air seemed to kiss one's skin. It was the second of May. From somewhere deeper in the heart of the wood came the droning of ring doves.

He was a bit early. There had been no difficulties about the journey, and the girl was so evidently experienced that he was less frightened than he would normally have been. Presumably she could be trusted to find a safe place. In general you could not assume that you were much safer in the country than in London. There were no telescreens, of course, but there were always the danger of concealed microphones by which your voice might be picked up and recognized; besides it was not easy to make a journey by yourself without attracting much attention. For distances of less than a hundred kilometers it was not necessary to get your passport endorsed, but sometimes there were patrols hanging about the railway stations,

²³ between quotation marks to express how feeble and even deceptive this term is in the story as a result of the powerful influence of the slogan that employs this word.

²⁴ Which roughly saying would be the Greater London.

who examined the papers of any Party member they found there and asked awkward questions. However, no patrols had appeared, and on the walk from the station he had made sure by cautious backward glances that he was not being followed. The train was full of proles, in holiday mood because of the summery weather. The wooden-seated carriage in which he traveled was filled to overflowing by a single enormous family, ranging from a toothless great-grandmother to a month-old baby, going out to spend an afternoon with 'in-laws' in the country, and, as they freely explained to Winston, to get hold of a little black-market butter.

The lane widened, and in a minute he came to the footpath she had told him of, a mere cattle track which plunged between the bushes. He had no watch, but it could not be fifteen yet. The bluebells were so thick underfoot that it was impossible not to tread on them. He knelt down and began picking some, partly to pass the time away, but also from a vague idea that he would like to have a bunch of flowers to offer the girl when they met. He had got together a big bunch and was smelling their faint sickly scent when a sound at his back froze him, the unmistakable crackle of a foot on twigs. He went on picking bluebells. It was the best thing to do. It might be the girl, or he might have been followed after all. To look round was to show guilt. He picked another and another. A hand felt lightly on his shoulder.

He looked up. It was the girl. She shook her head, evidently as a warning that he must keep silent, then parted the bushes and quickly led the way along the narrow track into the wood. Obviously she had been that way before, for she dodged the boggy bits as though by habit. Winston followed, still clasping his bunch of flowers. His first feeling was relief, but as he watched the strong slender body moving in front of him, with the scarlet sash that was just tight enough to bring out the curve of her hips, the sense of his own inferiority was heavy upon him. Even now it seemed quite likely that when she turned round and looked at him she would draw back after all. The sweetness of the air and the greenness of the leaves daunted him. Already, on the walk from the station, the May sunshine had made him feel dirty and etiolated, a creature of indoors, with the sooty dust of London in the pores of his skin. It occurred to him that till now she had probably never seen him in broad daylight in the open. They came to the fallen tree that she had spoken of. The girl hopped over and forced apart the bushes, in which there did not seem to be an opening. When Winston followed her, he found

that they were in a natural clearing, a tiny grassy knoll surrounded by tall saplings that shut it in completely. The girl stopped and turned.

'Here we are,' she said.

He was facing her at several paces' distance. As yet he did not dare move nearer to her.

'I didn't want to say anything in the lane,' she went on, 'in case there's a mike hidden there. I don't suppose there is, but there could be. There's always the chance of one of those swine recognizing your voice. We're all right here.' (ORWELL, 2003, p.215-217)

The couple managed to have some private time in the woods, while paying good attention to the presence of microphones in some of the areas they walk through. On the way to the meeting point, Winston feels a lot of pressure not to be caught during his journey. His fears and worries are a clear sign of his slavery to the Party, as his mind is often terrified with the risk of having his wrongdoings²⁵ discovered by the Thought Police or the patrols in the train stations. There is a high contrast between the idyllic, peaceful, greenish countryside where they had a few moments of freedom from the suffocating rules of daily routine and the gloomy, smelly, discolored metropolis of London. This opposition also applies to the relation of this part with the slogan, since it is logical to set a parallel between city/slavery and country/freedom, as the previous passage clearly distinguishes both places and implies these connections by describing them using shady, heavy adjectives for the city, and colorful, soft ones for the country. This depiction is a good indicator of the change of mood Winston goes through when he shifts from one to the other.

The psychological state of the main character also undergoes a transformation. One's mind often wishes for the peace and sensation of liberty the country provides, but it struggles to leave the strict life of the city, because to go to the country is in itself an act of rebellion against the Party. Winston had to break the rules (slavery) to have some pleasure (freedom). This act of transgression grants him what he wants and at the same time this causes an intense pressure through fear, whereas he felt much more comfortable under the Party's grasp²⁶.

²⁵ Having an affair is unthinkable in the world of *1984* because one can be punished with death.

²⁶ Most of the time he is under the rules everything comes automatically, so he does not get afraid of acting suspicious, while by going out of the city he crosses the line between safety and danger.

It is interesting to notice the power of language in Orwell's novel. It is language that is behind the scenes of the characters' actions, thoughts, and reactions, which, again, is *doublethink*. Individuals are shaped to the Party's will by means of the mottos, which by design eliminate the contradictions. Society has to believe there is no contradiction because there is no opposition, thus war is accepted because it brings the idea that peace and slavery are not an issue because of the slogan's reversibility²⁷ and connection to the greater meaning of the Party²⁸. All this discussion on language serves to show the significance of Orwell's work with it. The author is commonly associated with politics, so most of his work is interpreted considering his political views, but Barthes defended the neutrality of a writer's biography:

As soon as fact is *narrated* no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters his own death, writing begins. (BARTHES, 1977, p.147)

He meant that the author's point of view does not serve as a key to the interpretation of the book. It just serves as a deviation from the real experience of writing: to play with language. Biographies are often used as base for interpretation of one's work. So, criticism usually leans towards the writer's background, formation and literary influences. What Barthes proposes is for literary critics to focus more on the technical aspects of a writing, like aesthetics, semantics, syntax, among others. These, for the French critic, are more representative of an author's achievement. Not that every subjective aspect of the writer's life should be ignored right away. Instead, there should be a more careful approach when dealing with biographies. The core of any literary analysis is the content of the text, that should be the starting point, not the author's life.

Taking Barthes' concept into consideration, Orwell, as a consequence of his political activism and sharp journalism, may have had a biased criticism of his works in favor of his political views and in disregard to the quality of his literary work. In this study, the balance shifts towards the technical side of his literary writings. As it has been shown up to now, *Nineteen Eight-Four* represents a serious work with language, since the cornerstone of the

²⁷ Freedom equals Slavery and Slavery equals Freedom.

²⁸ Slavery means freedom when one gets rid of his individuality for the sake of the collective, which leads to the strengthening of the Party as an entity more than an institution.

story is *doublethink*. This is the source of the slogans, which in turn are the basis of the political system (Ingsoc) in charge of society. This is not to say Orwell's political activism is to be ignored altogether, it is just to clarify the significance of the literary work present on the novel, which offers a rich and complex treatment of language. The British writer even wrote an appendix solely to explain how Newspeak functions in the dystopian world of the book:

The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible. It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought—that is, a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc—should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words. (ORWELL, 2003, p.387)

The citation is precisely about the goal of Newspeak: to make unwanted thoughts impossible in the future. Furthermore, the appendix may also help to produce an analysis aimed at the textual content, whereas without it one would most likely regard the novel through political “lenses”. Anyways, as the appendix appear only at the end of the book, it is up to the reader to read it beforehand or afterwards the main story. With this extra section in the end of the novel, it seems Orwell tried to show how powerful and harmful a controlled language can become if aimed towards the shattering of the human consciousness.

In his essay *Politics and the English Language*, Orwell warns the reader about the peril that comes from political language, which is frequently reshaping itself to a more subjective and prolix discourse. This constant effort to make it more complex is backed by the political ambition of politicians, who are relentlessly looking for more power and profit, while at the same time keeping their people in relative darkness regarding their country's real issues. Instead, they are given nice, soft, crafted words to be convinced that all is going as planned, even if there are some things going wrong. Orwell presents an explicit example of what politicians usually do with language: “Political language — and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists — is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.” (1981, p. 189-190). The statement sets up a solid platform for the creation of *Newspeak* by Orwell; it can also be regarded as the basis of the Party's actions in the novel, as the ruling government really deceives it own people through language.

The second illustration of *Freedom is Slavery* refers to the narrator's reflection upon the couple's situation. They have their own place for their romantic meetings on one hand and on the other the incessant fear of getting arrested to be tortured at the Ministry of Love. Here is the excerpt:

“Both of them knew—in a way, it was never out of their minds—that what was now happening could not last long. There were times when the fact of impending death seemed as palpable as the bed they lay on, and they would cling together with a sort of despairing sensuality, like a damned soul grasping at his last morsel of pleasure when the clock is within five minutes of striking. But there were also times when they had the illusion not only of safety but of permanence. So long as they were actually in this room, they both felt, no harm could come to them. Getting there was difficult and dangerous, but the room itself was sanctuary. It was as when Winston had gazed into the heart of the paperweight, with the feeling that it would be possible to get inside that glassy world, and that once inside it time could be arrested. Often they gave themselves up to daydreams of escape. Their luck would hold indefinitely, and they would carry on their intrigue, just like this, for the remainder of their natural lives. Or Katherine would die, and by subtle maneuverings Winston and Julia would succeed in getting married. Or they would commit suicide together. Or they would disappear, alter themselves out of recognition, learn to speak with proletarian accents, get jobs in a factory, and live out their lives undetected in a back street. It was all nonsense, as they both knew. In reality there was no escape. Even the one plan that was practicable, suicide, they had not intention of carrying out. To hang on from day to day and from week to week, spinning out a present that had no future, seemed an unconquerable instinct, just as one's lungs will always draw the next breath so long as there is air available” (ORWELL, 2003, p. 247).

As another sample of the clash between the ideals of freedom and slavery, the above passage confirms the effects of the *doublethink*-based catchphrase. It is Newspeak which is responsible for eliminating once and for all every possible contradictory thought, because then people will not be able to escape from Ingsoc. But for this new language to evolve, the slogans are essential in working out the principles of the Party, since they are designed to

dissolve any conflict that might arise from Party members. Winston and Julia are not yet the exemplary members they should be (as with everyone). Their sense of liberty derived from having a private place gives them this chance of rebelling against the status quo, something that would not (probably) happen if Newspeak was in its complete form. If this was the case, thinking about love, freedom, and pleasure would be quite impossible, for thinking without words translate into talking without arguments, which brings social meetings and possible rebellions an impossibility.

Meanwhile, the couple struggles to keep their affair as long as possible. This is a sign of hope and faith in their ability to avoid MiniLuv's cells. Their lives were burdened with time spent with Party's duties and a twelve-hour work shift, which sounds as a slave condition, and a few hours in the room above the shop, considered a sanctuary where they could be outside the Party's reach. Paradoxical as it seems, it was the only way for them to cope with all the despair of being a brother or sister of Big Brother. While there was any hint of hope in their hearts and minds, they could not turn themselves into instruments of the ruler's will²⁹. The intention behind the slogans is to make people's rather paradoxical thinking become a logical in their psyche by deconstructing what they understand as contradictory ideas.

In this sense, the Party has not yet achieved success with Winston and Julia. They slip away from the former's grasp by seeing each other in a hidden place. The narrator frequently hints their delusion by giving indication that they are doomed: O'Brien's contact with Winston — the former is an Inner Party member, therefore possibly dangerous — and Winston's own sense of guilt are strong evidence of their destiny. Still, while their fate does not catch up with them yet, they keep breaking the rules and living in the contradictions of their slavery to the Party and their freedom in their secret place.

²⁹ Which is achieving a metaphorical freedom from the cycle of life and death by uniting themselves with the Party and thus becoming, in the process, nothing more than a mechanical being who blindly obeys the precepts of Ingsoc.

6 IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH - TORTURE AND ABSOLUTE POWER

The last part of the analysis is concerned with the last of the slogans, *Ignorance is Strength*, which deals with the inner core of the Party: power. The subject of power has been repeatedly brought to discussion over the course of this paper, and it could not be any different, since language and politics are some of the aspects of human life that are more closely related to empowerment. Orwell's novel provides an immersive experience in a totalitarian state — usually marked by the intense use of the political and linguistic aspects³ — through a character whose life is determined since his birth. In the dystopian story, it does not matter what your social class is because they are all exploited by the Party, which uses them to keep its structure and influence intact throughout time and space.

The appearance of politics in the novel can - and usually is - be associated with Orwell's background as a journalist and writer who was often involved in political matters, both in his country and abroad. Although Barthes warns literary critics of the narrowness — in the sense of lessening the literary analysis of the text — of the association between an author's background and what he writes, one cannot simply ignore a person's life story. There must be a balance in the interpretation of one's text; the investigation should take into account some important aspects of the writer, while also reflecting upon the complexity of the text and trying to uncover some of its many possible readings.

Eagleton has an interesting view on the matter of politics and literary theory:

There is, in fact, no need to drag politics into literary theory: as with South African sport, it has been there from the beginning. I mean by the political no more than the way we organize social life together, and the power-relations which this involves; and what I have tried to show throughout this book is that the history of modern literary theory is part of the political and ideological history of our epoch. (EAGLETON, 1996, p.180)

Eagleton's argument on the inherent connection linking politics to literary theory proves Orwell's significance in world history even more, because the latter understood societal problems like poverty and slavery as consequences of political actions. So, one has to

³⁰ As an example, Stalinism in the U.R.S.S. and in North Korea. In both, politics has a more pronounced purpose, but language manipulation also plays a role in both of them. In the Soviet Union, political enemies would be crossed out from newspaper databases and also be erased from pictures. This affects how people deals with facts, influencing their opinion and views in favor to whoever is in power, as their enemies are totally erased from the system.

take into account the author's political background, but only as far as it does not conflict with other possible and even more adequate readings than the political.

Back to the text, the next excerpt contains both the meaning of the slogan and a practical sample of its functionality:

“O’Brien’s manner grew stern again. He laid his hand on the dial.

‘On the contrary,’ he said, ‘you have not controlled it. That is what has brought you here. You are here because you failed in humility, in self-discipline. You would not make the act of submission which is the price of sanity. You preferred to be a lunatic, a minority of one. Only the disciplined mind can see reality, Winston. You believe that reality is something objective, external, existing in its own right. You also believe that the nature of reality is self-evident. When you delude yourself into thinking that you see something, you assume that everyone else sees the same thing as you. But I tell you, Winston, that reality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind, nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes, and in any case soon perishes; only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds truth is truth. It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party. That is the fact that you have got to relearn, Winston. It needs an act of self-destruction before you can become sane.’

He paused for a few moments, as though to allow what he had been saying to sink in.

‘Do you remember,’ he went on, ‘writing in your diary, ‘Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two makes four?’

‘Yes’, said Winston.

O’Brien held up his left hand, its back towards Winston, with the thumb hidden and the four fingers extended.

‘How many fingers am I holding up, Winston?’

‘Four.’

‘And if the Party says that this is not four but five—then how many?’

‘Four.’

The word ended in a grasp of pain. The needle of the dial had shot up to fifty-five. The sweat had sprung out all over Winston’s body. The air tore up into his lungs and issued again in deep groans which even by clenching his teeth he could not stop. O’Brien watched

him, the four fingers still extended. He drew back the lever. This time the pain was only slightly eased.

'How many fingers, Winston?'

'Four! Stop it, stop it! How can you go on? Four! Four!'

'How many fingers, Winston?'

'Five! Five! Five!'

'No Winston, that is no use. You are lying. You still think there are four. How many fingers, please?'

'Four! Five! Four! Anything you like. Only stop it, stop the pain!'

Abruptly he was sitting up with O'Brien's arms round his shoulders. He had perhaps lost consciousness for a few seconds. The bonds that had held his body down were loosened. He felt very cold, he was shaking uncontrollably, his teeth were chattering, the tears were rolling down his cheeks. For a moment he clung to O'Brien like a baby, curiously comforted by the heavy arm round his shoulders. He had the feeling that O'Brien was his protector, that the pain was something that came from outside, from some other source, and that it was O'Brien who would save him from it.

'You are a slow learner, Winston,' said O'Brien gently.

'How can I help it?' he blubbered. 'How can I help seeing what is in front of my eyes? Two and two are four.'

'Sometimes, Winston. Sometimes they are five. Sometimes they are three. Sometimes they are all of them at once. You must try harder. It is not easy to become sane.'" (ORWELL, 2003, p.340-342)

The previous scene shows a part of the interrogation Winston was subjected to in the Ministry of Love in room 101. The ongoing torture is part of the necessary brainwash to become loyal to the Party. O'Brien keeps forcing Winston's will to break, and the more he bends and weakens, the more O'Brien reassures his position as Winston's last resort against all the suffering he is enduring as atonement for his sins against the Establishment.

The motto *Ignorance is Strength* can be explained by O'Brien saying that the only truth is that of the Party; the only chance for one to become conscious is through self-destruction of his personal will. It can be inferred from this that the more one turns himself

into a member of the collective mind of the Party, the more powerful the latter gets to be. This is the essence of the slogan: an individual has to surrender his or her identity to be part of the whole process, while making the social/political system in charge stronger and stronger. This last piece of language closes the triangle formed by the three slogans, which form the impenetrable base of the ruling system. They complete each other in the sense that each of them takes a vital part of human beings and in exchange gives back some delusional device to keep them forever stuck in the system³¹, blocked from ever escaping the vicious cycle of power that links everything together.

Along with the information on the slogan, the extract above also deals with some empirical data like Winston's being ill-treated by O'Brien, who works to convince the first to blindly follow whatever the Party says to be the truth, as it is the only truth ever available. Winston cannot help but see four fingers whereas O'Brien is trying to make the tortured actually believe he is seeing five instead of four. Saying that one sees five fingers is not enough, the real thing is to completely believe to see them. Utter domination of the minds is the goal pursued by Big Brother's Party, for it is the best way, according to O'Brien, to ensure the ruthless state will remain at its strongest for an unforeseen future.

O'Brien is someone whose actions can be translated into perfect exercises of *doublethink*. He abuses Winston by making himself both the cruelest interrogator and the best friend figure. Despite the seemingly confusion that may arise from that, it works very well on Winston's weak mind, as he increasingly cries for his "friend" and savior O'Brien to stop the utterly painful agony, instead of blaming him for causing all the suffering. Hence, he himself is a personification of the apparently abstract concept of Ingsoc, someone who deeply reflects the status quo of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, with his unbreakable determination and a wide comprehension of the whole mechanism of the Party. Consequently, he can be regarded as the embodiment of *Ignorance is Strength*, as he represents the Party's ideologies at its best.

The next and last passage from the novel mirrors the impact of the catchphrase upon life in Oceania in a decisive manner, as information about the future is then given to the

³¹ *War is Peace* - takes away love and pleasure, giving in turn huge masses of hatred to keep the people's will in constant tension to support the endless war.

Freedom is Slavery - creates a constant state of delusional freedom while restraining people's thoughts, actions and movement.

Ignorance is Strength - evokes the redemption of the individual in favor of the collective, designing an unconscious state of mind that empowers the Party.

reader. Not only O'Brien appears again as an object of study, he also talks about one of the key aspects of the Party's ideology: power through suffering. The extract reads:

“I told you Winston,’ he said ‘that metaphysics is not your strong point. The word you are trying to think is solipsism. But you are mistaken. This is not solipsism. Collective solipsism, if you like. But that is a different thing; in fact, the opposite thing. All this is a digression,’ he added in a different tone. ‘The real power, the power we have to fight for night and day, is not power over things, but over men.’ He paused, and for a moment assumed again his air of schoolmaster questioning a promising pupil: ‘How does one man assert power over another, Winston?’

Winston thought. ‘By making him suffer,’ he said.

‘Exactly. By making him suffer. Obedience is not enough. Unless he is suffering, how can you be sure that he is obeying your will and not his own? 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 own choosing. Do you begin to see, then, what kind of world are we creating? It is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined. A world of fear and treachery and torment, a world of trampling and being trampled upon, a world which will grow not less but more merciless as it refines itself. Progress in our world will be progress toward more pain. The old civilizations claimed that they were founded on love or justice. Ours is founded upon hatred. In our world there will be no emotion except fear, rage, triumph, and self-abasement. Everything else we shall destroy—everything. Already we are breaking down the habits of thought which have survived from before the Revolution. 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 child or a friend any longer. But in the future there will be no wives and children. Children will be taken from their mothers at birth, as one takes eggs 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. Our neurologists are at work upon it now. There will be no loyalty, except loyalty to the Party. There will be no love, except the love of Big Brother. There will be no laughter, except the laugh of triumph over a defeated enemy. There will be no art, no literature, no science. When we are omnipotent we shall have no more need of science. There will be no

distinction between beauty and ugliness. There will be no curiosity, no enjoyment over the process of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed. But always — do not forget this — 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.’’ (ORWELL, 2003, p.357-358)

O’Brien is quite rough in his speech, declaring the future state of things in the world. There is going to be only negative feelings, even laughter is going to be sorrowful. It is a dark future, with no sex, no happiness, no literature, nothing except Big Brother and Newspeak, the pillars of the Party. Suffering is at the center of his statement; it is through pain that one really learns how to obey the Party without blinking for a second, with no hesitation at all. Humans are destined to suffer, according to O’Brien's point of view. War can never cease, to keep the suffering strong enough to drive society’s support of the state of affairs.

Power here is regarded as the domination of men over men, as the political and social device responsible for sustaining not only the status quo, but the whole ideology brought up by the Party’s slogans. To attain this ultimate power over people, it is necessary to remove every possible obstacle that may go in the way between the collective mind of the Party (represented by loyal Party members) and its search for such a form of control. Language plays one of the darkest roles in this scenario, since Newspeak is going to replace Oldspeak (English) as the official communicative and thinking device, since all language considered important for human development (art, literature and science) is going to disappear, to be obliterated. Thought is not going to be possible, except mechanical ones directed towards Party worship and war related reactions.

That is what O’Brien says about the future, and it serves well as a metaphor for the slogan: all knowledge and forms of thinking disappear, leading to total ignorance, whereas the Party becomes even more ubiquitous (given its presence deep inside the human mind) and powerful by “purifying” its members through the wiping out of everything that is thought to represent any kind of impediment to achieve and maintain the raw power it desires.

To conclude this analysis, a quotation from Hitchens: “To describe a state of affairs as ‘Orwellian’ is to imply crushing tyranny and fear and conformism. To describe a piece of

writing as 'Orwellian' is to recognize that human resistance to these terrors is unquenchable. Not bad for one short lifetime" (2002, p.12). The term *Orwellian* fits to describe both the tone of the narrative and the last excerpt, for they are pessimistic, dark and offer some degree of philosophical reflection about the human condition, even if a gruesome one.

7 CONCLUSION

Orwell's prose is very straightforward and often as simple as it can be. That explains why his most important novels³² contain explicit rational messages in the core of their texts. Their ruling principles are made of a dense and coherent web of undiluted thoughts. Hitchens praised this coherence by pointing out that "He would never appear to have diluted his opinions in the hope of seeing his byline disseminated to the paying customers; this alone is a clue to why he still matters" (2002, p.12). Accordingly, Orwell's integrity as both writer and journalist is one of the reasons to respect his achievements and to consider the significance of his views on the world and in literature.

The three slogans which, together, form the whole of the novel are organized and presented in the following sequence: part I is mirrored by *War is Peace*; part II by *Freedom is Slavery*; part III by *Ignorance is Strength*. Although the study concludes that they represent each part in this order, it is possible to see all of them across the novel. That happens because the story is constantly dealing with situations in which they all influence life in Oceania in some way or another. The third slogan, *Ignorance is Strength*, is not directly cited in the text as the others. Alternatively, it is implied in O'Brien's statements included in the analysis, as well as in other parts of the novel. The reason as why there is not direct explanation in text is unknown, so it could be a future object of study.

Another interesting subject for further investigation is the role of love in the novel. In the second part, the love affair between Winston and Julia makes them hope, to a certain extent, that they can rebel against the Party, which is what they do by frequently making love in secret. They know they cannot fight the Party in the open because they would be instantly surrounded by devotees craving for martyrs to direct the anger that they feed everyday in the Two Minutes Hate³³. So they keep their "silent" revolution, until they are finally caught by the Thought Police and then imprisoned. This was bound to happen at the end, since the Party was very aware of the power of love, especially because love is the opposite of the hatred the Party so religiously nurture in Oceania's citizens. Winston's torture in the Ministry of love is

³² *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

³³ It is a daily activity every Party member has to do. They stand in front of the telecreen, watch a movie containing scenes of the enemies of the Party, and then yell at the screen with swear words and filled with hatred.

designed to ultimately annihilate the affective bonds between him and Julia, thus eliminating any possibility of future rebellion against the system.

As already discussed in this research, *doublethink* is the principle that rules everything and is what holds the book together, in the sense of blending the ideology of the Party with all the events in the story. The narrator summarizes the importance and the function of *doublethink* in the novel, while also emphasizing that one has to be able to use it to understand its underlying principles:

To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which canceled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy, to forget whatever is necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget again, and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself—that was the ultimate subtlety: consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you had just performed. Even to understand the word ‘doublethink’ involved the use of doublethink. (ORWELL, 2003, p.137)

Most of the research on Orwell’s works has been focused, for decades, on the author as a political thinker instead of his skills as a writer of literature, and that is what makes this research significant to literary studies about him. In the end, the fundamental idea behind the slogans is that they are psychological devices intended to go through people’s consciousness throughout an eternal cycle of power, eventually leading to a ‘soulless’ society as the slogans slowly, but surely, attain the goal of reshaping countless conscious minds across Oceania into deeply unconscious ones.

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