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PROPAGANDA AND LANGUAGE AS A DEVICE FOR POWER
MAINTENANCE IN GEORGE ORWELL'S *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*

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I confirm that this thesis is my own work written using solely the sources and literature properly quoted and acknowledged as works cited.

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Anotace

Hlavní náplní této bakalářské práce bude zkoumání konceptu jazyka jakožto nástroje k udržení moci v románu George Orwella *Devatenáct set osmdesát čtyři*. Práce se pokusí popsat a rozebrat, jakou roli hraje v Orwellově románu jazyk a jakým způsobem je s ním zacházeno skrze propagandu cílící k udržení neomezené moci autoritativního systému v dystopické Oceánii. V úvodní části se práce částečně zaměří na Orwellův život, aby naznačila neodmyslitelnou provázanost autora s klíčovými tématy jeho románu, které budou následně rovněž zanalyzovány. Tato bakalářská práce si dává za cíl demonstrovat způsob zneužití jazyka ve prospěch šíření a udržení autoritářské ideologie vládnoucí Strany. Důraz je kladen na vysvětlení metod, kterými je s jazykem manipulováno a poukázání na celospolečenský dopad totalitářské propagandy.

Klíčová slova: jazyk, manipulace, propaganda, moc, Orwell

Abstract

The main goal of this bachelor's thesis is the investigation of the concept of language as a tool for power maintenance in George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. By analysing passages from the novel, the thesis will try to describe and disclose what role language plays in Orwell's novel and how exactly is it treated by the propaganda aiming ultimate power maintenance of the authoritative system of dystopian Oceania. In the beginning, this thesis briefly focuses on Orwell's life, in hopes to highlight the inherent connection of the author and the novel's key themes, which are to be examined further as well. The bachelor thesis aims to demonstrate the misuse of language in favour of spreading and maintaining the authoritarian ideology of the ruling Party. It emphasizes the examination of the methods of linguistic manipulation and pointing out the societal impact of totalitarian propaganda.

Key words: language, manipulation, propaganda, power, Orwell

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INTRODUCTION

As a cornerstone of human communication, language holds immense power. It influences our beliefs and ultimately shapes our perceptions and the societal structure. This makes language a valuable, potentially powerful tool for those in positions of power, who seek to transform it into a device for manipulation and control. In George Orwell's dystopian vision of the future in the year 1984, language emerges as a central battleground in the struggle for power. It is not merely a means of expression, but rather a weapon wielded by the omnipotent Party to maintain its control upon the society by manipulating thought and moulding reality.

By introducing Newspeak; an artificial language designed by the Party to eradicate dissent and independent thought, Orwell's novel discloses how the totalitarian government purifies the original English from the influences of the previous, now unfavourable, era and political system. The novel's portrayal of the deliberate simplification and distortion of language shows just how damaging the impacts of linguistic manipulation are.

The authoritarian regime, as mentioned, is maintained by the Party and its main ubiquitous representative – Big Brother, who, as a physical character is never really fully described in the novel, apart from being represented by an imposing, moustachioed face depicted on posters with the famous slogan “BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU” (Orwell, 1984¹ 3, emphasis mine). This face becomes an omnipresent reminder of the

¹ Since the thesis works with more than the primary novel written by George Orwell, there will be a shortened title mentioned while citing Orwell. The title of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* will also be referred to as *1984* throughout the whole thesis.

Party's surveillance and control, inculcating fear and obedience in the minds of the population. Big Brother is the metaphor representing the Party itself – its ideology and its oppressive rule. He is portrayed as a benevolent protector by Party propaganda, but in reality, he serves as a key tool for maintaining power and suppressing dissent. Through the cult of personality surrounding Big Brother, the ruling Party seeks to enforce loyalty and conformity among the citizens of Oceania. Big Brother embodies the themes of authoritarianism, propaganda, and the destruction of truth. Ultimately, Big Brother serves as a constant reminder of the dangers of unchecked power and the manipulation of information for political ends, representing the omnipresent surveillance state and the totalitarian regime's iron grip on every aspect of the citizen's lives.

1984 provides the reader with the depiction of the effects of constant surveillance and prevalent propaganda, showing how constant alternation of the events of past and persistent rewriting of the information imprisons the people in one single perspective of the world that cannot be questioned. The pervasive media manipulation and propaganda merged with the linguistic manipulation in the form of Newspeak significantly limits not just the opportunities to think independently and critically, but also one's creativity and imagination. Those restrictions constructed by the Party's manipulation therefore lead to the complete loss of individuality.

In this bachelor thesis, I will elucidate the importance of language and its relations to expressing independent, critical thoughts and ideas. Through this exploration, I aim to unravel Orwell's vivid illustration of language as a battleground for autonomy. Ultimately, it should be apparent that the relationship between language and power in the dystopian world of *1984* is rather intricate. The work aims to highlight the significance of linguistic manipulation to propagandistic techniques used by the Party, achieving so by

carefully analysing passages of the Orwell's novel that deal with the insidious nature of linguistic manipulation and its linkage to propaganda, as well as discussing the profound implications of those techniques for society.

To provide essential context and insight into the thematic concerns of *1984* and to enhance the depth of my analysis, the thesis will at first shortly examine the author, George Orwell. Orwell's political beliefs profoundly influenced most of his writings, including the novel *1984*, in which he famously crafted a narrative centred around linguistic manipulation and propaganda. By including his perspective and considering his personal intent, explaining his views on language, power, and propaganda, the thesis aims to elucidate the novel's underlying messages and themes. Thus, a more nuanced analysis of the novel's portrayal of language as a tool for power maintenance and its relationship to propaganda will be provided.

The thesis will address the essential importance of language and its role in establishing and maintaining the oppressive regime of the Party. While discussing the role of language, the thesis will try to analyse how exactly is language utilized to uphold authority and examine the deliberate linguistic manipulation and its repercussions. Furthermore, I will delve into the concept of Newspeak and explain its significance to the Party's totalitarian control over communication between the people of Oceania and their overall perception of life. Thus, the complexity and versatility of the interplay between language and power in Orwell's novel should be clarified.

Followingly, this work focuses on propaganda in *1984*, emphasizing on the analysis of the slogans, posters, and other propagandistic forms from the novel. It will try to explore the examples of manipulating history and disseminating information by the Party, as well as to discuss the impact constant exposure to propaganda has on the

characters. Ultimately, the intertwining of language and propaganda in *1984* will be explained, discussing how manipulating language rises effectiveness of the Party's propaganda and analysing the role of linguistic control in sustaining the public perception aimed by the Party. Additionally, the concept of Doublethink and the specific examples of accepting contradictory beliefs and conflicting ideas simultaneously will be explained and analysed.

Moreover, the work delves into the consequences of linguistic manipulation in the novel, trying to analyse specific examples of the manipulation on individuals' autonomy, critical thinking, and memory, highlighting the effect of the Party's manipulation on the characters' beliefs and behaviours.

1 ORWELL'S WAY TO *1984*

1.1 Political writer

Throughout his career, Orwell demonstrated a keen understanding of the mechanisms of propaganda, dissecting the ways in which language can be distorted and manipulated for political ends. By delving into Orwell's own essays and non-fiction works, such as "Politics and the English Language", the paper will provide valuable insights into his personal views on language and propaganda, which undoubtedly shaped his portrayal of Newspeak and the Party's manipulation of language in *1984*. Examining some of his theoretical works will enable the bachelor thesis to draw parallels between his theoretical insights and the techniques depicted in *1984*, providing a theoretical framework for understanding the novel's portrayal of language and propaganda.

By reading through Orwell's bibliography, it can feel quite instinctive and logical to think of the man as a political writer. Most of his essays deal with this theme and the core of his most famous fiction leads to subtext that can clearly be seen as political. However, as true and undoubtful as this identification of Orwell as a political writer is, it was not "politics qua politics" that he was interested in (Quinn 9). As Edward Quinn states in his *Critical Companion to George Orwell*, Orwell was keener on the exploration of morality and the ethical implications of politics (9). During his lifetime, the world was extremely contained by politics – he witnessed two world wars and the aftermath they left. Inevitably, the society was left frightened and divided by essential moral questions expressed in political terms: "the twin evils of fascism and Soviet communism, the lesser evil of capitalism, and the qualified good of democratic socialism, being four of the major ones" (Quinn 9). Orwell (unlike some of the less attentive readers might think) did

not write his most famous work as a warning against one of the particular threats that has just been listed, but vice versa – he “envisioned the possible rise of superstates that would contain elements of all four, in which individual freedom might be ruthlessly suppressed” (Quinn 9). Ultimately, Orwell’s only permanent target was neither Stalin nor Hitler; communism nor Nazism, but totalitarianism, which for him would constitute a much greater threat for its permanent presence throughout every constitution or ideology that would incline to either far-rightism, far-leftism or any type of extremism, and that would seek only its own persuasion and ideas with the drive to acquire ultimate restricted power. This moralist core, especially with the emphasis on recognizing language as a key instrument of totalitarianism and control seeking, is an essential element of Orwell’s writing and projects greatly and substantially in most of his works, including *1984*.

1.2 Projection of Orwell’s values in his work

This thesis’ intention gives me no capacity to explain the complexities of Orwell’s ideological thinking. Nevertheless, it is important to mention it in terms to his political views and writings as well. After his time of a service in Burma, which influenced Orwell to write a novel critiquing the British colonialism and the inherent injustices of the imperial rule, along with later witnessing of the rise of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes shaped his understanding of freedom and justice. A deeper understanding of his understanding and nuanced views on these fundamental values can be gained by delving into not just his essays, but also in his later works, such as *Animal Farm*, or, of course, *1984*. Orwell’s examination of totalitarianism and ways in which language may be used to censor and twist the truth underscores his conviction that everyone has the fundamental right to the freedom of speech and thought. His literary

critique highlights the perils of unchecked power and the degradation of civil liberties in authoritarian societies.

The view of justice as an important ideal of Orwell's played an apparent role in his identification with socialism. In *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Orwell expresses his urge for societal justice and liberty, which, according to him, is what socialism means (Orwell, *Road* 208). In *Homage to Catalonia*, a book in which he describes his experiences during the Spanish Civil War, he explicitly states that the "sort of microcosm of a classless society" was what attracted him to socialism even more and made him "desire to see socialism established much more actual than it had been before" (Orwell, *Catalonia* 55). It was Orwell's deeply seated hatred towards fascism and his desire to fight against the rising tide of totalitarianism in Europe that motivated him to participate in the war.

He reflects on his experiences fighting in the Spanish Civil War in his essay "Looking Back on the Spanish War", where he examines the broader political context of the conflict. It is a deeply personal and introspective essay which provides valuable insights into Orwell's political beliefs and his ongoing struggle to reconcile his idealism with the harsh realities of the world. The essay begins with Orwell's personal motivations for joining the fight against fascism, believing that it is crucial to defend democracy before totalitarianism. He truly believed that he was participating in a "war which is about something," (Orwell, *Collected* 190), acknowledging that a war is never good, however "it is often the lesser evil" (Orwell, *Collected* 192). As he declares in another essay of his from 1938 "Why I Joined the Independent Labour Party": "It is not possible for any thinking person to live in such a society as our own without wanting to change it. At a moment like the present writing books is not enough. One has got to be actively a Socialist, not merely sympathetic to Socialism" (Orwell, "I.L.P.").

Despite Orwell's commitment, the firsthand experience in Spain significantly influenced his political evolution. In "Looking Back on the Spanish Civil War", he reflects on the disillusionment and betrayal the Spanish Civil War left him with. The tactics of the Soviet secret police, infighting and political purges within the Republican ranks (the suppression of anarchist and Trotskyist factions in particular) made him question the leftist movement that seemingly pursued political power unlike justice and liberty, which were the ideals he was originally so drawn to. Orwell delves into the complex nature of political ideology and the inconsistencies inherent in the socialist movement. Despite the sense of betrayal his personal involvement in the conflict left him with and the suffering he witnessed, it could be argued Orwell remained a socialist, still staying true to his original, now perhaps even stronger, ideals. For him, the core of socialism lies in addressing socio-economic injustices and essentially improving ordinary people's lives. His interest did not lie in political theory itself, but in the ideals mentioned several times – justice and freedom. Orwell openly criticized all sorts of power-hungry ideologies and governments and was strictly opposed to fascism as well as communism and saw the democratic socialism as the best possible way to maintain equitable and free society.

1.3 BBC and propaganda as a central theme of 1984

Orwell's more nuanced understanding of power and propaganda and the shape of his political beliefs showcases the profound impact the Spanish Civil War had on him. While working at the BBC, Orwell, committed to truth-telling and disdain for propaganda, critically approached his position of a talks producer for the Eastern Service, and fought against censorship, attempting to include more diverse and dissenting voices

in BBC programming. Nevertheless, his outspokenness and refusal to toe the official line sometimes, especially then his frustration with bureaucratic interference and censorship, lead to him resigning from the BBC in 1943. His time at the BBC, however, beneficially allowed him to hone his skills as a writer and thinker, providing him just another firsthand experience of the complex power dynamics and also of the challenges of navigating the media landscape.

Propaganda and Orwell's belief in the importance of independent thought, solidified by his BBC experience, shows to be one of the main themes of his novels. Orwell reflects his experiences and ideals in several essays (a few of them has been mentioned), as well as in his novels, most famously in *Animal Farm* and *1984*. The novel this thesis focuses on, *1984*, is often misunderstood and cited out of context, ironically by many right-wing politicians using its slogans and quotes to validate their own political agenda. Bernard Crick in his essay "George Orwell: Voice of a Long Generation" explains how many right-wing critics read the novel in a contrary sense, stating that "*Nineteen Eighty-Four* was not a morbid prophecy of what was sure to happen in society, but a savage, Swiftian satiric warning of what could happen if power was pursued for its own sake" (3). It is safe to say that Orwell did not write *1984* as a warning against any particular state. His target was neither of the sides fighting in the Cold War, but the threat of erasing the freedom of speech and thought.

An important fact that needs to be mentioned before this thesis delves deeper into individual themes of *1984* is that Orwell viewed language as a powerful tool for both communication and manipulation. In his essay "Politics and the English Language", Orwell criticizes the use of purposely vague and misleading language as a means of political manipulation and control. He expresses his belief that it is essential for language

to be clear and honest for democratic societies to be maintained and for resisting totalitarianism. The role of language, as well as its link to propaganda, and the dangers that those systematic techniques bring out will be analysed in the following chapters.

In conclusion, Orwell's life and his personal experiences remarkably shaped his worldviews expressed in *1984*. Firsthand witnessing of the brutality of authoritarianism, the degradation of the English language, and the power of propaganda, ultimately lead him to use the themes of linguistic and mass media manipulation in his final novel.

2 LANGUAGE AS A TOOL FOR POWER MAINTENANCE

Language, in all its forms, is far more than just a primary communication tool. Through language, we comprehend and cocreate reality. It is a key aspect of human culture and social interaction. Language is the means by which we express emotions, share and transfer knowledge, and preserve history. Hence, it is far from being neutral; as Christopher Lucca comments in his article “The Impoverishment of Human Experience and Eidetic Imagination Through the Manipulation of Language: The Systematic Destruction of Language in Orwell's *1984*”, it is a shaping medium that pre-organizes and transcends our experience (142). Manipulation of language can therefore easily be a powerful tool for those seeking to control narratives and maintain dominance. In *1984*, the Party aims to do exactly that; It manipulates language to shape perceptions, mislead, or suppress dissent.

2.1 Linguistic manipulation

As suggested previously, the totalitarian government in the novel aims to control the population in every aspect of life, using many different methods of manipulation to achieve this goal. The type of manipulation that this thesis focuses on in greater detail is linguistic manipulation.

The world that Orwell built in *1984* feels very glaucous, grey, and lifeless from the very first page that introduces the reader to the novel. The surroundings seem to be always very mechanical and so does the life of the characters, as well as most of its aspects, including language. The overall communication differs vastly from what one imagines from the real world or even from other books, since it is considered redundant

and unnecessary by the Party. So unnecessary, in fact, that as Mozaffor Hossain suggests: “The language in *1984* is more for intimidation than for regular communication” (25). He then goes on listing and underlying that all the different versions of language, including spoken, read, written, and listened, are “mechanized in such a manner so as to coerce the users to be in an unconscious apprehension day in and day out” (Hossain 25). The Party’s usage of language is set to promote its pure ideology only, it intentionally strips language of its core purpose to interpersonally communicate. Communication with others includes sharing different thoughts and feelings, which is ultimately undesired by the Party, aiming for a blunt, non-insightful society.

Example of such mechanization of the language can be seen in the parts of the book that introduces some kind of political oratory, usually in speeches given by Party members, the slogans themselves, all usually serving propagandic purposes. For instance, the posters with Big Brother’s face that surrounds Oceanians on every corner caption “BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU” (Orwell, *1984* 3, emphasis mine). The famous slogan is short and dull enough to be a leading example of the Party’s language mechanization, as well as other slogans of a similar character, such as “War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength” (Orwell, *1984* 6). Those are instances of language manipulation through silent public propaganda. What is more demanding and bigger of a challenge for the Party, is making sure mechanizing language becomes the norm of a regular everyday exchanges between people. Nonetheless, Winston witnesses such a regular conversation of one of the Party’s members in a canteen, whose words come out of his mouth without even thinking, which alongside the still rapid and continuous tempo of his speech, makes him sound like a “harsh gabble almost like the quacking of a duck,” (Orwell, *1984* 53). This reveals the Newspeak as, though not yet

spoken generally, aiming to remove any real and genuine thought. This dissociation of language from thought and facts can be supported by another example, where a Party member informs the public about Oceania's enemy during the Hate Week. Orwell describes how the speaker's voice "made metallic by the amplifiers" (1984 194) is impossible to listen to "without being first convinced and then maddened" (1984 195). The fact that the speech passionately mentioning "an endless catalogue of [Eurasian] atrocities, massacres, deportations, lootings, rapings, torture of prisoners, bombing of civilians, lying propaganda, unjust aggressions, broken treaties" (Orwell, 1984 195) is able to affect the audience the way Winston describes, discloses the success of the Party's initial aims.

While giving this passionate speech about the enemy, the speaker is then handed a piece of paper with the information that it is not Eurasia that is the enemy anymore, but Eastasia. Without pausing or hesitating, he carries on with his speech, just naming different country as the enemy as if nothing happened. As Winston himself reflects:

The speaker had switched from one line to the other actually in mid-sentence, not only without a pause, but without even breaking the syntax (Orwell, 1984 195).

This shows how the Party uses language to get rid of any thought, stripping it off any consciousness. As Roger Fowler states: "it does not matter what the speaker is saying: his utterances are just an orthodox gesture and in no sense an account of a real state of affairs. It is just automated speech, the utterance of a machine" (95). This supports my former statement about the mechanizing character of the 1984's world, disclosing the unsolidity of conscious, meaningful and comprehensible nature of the communicative function of a language.

It is suitable for me now to try to elucidate why exactly manipulating language is so dangerous and how it connects to the threat of losing independent thought. In his essay “Politics and the English Language”, Orwell reflects his critique of how political language is used to distort truth, glorify unethical actions, and mislead the public. He describes political language as “designed to make lies sound truthful and murder more respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind” (*Selected* 221). In this same essay, he analyses the problem of automated speech, observing the phenomenon of a speaker mechanically delivering well-worn political phrases:

When one watches some tired hack on the platform mechanically repeating the familiar phrases – bestial atrocities, iron heel, blood-stained tyranny, free peoples of the world, stand shoulder to shoulder – one often has a curious feeling that one is not watching a live human being but some kind of dummy: a feeling which suddenly becomes stronger at moments when the light catches the speaker’s spectacles and turns them into blank discs which seem to have no eyes behind them. (Orwell, *Selected* 217)

He compares such speakers to “dummies” or machines, suggesting the lack of a genuine human presence and thought. Orwell describes how the repetitive use of certain phrases makes them completely empty, leading the speaker to disengage mentally. This essentially disconnects the speaker from the content they initially aimed to deliver. What once was a comprehensive, understandable statement spoken by colourful language, was suddenly just a numerous of empty phrases, as if the humanity of the speaker melted into a stuck, broken machine. Orwell then goes on to highlight how:

The appropriate noises are coming out of his larynx, but his brain is not involved as it would be if he were choosing his words for himself. If the speech he is

making is one that he is accustomed to make over and over again, he may be almost unconscious of what he is saying, as when one utters the responses in church. And this reduced state of consciousness, if not indispensable, is at any rate favourable to political conformity. (*Selected* 217)

As the author continuously suggests, the completely detached speaker may recite speeches almost unconsciously. A speaker who uses that kind of phraseology has gone some distance towards turning himself into a machine. Orwell, even bringing up a parallel with religious service, argues that this diminished awareness, while not a necessity, encourages political conformity, as the speaker relinquishes personal thought and expression for the sake of fitting into established political rhetoric.

It is no doubt that giving up personal thought and expression involves adopting pre-established phrases and ideologies without critical examination. By parting up with independent thought, individuals surrender their autonomy, allowing authorities to dictate what to think and believe. This conformity then makes it easy to create a collective mindset where dissent or alternative ideas are suppressed, leading to a homogeneous society that aligns with the ruling agenda. In *1984*, the Party's control over language demonstrates how altering language limits thought, as it aims to diminish the range of expressible ideas, making rebellious or subversive thoughts literally unthinkable. By limiting language, the Party restricts the ability to articulate opinions that dissent their own and thereby reducing the potential of such rebellious differences to even emerge.

Going back to the passage in the canteen, where Winston witnesses a man speaking thoughtlessly, recognizing the incomprehensibility and meaninglessness of the automated speech. It is apparent that his perception of the speaker coincides with what Orwell wrote in his "Politics and the English Language". He mentions how impossible it

was to distinguish a single word, leading him to the feeling that “this was not a real human being but some kind of dummy” (Orwell, 1984 57). Winston then explicitly says that “It was not the man’s brain that was speaking, it was his larynx” (Orwell, 1984 57). This passage ultimately sums up how noticeable are the Party’s linguistic forces. It shows that it feels unnatural to be using language in such a mechanized manor. This kind of linguistic manipulation, however, leads to what the Party eventually aims to achieve – unconscious society mechanized in a way it is easy for the regime to hold its authoritative power.

2.2 Newspeak

The main peak of the control the Party aims so much to have over the citizens is the control over the civilian’s thought processes. And as outlined above, language itself has an extremely far-reaching impact on how people perceive things and what things they decide to believe. It is probably not so difficult to form the idea of how much of a complex process it would be to manipulate the structures of already existing language in order to meet the needs of the Party. To be sufficient enough in its striving towards achieving total control over people’s thinking, the Party therefore began the invention of a completely new language – Newspeak. This politically manufactured language does precisely what the totalitarian government in 1984 aims – it makes deceit and manipulation easier with the intention of limiting comprehension of reality. By introducing Newspeak and profusely illustrating the Party’s abuse of language, Orwell shows just how powerful of a tool of manipulation language actually is.

Newspeak is designed to ultimately replace the standard English (or Oldspeak) and become the only official language of Oceania. In the time of the narration, it is still

not commonly used in everyday speech. Nevertheless, the population is exposed to Newspeak through media, as the newspaper are written entirely in it. Winston himself works in the Record Department of the Ministry of Truth, which is responsible for the print. The workers of the Ministry of Truth are provided with a Newspeak dictionary, so they can write the articles with alternated facts in a manner obligated by the Party. This is a very strategic thing for the totalitarian government to do because there is no need for using the force of a law to demand the use of Newspeak (which could easily evoke rebellion), as its widespread transmission puts pressure on people to use it merely for commercial communication. By surrounding people with Newspeak as exceedingly as possible, the Party ensures that the people of Oceania will eventually accept Newspeak as their one and only language.

What distinguishes Newspeak from any other language is that it completely lacks one of the principles of generally every well-functioning language – the tendency to expand its vocabulary. New terminology and constant word creation are the basis for a more versatile, adaptable language that is capable of meeting the diverse communicative needs of its speakers. This facilitates effective communication, which is, however, exactly what the Party does not want. Therefore, rather than evolving continuously, Newspeak is a language that is static, meaning no new words can be added and the meanings of already existing ones cannot be expanded. This Newspeak's goal to “diminish the range of thought” (Orwell, 1984 318) with the assistance of “cutting the choice of words down to a minimum” (Orwell, 1984 318), not only makes the people almost incapable of communication, but it also leads to them being passive in expressing feelings and emotions. With the limited vocabulary, people lose the ability to construct true reality, they are locked in an orthodox world carefully manufactured by the Party. Therefore, the

moment when Newspeak finally becomes the one and only medium (which, as stated in the book, is expected to be by 2050), “it will totally shape what they [the people] can say and therefore what they can think” (Fowler 99). As indicated, the myopia of Newspeak lies in its essence of erasing as many words as possible. Syme, who works as a Newspeak developer, emphasizes this fundamental idea of vocabulary reduction when talking about Newspeak with Winston:

“Every concept that can ever be needed, will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meaning rubbed out and forgotten.” (Orwell, 1984 55)

This passage highlights that Newspeak dictionaries in the novel do not just have new words in; the dictionaries themselves gradually get thinner and thinner as words are literally removed from the language. This enables the Party to use language to control people, because when the number of words is limited, the available thoughts that can be used against the government is also limited. As Syme continues his conversation about Newspeak with Winston:

“The whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought. In the end we shall make Thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it.” (Orwell, 1984 55)

This passage shows that our main characters are aware of the primary purpose of this artificial language, which is to essentially shrink the human consciousness into a controllable unit that does not enable the individual to think unorthodoxly.

The link between words and critical thinking is what makes language so crucial and the Newspeak dictionaries so sinister. The Party’s goal is to literally shrink the human knowledge to limit the number of thoughts that people can use to challenge the

government and liberate themselves. It ultimately aims to preserve power. And it is exactly that – the way the Party does not just suppress subversion through surveillance, violent arrests, and torture, but also through the suppression of individualism by limiting language – that makes Orwell's novel so distinctive from other dystopian worlds with totalitarian governments. *1984* shows how nightmarish a system can be without necessarily using physical violence to oppress the citizens. The Party, of course, does exert physical torture towards those who disobey its rules, but the arguably biggest strength lies in the psychological manipulation of people through language; the punishment so difficult to notice that it can be perpetually applied to the people of Oceania without raising greater resistance.

Orwell elaborates more on the design of Newspeak in the Appendix, where he provides readers with linguistic principles of the political language. The Appendix serves as a supplement to the main narrative (written by a character who is supposedly a linguistic expert of that time) offering insights into the Party's strategy for linguistic control. It is this part of the novel, where Orwell explicitly expresses the fact that Newspeak was established and devised to completely remove and replace Oldspeak, and therefore make it impossible for the people of Oceania to think contrary to the totalitarian system. This is to be done by completely erasing words considered unnecessary from the lexicon, so it is not just that the vocabulary shall not grow, but that there is an ongoing shrinkage happening. As it is noted in the Appendix, Newspeak's grammar is rather simplified from Oldspeak's grammar. A certain word could be used interchangeably across the lexical categories, so there would only be a very limited number of words necessary. This meant verbs and nouns of the same root would merge into one word only, so, for instance, "The word *thought*, for example, did not exist in Newspeak. Its place was

taken by *think*, which did duty for both noun and verb” (Orwell, 1984 319). This peculiarity also included words with no etymological connection at all, just like in the case of ‘cut’ which disappeared from the lexicon completely, as its meaning would be sufficiently covered by the word ‘knife’ (Orwell, 1984 319). For another instance, antonyms would be significantly shrank since just one word from the pair was necessary to keep, the one with opposite meaning would then just be formed by attaching a negative prefix. Thus, a word like ‘bad’ could be removed from the lexicon, because “the required meaning was equally well – indeed, better – expressed by *ungood*. All that was necessary in any case where two words formed a natural pair of opposites, was to decide which of them to suppress” (Orwell, 1984 320). Consequentially, the totalitarian government has the ability to remove terms representing a threat to its ideology, making another step forward its ultimate control and power maintenance.

Newspeak is explicitly designed to eliminate the possibility of ‘thoughtcrime’ (the act of holding unconventional views that contradict or deviate from the Party’s ideology); The lexicon reduction guarantees that individuals then lack the vocabulary that would help them verbalize opposing viewpoints, nearly preventing disruptive ideas to be even mentally developed and proliferated. To do so, Newspeak aims to get rid ambiguity. Words with multiple meanings or ambiguous interpretations are to be eliminated to ensure the precision of the language is preserved and there is no room for misinterpretation or creative reinterpretation of ideas. There will only be one interpretation possible – the one accepted by the Party. This kind of a lexical reduction greatly concerns words with some kind of a political subtext, such as ‘free’ or ‘equal’. They still exist in Newspeak, but, as Orwell explains, “A person growing up with Newspeak as his sole language would no more know that *equal* had once had the secondary meaning of ‘politically equal’, or that

free had once meant ‘intellectually free’” (Orwell, 1984 328, emphasis original).

According to Paul Chilton’s analyses of Newspeak in his *Orwellian language and media*, the restriction public language is “the closing off of discourse” (37). This disallows undesirable topics to be even discussed and overall, dismiss the chances to criticism. By favouring certain voice, the Party may not completely dispose resistance at first, but it inevitably legitimizes their power (Chilton 38). This legitimization is certainly a long process, but very effective, since it feels much more natural and inconspicuous.

Advocating and supporting Party’s ideology fundamentally means silencing the opposing voices by toning up the preferred ones.

It is important to highlight that in the novel, Newspeak is “a restricted code that is peculiar to the ruling class; the proles do not speak it,” (Chilton 37). As it was already indicated in previous paragraphs and as Chilton states in his work, the main goal of Newspeak is to create “a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits of the ruling elite” (37), do all other modes are eventually impossible. Chilton points out that even though no one can naturally be forced to speak or use the manufactured language, the use of Newspeak in official prints and broadcast leaves the people with no choice but to adapt to it to the degree that they essentially start to communicate the way the Party aims them to (37). Therefore, despite the impossibility of natural enforcement to use Newspeak, the Party ensures the inevitable destruction of Oldspeak by denying Oceanians access to the undesired vocabulary. The restrictive character of Newspeak is what reflects the totalitarian nature of the regime of Oceania. It is Newspeak that helps the Party to maintain a homogenous, conformist society, making it easier for the government to stay in power and keep its control.

3 PROPAGANDA

This chapter of my thesis will focus on propaganda and the propagandistic techniques used in the Orwell's novel. Propaganda serves as an instrument of public persuasion. In his work "Understanding Propaganda: The Epistemic Merit Model and Its Application to Art", S.T. Ross defines propaganda as "an epistemically defective message used with the intention to persuade a socially significant group of people on behalf of a political institution, organization, or cause" (24). Understanding this term as a powerful tool used to manipulate public and control societal beliefs, it is apparent that propaganda is a central theme used by the totalitarian regime to hold on its grip on power.

3.1 General definition and types of propaganda

It is to be noted that not all propaganda necessarily needs to be considered essentially harmful. As Randal Marlin describes in his *Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion*, by defining it as an attempt systematically motivated to influence other people's thinking, there are various techniques and categories of propaganda offered to be analysed (95). Examples of a type of propaganda that come to mind which does not present as harmful, are those that aim to educate and use the tactic of persuasion to adopt healthy behaviours or avoid risky activities. Those may involve public health campaigns, anti-smoking initiatives for instance, or similar attempts to fight unhealthy lifestyle choices. Propaganda focused on socio-cultural aspects may seek to reinforce stereotypes related to gender or race, challenging societal norms and advocating for social change. It is always, though, tied to manipulation, which is connected to a lack of transparency. In his book, Marlin acknowledges the fact that persuasion often comes with prejudices and overall attitudes that serve the side of the persuader (95-96). Propaganda in advertising,

for example, often exaggerates the benefits of the product or service that is being promoted, while downplaying the negative aspects. Religious propaganda, however innocent it may seem at first glance while spreading particular belief, may portray all non-believers as misguided or sinful, creating pressure and a sense of guilt to join their ideology.

Taking all of this into account, propaganda's essence – the aim to persuade, therefore makes it inseparable from politics. In his book *How Propaganda Works*, Jason Stanley focuses on political rhetoric and explains that it is how he ultimately understands what propaganda is. He goes back to Plato's dialogues and explains how there is no way manipulation can be taught – it always “depends upon particular facts about societies that are not part of a science of rhetoric” (21), explaining that manipulation is not a subject that could be explained and taught by certain universal rules. It is always dependant on time and space.

As Stanley states, “harmful propaganda relies upon the existence of flawed ideologies present in a given society” (21). Those ideologies strengthen themselves by exploiting the societies they rule over (Stanley 21). The effectiveness of harmful propaganda “rests on a theory of flawed ideology”. In *1984*, as was already indicated many times in this thesis, Orwell criticizes totalitarianism, which is an ideology he found the most dangerous and therefore important to be warned before. It is no surprise then, that in the novel, the authoritarian Party essentially relies on propaganda; it is the propagandistic techniques that help them systematically conceal its own agenda and interests, robbing the society of their own opinions. Henceforth, the next section tries to elucidate specific propagandistic elements presented in *1984* to demonstrate just how

salient of a theme inherently connected to manipulation it is and to highlight its role in the overall control of the Party over the Oceanian society.

3.2 Propagandistic methods in the novel

Orwell vividly depicts the insidious nature of propaganda and its role in reinforcing the Party's authority by introducing the reader to the Ministry of Truth, the Party's ultimate device of control over information and shaping public perception. The Ministry of Truth, one of the four main Ministries in *1984* along with the Ministry of Peace, Love, and Plenty, is a department responsible for propaganda, historical revisionism, and the dissemination of Party-approved narratives. Despite its name referring to truth, it alters historical records, produces propaganda materials, and controls the media to manipulate public opinion and reinforce loyalty to the Party. It is tasked with producing propaganda that glorifies the Party, demonizes its enemies, and promotes obedience to Big Brother. The aim is to manipulate public opinion and foster loyalty to the Party. Orwell's portrayal of propaganda could be characterized by its pervasive presence in the citizens' lives as the Party utilizes advanced technological tools like the telescreens to disseminate constant propaganda, shaping the thoughts and behaviours the citizens of Oceania. The propaganda is inevitable, as it is disseminated through various mediums that surround the people pretty much everywhere and all the time – newspapers, radio broadcasts, posters, and films. As previously stated while discussing the mechanization of language in the novel, the main poster with the face of the Big Brother and statement “BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU” (Orwell, *1984* 3, emphasis mine) is a striking example of how the Party keeps controlling the whole nation. The constant exposure to such a short memorable statement helps the Party establish an

obedient society filled with fear. The face of a possibly non-existent physical figure becomes the Party's propagandic weapon. It is a symbol of society living under strictly authoritarian regime, terrified of disobeying the leader.

The Ministry of Truth is distinguished by its constant rewriting of history in such ways that it aligns with the Party's current agenda. The historical records are altered, and inconvenient facts are being erased or distorted to maintain the favourable narrative of infallibility and perpetual progress. This deliquescence of the past makes it impossible for the citizens of Oceania to determine the truth, since it is nothing but a subject to change at the whim of the Party. The alternation of history relates to censorship in general, which is another responsibility of the Ministry of Truth. Any information or literature that would contradict the doctrine of the Party or that would challenge its authority in some way, is being suppressed and eliminated, as the Ministry decides what is to be given access to. This censorship extends to every form of communication, including letters, books, as well as personal conversations. This can obviously be done only by employing a vast network of spies and surveillance technology that monitor not just the behaviour of the citizens, but their thoughts as well (this type of control will be discussed to a greater detail later in the thesis). Ultimately, the Ministry of Truth intercepts and analyses communication for any signs of dissent or rebellion, ensuring that the Party remains able to totally control the whole country.

Winston Smith, the main protagonist of *1984* works at the Ministry of Truth and is therefore responsible for rewriting newspaper articles and historical documents to ensure they conform to the Party's ideology and align with its current narrative. In the novel, Orwell describes somewhat called "memory holes", which are oblong slits protected by a wire grating intended for the disposal of wastepaper – not just regular

paper, but for documents due to destruction. Historical documents and records would be “whirled away on a current of warm air to enormous furnaces which were hidden somewhere in the recesses of the building” (Orwell, 1984 40). By incinerating the undesirable documents, any evidence that contradicts the Party’s version of history could be effectively erased. With no evidence, it would appear certain events and information never even existed, therefore the name “memory hole”.

3.3 Language and propaganda intertwinement in *1984*

As previously suggested, the manipulation of language highly rises effectiveness of the Party’s (and overall) propaganda. They are essentially inseparable from each other, as language is our main communication tool and propaganda is carried out by communicating. The thesis already devoted one chapter to Newspeak, the artificial language created by the Party, and in this part, the paper will try to elucidate how Newspeak helps the authoritarian Party maintain its power, as it is a central part of its propaganda.

The Party wields language as a potent propagandistic tool, as their inextricable intertwinement serves as a powerful instrument of control over Oceania. Rather than simply conveying information, language in Oceania is weaponized by the Party to indoctrinate the citizens, enforce obedience, and erase dissenting viewpoints. By restricting vocabulary and restructuring language through Newspeak, the Party in *1984* eradicates the possibility of rebellious ideas by altering the very means of expression. Furthermore, the evolution of language in propaganda signifies a deep-rooted ideological struggle, where revolutionary propagandists seek to connect with and influence the masses through semiotic frameworks. In the context of the novel, the Party’s linguistic

manipulation highlights the power dynamics, demonstrating the powerful impact of language in forming ideas and perpetuating propaganda.

Orwell proficiently illustrates the intertwinement of language and propaganda, showing how linguistic manipulation acts as a formidable mechanism for the consolidation and maintenance of the Party's authoritarian power, dictating the boundaries of thought and perception. This thesis has already discussed some instances of the intertwinement while analysing linguistic manipulation. Newspeak itself is in its core the centre of the intertwinement between language and propaganda, with its purpose and aim to not only shrink vocabulary, but also to remove unsuitable words and forcing shorter, simpler, and most importantly more convenient ones for the Party's interests. The strategic application of language, exemplified through the development of Newspeak, serves as a potent tool for the Party to constrain thought. By the restriction of vocabulary and altering the linguistic structures, the Party not only limits individual expression, but also reshapes the very essence of reality. Orwell viewed language as "an instrument which we shape for our own purposes" (Orwell, *Selected* 209), as he states in his essay "Politics and the English Language", meaning that it can be easily controlled by its users if they wish so. In his book *The Language of George Orwell*, Roger Fowler analyses this Orwell's essay and comes to the conclusion that its "dominant focus is laziness and complicity", which is what leads the speakers (in this particular context it is politicians we are talking about) to use language dishonestly and stalely – "because it is easier: it saves thought" (33-34). As it was already explained in the chapter on Newspeak, its essential characterization lies in its tendency to extreme restriction and simplification of vocabulary. If we accept Orwell's idea of politicians' proneness to misguide their target audience simply due to time savings' reasons and connect it with the desire to control

masses through propaganda, it is no wonder Orwell created Newspeak as an efficient tool to manipulate the thoughts and actions of the population of Oceania in *1984*.

Furthermore, Orwell describes political language as “designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind” in the same essay of his mentioned earlier (Orwell, *Selected* 221). This projects significantly in *1984*, where the populace completely loses the sense of truth as they face the omnipresent propaganda of the Party, unable to distinguish what is true and what not, accepting the Party’s statement as pure facts.

Language restriction is closely tied to alternation of history. Previously, the thesis already delved into the description of the Party’s control over historical records. The alternation and erasure of individual events or people from existence, and the suppression of inconvenient are all parts of historical revisionism, through which the Party maintains its grip on power as it controls the narrative of the past, present, and future. A famous quote from the book concludes it perfectly: “Who controls the past, controls the future: who controls the present, controls the past...” (Orwell, *1984* 264). This thought of Winston that comes to his mind one day after he wakes up shows how despite his everyday exposure (and contribution, taking into account his job of an editor in the Records Department at the Ministry of Truth) to the constant propaganda, he is still aware of the fact that “the past is whatever the Party chooses to make it,” as it is something only traceable in memories and records (Orwell, *1984* 227). By alternating those, the Party insures to completely control the past to fit its suited narrative, resulting in ultimate control over the present as well as the future.

3.4 Doublethink

When discussing the manipulation of truth and reality in *1984*, it is crucial to analyse the concept of Doublethink, which plays a central role in the Party's control over the populace. Doublethink is the ability to hold two contradictory beliefs simultaneously and accept both as true. Orwell introduces Doublethink in the third chapter of *1984*:

To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them both to be contradictory and believing in both of them; to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it. (*1984* 37)

This dangerous form of cognitive dissonance allows the Party to control the minds of its citizens, creating a society where truth and falsehood are indistinguishable. The usage of Doublethink is the Party's deliberate way of manipulation of reality, allowing it to maintain dominance through the suppression of dissent and the distortion of truth.

Orwell's portrayal of Doublethink highlights the extreme psychological manipulation employed by authoritarian regimes to subjugate individuals and shape collective perception. Embracing Doublethink allows the people of Oceania to accept the Party's propaganda without question, reinforcing its power and eroding independent thought. The Party's mastery of Doublethink is another chilling example of how language can be employed as a tool of oppression, as the line between truth and falsehood blurs completely, enabling the Party to manipulate public consciousness and perpetuate control. A prominent example of linguistic manipulation is the famous Party's slogan itself, to which the populace is exposed to on daily basis: "War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength" (Orwell, *1984* 6). This slogan embodies the Party's use of Doublethink, redefining concepts such as war, freedom, and ignorance as their polar

opposites and blurring the lines between truth and falsehood, which ultimately results in making independent thought virtually impossible. In his book *Orwell's Theory of Language*, Andrei Reznikov explains that Newspeak claiming the opposites actually mean the same thing eliminates the anonymity; “war becomes peace, freedom really becomes slavery, and ignorance really becomes strength” (48). By confusing the binaries, the citizens eventually become unable to think rationally. In the novel Orwell puts it well by stating: “In general, the greater the understanding, the greater the delusion: the more intelligent, the less sane” (Orwell, 1984 229), explaining what important of a role public confusion plays in Party’s propaganda.

Another instances of Doublethink and using combination of words with the opposite meaning are the names of the four Ministries. As I have previously described, the Ministry of Truth’s main focus is propaganda, especially redescriving the past events and alternating facts and history in ways profitable to the Party’s current agenda. The Ministry of Peace is paradoxically responsible for waging war and maintaining the military apparatus of Oceania, overseeing the Party’s military forces, conducting propaganda campaigns to justify wars and conflicts. The Ministry of Plenty, which manages the economy and ensures the distribution of goods and resources, despite its name deliberately maintains scarcity and rationing to keep the population impoverished and dependent on the Party. And finally, the most feared and arguably the most oppressive of all the ministries of Oceania – the Ministry of Love – is responsible for maintaining law and order, enforcing loyalty to Big Brother, and carrying out acts of torture and punishment against those who Party deems as enemies. It is the Ministry of Love where the Party members interrogate and brainwash the caught ‘criminals’, ultimately executing or ‘vaporizing’ them. Representing the pervasive control and

oppression of the Party over every aspect of life in Oceania, the ministries demonstrate the Party's ability to wield power through propaganda, surveillance, and violence, which enables it to maintain its totalitarian rule over Oceania.

This thesis has previously discussed the alternation of history and its cruciality in the effectiveness of the Party's propaganda. As Homi K. Bhabha mentions in his paper "Doublespeak and the Minority of One", it is Doublethink that ultimately makes this alternation to happen. He describes that through Doublespeak, the Party locks the populace's consciousness and eventually tears down their memory, so there is no way to verify historical events, as they are left in a version of present reality that is established by holding contradictory beliefs simultaneously. He then goes on explaining that the process of Doublethink has always been a very strategic and conscious one – that is what ultimately enables the Party to manipulate reality precisely according to their suited ideas. The word itself suggests that the reality has been altered and "one has to subject doublethink to doublethink, so that the knowledge of holding contradictory beliefs is erased" (Bhabha 182). By putting the word into the Newspeak dictionary, by using it as well as demanding its use, and mainly by practicing it, the Party ensures no one questions the meaning of the word Doublethink. It has to be (and for most of the populace it has been) accepted as a non-contradictory term.

Near the end of the novel, during the scene of Winston's torture, there is an instance of Orwell using Doublethink performatively, as an actual practice of torture and thought manipulation. After physically torturing Winston, O'Brien shows him a copy of newspaper that ultimately proves that he was imprisoned and convicted wrongfully – he claimed there was a proof of innocent members of the Party that had been executed; that proof being a photograph in a New York newspaper. This knowledge, of course, was not

considered as desired or allowed to have for a regular member of society, therefore they labelled Winston as a criminal and decided to bring him to the Ministry of Love, where he was to be tortured. O'Brien executed what the Party ultimately always aimed and what this thesis previously delved into – he tried to confound Winston's reasonable thinking and cogitation to the degree that he no longer trusts his own mind, not knowing what the real truth is. After showing the newspaper to Winston and letting him rejoice the fact that he was, indeed, right about the existence of the photograph, O'Brien immediately throws the incriminating evidence into a memory hole, burning it to ashes, and straightly denies it has ever existed. Winston realizes that what he is experiencing is Doublethink in practice. Despite Winston's resistance and attempt to fight back, O'Brien calmly and persuasively states that he, in fact, does not remember ever seeing the paper, nor showing it to Winston:

If he could have been certain that O'Brien was lying, it would not have seemed to matter. But it was perfectly possible that O'Brien had really forgotten the photograph. And if so, then already he would have forgotten his denial of remembering it, and forgotten the act of forgetting. How could one be sure that it was simply trickery? Perhaps that lunatic dislocation in the mind could really happen: that was the thought that defeated him. (Orwell, 1984 204)

Winston is now at the very edge of falling for O'Brien's use of Doublethink. Although being completely uncertain about whether he could rely on his own reminiscence, he is still able to reflect on the overall process, meaning that O'Brien has not succeeded in deleting Winston's memory just yet, which allows him to think about the events that had just happened. Bhabha points out in his article that during the events in the novel that have just been described, Winston's primary concern is not "the vicious circle of deceit

that structures Doublethink as the discourse that keeps the lie always one leap ahead of the truth” (Bhabha 183). He hopes O’Brien is knowingly lying, so that it could be established that despite the “deliberate exercises in Doublethink”, there is still clear distinction between what is true and what is a lie, meaning there could still be a chance to create arguments and discuss (Bhabha 184). It is apparent that more than anything, Winston appreciates and guards his own autonomy and critical thinking, the ability and possibility to think for himself and form opposing, yet authentic thoughts. The Party clearly lying and dismissing the truth is something that Winston seems to accept as something that is not in his power to change. Nonetheless, his autonomy is something that he longs to keep, as if it is the main reason that keeps him being a human and not just another cog in the totalitarian machine.

In conclusion, it has been established that in *1984*, language and propaganda are inextricably intertwined. This chapter analysed how powerful of instruments of control they serve as in the hands of the Party, showing the prominent importance of propaganda while maintaining power over a society. By internalizing the Party’s propaganda, the Oceanian society conforms to its authoritarian ideology, accepting Party doctrine without question. Every single propagandistic method of the Party illustrates its relentless efforts to control information, manipulate public opinion, and maintain its totalitarian rule over Oceania. The individual sub-sections of this chapter showed how through language, surveillance, historical revisionism, and emotional manipulation, the Party shapes reality and suppresses dissent, ensuring its continued dominance over the minds and lives of the citizens of Oceania. Suggestion of the outcomes of Party’s propaganda has already been mentioned – the thesis has explained how by manipulation of language, the Party distorts reality, creating a world where lies are accepted as truth and truth is dismissed as lies,

which inevitably leads to the erosion of trust and undermining the possibility of meaningful communication, isolating individuals from one another. Together with the suppression of truth and the perpetuation of falsehoods, it has also been indicated that tripping the populace of critical thinking and denying it from free expression unavoidably leads to the erosion of individuality and autonomy. Nevertheless, the consequences of linguistic manipulation will be further discussed in the following chapter.

4 CONSEQUENCES OF LINGUISTIC MANIPULATION.

While the previous chapter explored how the authoritarian regime utilizes every medium available to control speech and memory of the populace, this chapter aims to examine the consequences for individuals' mindsets to deepen the understanding of the significance of the outcomes of linguistic manipulation.

4.1 Thoughtcrime and individual autonomy

In *1984*, the Party employs various tactics to ensure conformity and obedience among the populace. All of the restrictions on autonomy are eventual consequences of the Party's totalitarian control over every aspect of life in Oceania, demonstrating the extent to which individual freedom is subjugated to the will of the Party. Oceanian citizens are being constantly monitored by telescreens, hidden microphones, and informers, creating a pervasive atmosphere of fear and suspicion. This surveillance state maintained by the Party stifles any semblance of privacy and personal autonomy, as individuals are unable to act or speak freely without the risk of being reported for so called thoughtcrime.

Thoughtcrime is a term used to describe the act of holding unorthodox or dissenting thoughts that challenge the ideology and authority of the Party. It encompasses any form of independent or critical thinking that deviates from Party doctrine. In Oceania, it is considered a grave offense, punishable by imprisonment, torture, or even execution. The concept of thoughtcrime is central to the Party's control over the minds of individuals in Oceania. By criminalizing even the mere act of thinking rebellious thoughts, the Party effectively suppresses dissent and maintains its totalitarian rule.

Oceanians are conditioned to self-censor their thoughts and feelings, fearing the consequences of being caught engaging in thoughtcrime.

Early in the novel the reader is introduced to an example of thoughtcrime, when the protagonist, Winston Smith, begins to question the authority of the Party and therefore conceals thoughts of rebellion. Winston keeps a diary in which he secretly records his subversive thoughts. Winston embodies the struggle against conformity, as he desires truth and individuality, which challenges the Party's control. This can be remarked on his act of keeping a secret diary – a symbolic act of rebellion against the oppressive regime, which he began as a way to express his forbidden thoughts and emotions. In his diary, Winston writes down his true feelings, doubts, and even criticisms of the Party. By doing so, he attempts to preserve a sense of individuality and some kind of human sanity in a world that aims to erase both. Winston's diary also serves as a narrative device, providing insights into Winston's inner struggles and the oppressive nature of the Party. Through his writing, readers gain access to Winston's genuine emotions and thoughts. This is a sharp contrast with the facade he is forced to maintain in public to avoid detection.

This is definitely considered a thoughtcrime, as it allows him to express his true feelings and desires. While, by writing his diary Winston is able to keep the bits of his own personal autonomy and partially resist the Party's propaganda, it also exposes him to the risk of being discovered and punished by the Thought Police. Winston is well aware of the risks he is taking, noticeably feeling anxious and scared every time he is about to start his writing process. As it is stated in the novel, he “had been making ready for this moment, and it had never crossed his mind that anything would be needed except courage” (Orwell, 1984 9). Winston's fate eventually ends up with the arrest by the

Thought Police and torture, as well as the betrayal of his lover Julia. The fate of the novel's protagonist serves as a chilling reminder of the danger of independent thought in a totalitarian society.

Undoubtedly and unsurprisingly, maintaining its authoritarian power over the system is essential to the Party, which is the reason why it ultimately at all costs aims to prevent free expression and independent thought. Through its propaganda, the Party forces Oceanians to conformity and consentient agreement with the information whose availability depends on the currently suited narrative. By making independent thought unavailable and impossible, the Party ensures its authoritarian position, leaving the individuals with no sense of truth and falsehood. Thus, no one can protest against the established regime and demand changes. The importance of the silence of the opposing voices is tied to the fear of possible chain reaction which could result in a revolution against the system.

This is why even writing a diary in which one captures their own authentic feelings and thoughts is considered a crime in Oceania. It is a form of self-expression which demands freedom of thought. The ability to freely express one's thoughts is a direct threat to the totalitarian system. In his broadcast titled "Literary Criticism IV: Literature and Totalitarianism" from 21 May 1941, Orwell mentions that "Totalitarianism has abolished freedom of thought to an extent unheard of in any previous age" (*Truth* 63) and goes on by putting an emphasis on the importance of realisation that its aims do not end by forbidding expression but establishing the proposed way of thinking. He notes how totalitarianism creates its own ideology aiming to "govern your emotional life as well as setting up a code of conduct. And as far as possible it isolates you from the outside world, it shuts you up in an artificial universe in

which you have no standards of comparison” (Orwell, *Truth* 63). Furthermore, he adds that “the totalitarian state tries, at any rate, to control the thoughts and emotions of its subjects at least as completely as it controls their actions” (Orwell, *Truth* 63). This part of his broadcast sums up perfectly what he later illustrates in the novel. He puts his understanding of totalitarianism into his *1984* by introducing the reader to the methods the Party is using to keep its established position and power and control over Oceania. Everything he states about the aims and goals of totalitarian governments fits perfectly with how the Party and its practices are described in the novel.

Additionally, the direct relationship between freedom of thought and language itself is what constitutes a problem for people to keep their autonomy. Winston himself is aware of this uncertainty while writing his diary. As was previously mentioned, the Party systematically tries to destroy the regular English by creating Newspeak regulates the vocabulary to such an extent that it is more than possible that in less than 70 years from the events of the novel no one would be able to understand the conversations the individual characters were having in the year of 1984 (Orwell, *1984* 55). Hence, it is still unclear to Winston how convenient the whole risky process of writing a diary is, since he cannot be certain anyone could actually comprehensively read the words of his as the vocabulary is in a constant process of reduction. Nonetheless, as previously stated, it offers Winston preservation of his own sanity to a certain degree, as he is (at least partially) able to maintain his consciousness and autonomy. Winston utilizes the writing process as a tool for emotional venting, it gives him hope that by attempting to keep his individual way of thinking, he will eventually be able to recall his former reminiscence of events.

Regardless of his somehow optimistic outlook and former goals, it is noticeable that due to the pervasive propaganda and progressive destruction of vocabulary influences his writing processes and make them more difficult. Winston realises the difficulties of being able to express himself as he feels that the power of expressing himself has decreased and that he even “forgotten what it was that he had originally intended to say” (Orwell, 1984 9). This is a striking representation of the effectiveness of the Party’s ongoing brainwashing of the populace’s minds. It projects in Winston hardly being able to put his thoughts in one piece, even though he has been carrying them in his mind for such a long time. The narrator of the story describes how disorderly Winston’s writing process is, ultimately creating a very messy, confusing and arguably unreadable mass of words. The limitation of vocabulary projects into his writing process greatly, as at one point, all he is able to put down on paper is “DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER” (Orwell, 1984 20), writing this phrase over and over again, noticeably angry and frustrated by his own inability to form proper sentences as he feels the effectiveness of the Party’s ongoing tries to restrict vocabulary by limiting the language principles.

Furthermore, the significance of the purely propagandistic environment needs to be considered. The citizens, as it was already indicated, are surrounded by telescreens and posters through which constant propaganda is being presented. The only problem here is not just the fact that Winston needs to find a spot where no telescreen or camera can detect him, but also the ongoing distraction impeding the citizens to focus on anything else but what is being presented on the telescreens and posters. This is illustrated in another passage of the novel when Winston opens his diary, yearning to write something down. Nonetheless, he cannot focus properly as the telescreens just started playing a new song, and the singer’s voice “seemed to stick into his brain like

jagged splinters of glass” (Orwell, 1984 108). Thus, it is not necessarily just a pure, straightforward propaganda that is to distract the populace and leave them unable to think independently. The Party secures its capability to destroy one’s autonomy and self-realisation diversely and in else ways.

4.2 Critical thinking

The intense propaganda and thought control by the Party effectively limits the citizen’s critical thinking. By manipulating language and information to distort reality, the Party establishes its position in the totalitarian society where Oceanians blindly accept the Party’s truth without questioning it. This suppression of critical thinking is a cornerstone of the Party’s power, as it prevents individuals from challenging authority or questioning the status quo. With analysis of the consequences of this propagandistic control, it becomes clear that critical thinking is not only discouraged, but actively suppressed in Orwell’s dystopian world, highlighting the importance of independent thought in challenging authoritarian regimes.

In the dystopian world of *1984*, critical thinking represents a dangerous act of rebellion against the regime. Thus, Orwell illustrates and highlights just how important challenging and questioning the information we are presented to actually is. In their research focused on “Relationship between irregularities in spontaneous otoacoustic emissions suppression and psychological tuning curves”, Engler et al. explore the irregularities in cochlear frequency selectivity and the potential limitations of objective evaluation methods (1055). A parallel of the consequences of the Party’s propaganda and the findings of this research can be drawn, as the similarities of the Party’s aims to control and shape information available to citizens are evident. With the support of

Engler's research it is safe to say those aims of the Party ultimately influence the cognitive processes of the citizens in Orwell's novel.

Orwell's depiction of a society devoid of critical thinking aptly reflects the dangers of unchecked propaganda and underscores the vital role of independent thought in defying against manipulative control. *1984* illustrates the severe limitations placed on critical thinking among the citizens of Oceania. The Party's pervasive propaganda, such as the manipulation of language through Newspeak and the constant surveillance through telescreens effectively suppresses independent thought and promotes ultimate conformity. By controlling information and manipulating reality, which the thesis described previously, the Party instils fear and obedience, hindering citizens from questioning authority or challenging the status quo, whose keeping is central to the Party as it helps it maintain its power and authoritarian regime. This extreme limitation on critical thinking not only highlights the oppressive nature of the Party, but also underscores the oppressive nature of such propagandistic techniques. The novel ultimately reminds the readers of the importance of preserving our ability to think critically and resist manipulation in a world where propaganda and censorship continuously pose threats to freedom of thought and expression.

4.3 Memory

The effects on memory are a central theme that profoundly influences the characters' behaviour and the overall societal structure. The Party's manipulation of information, history, and language serves to control and distort the citizens' understanding of reality, altering their perception of the past and present. As Lillian Feder states in their article "Selfhood, Language, and Reality: George Orwell's *Nineteen*

Eighty-Four”, “memory provides the only knowledge available, the only psychological preparation for apprehending present reality and for experiencing his own existence as authentic” (400). Thus, the loss of memory is another striking consequence of the Party’s propaganda, closely tied to previously discussed outcomes, as it proves just how much it affects the characters’ selfhood.

In the thesis’ analyses of Doublethink, it has been elucidated that through slogans like “War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength” (Orwell, 1984 6), the Party instils contradictory beliefs that confuse and weaken the individuals’ ability to accurately remember the original meaning of the individual terms. This deliberate distortion of memory results in a compliant and malleable population that blindly follows the Party’s directives. Going back to Winston’s diary, the protagonist apparently struggles to reconcile his personal memories with the Party’s version of events. He is unable to even confidentially state what year it actually is, guessing the date by counting the passed years from his birth (Orwell, 1984 9). The consequences of propaganda on memory become painfully evident, driving the narrative forward and highlighting the destructive power of manipulation and censorship.

The Party’s constant changes of the narrative and the alternation and demolition of historical events and records creates a distorted reality for the characters, blurring the lines between truth and fiction. This manipulation of information not only influences the characters’ perception of reality, but also impacts their memory formation. By constantly revising history and disseminating false information, the Party inculcates confusion and uncertainty in the minds of the citizens, leading to a collective amnesia and complete reliance on the Party’s version of the truth.

The promotion of Doublespeak along with the continuous alternation of official records result in the Party effectively distorting the truth and erasing any trace of dissent or opposition. Writing his diary helped Winston to hold onto his memories despite the Party's relentless propaganda, trying to at least partially keep his individual autonomy. Although striving for a systematic change, the protagonist, being one of a few capable of distinguishing the truth and lies, often ends up feeling hopeless. He acknowledges being powerless, as he knows that falsification of written records lead to the society simply accepting the living conditions established by the Party "because there did not exist, and never again could exist, any standard against which it could be tested" (Orwell, 1984 98). Using propaganda limits the critical thinking of the citizens, as they are constantly fed misinformation and propaganda that is designed to suppress any dissenting thoughts or opinions. By controlling the flow of information and manipulating historical records, the Party effectively eradicates any possibility of independent thinking or questioning of authority, leading to a society where individuals are unable to think for themselves and blindly accept whatever information is presented to them. As already mentioned, the ultimate control over the past helps the Party to form a version of a present reality which is not less indistinctive than the events of the past. Orwell describes this by describing how "everything faded away into a shadow-world" (1984 4), proving that the surroundings the Party establishes by controlling the past blurs the present and future as well.

Through the manipulation of memory, the Party reinforces its grip on power and perpetuates a culture of fear and obedience among Oceania. Orwell illustrates how the Party's propaganda erases individuals' memories and replaces them with the Party's version of events, creating a society where truth is never to be objective or even stable.

This deliberate obscuration of reality results in confusion, fear, and ultimately compliance among the citizens of Oceania. The outcomes of propaganda on memory in *1984* highlights the dangers of unchecked power in a society whose regime manipulates information according to its suited narrative.

CONCLUSION

This bachelor thesis focused on the role of manipulation of language and propaganda in George Orwell's *1984*, ultimately trying to disclose how the authoritarian regime of the Party uses such techniques to maintain its power over the society. The aim of the paper was to highlight the importance of linguistic manipulation in relation to the Party's propagandistic strategies. It closely examined significant sections of Orwell's novel that address the destructive nature of the manipulation of language and its connection to propaganda, as well as the significant social consequences of those techniques. In each chapter, the paper tried to provide essential background and insight into the themes of the Orwell's novel.

Orwell's novel vividly illustrates the profound interplay between propaganda, language, and the maintenance of power within a totalitarian regime. Through the Party's manipulation of language and dissemination of propaganda, Orwell paints a bleak portrait of a society where individual autonomy is sacrificed in the name of collective obedience to the Party's rule.

This thesis aimed to prove that the significance of language in *1984* cannot be overstated. As discussed, Newspeak serves as a powerful tool of societal control that restricts the range of expressible ideas and eroding the capacity for independent thought. By analysing chosen passages from the novel, the thesis highlighted the unnatural character of the manipulated language, suggesting that this kind of linguistic manipulation perpetuated by the Party leads to unconscious society, which ultimately makes it is easy for the regime to hold its authoritative power. Moreover, the thesis showed that despite being impossible to enforce to be used naturally and by the Party's denial of vocabulary, Newspeak is still to gradually replace the Oldspeak. Reflecting the restrictive totalitarian

nature of Party's rule, Newspeak serves the government to maintain a homogenous society, which is easier to keep under control.

Furthermore, establishing the key role of language in Party's spread of its own agenda, this bachelor thesis addresses propagandistic methods such as Doublethink, exemplifying the insidious ways in which language is used to manipulate public perception and maintain the Party's power. By providing an analysis of the repetitive Party slogans, the dissemination of false information, and the rewriting of historical events and records, the thesis highlights how Doublethink stifles critical thinking and reinforces obedience to the Party.

Finally, the thesis discusses the far-reaching inevitable consequences of linguistic manipulation in *1984*. It showcases how profoundly the totalitarian regime and its techniques affect the society. Having no notion of what is true, and no medium to communicate through lead to the lack of critical thinking and being stripped of one's autonomy and individuality. As not just actions, but also dissenting thoughts alone, are considered crime, which is to be ruthlessly punished, the society becomes conformist, unconscious, and therefore easier to have power over. It has been described how by altering the past events and historical records, the Party ensures its controlling position. Memory becomes a battleground between the individual's subjective experiences and the Party's objective manipulation of history. Thus, the distortion of memory leads to a society with no real experience of its past self. This highlights how the restrictive character of all Party's interconnected mechanisms and manners eventually leave behind a society with no history.

To conclude this thesis, it can be affirmed that *1984* reminds the readers of the fragility of language, the importance of truth, and the inherent value of individual

autonomy. Orwell highlights the importance of remaining vigilant against the manipulation of language and the abuse of power.

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