

To Narrow the Range of Thought

Language, Power and Satire in George Orwell's
Nineteen Eighty-Four

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A Thesis Presented to
the Department of British and American Studies
University of Oslo
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Cand. Philol. Degree
Autumn Term 2004

Acknowledgements

Thanks to:

Professor Jakob Lothe for advice and inspiration, and for many productive discussions.

Lecturers, staff and fellow students at the Department of British and American Studies, University of Oslo and at the Department of English, University of Tromsø, for making my student days truly enjoyable.

Susan Jackman for much-appreciated proofreading in the final stages of writing.

My friends and family for all their encouragement, especially my father for technical support.

Eva S. Braaten for her tasty sandwiches, helpful editing skills and invaluable presence.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The problem to be investigated

In his introduction to Penguin Books' 2003 edition of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, American writer Thomas Pynchon notes that '[t]here is a game some critics like to play, worth maybe a minute and a half of diversion, in which one makes lists of what Orwell did and didn't 'get right'' (Pynchon 2003: xiv). In Orwell's fictional world of Oceania telescreens installed in every household enable the rulers to monitor even the farthest territorial corner while at the same time feeding the people with never-ending Party propaganda. Surely, Oceania is the extreme version of the surveillance society, and in many ways the characteristics of such a society seem applicable to our time. Similarly to the geopolitical landscape of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the world of today is largely dominated by superpowers. Television has possibly unparalleled potential for influence and social control, while electronic surveillance of ordinary citizens has become a vital part of police activity against crime. Focusing on such aspects, it will of course be possible to read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as George Orwell's techno-scientific, anti-utopian prophecy of future society, something which the very title of the book invites the reader to do. It is my opinion, however, that this would reduce the importance of the novel's central thematics, aspects of which I will be focusing on in the following chapters. Besides, the futuristic, technical components of Oceanic society are not that numerous – or horrifyingly realistic in the light of today's science, for that matter. The *speakwrite*, for instance, is a rather comical invention which strikes me as hopelessly impractical when it comes to such a large operation as 'rectifying' history. Thus tying in with Pynchon on his introductory point, I do not find that making lists of what features of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* did and did not happen is worthwhile here. A reading like this could even be said to reduce Orwell's literary masterpiece to a vision of a grim future that never took place.

Another possible reading of the novel is to see it as an allegorical critique of historical totalitarian regimes. In the moustached face of Big Brother there is a notable resemblance to Stalin. This would make Trotsky model for the character of Emmanuel Goldstein, and the novel a critique of Stalin's Communist State. George Orwell was a self-declared political writer of the 'independent left', writing '*against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic socialism' (Orwell 1968a: 5, original emphasis), and he was certainly disillusioned by Stalinist atrocities in the first half of the twentieth century. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is, amongst other things, a critique of the Soviet Communist State, as well as of Hitler's totalitarian Third Reich. But the novel is also more than that, and this is what makes it not so much a prophecy as a *warning* – against totalitarian tendencies visible in 1948, at the time when Orwell was working on his narrative, and extended into a fictional future, represented by the year of 1984. In a press release commenting on the reading of his novel as a future prophecy, Orwell wrote:

It has been suggested by some of the reviewers of NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR that it is the author's view that this, or something like this, is what will happen inside the next forty years in the Western world. This is not correct. I think that, allowing for the book being after all a parody, something like NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR *could* happen. This is the direction in which the world is going at the present time, and the trend lies deep in the political, social and economic foundations of the contemporary world situation. [...] *But danger lies also in the acceptance of a totalitarian outlook by intellectuals of all colours.* (Orwell in Crick 1980: 565–66, my emphasis)

I have chosen to read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as an exploration of that something which Orwell warned *could* happen; as an exploration of the dangers of totalitarianism, not primarily as a system of government but rather as a *mindset*, or, put differently: how the system may enter the individual and, more importantly, how a mindless acceptance of its truths may contribute to the corruption of individual thought. These were ideas which fascinated Orwell deeply, tendencies of the contemporary world which troubled him, and which he explored in his

writings. This agenda made my personal encounter with the novel a powerful literary experience. To me, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* served as a literary eye-opener to language use and abuse, as a demonstration of how language may be exploited to serve the interests of particular social groups. This is a matter which to me feels more worrying than ever. At present the possible outcome of political words seem to be overwhelming. What kinds of actions, for instance, can be justified on the grounds that they are committed in the name of a ‘war on terror’? What about the classification of certain states into an ‘axis of evil’, seen as posing a terrible threat against the ‘civilized world’? (O’Reilly 2003)¹ Questions like these seem to be just as relevant today as in Orwell’s time, or in 1984 for that matter.

It follows that the object of my thesis is to examine the mechanisms and potential of mind control and to discuss how language may serve as an instrument in such a process – this as perceived through some of the characteristic features of Newspeak, the ultimate totalitarian language, as well as other forms of language use and other methods of control which are depicted in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. No doubt, Oceania is the *extreme* instance of a post-revolutionary state turned into a tyrannical totalitarian regime. My general approach to the novel will therefore be to see it as Orwell’s vehicle of satire, not only on the many manifestations of totalitarianism, but mainly as his fictional exploration of totalitarianism as language. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in my opinion, demonstrates that manipulation of language and thought can be ‘a plot against human consciousness’ (Rahv 1963: 182) which is just as powerful and disturbing as physical methods of control.

Why I write: introduction to Orwell

In the summer of 1946, three years prior to the publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, an essay entitled ‘Why I Write’ appeared in *Gangrel* magazine. Here, novelist George Orwell

¹ <http://www.altpr.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=23>

discussed his own characteristic approach to literature, and more importantly, what he considered to be the basic motives for writing. Quite openly, Orwell starts out by admitting that the desire to make a name for oneself is something that all writers must share, along with a certain wish to express personal thoughts or experiences artistically. And yet literature is more than that, for ‘the writer’s subject matter will be determined by the age he lives in – at least this is true in tumultuous, revolutionary ages like our own’ (Orwell 1968a: 3). However, ‘writing raises problems of construction and of language, and it raises in a new way the problem of truthfulness’ (ibid: 6). This observation accentuates two central characteristics of Orwell as a writer. First, the comment highlights his preoccupation with language and language related issues. Second, it puts emphasis on the fact that Orwell was a political writer who, in his own characteristic way, was deeply concerned with the social situation of his day. The ‘tumultuous, revolutionary’ age from which Orwell was writing will be the focus of the following pages.

Orwell’s ‘subject matter’

Novelist, essayist, critic, commentator, pamphleteer and journalist George Orwell (born Eric Arthur Blair) spent the first years of his life at Motihari in Bengal, where his father served as a sub-agent in the Opium Department of the Government of India. At the turn of the nineteenth century the British Empire was by far the greatest imperial power in the world. The Indian colony was its jewel in the crown, and the opium trade with China had been legalized and monopolized by the government (Crick 1980: 45). Eric’s father joined the Imperial Forces at an early age, as had his father before him. His children, however, were brought home to be raised there, as was common practice among the Anglo-Indian families, and so young Eric Blair received his education as a scholarship student at prestigious private boarding schools back in England. Reported as being a fairly good student, Eric really

preferred to spend his time reading great literature or writing poems and journalistic pieces for the school paper. At fourteen he went on to study at Eton College, still partially funded through scholarships. Unlike most of his fellow Etonians, however, he would not go on to university after graduation. Giving up on his academic career, he had decided that he would follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather by joining the Imperial Police.

By the time that Orwell's service as an officer in Burma had ended, critical voices back in Britain had started to question England's role as an imperial nation. It is clear that Orwell's encounter with the colonial system made him reject imperialism, but probably only gradually (ibid: 147). From Orwell's later writings, above all the anti-colonialist novel *Burmese Days* (1934) and also the well-known essay 'Shooting an Elephant' (1936), we learn about his growing scepticism towards imperialism and his sense of guilt about the British dominion. Flory, the protagonist of *Burmese Days*, reflects in the following on the lie which he feels that the British in Burma are living on, 'the lie that we're here to uplift our poor black brothers instead of to rob them. I suppose it's a natural enough lie', he says, 'but it corrupts us [...] We Anglo-Indians could be almost bearable if we'd only admit that we're thieves and go on thieving without any humbug' (Orwell 2001a: 37). Perhaps such an observation reflected Orwell's own critical response to the situation? In 1927, after five years of service, Orwell resigned from his post in the Imperial Police. He later stated that this was 'mainly because I could not go on any longer serving an imperialism which I had come to regard as very largely a racket' (Orwell in Crick 1980: 171). Another reason was certainly that he by then had been ill for some time. At repeated intervals during the rest of his life Orwell was troubled by a tubercular lung condition which was believed to have developed during his years in the Burmese climate.

Reading the narratives of George Orwell, perhaps the earliest novels in particular, one is bound to notice that there are certain parallels between the author's personal experiences

and those themes which appear in his work. Orwell himself acknowledged that the contemporary social situation was a major driving force behind his literary production. More than anything else, Orwell felt that he was a writer who had been ‘forced into becoming a sort of pamphleteer’ (Orwell 1968a: 4) by politics; he had in fact *no choice* but to write politically about the things which happened around him. As a writer he was simply an instrument through which certain injustices needed to be dealt with and certain ideas needed to be expressed. This is how strongly Orwell felt about the political purpose of his writing. The issues that the writer must tackle, he said, are determined by his social and historical setting. What, then, were the social events which contributed to the making of political writer George Orwell? What was his subject matter, determined by the age in which he lived?

In ‘Why I Write’, the first-hand experience of British imperialism in Burma is referred to as one of these formative events. The rise of Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy are others, along with Orwell’s ‘expeditions’ among the British working classes in the late 1920s, and his personal experience of poverty and failure. All over Europe, including Britain at Orwell’s time, the post-war disillusionment of the 1920s brought on depression and great social unrest in the early 1930s. Unemployment had reached drastic proportions; only in Great Britain three million people were reported unemployed by 1933. Orwell, returning from Burma, was intent on fully dedicating himself to his long-standing ambitions of becoming a writer. By leaving the Imperial Police and insisting on making his living as a writer, Orwell was turning away from the traditional middleclass values of his family. Now he made himself down and out in London and Paris, changing his appearance and disappearing for days at a time. His literary success, however, did not follow immediately, and for a long period he was forced to take various odd jobs to be able to afford food and shelter while he was working on his writing. The first novel to be published, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), deals with Orwell’s experiences in Paris as a writer who is just starting out, and then a period in

which he went to live with tramps and outcasts in London. The following novel, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), was originally commissioned by Victor Gollancz, Orwell's publisher at the time, who wanted Orwell to study and report on the conditions of coal miners and unemployed in the industrial north of England.

It was around this time that Eric Blair chose to adopt his writer's alias 'George Orwell', a name he probably got from the River Orwell in the Southeast of England. In contrast to 'Eric Arthur Blair', 'George Orwell' had a sort of class-neutral, yet traditional English quality to it. This was surely not without intention. Orwell now explored questions of class differences in both essays and novels. He felt that he was living in 'the most class-ridden country under the sun [...], a land of snobbery and privilege' (Orwell 1968f: 67), and he would often find it impossible to identify with members of his own class. Orwell's sympathies in political matters certainly tended to be with the working classes. And yet he was very much aware of the fact that socially he did not really belong there either. It was impossible to ignore the social gap produced by such a long-established class system as that of Britain. One of Orwell's last diary entries contains a characteristic condemnation of 'the cultivated accents' of the upper-class voices that he hears from his hospital bed in Cranham Sanatorium in April 1949, voices that he had grown unaccustomed to after years among 'working-class or lower-middle-class Scottish voices':

It is as though I were hearing these voices for the first time. And what voices! A sort of over-fedness, a fatuous self-confidence, a constant bah-bahing of laughter abt nothing, above all a sort of heaviness & richness combined with a fundamental ill-will – people who, one instinctively feels, without even being able to see them, are the enemies of anything intelligent or sensitive or beautiful. No wonder everyone hates us so. (Orwell in Crick 1980: 559)

Orwell makes an interesting comment on the relation between class and sociolect. But his characteristic viewpoint is perhaps even more interesting: he is an observer of the so-called

privileged classes, and yet he is referring to his subjects as ‘us’. His own position is thus really within the same class that he is looking at from outside. This observation reflects Orwell’s rather unusual dilemma concerning class in a quite remarkable way.

I have mentioned some of those influential experiences which shaped the political writer George Orwell. But the one historical event that really made Orwell see himself as a ‘novelist with a mission’ (Hammond 1982: 23) was no doubt the outbreak of the Civil War in Spain:

The Spanish war and other events in 1936–37 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, *against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic socialism, as I understand it. (Orwell 1968a: 5, original emphasis)

The 1936 general election in Spain had brought a left-wing republican ‘Popular Front’ to power. In response to the rebellion that soon followed, organized by General Franco and his right-wing army of Fascists, the government started arming peasants and factory workers. This inevitably led to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, or, in some parts of Spain, a workers’ revolution. On a larger scale, the Spanish war must be seen as symptomatic of European power relations at the time. General Franco was receiving support from the German and Italian governments, while the Russians on their side provided the Communist forces with weapons. Many European and American intellectuals saw the war as an ideological battleground for larger forces at play, and they joined the Communist organized international brigades in order to take active part in the war against Fascism.

Among the British anti-fascists who travelled to Spain was writer George Orwell. He did not enlist with the international brigades, however, and instead served as a corporal in the POUM, the militia of the Workers’ Party of Marxist Unification. The POUM was at the time regarded as the ideological sister party of the British Independent Labour Party. Its members

were largely anti-communists of the opinion that Stalin had betrayed the Russian revolution. Although Orwell did share some of the Communist viewpoints (Crick 1980: 329), he must have felt that the position of the POUM was closer to his own. His experiences from Spain are recorded in *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), a book that not only documents his own involvement but also strongly criticizes the Communist party's actions in the conflict. The novel caused great reactions on the British left at a time when the Communists were seen as the natural enemies of the growing fascist threat. The POUM was in fact later accused by the British left-wing press of being secret allies of the Fascists, something which disappointed Orwell greatly.

Orwell was never a particularly active member of a British political party, nevertheless he managed to become one of the most well known political novelists of the mid-twentieth century. His foremost literary goals, as we have seen him declaring in the passage from 'Why I Write', were to promote democratic socialism and to fight totalitarianism in all its darker shades. In *Animal Farm* (1945), the first major novel to be acclaimed by a wide range of critics, the reader is presented with a picture of socialism turned into tyranny. Orwell later confessed that *Animal Farm* was 'the first book in which I tried, with a full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole' (Orwell 1968a: 7). Being a committed socialist, the political affairs conducted in the name of socialism concerned Orwell.

Producing a novel had for Orwell always been exhausting work, and the completion of the following novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), was without a doubt a very demanding task. By this time, Orwell had become a single parent and a widower, and he had settled on the Island of Jura in the Hebrides in order to concentrate on the writing of what was to become his last novel. The process of writing was greatly delayed because of his returning lung trouble, and he was forced to spend several periods in various sanatoriums and hospitals.

In June 1949 he finally managed to get the novel published. It was an immediate success among both readers and critics. Later that same year, still confined to his hospital bed, Orwell married Sonia Brownell, a journalist and friend from several years back. Apparently he had high hopes of recovering sufficiently to be able to continue his literary production. However, this was not the case. In the following January Orwell died of a lung haemorrhage caused by tuberculosis.

Theory and method

In the previous pages I have given a short biographical account of writer George Orwell. Doing so, I am of course aware of the fact that the relationship between the author's life and his or her work is extremely complex, and that a simple biographical interpretation of a literary text may be both unproductive and limiting. 'The relationship between the private life and the work', as asserted by Austin Warren and René Wellek, 'is not a simple relation of cause and effect' (Warren and Wellek 1949: 70). And in the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* such a reading would almost certainly be more or less limiting – both to the novel's contemporary and continuing relevance. Still, I include a brief account of Orwell's time and life. This is mainly because I choose to see the novel as appearing within an important social context, a context which moreover is valuable to take into account in a literary discussion of the text. Reading Orwell's novel as a satire, this particular aspect becomes even more significant, as we shall see later on. This said, however, I must emphasize that the main concern of the thesis is to do a close reading of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, discussing the novel as a text in its own right. My approach will thus be a combination of a text-focused and a biographically-focused reading, something which I believe the choice of literary theory also reflects. This is what I find to be the most productive analytical position when looking at aspects of power and language in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

A short presentation of the theoretical background to my discussion follows here. First, however, I would like briefly to focus on some of the possible obstacles that the reader of the novel may encounter. This because the story is not only presented through what we may think of as a conventional narrative structure of fiction; it also includes other kinds of textual elements, be it through Winston's inscriptions in his diary or the more essayistic extracts from the political manifesto of the Brotherhood. A central concern to my thesis is therefore what kind of text it is that I am dealing with, and what genre? Is it a fictional narrative or maybe, as Ben Pimlott has asserted, an essay disguised as a novel? (Pimlott 1989: viii). What do *I* choose to read it as? In chapter four I will be returning to these questions in more detail. For now suffice it to say that I see *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a fictional novel with some additional and highly interesting elements other than those we tend to expect in novels. This, at least, shall be the starting-point of my discussion.

Central to the theoretical framework of the thesis are Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of language and the modern novel. Bakhtin's notion of the novel as a hybrid literary form suggests a potentially very useful approach to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and his link between language and the novel as a genre is moreover valuable to my analysis. I shall be presenting some of his key terms and ideas, one of which is the notion of *heteroglossia*. This is also an important concept in the late Professor Roger Fowler's study of Orwell's authorship. I certainly owe a great deal to Fowler's work on the language of George Orwell. This has proved to be a helpful tool and opened up for new and fascinating aspects of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Fowler's characteristic perspective is useful to keep in mind when tackling Orwell's writings, both novels and essays.

One might say that a variety of different expressions of language are represented in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Though certainly very obvious in this particular context, Newspeak language is in fact only one of these expressions. In order to understand the function of

Newspeak within the overall structure of the novel, I will be using a Bakhtinian account of the forces at play within language. Bakhtin sees language as a highly dynamic medium, influenced by a social context, related to a world-view, and swarming with voices in dialogic interaction. This will be the main focus in the discussion of Newspeak language, but it is moreover relevant to the exploration of other, equally important expressions of language and style in the text. Language, of course, may also here be encountered in its written form – be it through the words on a piece of paper or through large essay-like sections of the novel. All of these expressions are equally important to an understanding of totalitarianism as language in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Fowler sees such expressions as forming a basically heteroglossic pattern in Orwell's novels. He employs central Bakhtinian ideas in a close textual reading of those narratives from a linguistic perspective. I believe a combination of Bakhtin and Fowler is productive for my project. Bakhtin's notions of language and the novel will act as theoretical background, while Fowler's study, by bringing theory to the text, is equally important. It follows that a discussion of language, style and narrative structure in Orwell's novel will be a most central part of this thesis, and here I will be drawing on terms and insights from the field of narrative theory, especially those that relate to the concepts of characterization and narrative sympathy. As for the concluding discussion of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as satire, here I shall mainly be making use of Peter Petro's informative survey and definition of modern satire.

George Orwell was undeniably an outspoken writer and a fierce essayist, something which not only the magnitude of his literary production but also a great variation in thematics testify to. Parallel to the close reading of his novel I will be looking at some of those ideas which Orwell originally presented through the essay format – chiefly ideas which deal with aspects of language use in contemporary British society. It is certainly impossible to approach essay and novel in the same manner, and this is not my intention either; they represent two

highly different literary modes and as such demand different critical responses. Bernhard Crick, author of one of the most comprehensive biographies on Orwell, notes that it is curious how some critics strive to identify the viewpoint of the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with that of ‘the persona of the documentary writer and the forthright *Tribune* writer, the George Orwell that went beyond Eric Blair’. On the other hand, he says, Orwell ‘digs just this trap for himself: he encourages his readers to be literal-minded’ (Crick 1980: 568–9). This particular aspect is perhaps complicated even further by the fact that fictional narrative in Orwell’s novels often is accompanied by personal commentary, whole passages which the reader may be invited to skip over. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, too, contains elements that ‘break’ with the typical structure of a novel.

In spite of these possible obstacles to interpretation, I will include in my discussion some of those ideas which Orwell presented in his essays. This is mainly because I think they may provide my reading of the novel with some interesting twists. No doubt, there are in ‘Politics and the English Language’ fascinating parallels to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s Newspeak language. On a thematic level, then, the two different literary modes deal with aspects of the same subject, and among the main concerns of both texts is emphasizing that it is important to have a conscious approach to language. Although not making any direct comparison between the arguments put forth in the essay and that which I choose to see as the novel’s thematics, I will be making use of the ideas presented in the essay format as a background to my exploration of totalitarian language in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The first thing that forcibly strikes the reader of one of Orwell’s essays is his extraordinary enthusiasm, observable especially when he writes about some injustice that he wishes to shed critical light on, or some political issue which he feels strongly about.²

² It is of course impossible to make such generalisations about *all* of Orwell’s essays, as they are highly varied and diverse in form, but I believe this is a characteristic feature of those essays which I have chosen to focus on in this thesis.

Orwell's essays are often journalistic in style, and the first-person essay narrator is easily discernible, often by addressing the reader directly, implicitly 'involving' him or her in the discussion. The use of essays in a discussion of the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* must be characterized as a variant of a biographically-oriented reading. There are of course different ways of expressing oneself through the essay format, but I find that Orwell's approach gives the impression of there being a characteristic narrator's voice or persona in the text, which furthermore must be perceived as being closer to the person Orwell than the narrator of novels such as *Animal Farm* or *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

It follows from the above that my critical approach to the text – the method of analysis in this thesis – is a combination of, or alternation between, different analytical positions. Bakhtin and Fowler certainly represent the more text-oriented approach, although within a sociolinguistic framework. In Crick, and to some extent also in Petro, there is on the other hand a greater focus on Orwell's biography and on the historical context. Alternating between and combining both of these general approaches will therefore place me in a mid-position between a basically text-oriented and a biographically-oriented (or rather, context-oriented) reading of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This does not mean that all of the ideas attributed to these various critics and theorists necessarily are directly relevant to my discussion of the novel. Combined, however, I believe that they contribute to the kind of perspective I wish to keep in mind through a close reading of the text. They are the theoretical tools that I have found to be the most useful to my understanding of Orwell's novel. More specifically, the method of analysis will be to study the text carefully, looking at how aspects of language, style and narrative structure combine to produce literary meaning. I shall also be focusing on the context of the time when the novel was written, as well as that which I perceive to be the text's continuing relevance. I will be demonstrating my analytical points by discussing passages from the novel in detail.

At this point, however, I wish to present some of those terms and ideas which form much of the theoretical framework to my thesis. The ideas are mainly drawn from the works of Bakhtin, as well as linguist Fowler's work on the language of George Orwell.

Roger Fowler: the styles of George Orwell

Owing to the popularity of his two last novels *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in particular, George Orwell has gained a firmly held position as a legendary writer of the twentieth century. In the years around 1984 his essays and novels, and of course primarily *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, received new critical attention. This was also recently the case in 2003, the year that marked the centenary of the author's birth year.

Unsurprisingly, quite a few of the works within Orwell criticism deal with his characteristic views on the subjects of politics, class relations, power and language – topics which Orwell saw as interrelated, and which figure in both fiction and prose throughout his literary career. Among the most prominent Orwell critics of recent years is Roger Fowler, whose study of Orwell's language is grounded in the critical approach known as linguistic criticism. His book *The Language of George Orwell* (1995) is a comprehensive survey of Orwell's linguistic and literary techniques, not just focusing on the two last and most well-known works but also dealing with his essays and the earlier novels. As Fowler's work is especially useful to my understanding of the function of Newspeak language in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, I shall be introducing some of his central points here.

Fowler was a pioneer within the field of linguistic criticism and the author of a number of well-known books on the subject matter. Generally speaking, linguistic criticism is the study of literature through language or, more precisely, the study of literary texts by methods and terminology drawn from linguistics. This critical approach was established in the late 1970s, and its predecessors are found among the Russian Formalists and the French

structuralists whose methods of analyzing literature were strongly inspired by linguistics. Fowler uses a Hallidayan grammatical model,³ which focuses on the social semiotic dimension of language. This means that the literary text must be analysed critically not just in terms of surface linguistic features of style;⁴ those styles must be put in the context of the social and historical meanings available to writers and readers – a characteristic approach described by Fowler as ‘a linguistics with a built-in social dimension’ (Fowler 1995: 18). In the case of Orwell, this makes an excellent method for looking at how variants of language, style and structure combine to generate literary meaning in the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Fowler acknowledges the centrality of language in Orwell’s body of writings, both as a means of expression but also as an important theme in itself:

Orwell’s interest in language centers on topics [such as] [...]: language as a political instrument, as an expression of or an inhibitor of thought, and as a practice which is central to all the workings of society: the media, the formation of history, literature, the ideas and the play of the people. (ibid: vii)

All of these areas or functions of language are vital to the ruling Party’s supremacy in Oceania. But Orwell’s views on language on a thematic level are not the only concerns of Fowler. Rather, he demonstrates how these views are tied up with narrative techniques, language and literary style in pieces of prose and in several works of fiction. Stylistically speaking, Orwell’s narratives are very different from one another, and not seldom it is possible to detect a variation of different genres or styles of writing within the same work. His first book, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), for instance, is a sort of fictional

³ From the British linguist M. A. K. Halliday’s works on functional grammar.

⁴ Fowler points to the inherent imprecision in the term ‘style’ because of its varied usage in linguistic criticism. His own use of the term ‘means roughly a distinctive or characteristic manner of writing’, and it is applied ‘where exactness is not crucial and a more technical linguistic term might be intrusive’ (Fowler 1995: 37). I shall be taking a similar approach, understanding style not only as a significant aspect of Orwell’s writing technique and a central part of the novel’s structure but also as generating literary meaning.

autobiography combined with sections of reportage and narratorial comments. The later *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936), on the other hand, is what we would see as a more traditional fictional novel, while *Animal Farm* (1945), by some considered his most well-composed work, is an allegory and a biting political satire. The main focus of Fowler is Orwell's stylistic variation, or the juxtaposition of different styles, and he sees this as the result of years of experimentation with various literary techniques. As for the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this must be seen as incorporating a 'plethora of literary styles' (ibid: 203). This and other of Fowler's ideas will be considered more closely in the subsequent discussion of the novel, mainly in relation to Newspeak language. At this point, however, I want to take a closer look at the theorist whose ideas of language and literature form much of the basis of Fowler's study of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. His ideas will be most important to my discussion of the novel.

Mikhail Bakhtin: language and the modern novel

It is only during the most recent decades that the influence of Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, Russian theorist of language and literature, has gained such a significant position within Western Academia. This may certainly have to do with the fact that Bakhtin's texts largely were produced under Stalinist Russia, in a particularly unfavourable political climate. Bakhtin was even sentenced to a period of internal exile, and it is believed that some of his early works on Marxism and the philosophy of language were published under the name of Valentin Voloshinov, or that he at least contributed to the writing of these texts. Some critics prefer to see his works as the production of the so-called Bakhtin circle. As I will be drawing on central Bakhtinian ideas and concepts in my discussion of the language of *Nineteen*

Eighty-Four, especially on the subject of language and the modern novel, I include a brief introduction to his theoretical basis here.⁵

Bakhtin is perhaps best known for his two distinguished works *Problems of Dostoevsky's Politics* (1929/1936) and *Rabelais and his World* (1965), in addition to several influential essays in which he focused on the dialogic aspects of language and on the novel as a genre. Some of these longer essays were later collected in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), among them 'Discourse in the Novel'. The work of Bakhtin first became known along Russian Formalism in the 1920s. However, Bakhtin was mainly interested in language as a social process, language as the product of continuous dialogue, and not as a closed system of self-identical forms: '*The organizing centre of any utterance, of any experience, is not within but outside – in the social milieu surrounding the individual being*' (Voloshinov 1986: 93, original emphasis). Julia Kristeva, pioneer within Western Bakhtin criticism, sees Bakhtin's work as representative of the Russian Formalist movement's 'most remarkable accomplishments, as well as one of the most powerful attempts to transcend its limitations' (Kristeva 1986: 35). Clearly, Bakhtin thought that a merely scientific abstraction of language did not constitute an adequate formula for the concrete reality of living utterances: 'Ignoring the impulse that reaches out beyond [the word]', Bakhtin says, 'is just as senseless as to study psychological experience outside the context of that real life toward which it was directed and by which it is determined' (Bakhtin 1981: 292).

Language is thus variable and diverse, and not a system of fixed rules. Bakhtin sees language primarily as a social phenomenon, emerging and operating in a society divided by several factors such as different social classes and groups. All uses of language are moreover interlocutory; they occur between people who speak their respective languages. It is important

⁵ My presentation of this model of language and the novel will for the most part be based on the essay 'Discourse in the Novel', published under the name of M. M. Bakhtin. Consequently, I will be referring to Bakhtin, not Voloshinov/Bakhtin.

to bear in mind that Bakhtin is not only focusing on people's linguistic dialects in the traditional, or geographic, sense of the word. Language is here 'conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world-view' (ibid: 270). It is not a neutral medium; the 'world-view' will be determined by the context, the historical and social forces that intersect each and every utterance, which consequently will have not only one fixed or stable meaning but rather is capable of carrying different values and attitudes. It therefore makes sense to talk about the language of a social class, the languages of professional groups, of generations, languages used for different occasions, and so forth.

It becomes obvious that we cannot talk about *a* language but rather a *multitude of languages* inscribed with different socio-ideological accents, taking part in an endless dialogic net where one utterance is the response to a previous one, directed at a new receiver, and thus awaiting another utterance in response: words in endless dialogic communication. Bakhtin uses the term *dialogism* to describe the ways in which languages interact, while *heteroglossia* (literally 'different-speech-ness', often translated as 'multivoicedness') is the diversity of actual languages in use at any time by the speakers of any language. In Fowler the notion of heteroglossia describes features of style in Orwell's novels, as we shall see later on in the thesis.

Moving on to Bakhtin's theory of the modern novel, he characterizes it as 'a diversity of social speech types [...] and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized' (Vice 1997: 65):

The orientation of the words amid the utterances and languages of others, and all the specific phenomena connected with this orientation, takes on artistic significance in the novel style. Diversity of voices and heteroglossia enter the novel and organize themselves within it into a structured artistic system. This constitutes the distinguishing feature of the novel as a genre. (Bakhtin 1981: 300)

Thus, the novel is the primary literary genre in which the dialogic aspect of language is represented. It is dynamic, elastic and flexible. In contrast to the older literary genres (such as the epic or the classical drama), the novel seems for Bakhtin to be the sole genre still capable of change; it has not yet reached its final stage from which it never will develop any further. It is the product of a new era, the never-ending present, bursting with changes and characterized by a multitude of languages in dialogue. In *The Dialogic Imagination* Bakhtin sketches out his history of the novel, focusing mainly on the development of the genre from a monologic mode characterized by great authorial presence to a highly dialogic structure in which different voices (such as the voices of both narrator and characters) are granted almost equal roles. Now if we see this line of development as a fixed scale, the novels of Jane Austen and Virginia Woolf would certainly represent two opposite poles, the former being characterized by the presence of an authoritative and easily discernible narrator's voice, while the latter are more like polyphonies of several central voices.

Because of its ability to incorporate all these different voices, the modern novel is a new hybrid form of fiction compared to the classic, monologic European novel of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Bakhtin sees Dostoevsky as the 'father' of the modern novel. Dostoevsky's novels are *polyphonic*: they differ from their literary predecessors in that they grant the voices of their main characters new importance, thereby more or less bringing them to the same level of authority as that of the narrator or author's voice. The polyphonic novel is a plurality of linguistic elements in dialogical relationships, and heteroglossia is one of its key features. It is important, however, not to see heteroglossia in the novel as only the representation of dialogue or inner speech of various fictional characters. In the literary text voices in dialogic interaction may also be derived from different sources of inspiration, be they texts which represent cultural, historical or political circumstances, or the incorporation

of different literary genres and styles, even various kinds of ‘speech genres’, regional or social dialects, etc. – all contributing to the stratification of language in the literary text.

Since the languages of social heteroglossia represent specific world-views, ‘they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically’ (ibid: 292). The novel, by bringing a number of these socio-ideological languages into play, becomes the literary field where world-views may intersect, communicate or collide. These are some central Bakhtinian ideas which I will be keeping in mind as I now look more closely at various aspects of language use in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. At this point, it may be useful to briefly recapitulate the main problems to be discussed in the thesis.

It is clear that life in Oceania involves no freedom for the individual. At least this is the case for the vast group of citizens who, like Winston, are members of the social class known as the Outer Party. The ruling élite (referred to simply as ‘the Party’) has a firm grasp on every aspect of society, ranging from the individual member’s occupation, dwelling or food rations to less concrete things such as feelings and social relations. Its ultimate goal is to dominate even the inner life of the Oceanic citizen. This objective is to be achieved through the manipulation of language, which, it is believed, eventually will manipulate people’s minds. But is it really possible to do such a thing? And how is it to be achieved? The key, according to the leading minds of the Party, lies in totalitarian linguistics, above all in the form of Newspeak language. What kind of relationship between language and thought, then, does such a model propose? And does this, in the light of other aspects of language use in the novel, come across as a plausible suggestion? What about the enormous project of creating an ideal history from which no evidence of the Party’s past blunders can be provided – will this new history eventually infiltrate or even eradicate people’s own memories of the past? These are only some of the relevant questions to the following discussion of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

I have already mentioned that I will be reading Orwell's novel primarily as his exploration of totalitarianism as a *mindset*, as I fear that an understanding of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* merely as a future prophecy, or just as a critique of historical regimes, will reduce the importance of this and other central themes. The main focus of my discussion will therefore primarily be on significant aspects and representations of language in the novel – both on a thematic, functional and linguistic level. These, I think, are highly relevant to an understanding of the characteristic features of Newspeak language and the underlying idea of language used as an instrument of mind control. It is furthermore in the connection between language and politics that such an idea becomes quite applicable to tendencies in the real world, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* may certainly be read as a satire on these. By looking at the choice of satirical targets and the ways in which language is used to convey that satire, I will demonstrate that satire is the main medium through which Orwell's warning about totalitarianism is expressed. My method or critical approach to the text combines a text-oriented and a context-oriented analysis, as outlined above.

The thesis will be centred on three main topics. Chapter two provides an initial presentation of the novel; however, the main focus will be on the characterization of Winston Smith, on narrative technique and sympathy, and on the styles through which Winston's thoughts and experiences are rendered. Chapter three deals with the characteristics and functions of Newspeak language, as well as other expressions of Party language in the novel, while the general focus of chapter four will be on issues of genre and on the satire of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In the concluding chapter five I will briefly recapitulate the main elements of my discussion, thus pointing to the ways they come together, before ending my thesis with concluding points.

Chapter 2: Characterization and narrative perspective

Nineteen Eighty-Four is a satire on totalitarian tendencies and the misuse of power through language. In many ways it is a very compact novel. This, however, is not primarily because of the plot, which in fact may seem quite simple. Pimlott identifies the ‘crude plot’ as one of the novel’s weaknesses, together with a general ‘lack of characterisation’ (Pimlott 1989: vi). The plot of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is simple if we choose to see it as the succession of events, from A to Z, which takes us through the relatively short time period of those decisive episodes which lead to Winston’s breakdown in the hands of his tormentors. However, by relating plot to character, the question may prove to be more complex than stated initially. By plot I mean the way in which the story is presented to the reader, thus focusing on its inherent dynamics: ‘Plot refers to the way in which the events are combined, structured, and developed’ (Lothe 2000: 72). Furthermore, as these events in general are constituted by actions performed by characters, it is safe to say that the characters are strongly involved in the plot. Character and plot are closely linked, and it follows that the way in which a character is established is conveyed through the plot. Thus the seemingly ‘simple’ plot of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is, as we shall see, complicated by a number of significant elements related to the concept of characterization.

The characterization of Winston Smith will be the main focus of this chapter. In what follows I shall discuss the development of action through three stages of the narrative, leading to Winston’s ultimate downfall at the end of the novel. As it is mainly through the consciousness of Winston that the reader experiences Oceanic reality, I will be looking at some of those narrative strategies through which Winston is established as the central character, aspects of the novel which furthermore are relevant to an understanding of narrative perspective and sympathy. It is necessary to understand the voice of Winston as a contrast to

the essentially oppressive voices of the Party which seek to monopolize discourse in Oceania. Winston's voice is constituted of several styles, and these are related to the presentation of external surroundings in the novel. Surely, some of the complexity of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is due to the broad picture of totalitarian reality which the novel presents. Its setting, a gloomy futuristic society of power-hungry governments and stifled individuals, is packed with dark and fascinating details. Here, manipulation through language is only one of several darker shades of the ruling Party's scheme to maintain its position of absolute power.

A brief outline of story and setting is included below. Although perhaps not that important as a reminder of the actual story in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (which certainly is rather well-known), the synopsis puts in context features of the novel which I will be referring to in the following discussion. My discussion will naturally move beyond the summary in order to consider the text in detail.

Synopsis

The opening paragraphs of a novel will often be indicative of the following story. Precisely so in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where the two very first paragraphs serve to introduce the reader to the story's main character, the society in which the action takes place, and last but not least, the great influence of the Oceanic state administration. The scene is set: it is an unfriendly urban landscape of deserted streets and miserable old buildings. In Victory Mansions – certainly a quite ironical name for such a run-down house – the power has been cut off for the day, and so Winston Smith has to climb all the stairs up to his apartment instead of taking the elevator. Winston seems to be in just as bad condition as his residence. He is troubled by an itching varicose vein and needs to halt and catch his breath several times on the way up. Winston's physical condition does in fact fit in quite well with the surrounding disintegrating city. Moreover, these opening paragraphs serve to establish a sense of the never-ending presence of Big Brother. Big Brother is the face of Oceania's ruling Party. He is the

protecting elder sibling of his people, the all-seeing leader of the nation; it is simply impossible to escape his gaze. In the hallway of Victory Mansions his enormous eyes are watching Winston from a gigantic poster on the wall.

We soon learn that Winston lives in London, chief city of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the Oceanic provinces. Oceania is one of the three totalitarian superpowers into which the world is divided. Two of these states are always at war with the third, although the constellations continually change. In this way global warfare never really ends, and so Oceania is in a more or less permanent state of war. The general structure of society is pyramidal and three-layered: on top the Inner Party, a small élite of Party intellectuals; then the Outer Party, mostly consisting of state bureaucrats like Winston; and finally the proles, Oceania's lower class, 'those swarming disregarded masses [constituting] 85 percent of the population' (Orwell 2003: 80).⁶ The proles are for the most part left alone, while Outer Party members are under the Party's constant surveillance and control: two-way telescreens monitor their actions while simultaneously feeding them with propaganda. All human bonds are systematically destroyed in Oceania, and children are from an early age encouraged to spy on their own parents. Any sexual contact or relationship not sanctioned by the Party is prohibited – even a gesture or a suspicious word uttered in sleep may in fact reveal a person as an enemy of the Party.

Combined with such strategies of surveillance and control, the supreme position of the Party is maintained by a continuous rewriting of history in order to suit its varying needs. Twenty-four hours a day, millions of people are working on this gigantic project. Meanwhile, others are employed with constructing a new and condensed form of language – Newspeak – which in its final perfected version will render people incapable of uttering rebellious thoughts. The Newspeak word for harbouring rebellious ideas is *thoughtcrime*.

⁶ Further page references are included in the text.

At the opening of the novel Winston is frustrated with the restricted kind of life he is living in Oceania. Is there any chance of a brighter future? Is he completely alone in his desire to stand up against the Party? Questions like these seem to have been troubling him for a long time, and now the moment has finally come when thoughts are put into action. Winston writes 'DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER' (20) in his newly obtained black-marked diary. The Party cannot control the words of a private diary, and so this is considered a highly illegal expression of individuality. The rebellion against the Party is carried on even further as Winston becomes the lover of Julia, a young co-worker at the Ministry of Truth, although he is quite sure of the fact that they are bound to be discovered sooner or later.

Things are starting to look up when Winston and Julia one day are contacted by a man called O'Brien, an Inner Party member also working at the Ministry. Winston instinctively believes that O'Brien is involved in the Brotherhood, and he promptly volunteers in the resistance. Rumour has it that the Brotherhood is an organization of dissenters run by a man called Emmanuel Goldstein working in secret to undermine the Party. Unfortunately for Winston, it turns out that O'Brien has acted as a Party spy all along, playing cat and mouse with Winston. In the closing stages of his game Winston is arrested, brainwashed and tortured until he breaks down completely. Forced to abandon his love for Julia, Winston comes to unconditionally accept the mentality of the Party. He has not managed to escape the gaze of Big Brother after all.

I am of course aware that a lot of information has to be left out when summarizing a novel of this magnitude. Although I have tried to give an impression of the story as it is rendered in the novel, it is still *my* presentation of selected details and events; no summary can be entirely neutral. However, I believe that the summary is the starting point of the discussion, pointing it in the direction that it will take.

Structure and development of action

As the above summary indicates, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is structured into three main parts of roughly equal lengths, followed by a thirteen pages long essay-like Appendix on 'The Principles of Newspeak' (343). The Appendix is footnoted on page six, and so the reader is quite early given the choice of turning over the pages in order to learn more about Newspeak language before proceeding with the actual story. Why Orwell chose to structure his novel like this, separating most of the Newspeak information from the story instead of incorporating it into it, is a question worth considering. The Appendix certainly stands out from the rest of the novel, both in terms of structure, thematics and narrative style. I think a reading of the Appendix prior to the story will influence *how* you read the story. What I mean is that through an initial presentation of Newspeak language, and especially of the Party's intentions behind this kind of linguistic experiment, Orwell is drawing our attention to those aspects of the story which point in the direction of satire. The Newspeak project is founded on dubious logics and includes some rather implausible elements. I will be discussing both the Appendix and further aspects of Newspeak language in chapters three and four.

As for the story, or the development of action, this follows a similar tripartite structure, organized by the three main parts mentioned above. The first part serves as an introduction to central characters and themes, all presented through Winston's experience of Oceanic society and through his reflections. Winston is already in possession of his diary at the opening of the novel, and this functions as his medium of expression in the first phase of opposition to the Party. On the level of story the diary is Winston's outlet of frustration and also part of his efforts at recollection. On a textual level, however, the frequent diary entries function as structurally unifying elements because they are dotted through all eight chapters of the novel's first part.

Most of the background to the action being provided in part one, the plot is further developed in the second part of the novel where rebellious words are turned into rebellious actions. We learn about Winston and Julia's love affair, their secret hideout, the encounter with O'Brien and his subversive manifesto of the Brotherhood. If the story has one major point of climax action-wise, this takes place at the end of the second part as Winston and Julia are nailed by the Thought Police. Up to this point the action has gradually been built up, but after Winston's arrest and imprisonment in the Ministry of Love his rebellion is naturally brought to an end, and the third part of the novel focuses entirely on his so-called 'reintegration' into Oceanic society. The optimistic reader might perhaps still hope that Winston manages to find some way out of his difficulties, that he will be capable of protest, or that the Party's reintegration will fail, but the final part certainly seems consistent with the rest of the story. Reading, I feel that I *know* Winston will be broken in the end; it is a logical conclusion to the preceding narrative – just as Winston himself has known this from his very first formulations in the diary:

Whether he wrote DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER, or whether he refrained from writing it made no difference. Whether he went on with the diary, or whether he did not go on with it, made no difference. The Thought Police would get him just the same. He had committed – would still have committed, even if he had never set pen to paper – the essential crime that contained all others in itself. [...] Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed for ever. You might dodge it successfully for a while, even for years, but sooner or later they were bound to get you. (22)

The pessimism in Winston's line of reasoning is quite evident. But there are other, structural elements of the narrative which also point towards the inevitable destruction of Winston by the Party. Among these is the incorporation of an old nursery rhyme, 'Oranges and Lemons', the first parts of which Winston hears again in Mr Charrington's junk shop, and which for some reason acquires an almost mystical quality for him. Even from these first lines Winston

knows that the rhyme ends in: ‘Here comes a candle to light you to bed, here comes a chopper to chop off your head’ (112). This kind of ending may certainly be read as a prolepsis,⁷ implying in advance that which later will happen to Winston. As for the preceding stanzas, they are provided bit by bit by those characters that come to play a part in Winston’s story: Julia and O’Brien (both as Mr Charrington and as O’Brien), besides Winston himself. In the same way as Winston’s diary entries through the first part of the novel bind the narrative together, the gradually uncovering of the six lines of the nursery rhyme functions as a unifying element, while also pointing towards the apparently inevitable tragic ending.

The characterization of Winston Smith

Nineteen Eighty-Four is not first and foremost the account of doomed Winston Smith, his life and downfall, although it is primarily through the character of Winston – through the representation of his sensations and reflections – that the reader may access the novel’s totalitarian reality. It is therefore worth looking at the textual strategies through which Winston is established as the central character of the novel, and here I will be focusing in particular on those narrative and stylistic features which constitute his personal voice.

Predominantly focusing on the ‘considerable range of voices’ which he sees as inhabiting Oceanic society, ‘the voices of the other’, Fowler argues that the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* must be perceived as being of an essentially heteroglossic make-up (Fowler 1995: 293). Fowler’s is an especially valuable perspective because it encourages a reading where the focus is also on the voices which do not belong to the ruling Party, rather than on Newspeak language alone (Newspeak is, after all, the most obvious example of the novel’s monologic voices, as I will be discussing in chapter three). These heteroglossic voices, thus

⁷ Prolepsis (commonly referred to as ‘foreshadowing’) is a temporal variation in the chronological order of the events which make up the story. Jakob Lothe defines prolepsis as a narrative manoeuvre, an evocation in advance of an event which will later take place (Lothe 2000: 55).

including the voices of the Party, can be attributed to various characters in the novel, they stem from written publications, or they are generic and stylistic variations, and representations of speech styles such as the working-class sociolect referred to as the Cockney of the proles.⁸ More specifically, however, and this will be significant to my project, Fowler identifies ‘the plethora of styles’ generated by Winston’s consciousness. These are:

his own ruminative and reflective thought-processes, his physical reactions, his imaginative flights, his romantic fantasies in the deceptive language of pastoral, his feel for the atmosphere of the city in which he dwells, the way he represents his own violent emotions, the way he sees violence to others, and experiences violence by others upon himself. (ibid 1995: 203)

Relating my discussion of the characterization of Winston Smith to two of these styles, namely Winston’s feel for the atmosphere of the city and his romantic fantasies, I will demonstrate that the multi-faceted voice of Winston, by entering the heteroglossia of Orwell’s novel, functions as a contrastive force to Newspeak and the languages of the Party.

The opening chapter of the novel contains an introductory presentation of Winston’s external appearance by the narrator. Winston is a smallish frail figure in Party overalls with skin that has been roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades, and his ‘naturally sanguine face’ (4) suggests that he is a basically optimistic guy, though perhaps a bit innocent. These are certainly not the physical attributes of your average hero. Through his external appearance alone Winston does not in any way signal that he has got what it takes to stand up in the face of adversity. Rather, it seems like the misery of his surroundings is draining him of physical strength, leaving him weak and in poor health. Winston is an

⁸ The representation of prole speech in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can of course be linked to the discussion of class distinctions in Oceanic society, something which in turn is relevant to the more general issue of language and power relations in the novel. Although certainly relevant to the project of this thesis, I will not be focusing on prole speech and on class distinctions as such here, but rather on the voice of main character Winston Smith. This is mainly because I think such a focus is valuable to my later discussion of Party voices, and also simply because I need to limit the object of this thesis.

insignificant person, one of the millions of Outer Party bureaucrats who serve the state administration. His name, however, if we choose to see it as having a characterizing function, might suggest otherwise.

The assigning of names to characters is an interesting variant of the kind of character indicator in a literary text which we call direct definition. Naturally, characters' names do not necessarily need to have a characterizing function, but they *can* have one (Lothe 2000: 81–2). In the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this would certainly encourage an interesting reading of the main protagonist. 'Smith' is an extremely common British surname, possibly suggesting that Winston is the 'common man'. And yet the ordinariness of 'Smith' is contrasted with the first name 'Winston', a name which Orwell may have borrowed from English statesman and war hero Sir Winston Churchill who led Britain successfully through the Second World War (Crick 1980: 567). The popularity of Churchill was certainly at its peak around the time Orwell wrote his novels. It follows that Winston has the potential to be a hero like Churchill, to fight against the oppression of his people. And yet he is not purely heroic, for he is at the same time the ordinary man; there is a chance that he will meet the same fate as every other ordinary man subject to the Party's doctrines, that what courage he may possess inevitably will be turned into fear and blind acceptance of the reality dictated by the Party. At least as can be indicated by his name, Winston embodies a duality which I think makes his character interesting, a duality which makes him stand out from the other, rather one-dimensional characters we encounter in the novel.

There are a number of elements of characterization which add to our total picture of Winston. One such character indicator is the milieu, or the external (physical/topographic) surroundings which contribute to his indirect presentation (Lothe 2000: 84). Winston's physical state at the opening of the novel echoes that of the surrounding disintegrating city: he seems to be falling apart, just like the crumbling old buildings in the city of London. Although

probably nearing age forty (something which cannot be known for sure as dates and years have faded into the shadow-world of the ever-changing past in Oceania), Winston has in reality got the physique of an eighty-year-old. Nevertheless, his physical condition changes over time, just like the atmosphere and external surroundings change through the three stages of the narrative.

The prevailing atmosphere in the first part of the novel is that of a city in war-time. Orwell has in the opinion of many critics laid his scene right in the middle of bomb stricken city of London during the Second World War. There is certainly nothing here of the ‘glittering antiseptic world of glass and steel and snow-white concrete’ (218) which the reader might expect of a novel set in the future. Winston moves in a cold and grimy urban landscape, among the rubbles of bombed-out buildings. By now the Oceanic citizens have become used to rationing and synthetic food, besides queues, daily power cuts and economy drives. Everything is covered in layers of dust; there is even dust in the creases of people’s faces. One critic has rightly pointed out that Orwell’s strength as a writer is his great capability of evoking a distinct atmosphere, a certain mood or setting (Hammond 1982: 40). Fowler refers to Winston’s ‘feel for the atmosphere of the city’ as one of the styles generated by his consciousness (Fowler 1995: 203). I find that the evocation of an atmosphere is one of the most fascinating qualities of the first part of the novel in particular. Having said that, however, I hasten to add that ‘atmosphere’ is a somewhat elusive term which sometimes may be more confusing than clarifying when used to describe a specific literary quality. No doubt, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact constituent aspects of the term, and I will therefore try to tackle that which I have chosen to call the atmosphere(s) of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by pointing to those details in the text which I believe serve to constitute a distinct atmosphere. Let us take a look at the way in which one of the old flats in Victory Mansions is presented in part one of the novel. Our hero is fixing a blocked-up drain at his neighbours:

The Parsons' flat was bigger than Winston's, and dingy in a different way. Everything had a battered, trampled-on look, as though the place had just been visited by some large violent animal. Games impedimenta – hockey sticks, boxing gloves, a burst football, a pair of sweaty shorts turned inside out – lay all over the floor, and on the table there was a litter of dirty dishes and dog-eared exercise-books. On the walls were scarlet banners of the Youth League and the Spies, and a full-sized poster of Big Brother. There was the usual boiled-cabbage smell, common to the whole building, but it was shot through by a sharper reek of sweat, which – one knew this at the first sniff, though it was hard to say how – was the sweat of some person not present at the moment. (25)

The first thing I would like to note about this passage is that there is an overall focus on detail rather than overview. I am referring to those very simple and concrete noun phrases through which the material objects of the room are presented to the reader. What we have here is basically a room crowded out by its own inventory, a flat which is nothing more than a list of objects – sports equipment, dishes, books, banners and posters – all of which are scattered randomly about, thus creating a sense of chaos and disorder. Now by looking more closely at the way in which these various objects are further described, we notice a certain lack of pleasantness. Things are dingy, battered, trampled-on, sweaty or dirty; even such a microscopic detail as a dog-eared book contributes to giving the whole place a shabby feel. These inserted negative adjectives, as well as the actual selection of the material details which represent the room, are extremely effective in evoking the atmosphere. Moreover, on the basis of such seemingly precise and detailed descriptions of a material reality, the reader is left with the impression that Winston is a particularly careful observer of his immediate surroundings. However, as there is an overall emphasis on physical squalor and on how Winston responds to this, we must not forget to take into consideration the fact that not only an observation but also an *evaluation* of the material reality is worked into the text. It is safe to say that external surroundings will not be conveyed entirely calmly, leaving the readers to make up their own

minds about them; rather we are simultaneously told – through the character of Winston – how to respond to them.

In the essay ‘Why I Write’ Orwell declares that ‘good prose is like a window pane’, thus implying that language should somehow have a transparent quality and not get in the way of representing things as they really are (Orwell 1968a: 7). Commenting on the atmosphere of the city of London in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Fowler finds that an ‘illusion of clarity and precision’ is created through linguistic techniques such as the ‘focus on detail or ‘microscopism’; the enumeration of facts; and a preoccupation with textures, spatial dimensions and other material considerations’ (Fowler 1995: 64). If language is a window-pane, in this case it is perhaps not entirely spotless? To some extent all fiction must be unrealistic, that is, creating an illusion of reality. But this illusion, I think, may just as well be called an impression, an effect of the text on the reader. The point is that through the mode of writing that may be called realistic fiction, details of the setting, characters, or events are made to seem plausible to the reader. And this is an aspect of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which makes the sense of atmosphere extremely haunting. One of the constituent features of the atmosphere is the effective presentation of settings and locations through a list of details described in a simple and almost documentary manner, as illustrated by the above excerpt, hence a strong feeling of reality; the reader is experiencing the hardships of the Oceanic citizen through Winston.

But the sense of atmosphere is not based entirely on the visual observations of Winston alone; constant references to smells also contribute to its evocation. Orwell, as Irving Howe has noted, ‘had the best nose of his generation’, being ‘remarkably keen at detecting loathsome and sickening odors’ (Howe 1992: 243). Take the Parsons flat, for instance, which is filled with the ‘usual boiled-cabbage smell’, but ‘shot through with a sharper reek of sweat’ (25). Surely none of these smells are rendered as very pleasant, and combined they must have

an even more nauseating effect. Reading on, we learn that Winston in other parts of the city encounters other, equally disgusting smells. From the open doors of a proletarian pub ‘there came forth a smell of urine, sawdust and sour beer’ (97); in the canteen of the Ministry of Truth there is ‘a sourish, composite smell of bad gin and bad coffee and metallic stew and dirty clothes’ (68); and in Winston’s hallway there is a persistent smell ‘of boiled cabbage and old rag mats’ (3). We notice that all of these odors are associated with shabbiness and scarcity, thus adding to the general feeling of physical squalor in Oceania. The inclusion in the text of such reports of smells provides the novel’s material reality with an extra dimension.

Being a careful observer, Winston is at all times particularly aware of his own physical condition. I have already mentioned that his appearance is mirrored by the atmosphere and external surroundings, and that these change through the different stages of the narrative. In the novel’s first part Winston, like the surrounding city of London, is in a state of decay. In the second part of the novel, however, we encounter a new and quite different kind of landscape. This is the landscape of the Golden Country, a place which Winston recurrently visits in his dreams, and which he sees again in real life when he goes to the countryside to be alone with Julia for the first time:

They were standing in the shade of hazel bushes. The sunlight, filtering through innumerable leaves, was still hot on their faces. Winston looked out into the field beyond, and underwent a curious, slow shock of recognition. He knew it by sight. An old, close-bitten pasture, with a footpath wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the ragged hedge on the opposite side the boughs of the elm tree swayed just perceptibly in the breeze, and their leaves stirred faintly in dense masses like women’s hair. Surely somewhere nearby, but out of sight, there must be a stream with green pools where green dace were swimming? (141–2)

There is a great contrast between the landscape of the Golden Country and Parsons’ claustrophobic flat, which I see as representative of the squalid urban setting of the novel’s

first part. Negative adjectives are all gone in the above passage – instead the beauty of nature is evoked through carefully selected details of a peaceful rural landscape. The sunlight is hot on Winston’s face and there is a faint, calming breeze in the air. Walking the streets of London, Winston has been trying to escape the coldness of the vile winds. The contrast to the Golden Country could not have been more striking. Symbolically enough, this is where Winston and Julia make love for the first time. According to Fowler, the above passage is rendered in the style of Winston’s ‘romantic fantasies in the deceptive language of pastoral’ (Fowler 1995: 203). I will not be going into those linguistic features which he sees such a style as being composed of, only indicate that I choose to see the Golden Country as representative of the atmosphere of the narrative’s second part – precisely because it stands out so piercingly against the grimness and filth of the city of London in the first part.

In fear that it would raise unwanted suspicion, Julia and Winston will not risk going back to the countryside again. Instead, they meet in deserted places in the city as often as they manage to slip away from work and ‘communal recreation’. The physical landscape of the Golden Country is in fact the setting to only one of the ten chapters in the novel’s second part, but the warm feeling of it spills over into the following narrative. In contrast to the preceding and following stages of Winston’s story, there is a general feeling of hope in the middle part of it, and it seems that he for the first time really allows himself to hold on to the slightest hope of survival. Winston’s desire and emotions are renewed. Does he perhaps see in these some powerful human instinct that will tear the Party to pieces – a belief that love will conquer all, no matter what?

As the months go by, Winston’s health improves with the change of atmosphere,

Winston had dropped his habit of drinking gin at all hours. He seemed to have lost the need for it. He had grown fatter, his varicose ulcer had subsided, leaving only a brown stain on the skin above his ankle, his fits of coughing in the early morning had

stopped. The process of life had 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. (173)

Now let us compare this passage to a later report of Winston's physical condition, this from part three of the novel:

As the gin rose in him he belched through purple lips. He had grown fatter since they released him, and had regained his old colour – indeed more than regained it. His features had thickened, the skin on nose and cheekbones was coarsely red, even the bald scalp was too deep pink. (332)

At this point in the story Winston has just been released after spending an indefinite period of time in the Ministry of Love. He has been brainwashed, mentally and physically abused, broken down completely and rebuilt again – at least after a fashion. Comparing these two passages to one another, one of the first things to notice is that Winston in both instances is reported to have grown fatter. His weight-gain is not necessarily of the good in both cases, however; while in the first instance it is a sure sign of health and new life, in the second it is associated with a bodily imbalance which makes his appearance almost grotesque. The impression is strengthened by the description of colours in Winston's 'new' face: his lips are now purple, not red or pink as we might expect; he has not only regained his old colour, it is in fact '*more than regained*'; just as his skin is '*coarsely red*', and his bald scalp '*too deep pink*' (my emphasis). Referring to Winston's facial features, adjectives of colour are modified by intensifying adverbs, and the overall impression is that his appearance is somehow more than natural. There is in fact something slightly artificial or inhuman about it.

'Artificial' is certainly the word which I believe most fittingly expresses the atmosphere of the cellars of the Ministry of Love, the place in which nearly the entire last part of Winston's story takes place. There is one sentence which frequently appears in Winston's dreams, and this has stuck to his mind: 'We shall meet in the place where there is no

darkness' (29). Sensing that O'Brien formulates these words, Winston imagines that they refer to somewhere safe, some free-zone or future society in which the shadows of the Party cannot reach him and Julia anymore. The formulation could also easily describe the glorious sunlight of the landscape of the Golden Country, but unfortunately the irony is directed against Winston. Surely enough, he is to meet O'Brien again – in the place where there is no darkness. However, O'Brien turns out to be his tormentor, not his liberator, and the place with no darkness is really the white-walled windowless cellars of the Ministry of Love, whose cold artificial lighting never is turned off. Winston does not have any points of orientation left, it is impossible to tell whether it is day or night, or whether his cell is below or above ground. He is deprived of all that which previously made him a sentient individual, and born again as one of the Party's mindless machines. Now he becomes 'simply a mouth that uttered, a hand that signed, whatever was demanded of him' (278).

One critic has asserted that 'Winston must break down completely and be left utterly without dignity; otherwise the totalitarian system Orwell tried to warn us of would not seem threatening enough' (Zwerdling 1971: 94). If it were not for Winston's downfall, the inevitable ending to his story, I believe that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* would not have had such a memorable impact on succeeding generations of readers.

Perspective and narrative sympathy

A common opinion among commentators on Orwell's novels seems to be that they have a certain didactic motivation, more or less explicitly stated.⁹ This didactic element has been seen as playing down or shifting the focus from the more literary qualities of those narratives,

⁹ In his essay, 'Orwell and the Techniques of Didactic Fantasy', Alex Zwerdling argues that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* must be perceived as a 'didactic fantasy' (Zwerdling 1971: 89). For a discussion of the term 'didactic' and whether I think it can be productively applied to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, see chapter four.

one of the consequences being that they are inhabited by basically ‘flat’ characters.¹⁰ A prime example is the character of Squealer in *Animal Farm*, the pig who goes around to the other animals telling them that Napoleon is always right, no matter what previous cruelties he has organized on the farm. Thus Squealer’s function in the novel is to symbolize the propaganda machine of the totalitarian government. But is it possible to see the protagonist of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as another of Orwell’s flat characters? I do not think so, certainly not entirely, and at least not when compared to the other characters in the novel. While the latter come across more as types than fully-fledged characters, Winston changes through the story; he has several character traits, and his voice is composed of several styles or languages. Let us briefly recapitulate Winston’s character indicators in the text so far.

Suggesting that it may have a characterizing function, I have given a possible reading of Winston’s name above, indicating the duality of character that this may suggest. More importantly, Winston is established through an indirect presentation of his actions, through his observations and reflections, and through the narrator’s presentation of his external appearance. This characterization is furthermore linked to the styles through which external surroundings are rendered in the novel. Winston’s actions may at times seem a bit unplanned, but all the same he goes through with that which in the eyes of the Party is the most serious misconduct of them all: he tries to be a human being on his own and not simply a member of the Party. The Newspeak word for this is *ownlife*, ‘meaning individualism and eccentricity’ (94). Moreover, Winston’s physical condition changes with the different stages of his opposition to the Party, and I have discussed how this variation is mirrored by the external surroundings represented by the city of London, the landscape of the Golden Country, and finally the cellars in the Ministry of Love, each atmosphere rendered in a different style. It

¹⁰ The question of ‘flat’ versus ‘round’ characters may be related to E. M. Forster’s notion of character development, first proposed in his *Aspects of the Novel*. A ‘round’ character will develop and change through the story, while the ‘flat’ character does not develop, and therefore appears more as a type (Forster 1971: 75).

may be useful to look more closely at narrative perspective and representation of discourse in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

‘What a character says or thinks – whether it be in dialogue, direct speech, or free indirect discourse – often has a characterizing function through both content and form’ (Lothe 2000: 83). Winston Smith is clearly a careful observer, and also someone who constantly evaluates his experience of Oceanic society. The distinction between Winston’s observations of the material reality and his response to it becomes even more blurred (and thus more effective in evoking the atmosphere) by the fact that the ‘interminable restless monologue that [has] been running inside [Winston’s] head, literally for years’ (10) is presented through free indirect discourse. Let us take a look at how this effect is achieved linguistically:

Winston had taken up his spoon and was dabbling in the pale-coloured gravy that dribbled across the table, drawing a long streak of it out into a pattern. He meditated resentfully on the physical texture of life. *Had it always been like this? Had food always tasted like this?* He looked round the canteen. A low-ceilinged, crowded room, its walls grimy from the contact of innumerable bodies; battered metal tables and chairs, placed so close together that you sat with elbows touching; bent spoons, dented trays, coarse white mugs; all surfaces greasy, grime in every crack; and a sourish, composite smell of bad gin and bad coffee and metallic stew and dirty clothes. *Always in your stomach and in your skin there was a sort of protest, a feeling that you had been cheated of something that you had a right to.* (68, my emphasis)

Free indirect thought is a variant of free indirect discourse, defined by Jeremy Hawthorn as ‘the use of the grammar of third-person utterance (with certain modifications) to present us with a character’s speech or (verbal or non-verbal) thoughts’ (Hawthorn 1997: 109–10). In the scene from Winston’s canteen, the reader is initially informed of the fact that Winston is *mediating* before we enter his thoughts directly, through questions rendered in free indirect thought which Winston addresses to himself: ‘Had it always been like this? Had food always tasted like this?’ Such questions communicate not only Winston’s apparent aversion to ersatz

food but also his growing dissatisfaction with conditions of life under Party rule. What was life in Oceania like before the Revolution? The last sentence is free indirect thought as well. The personal pronoun 'you' is used instead of third-person 'him', something which makes the utterance even more subjective. What literary effect, then, does the use of free indirect discourse to convey the thoughts of the novel's main character have? According to Dorrit Cohn, 'narrated monologue [Cohn's term for free indirect discourse] is at once a more complex and a more flexible technique for rendering consciousness than the rival techniques' (Cohn 1983: 107). In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, I believe that through free indirect discourse the consciousness of Winston Smith is made 'real' to the extent that the reader feels involved in Oceanic fictional reality, and this effect is crucial to an understanding of the novel's thematics. My point will be made clearer by relating the use of free indirect thought to the novel's narrative perspective.

Among the concerns that may be related to the use of free indirect discourse is the question of who is speaking, narrator or character? (Lothe 2000: 47). Narrative perspective in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is external and related to a third-person narrator, but it is also clearly associated with the perspective of main character Winston Smith, which is an important element of the novel. Although apparently knowing everything about Winston, the narrator is not in any way authoritative: his voice is not easily discernible and an external opinion on the thoughts or actions of Winston is hardly given. Rather, narrative sympathy with Winston is voiced in the text by means of two narrative and stylistic factors. In what follows I shall be concentrating on the use of free indirect discourse, which I consider as the most important of these factors. Sympathy is also expressed through the use of irony, or, more precisely, through the ironic characterization of the novel's other characters, especially those who come across as truly orthodox Party members. I will be returning to this point in the discussion of Newspeak language.

What are the thematic implications of the use of free indirect discourse in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*? Franz Kafka's masterwork *The Trial* (1914–15) may in fact provide us with a useful insight. Similarly to Orwell's novel, *The Trial* is a third-person narrative in which narrative perspective is closely associated with main character Josef K., who wakes up one morning to find himself arrested, seemingly without any clue of whether or what it is that he has done wrong. Awaiting his impending trial, K. prepares his defence, but the task is complicated by the fact that he does not know his charges, besides the inherent impenetrability of the court. Finally, without any specific information given of the outcome of his trial, the reader learns of K.'s execution by two gentlemen from the government in frock coats and top hats. It is safe to say that the sense of confusion and uncertainty experienced by Kafka's protagonist throughout this rather unpleasant encounter with the system of the court is strengthened by the novel's characteristic narrative perspective. Commenting on *The Trial*'s narrative method, Jakob Lothe notes that '[o]n the one hand K. is observed and presented by the narrator; on the other hand, he serves as a consciousness that experiences, reflects, and guides the narrator's communication' (Lothe 2000: 116). This observation may just as well refer to the narrative perspective of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, large parts of which are focused through Winston's visual perceptions of Oceanic society, and through his reflections rendered in free indirect thought. However, the perspective is also clearly affiliated with the novel's third-person narrator, who offers the reader his observations on (though not his critical opinion or judgement of) Winston. Such observations enable the narrator to distance himself from the character. However, both in *The Trial* and in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the narrators also clearly associate themselves with the novels' main characters, and this is expressed in the text through the use of free indirect discourse. Free indirect discourse is a narrative and stylistic variant which establishes understanding and sympathy with the fictional

character. Through free indirect discourse the thoughts or speech of that character are in a sense communicated by the narrator, who therefore gives his or her backing to the quotation.

Thus the reader is invited to sympathize with the character's feelings or understanding of certain events, and this kind of effect is achieved both in *The Trial*; where free indirect discourse expresses K.'s anxiety concerning his trial, and also in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; where the many regulations of Party society cause Winston's misery and general feeling of alienation. Through Winston's consciousness, his 'interminable restless monologue' (10) presented as free indirect thought, the reader is not only provided with a medium through which he or she may experience (fictional) totalitarian reality for him/herself, free indirect thought is used to express the character's feeling of vulnerability and confusion when facing a system that smothers him. By presenting Winston sympathetically we are invited to view Oceania through the eyes of those who become the victims of a powerful and oppressive system such as the Oceanic Party's. Also, because our understanding of that system will be limited to the perspective of Winston, the frustration and fear of what he cannot comprehend become ours. Similarly to the system through which power is exercised in *The Trial*, the Party system permeates every aspect of Oceanic society and *still* it has essentially no material form; its laws are mutable and unwritten, and its representatives are caricatures rather than live human beings with real hopes and worries. The system of power must therefore be seen as *depersonalised*, thus reinforcing that sense of frustration on behalf of the character who is trying to come to terms with it. Chapter three will explore how the representation of the many voices of the Party serves to strengthen this kind of impression.

Bakhtin conceives language as ideologically saturated, languages as representing specific world-views. Heteroglossia in the novel is not only the dialogue and speech of fictional characters. Literary voices in dialogic interaction may also be derived from various sources of inspiration, or from the incorporation of different literary genres and styles, even

different dialects. So far we have seen how the voice of Winston is constructed linguistically. It is composed of what I choose to call several languages or styles, all inscribed with different values. At this point it may be useful to go over the main points of the discussion in this chapter so far, while relating them to Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia in the novel.

Winston Smith is at all times acutely aware of his own situation, his physical condition and his surroundings; these are the topics which his thought processes constantly circle around. Narrative perspective is closely related to Winston, thus establishing sympathy with his character. Furthermore, as it is through his exclusive point of view that the reader experiences Oceanic reality, it is safe to say that Winston's voice comprises a 'plethora of styles that are generated by [his] own consciousness' (Fowler 1995: 203). These are Winston's observations and responses to the urban landscape, the dreamlike and almost romantic descriptions of the landscape of the Golden Country, the way in which the cold and artificial atmosphere in the cellars of the Ministry of Love is represented – all settings which are directly related to the narrator's presentation of Winston's physical state. However, language reality in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is made up of other voices – the voices of a system – which surround Winston and whose basic function is to restrict all others, forcing them to speak their monologic language. The characteristic features of these voices, related to their intended purpose, will be the main concern of my discussion in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Newspeak and the voices of the Party

[P]ower is power over human beings. Over the body – but, above all, over the mind. Power over matter – external reality, as you would call it – is not important. [...] We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull. (303)

It is clear that individual consciousness is the greatest menace to the absolute supremacy of the Oceanic Party; this is where the seeds of a resurrection may take hold and grow into an opposition that eventually could have the strength to overthrow their powerful regime.

Precisely for that reason it is essential that the Party's total dominance reaches even inside the skull. Winston Smith is in the end forced to give up everything which makes him a sentient being. Only through the total control of the individual, through an all-inclusive gaze that no one can escape, and last but not least – through a voice that drowns out all others, it becomes possible for the Party to maintain their influence.

I have previously stated that the consciousness of the individual in the novel (represented by the character of Winston) is bombarded by 'the voices of the other' (Fowler 1995: 203), and that the voices whose function is most clearly to restrict all other voices belong to the Party. In the present chapter I shall be examining those different styles which I have chosen to call the voices of the Party, with a particular focus on Newspeak language. In my opinion it is through the concept of Newspeak that some of the novel's most fascinating ideas about the power of language are formulated. We recall that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* may be read as Orwell's exploration of totalitarianism as a *mindset*. A key aspect here is the use of language as an instrument of manipulation or oppression – and this lies at the very heart of Newspeak language. However, as this chapter aims to demonstrate, Newspeak totalitarian linguistics also serves to demonstrate the futility of such an attempt, thereby rejecting the belief that thought can be completely controlled by an artificial language.

In the following I will therefore be looking at the central characteristics of Newspeak language, pointing to what may be perceived as a contemporary linguistic model. I then proceed to discuss the relationship between language and thought that such a model proposes, relating this to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis in linguistics, and furthermore to linguistic determinism. Newspeak language is certainly the most ‘audible’ expression of the nagging voices of the Party. However, Newspeak represents not the only style that I would like to label Party language. There are in fact several other expressions of Party language in the novel, and I have chosen to discuss two of these under the headings: ‘The falsification of history’ and ‘Party propaganda’.

Newspeak

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s fictional society it is the ruling Party that constructs and controls people’s conception of reality. Together with surveillance, physical restrictions, threats and violence, and a constant flow of propaganda, totalitarian linguistics is a key instrument in such a process. An artificial language is therefore under construction; this is Newspeak, which eventually will cleanse even the thoughts of its speakers of heretical ideas. Newspeak, as we shall see, ‘is designed to effect nothing less than the destruction of human reason by linguistic means’ (Strachey 1971: 56).

It is important to note that Newspeak at the time of the narrated events in the novel is in a phase of *transition*; it is not until the year 2050 that the language is expected to be fully employed. Fowler argues that the point of this transitional phase is to demonstrate that Newspeak is a long way short of completion (Fowler 1995: 220). That may surely be the case, and yet I find that this particular piece of information points to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s most significant relevance to the present. A future aspect is brought into the equation: by placing

the activities of the Party in a phase of transition, Orwell gives life to certain tendencies which he found alarming, tendencies which continue to be relevant even today.

In 1984 no one speaks Newspeak only. Party bureaucrats use some kind of professional lingo, a fusion of Oldspeak (or Standard English, as we know it) and Newspeak, referred to as ‘the hybrid jargon of the Ministries’ (195). Only the leading articles in *The Times*, we are told, are written exclusively in Newspeak. Throughout the novel we are in fact never given an example of Newspeak language in extended use. There are nevertheless several examples of words from its vocabulary, in addition to a couple of instances from which we may learn something about its peculiarities through memos rendered in the jargon of the Ministries. The concept of Newspeak is thus for the most part introduced through the character of Syme, one of the language experts working on the adjectives, and also through the previously mentioned Appendix on the principles of Newspeak language, both of which I will be discussing shortly.

To begin with, I would like to address that which I consider to be an inherent want of logic in Newspeak language’s nature. According to Ferdinand de Saussure:

A language [...] is something in which everyone participates all the time, and that is why it is constantly open to the influence of all. This key fact is by itself sufficient to explain why a linguistic revolution is impossible. Of all social institutions, a language affords the least scope for such enterprises. (Saussure 1983: 74)

Reading *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, one is bound to wonder exactly *how* it is that the Party has intended to enforce the use of Newspeak, starting with the question of how they are going to make people *verbally* communicate that which at this point only exists as the *written* signs in a dictionary? The Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak Dictionary will contain the final, perfected version of the language, ‘the shape it’s going to have when nobody speaks anything else’ (59). In 1984 language experts are still working on the Ninth and Tenth Editions, which

are provisional versions only. Thus the question of whether Newspeak will ever really succeed as a workable project is cunningly avoided by ‘postponing’ the last and definitive stage of language implementation to a point in time which follows after the novel’s narrated events.

This future aspect brings us to yet another important problem inherent in Newspeak, and here I would like to relate my argument to another central point in Saussurean linguistics. Saussure sees the linguistic sign as a double entity, as a unity of the two terms ‘signifier’ (*signifiant*) and ‘signified’ (*signifié*). Roughly speaking, the signifier is the ‘word image’ (visual or acoustic) and the signified the ‘mental concept’ (Rice and Waugh 1989: 5). The relationship between the signifier and the signified is furthermore arbitrary. I will not go into this particular aspect any further here, only point to one of its direct consequences: if signs do not have any essential core of meaning it follows that they are open to change. A language in use, according to Saussure, must therefore be looked at in both its diachronic aspect (relating to how that language changes over a period of time) and its synchronic aspect (the language system at one particular point in time): ‘Language at any given time involves an established system and an evolution. At any given time it is an institution in the present and a product of the past’ (Saussure 1983: 9). The Newspeak language engineers, it may seem, are ignoring the diachronic aspect of language in particular. Their artificial language has at this point only got a future aspect. ‘Newspeak would have finally superseded Oldspeak [...] by about the year 2050’ (343). It follows that Newspeak is intended as a closed linguistic system ‘frozen’ in time, fixed in an eternal present. The social aspect of language is completely ignored as well. Newspeak cannot be subjected to any kind of outside influence; nor will it be open to natural change, and common processes such as language growth or semantic enrichment must somehow be avoided. Besides, all other words and modes of expression are to be completely abolished. One is bound to wonder exactly how the Party will make the whole language

community conform to such restrictions, no matter how physically threatening Oceanic law enforcement is. Surely, this seems to be an impossible task, even for a crushing regime such as the Party.

Moving on to look more closely at the characteristics of Newspeak language, I find that the very hypothesis behind the invention of Newspeak lies in the proposal of the essay ‘Politics and the English Language’, stating that ‘if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought’ (Orwell 1968e: 137). The idea is most clearly rendered through the conversation between Winston and his colleague Syme during lunch break at the Ministry of Truth. Syme is one of the expert linguists working on the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak Dictionary. He eagerly lectures Winston on the principles of Newspeak, the only language that loses words every year instead of gaining them. With a naïve-like enthusiasm, Syme sees the beauty in eliminating words in order to make language ‘clearer’:

You think, I dare say, that our chief job is inventing new words. But not a bit of it! We’re destroying words – scores of them, hundreds of them, every day. We’re cutting the language down to the bone. The Eleventh Edition won’t contain a single word that will become obsolete before the year 2050. [...] Of course, the great wastage is in the verbs and adjectives, but there are hundreds of nouns that can be got rid of as well. It isn’t only the synonyms; there are also the antonyms. After all, what justification is there for a word which is simply the opposite of some other word? (59)

The twentieth century witnessed several universal language schemes, among the most legendary ones probably Schleyer’s Volapük and Zamenhof’s Esperanto (Chilton 1988: 9). Orwell’s real life model for Newspeak language could surely be Basic English,¹¹ a simplified version of the English language proposed by Charles Kay Ogden in 1930. Basic was devised as an ‘easy-to-learn’ international English, and Ogden therefore did not put into the language

¹¹ Basic (‘British American Scientific International Commercial’) English, as formulated in Ogden’s *Basic English: A General Introduction with Rules and Grammar* (1930).

words which could be said with a few other words. Basic grammar was greatly simplified and the vocabulary reduced to only 850 ‘core words’, organized into separate sections according to function, which together were supposed to cover everything that needed to be said. A closer examination of Newspeak reveals that it possesses some of the very same qualities as can be found in Ogden’s Basic English.

Similar to Basic, the vocabulary of Newspeak must be quite small as Party linguists are reported to be destroying scores of words every day. From the Appendix we learn that it is divided into three main sections: the A-vocabulary, which contains words needed for everyday life, the B-vocabulary, consisting of words for political use, and the C-vocabulary, including scientific and technical terms. Moving on, Newspeak is a language with surprisingly simple and regular grammar. Any word in the language may in principle be used either as verb, noun, adjective or adverb, and all inflections in general follow the same pattern. Thus, in all verbs the preterite and the past participle are the same and end in *-ed* (346). Any word in the language is in its negative form preceded by the affix *un-*, or may be strengthened by the prefixes *plus-*, or even further by *doubleplus-*. Thus, a word like *ungood* really means ‘bad’, while *plusgood* and *doubleplusgood* mean ‘very good’ and ‘extremely good’, respectively (346). As a result, it becomes possible to cut out of the language many unnecessary words, and the combinations of a small number of basic words are instead to be used for every purpose of meaning.

Even though there are some striking similarities between Newspeak and Basic English, I do not believe that Orwell’s intention, through Newspeak, was to parody or criticize Ogden’s international English. However, Orwell probably saw something in Basic that could be related to his own views on language, something which he made use of in the creation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s totalitarian linguistics. Being in fact not particularly interested in the potentially wide scope and great learning possibilities of Basic, Orwell

commented sarcastically in one of his *As I Please*-columns that ‘existing side by side with Standard English [Basic] can act as a sort of corrective to the oratory of statesmen and publicists. High-sounding phrases, when translated into Basic, are often deflated in a surprising way’. Above all, he wrote, ‘in Basic [...] you cannot make a meaningless statement without its being apparent that it is meaningless’ (Orwell 1968d: 210). Here we touch upon a crucial point in Orwell’s criticism of language, which also is related to Newspeak language in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: the ways in which language may be used to disguise or distort underlying motives. The above comment on Basic English is clearly ironic and not primarily directed at Basic as such but rather at what Orwell sees as the evasive nature of ‘the oratory of statesmen and publicists’, in particular language which, in order to give it an air of importance, is filled with pretentious diction and unnecessarily complex phrases. The meaningless and certainly rather ridiculous nature of statements rendered in Newspeak becomes quite apparent through the novel, thus constituting an important element of Orwell’s satire on political oratory.

In the essay ‘Politics and the English Language’ Orwell criticizes some of the ways in which political language may be used in a conscious way to disguise hidden motives, or even to cover up for that which basically is emptiness of meaning. I shall be giving a very brief outline of the essay here. First, however, I once more point to the fact that essay and novel are two very different literary modes. They represent different manners of dealing with a subject, and as such must be dealt with correspondingly in a literary analysis. It is not my intention to give a ‘direct’ comparison between essay and novel. Nevertheless, on a thematic level I will be using ideas presented in the essay as a kind of background to my exploration of totalitarian language in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as I feel that central arguments in ‘Politics and the English Language’ are highly relevant to the thematics of Orwell’s later novel. In a few words, ‘Politics and the English Language’ addresses that which Orwell sees as the decay of the

modern English language, the ways in which language may be misused, especially in political rhetoric, and what effects this may have – not only on those who are exposed to it but also on those who make use of it themselves. Running through the essay is Orwell's notion that language and thought are closely connected, the idea that not only does the way we think affect the language we use but our language also affects the way we think. Political language in particular may therefore be used to conceal underlying meanings and blur clear thinking, even for the political orator him/herself. The importance of having a conscious approach to language, both to the language of others and to one's own, is stressed. In order to write good prose, Orwell states, it is necessary to keep language clear and concrete, simplifying when possible, and using words which express something in a direct manner instead of causing vagueness of meaning.

The A-vocabulary of Newspeak consists only of words which denote concrete things, simple thoughts and everyday actions, words from which 'all ambiguities and shades of meaning have been purged out' (314). At first glance, Newspeak therefore appears to be that ideal language – cleansed of all stale images and diffuse idioms – which Orwell prescribes in 'Politics and the English Language'. Newspeak is above all precise; the concrete certainly does not '[melt] into the abstract' (Orwell 1968e: 130) – quite the opposite, it thrives on concreteness and efficiency. In Newspeak it will simply be impossible to mistake the meaning of an utterance for something else, as each word has got only one exact meaning. Thus, Newspeak is in fact quite comparable to the kind of language Orwell thinks should be 'concerned with the scrapping of every word or idiom which has outworn its usefulness' (ibid: 138), which the essay introduces as a better alternative to the imprecise use of modern English language.

Now turning to the B-vocabulary of Newspeak, another, more central aspect of Oceanic totalitarian linguistics is encountered, a quality which in 'Politics and the English

Language' is perceived quite differently than concreteness of meaning through simplicity of language. I mentioned above that the B-vocabulary includes only words that are constructed especially for political purposes. Such words, as we shall see, are really supposed to impose a desirable mind-set on its speakers. It is helpful to relate this claim to some concrete examples from the Appendix. All of the words in the B-vocabulary are compound words. These may be perceived as some sort of 'linguistic tanks' in the sense that whole ranges of ideas are to be contained in only one word. The term 'goodthink' (347), for instance, means something like thinking in an orthodox manner, which in reality means thinking in such a way as the Party approves of. 'Crimethink', on the other hand, includes all sorts of ideas that deviate from this kind of orthodoxy. 'All words grouping themselves round the concepts of liberty and equality' (349) are thus to be contained in that *one* single word.

Following Orwell's line of reasoning in 'Politics and the English Language' it becomes quite clear that the words of the B-vocabulary seem to go rather well with the kind of language that is commended in the essay. On the face of it, B-words are expressive and concrete. More importantly, they are brief – in only two syllables a whole strand of thought is expressed, and its meaning simply cannot be mistaken. These are the very same qualities which the essay encourages: short words are preferred to long ones; statements should be brief and expressive, not lengthy and imprecise: 'if it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out' (ibid: 139). Through the B-vocabulary this is precisely what the Party has managed to do; they have narrowed the language down to an extreme minimum of basic, simple, highly expressive words. But what consequences will this have for the minds in which the words are to be contained?

The desired effect on the Oceanic language community through the implementation of Newspeak is to induce unconsciousness in the minds of its speakers. For those Party members

who even bother to listen this is no secret at all. Syme informs Winston about the ultimate purpose of Newspeak:

Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed will be expressed by exactly *one* word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten. (55)

I mentioned above that Orwell's critique of deceptive language in 'Politics and the English Language' is based on the general idea that 'if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought' (ibid: 137). It is possible to relate such a proposition, also attributed to Syme and the Party, to a belief that language and thought are closely interrelated, and that political orthodoxy is the same as not thinking for oneself but blindly accepting those truths which, in this case, are dictated by the Party. The idea is rather absurdly illustrated as the narrator immediately after Syme's little speech moves on to portray a member of the Fiction Department whom Winston overhears talking. The character is initially presented through a physical description of his appearance, yet not of the colour of his hair or the shape of his body, as we perhaps might expect. Instead, a powerfully built throat and a large mouth are his sole physical features. He 'is' his vocal apparatus, letting out a monotonous stream of words – none of which probably gives any meaning to his listeners. Anne-Marie Simon-Vandenberg has pointed out that this specific example contributes to the general theme of dehumanisation in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Simon-Vandenberg 1993: 72). She makes an interesting and appropriate point, precisely because the man in the canteen is not presented as a whole person but rather as a disembodied and pre-programmed voice uttering Party truths. More importantly, his example illustrates that language may serve as a powerful political tool in Oceania. We are presented with a dummy-like speaker who apparently does not make use of

his brain when talking – or who even has no brain at all. As Winston watches him, ‘his spectacles caught the light and presented to Winston two blank discs instead of eyes’ (62).

These are actually almost the exact same words which presented the political speaker in Orwell’s three years earlier essay:

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 1968e: 135)

Orwell thus illustrates his point about political conformity through a rather worrying image of the politician who is incapable of producing ideas of his own, who only knows how to use the commonly accepted ways of expressing oneself according to the party line. Watching the man from the Fiction Department, Winston too has ‘a curious feeling that this was not a real human being but some kind of dummy. It was not the man’s brain speaking, it was his larynx’ (63). The man in the canteen is true orthodox individual. His brain is flooded with Party words; he is indoctrinated with Party beliefs. An essentially inhuman system has entered him, erasing his capacity for individual reflection. As if being a pre-programmed machine, his brain is not involved as he speaks; the words come directly from his larynx.

The ultimate purpose of Newspeak is to manipulate the thoughts of its speakers, and we have seen how the Party proposes to do this through some of the characteristic features of Newspeak language. First, the vocabulary is narrowed down to a bare minimum of words, thus limiting the basic opportunities of people to talk freely on whatever topic they like. Second, the Party provides those few words which are left with meanings of their own, making it impossible to say anything that the Party has not already approved of. Once Newspeak is implemented and Oldspeak forever forgotten, it will therefore be impossible to verbally express a strand of thought that deviates from the Party line. The Oceanic language

community will have no medium through which they may talk about such concepts as freedom or justice, no way of criticizing the system of the state. The futility of such an attempt can be demonstrated through the translation of an extract from the American Declaration of Independence to Newspeak, a legendary formulation with which we all are familiar:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government... (354)

As pointed out in the Appendix, it is of course impossible to render this passage into Newspeak while keeping the sense of the original. One possible approach is at any rate suggested as the nearest one could come to a translation, this ‘would be to swallow the whole passage up in the single word *crimethink*. A full translation’, it is explained, ‘could only be an ideological translation, whereby Jefferson’s words would be changed into a panegyric on absolute government’ (355). I do not think it coincidental that this well-known passage has been chosen to illustrate Newspeak language’s restrictive nature. Introducing a document which is the very symbol of social equality and of the emergence of modern democratic systems of government, the passage not only serves to historicize the text but also effectively contrasts facets of Oceanic rule to such founding principles. The Declaration is a source of inspiration to later declarations of independence and human rights, and gives voice to values which are the antithesis of Oceanic totalitarianism. Power in Oceania is upheld by ensuring that the citizen is denied the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Rather than deriving its just powers from the consent of the governed, the government’s only concern is to render it impossible for the governed to voice disapproval. But are we really supposed to

believe that the ability of people to rebel can be wiped out by tampering with language? Will the individual Party member not *know* that he or she has no freedom, even if there is no word to describe it? In order to address such questions I find it useful to discuss the kind of relationship between language and thought that Newspeak is based on in terms of a related linguistic model.

The underlying principle of Newspeak is that if something cannot be said, then it cannot be thought either. A central question prompted by this principle is to what extent our conception of reality is defined by language. This is a concern which furthermore may be related to linguistic relativity; the notion that language may have an effect on the ways in which we perceive the world, or that ‘distinctions of meaning between related terms in a language are arbitrary and particular to that language.’¹² A radical version of this idea was championed by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf in what is known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. Although now considered highly controversial, the hypothesis was particularly popular in the 1950s. Whorf, a student of Sapir, had studied native American languages, and on the basis of his material formulated the idea that language embodies specific views or conceptions of reality. He found that ‘languages could differ radically in their basic structures,’ and maintained ‘that these differences could have the effect of ‘packaging’ reality differently for speakers’ (Fowler 1995: 218).¹³ It follows from this notion that the way in which people think about the world is strongly influenced by their language, that there even are certain thoughts of a person that cannot be understood by a speaker of another language.

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis must be seen in relation to the idea that words affect thoughts, or that the individual’s world-view will be largely determined by the vocabulary and

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sapir-Whorf_Hypothesis

¹³ A question worth considering, also pointed out by Fowler, is how Whorf could be able to understand this other ‘language reality’ when he was not a native speaker himself, and, furthermore, how he then was able to translate it into his own.

the syntax available in that person's language.¹⁴ This is the extreme version of a theory known in modern linguistics as *linguistic determinism*, and, as we have seen, the very hypothesis on which Newspeak language is based. Given that a person's thoughts are influenced by his or her language, it follows that a strictly regulated and greatly simplified language like Newspeak will narrow down the ability of speakers to conceptualize anything that does not issue directly from the Party. 'Philosophically,' Fowler has noted, 'the proponents of Newspeak language take an extreme nominalist position' (Fowler 1995: 225). A nominalist would claim that no universal or abstract concepts exist outside the mind. Blue things are not blue in virtue of an underlying abstract concept. Rather, it makes sense to talk of mere names without a corresponding reality, or, put even more simply: meanings derive from words, not the other way around – as would be a fundamentally 'realist' view of language.¹⁵ In Newspeak there will be no words denoting freedom and equality, and, according to the Party, thus no way of grasping the meanings of such terms. No Newspeak speaker will therefore even be capable of conceptualizing dissent. 'In Newspeak,' we learn from the Appendix, 'it was seldom possible to follow a heretical thought further than the perception that it *was* heretical: beyond that point the necessary words were non-existent' (349–50).

The Newspeak project – the manipulation *of* and *through* language – is thus supposed to function in a two-step process, as sketched out here: the basic proposition, as we have seen, is that meanings derive from words. It follows that the Party, as the sole creator and regulator of Newspeak language, also will determine meanings, thereby excluding all of which may conflict with the principles of their rule. To this nominalist position, the proponents of

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sapir-Whorf_Hypothesis

¹⁵ Interestingly enough, Orwell suggested a basically realist plan for the invention of new words in his 1940 essay 'New Words'. The essay deals with what Orwell saw as the difficulty of expressing one's 'inner life' (i.e. feelings, dreams or motives) in a clear and unambiguous manner through the existing vocabulary of the English language. His basic proposal is to put together a group of people who could agree upon certain common experiences, and then name these. 'One must have standards that could be referred to without any chance of misunderstanding, as one can refer to a physical thing like the smell of verbena', Orwell says, 'In effect it comes down to giving words a physical (probably visible) existence' (Orwell 1968b: 9–10).

Newspeak language add an extreme determinism; they believe that thoughts are controlled by words (Fowler 1995: 225). The words of the Party, which are the only words available to the Oceanic language community, will therefore reside in the minds of the Party members, dictating the way they think and express themselves.

Now let us say that we accept these basic premises of the Newspeak proposal and go along with the idea behind the project as workable – what consequences will this have for the language community of Oceania? Needless to say, we can never be sure as the final stage of Newspeak implementation always will and must reside outside the time-span of the novel's narrated events. But surely we can imagine a nightmare of a future where individuals have become isolated by their language,¹⁶ a group of people unable to communicate about anything else than practical matters and political orthodoxy. This is the true Ingsoc future – where love and compassion, freedom and expressions of imagination will be non-existent simply because there are no words to describe such things.

I do not here wish to speculate in any more detail about the possible future consequences for the Newspeak language community. I will, however, point to one immediate aspect which is a most central feature of such a language: Newspeak is by its very nature designed to have a *restrictive* effect on both the individual speaker's mind and on the Oceanic language community as a whole. We have seen that Newspeak is based on a language-thought model of which the basic proposal is that the understanding of reality is shaped by language. If so, a language which is restrictive by nature will also eventually create restrictions in the mind, or, in the words of Syme, '[e]very year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller' (61) – even to the extent that no Newspeak speaker possesses the ability of conceiving a better life than their miserable existence as Party

¹⁶ In his novel, *Orwellian Language and the Media*, Paul Chilton points to the linguistic theme in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that can be related to the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel: language was confused after God destroyed the Tower of Babel, and as a result each post-Babel language is a closed system containing its own untranslatable view of the world (see Genesis 11: 1–9, *Holy Bible* 1995: 9).

members. If we now shift the focus from the individual to the Oceanic language community as a whole, Newspeak proves to have a rather similar effect on both of these targets. This restrictive effect, or rather function, can be related to Bakhtin's account of the diverging forces at play within language.

According to Bakhtin, any language is pulled in two opposite directions, represented by the centralising and the decentralising forces in that language or culture (Dentith 1995: 35). The centralising forces function centripetally, pulling language towards a unitary centre, as provided by the notion of a 'national language'; while the decentralising (or dispersing) forces function centrifugally, pulling it 'towards the various languages which actually constitute the apparent but false unity of a national language' (ibid). Oceania has no capital, no official laws, no formal government (its great leader is a person whose actual existence no one really is sure of), and all bonds between family, friends and lovers are systematically destroyed. 'Except that English is its chief lingua franca and Newspeak its official language,' the Oceanic state is in fact 'not centralised in any way' (239). Newspeak language therefore, in Bakhtin's phrase, serves a basically centripetal force; if not functioning as *the* binding element of the state, then it certainly is intended to play the role as a very important unifying factor. Not only will Newspeak be the sole language available to the people, all other modes of expression will have been completely eradicated in the process of language 'purification'. What is more, the forced unity of the state is further strengthened by a consciously positioning of Oceania counter to all that which is outside its boundaries. The following passage from Goldstein's manifesto discusses the so-called 'cultural integrity' of Oceania:

It is absolutely necessary to [the state's] structure that there should be no contact with foreigners, except, to a limited extent, with war prisoners and coloured slaves. Even the official ally of the moment is always regarded with the darkest suspicion. War prisoners apart, the average citizen of Oceania never sets eye on a citizen of either Eurasia or Eastasia, and he is forbidden the knowledge of foreign languages. If he

were allowed contact with foreigners he would discover that they are creatures similar to himself and that most of what he has been told about them is lies. The sealed world in which he lives would be broken, and the fear, hatred and self-righteousness on which his morale depends might evaporate. (225–6)

Language in Oceania thus functions to isolate not only the individual but also, by denying the citizens any knowledge of foreign languages and cultures, the whole community as a group. The ‘sealed world’ of both individual and group cannot be broken, neither from within nor by outside influence, because people at all levels will be denied their fundamental means of communication. The individual cannot communicate his or her misery and dissatisfaction with the system to another fellow being. He or she simply does not have the words for such feelings or desires, and so the impulses to do so should be non-existent as well. On a larger scale, the isolation of the Oceanic state prevents alliances and knowledge of a world outside, something which probably would put the miserable conditions of life in Oceania into perspective (although, as we are told in the manifesto, the conditions in all three super-states are very much the same). Instead every citizen is indoctrinated with fear of foreigners. Combined with a basic ‘mentality appropriate to a state of war’ (221), this will strengthen people’s allegiance to the state. In order to keep the wheels of the war industry turning there has to be a certain cutback in the general standard of living. ‘[T]he well-fed, physically contended citizen, with a wide range of goods for consumption and the money to buy them,’ as Anthony Burgess has pointed out, ‘is a bad subject for an oligarchical state’ (Burgess 1985: 15). Plus, warfare will no doubt make the general feeling of a national community even stronger. There is, as we all know, nothing like a war when it comes to boosting public morale and national patriotism.

Do the development and intended consequences of the Newspeak project really come across as workable within the novel? Is the reader meant to believe that it is possible to use language to control people much in the same way that the Party has in mind? I certainly do

not think so. However, I believe that the novel, through the example of Newspeak, and by means of satire, demonstrates that there is an important link between language and thought. Let us first go over some of the ‘doubts’ about Newspeak worked into the text. I have previously addressed the somewhat illogical nature of Newspeak language through some of the basic premises of Saussurean linguistics. Real human language, in the words of Saussure, is diverse, flexible and susceptible to change – quite the reverse of the characteristic traits of Newspeak; Oldspeak will be replaced by a restricted set of signs fixed in an eternal present, an artificial language used as an instrument in order to control not merely how people speak but also how they think. As such, the proponents of Newspeak refuse to take into account the social aspect of language, as well as the fact that a language in use is bound to change over a period of time. I therefore think that Newspeak will not before long run into some basic difficulties inherent in its own nature. Also, I do not believe that it was Orwell’s intention for Newspeak to be taken wholly seriously. Rather, Newspeak’s function is to satirize the ways in which political language may be used as a means of manipulation. This critical notion will be one of the main concerns of the next chapter.

This said, I have also demonstrated that both on the level of the individual and the community as a whole, Newspeak is designed to have a basically restrictive effect, serving to confine and constrain both of these entities. Talking of restrictions, I have not mentioned the many physical restraints on which the Oceanic regime so dependently relies. One instrument of power furthering such restraint is the Thought Police, which is a most central factor in the state administration. They are, of course, not actually able to read people’s minds, but at any rate they can ‘plug in’ on the citizens’ individual telescreens at all times. Besides, they serve as the Party’s own police force, making convenient arrests, interrogating and torturing prisoners. The question, then, is whether the Thought Police really would be necessary if Oceanic society functioned as it was supposed to. Why are these physical restrictions needed

when the people through Newspeak language will be brainwashed into complete servility anyway? Could it be that Orwell, through *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s Thought Police, is attacking the nominalist idea that human consciousness is infinitely malleable? (Saunders 2000: 23).

Although the Party consciously uses language to serve its political objectives, it still has not managed to eradicate people's basic needs for individuality and freedom. Quite the contrary in fact; the cellars in the Ministry of Love are close to spilling over with enemies of the Party. Winston is not 'the last man in Europe', as Orwell's earlier title suggestion of his novel might imply, he is not even in the minority – nearly all of the minor characters end up being arrested by the Thought Police or they simply cease to exist. It is not only Julia and Winston who must face their destiny in Miniluv, but also the poet Ampleforth and Newspeak linguist Syme – even Winston's neighbour Tom Parsons, 'one of those completely unquestioning, devoted drudges on whom, more even than on the Thought Police, the stability of the Party depended' (26). Tom Parsons, the truly obedient Outer Party member, is even proud of his little daughter for denouncing him, evidently for uttering obscenities in his sleep:

"Down with Big Brother!" Yes, I said that! Said it over and over again, it seems. Between you and me, old man, I'm glad they got me before it went any further. Do you know what I'm going to say to them when I go up before the tribunal? "Thank you," I'm going to say, "thank you for saving me before it was too late." (268)

Winston is apparently not the only obstacle to the complete dominance of the Party. During interrogation, O'Brien tries to convince him that he is a 'flaw in the pattern, [...] a stain that must be wiped out' (291), but it seems that individuals like Winston really make the pattern of Oceanic society.

Clearly, it is impossible to take the arguments of a character like Syme regarding Newspeak language as altogether reasonable. In the process of imposing a desirable mindset

on the people of Oceania, we must therefore take into consideration the rather ambiguous concept of doublethink. Doublethink also serves as a part of Orwell's satire on the nominalist view of language in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. I will be returning to this notion in the next chapter. As for now, I will be presenting briefly the two other styles which I have chosen to examine as examples of the voices of the Party. The first of these is perhaps not so much a style as an expression of the Party's supreme power through the falsification of written records, which carry the historical, literary and linguistic legacy from the past. It is also one of the direct, and rather improbable, consequences of the Party strategy of controlling mind through language.

The falsification of history

A few days later, when the terror caused by the executions had died down, some of the animals remembered – or thought they remembered – that the Sixth Commandment decreed: 'No animal shall kill any other animal.' And though no one cared to mention it in the hearing of the pigs or the dogs, it was felt that the killings which had taken place did not square with this. [...] Muriel read the Commandment for [Clover]. It ran: 'No animal shall kill any other animal *without cause*.' Somehow or other, the last two words had slipped out of the animals' memory. But they saw now that the commandment had not been violated; for clearly there was good reason for killing the traitors who had leagued themselves with Snowball. (Orwell 1979: 78, original emphasis)

The falsification of history is not just a necessary element of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s totalitarian regime; the very same idea may also be encountered in *Animal Farm*, Orwell's political fable from 1945 of another revolution betrayed by power, corruption and lies. Tampering with the written commandments on the barn wall, Napoleon and the pigs figure out, proves to be a convenient means of manipulating the other animals into blindly acquiescing with whatever the pigs have in mind. This kind of tactic is in the end taken to a

rather absurd extreme as the Seven Commandments are reduced to only one, reading: ‘All animals are equal – but some are more equal than others’ (ibid: 114). Similar to *Animal Farm*, I will be demonstrating in the following, the falsification of written records in Oceania is essential in order for the Party, not only to safeguard its own infallibility but also – through the manipulation of language in its written form – to ensure that the necessary words will ‘slip out’ of the collective memory of the people. The Party, as can be seen through the example of Newspeak, specializes in the engineering of reality through language. Yet another disturbing manifestation of such a strategy is developed in the novel as the Party seeks to gain ultimate control over history. Language, after all, is an important link to history.¹⁷

How, then, does the Party propose to pull off something of that nature? As Winston works in the Records Department at the Ministry of Truth the reader is provided with a fascinating glimpse into the peculiarities of the considerably time-consuming process of falsifying Oceania’s historical records:

As soon as all the corrections which happened to be necessary in any particular number of the *Times* had been assembled and collated, that number would be reprinted, the original copy destroyed, and the corrected copy placed on the files in its stead. This process of continuous alteration was applied not only to newspapers, but to books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, sound-tracks, cartoons, photographs – to every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance. Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date. (46–7)

The tough part of the work is not just ‘correcting’ any evidence which may prove the Party wrong in some previous announcement or prediction concerning the future state of Oceania, someone literally has to track down and destroy all of the original copies to be altered. This, we are told, is the responsibility of the far largest section of the Records Department. An

¹⁷ <http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~umberkes/>

operation like this would presumably be of such great dimensions that it would be quite impossible to carry out in reality, although, I must admit to thinking, the task would probably be considerably less time-consuming in a time of electronic information like our own.

It is, however, important not to forget that the past not only exists in written records, as pointed out by O'Brien; it is also present in human memory. Thus, 'the control of the past depends above all on the training of memory' (243), a claim which must be related to the Party's notion of reality as having no real existence outside the mind, as discussed previously. In Oceania there is no such thing as the individual mind. There is only one true, collective mind of the Party. Several of the novel's characters certainly seem to be more or less confused about the nature of past events – even Winston has problems remembering what history looked like before the Party came to power, and throughout the novel he constantly struggles to come up with private memories. The ultimate aim of the Party is to achieve a state of 'collective solipsism', a belief that nothing exists outside the all-embracing Party mind. The line of reasoning in this kind of argument is roughly as follows: given that reality exists only in the human mind, and, what is more, that there is no such thing as an individual mind, then reality will exist only in the mind of the Party, which, according to O'Brien, 'is collective and immortal' (285). As for Oceania's written documents, Richard Bailey has pointed out that '[n]othing external to the mind, even written records of the past, will then be needed as a source of validation and truth' (Bailey 1987: 40). It is furthermore important to remember that the Oceanic citizens' link with the past will be broken by a language barrier anyway, once all knowledge of Oldspeak has disappeared for good. Not only will the whole literature of the past have been destroyed, but any document rendered in Oldspeak will by then in fact be quite unintelligible to the people. The manipulation of mind through language will make the whole operation of falsifying historical records unnecessary.

As in the case of Newspeak, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* includes several passages in which the general idea of the mutability of the past is discussed by various characters of the novel, yet not that many examples of, or excerpts from, actual documents which put idea into practice. In the news, of course, there is a new version of the truth every day. But as this for the most part is communicated through the telescreens and not the newspapers, I will not be discussing the lies of the news here. The telescreen will be the subject of this chapter's next section. At this point, I shall focus on some of the few examples of manipulated documents which are provided in the novel, and then proceed to discuss the power of written records in Oceania.

From his neighbours' Winston gets hold of a children's history textbook written by the Party, from which he copies a passage into his diary. It is a fairly simplified account of the miserable old days before 'the glorious Revolution' (83) which crushed Oceania's reigning capitalist élite and brought the Party to power in its stead. Needless to say, references to actual conditions are presented in a particular light; they are distorted and put together in such a manner as to serve the Party's agenda, and the readers are encouraged to see the rule of Big Brother as the only true answer to past problems. Indeed, real life politicians and governments have been known to use written language to manipulate history and support their own doctrines, as well as to 'protect' readers from corrupting influences. During the days of Stalin's regime, Soviet schoolbooks were constantly revised to exclude photos or articles which mentioned politicians who had fallen out of favour with the regime. Among the most spectacular outcomes of this policy was certainly the removal of unwanted passages from the *Soviet Encyclopaedia*. History was thus frequently rewritten, and past events were modified so they always would portray Stalin's government favourably.¹⁸ The insubordinate individual risked becoming an 'unperson', whereby all traces of that person would disappear from

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_revisionism

printed works. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston's colleague Syme becomes an unperson, presumably because he knows too much and speaks too plainly about the purpose of Newspeak language:

Syme had vanished. A morning came, and he was missing from work: a few thoughtless people commented on his absence. On the next day nobody mentioned him. On the third day Winston went into the vestibule of the Records Department to look at the notice board. One of the notices carried a printed list of the members of the Chess Committee, of whom Syme had been one. It looked almost exactly as it had looked before – nothing had been crossed out – but it was one name shorter. It was enough. Syme had ceased to exist: he had never existed. (170)

Because of a couple of missing words on a piece of paper Syme is in fact lifted clean from the stream of history. This effect says something about the power of written records in Oceania. Similarly, but to the opposite effect, Winston is in fact able to give life to a certain Comrade Ogilvy through a written document, a courageous war hero and faithful Party member whom he affords the honour of having died in battle while serving Big Brother. The story of Comrade Ogilvy, which Winston has made up in a falsified article in the *Times*, is really a cover-up for another comrade who has fallen out of favour with the regime. 'Comrade Ogilvy, who had never existed in the present, now existed in the past,' Winston reflects after his act of falsification, 'and when once the act of forgery was forgotten, he would exist just as authentically, and upon the same evidence, as Charlemagne or Julius Caesar' (55). The Party not only has the power – through the manipulation of written records – to remove unwanted individuals from history. It can also bring them into existence if necessary. This capacity not only demonstrates the Party's total control over the lives of individuals in Oceania, it also says something about the ways in which that position of power is established and maintained. Power is the power to define reality, in the words of O'Brien. 'Truth', or the accepted view of Oceanic reality, works only in the interest of the ruling class. The Party is able to produce and

control reality precisely because of its supreme position, and, because it defines what is true, it will use the information to maintain that very same position. Needless to say, people of Oceania are caught in a vicious circle of power abuse.

There is one immediate question which probably springs to mind from the above discussion of the manipulation of history, or rather, from the striking parallels in the novel to real life examples in Soviet history: do I mean to suggest that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* should be read as an allegory and a critique of Stalinist Russia? Many critics – including Philip Rahv, Orwell's great American admirer – see the satire of the novel as 'applicable only to the Soviets, and their sympathizers, and not also to the Western way of life whose mass media [at that time] were already churning out prole-culture for the millions' (Crick 1980: 568). In fact, many of the characteristics of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s one-party regime were probably the products of Orwell's reaction to incidents that took place during the Stalinist era. Winston's world has several things in common with the Communist State, not only the theme of the falsification of historical records but also that of a betrayed revolution and the total subordination of individuals to the Party. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, I choose to see Orwell's novel not only as an allegory of totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century, nor necessarily as a future prophecy, but rather as a warning against tendencies visible in 1948 – satirized and extended into a fictional future. And this, I would argue, is where the extraordinary intensity of the novel lies. The tendencies portrayed were not only visible in the Communist State, nor in Nazi Germany for that matter; they also concern the so-called free world, not only at the time Orwell wrote his novel but arguably also in the present. I do not think it coincidental that Orwell chose his own nation as the background for the story, an England absorbed by the United States into one great super-state, and with a setting which is that of post-war Britain, 'where rationing was still in place, and the British Empire was

dissolving at the same time as newspapers were reporting its triumphs'.¹⁹ I will be returning to this concern in the discussion of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s satirical targets in chapter four.

As for the reshaping of people's understanding of history in order to serve a political purpose, this is what we refer to as political revisionism;²⁰ it is part of the attempt of a group or a party to construct an image of the kind of reality that will serve their agenda. History has witnessed many expressions of this kind of manipulation of information. In fact, critics claim that the most recent examples of truth engineering have been carried out by the government of the Western power once known as former Communist Russia's main adversary. I am referring to the way in which information from the Bush Government prior to the war in Iraq may have helped create public confusion about Saddam Hussein's involvement in the September 11 attacks.²¹ My point is this: I believe that Orwell's novel still has something important to say about the ways in which power may be exercised, and how the misuse of power by privileged groups may have harmful consequences. More specifically, it raises problems connected with a most fundamental link between political power and the representation of information. The exercise of power, as asserted by Hawthorn,

requires the control of information as much as does the attainment of power; revolutionaries head for the radio station as determinedly as the government tries to hang on to it. And if control of information gives power, so power gives one greater control of information. (Hawthorn 1987: ix)

¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineteen_Eighty-Four

²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_revisionism

²¹ According to a poll in the *Washington Post*, 69% of Americans believed that Saddam Hussein probably had a role in attacking the US. Recently, President George Bush has admitted that he had no proof prior to the war linking Saddam to the attacks – 'disputing the popular belief critics say his administration helped to create' (<http://www.mwaw.org/article.php?sid=2785>).

Apparently, Oceania's government is very much aware of that vital link which Hawthorn calls attention to. This, however, brings us on to the next concern of this chapter: the discussion of the propaganda efforts of the Party.

Party propaganda

Politically motivated revisionism, an expression of which is the falsification of history, is closely related to the propaganda efforts of the Oceanic government. In the following I shall be looking at some of the other, perhaps more direct, forms of Party propaganda described in Orwell's novel. By 'propaganda' I understand the conscious representation of information or ideas, aimed at serving the agenda of an interested party or encouraging a desired response from the addressee. Oceanic society is flooded with information which serves Ingsoc ideology: there are public demonstrations and communal events, broadcasts and forecasts and inspirational music, as well as political speeches and announcements of various kinds. All of these are organized by the Party, and they are designed to serve the Party's ideological agenda. The discussion of Party propaganda will be centered around the communication of propaganda through the medium of the telescreen. More specifically, my focus will not necessarily be on the contents of the information which it distributes, but rather on the characteristics of those voices which communicate that information. The telescreen is in my opinion one of the most important channels through which the voices of the Party have their outlet, voices whose basic aim is enveloping the citizens in useful deceit. A closer look at some of their basic characteristics may therefore provide us with useful insights on the desired effect of propaganda in Oceania.

When discussing the representation of different voices in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, chiefly those that I have labeled 'the voices of the Party', I shall be relating my own understanding of the subject matter to some of the ideas put forth in a thorough and relevant

article by Simon-Vandenberg. Here, she examines the use of metaphors in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and demonstrates how these contribute to the general theme of dehumanisation. More specifically, Simon-Vandenberg points to some of the metaphorical references to speech in the novel, and proceeds to show how these representations play their role in building up the picture of a world in which individual consciousness has no place, where one is never alone and always being watched (ibid: 63). As a result, she argues, the Oceanic individual is effectively being kept under control by the propaganda system. The voices whose major source is the telescreen are the voices of a system rather than live human beings (ibid: 66), as we shall see in the following.

In more or less every room in every building the Party member has access to, there will be a telescreen, a point which the novel illustrates through frequent references to voices or to music which issue from the apparatus. The majority of such references occur in the first and third parts of the novel. In the second part, however, reduced focus on the voices contributes to establishing an atmosphere which seems more peaceful. This aside, the strong presence of the telescreen is signalled already on *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s first page. As soon as Winston enters his apartment on that cold April day, he is met by 'a fruity voice' (3) from the telescreen reading out a list of figures on the state production of pig-iron. The sound of the telescreen, we are informed, can never be turned off completely, only slightly dimmed, and the citizens are therefore almost constantly exposed to the propaganda of the Party. Not only is information being transmitted through the telescreen, the apparatus may also function basically as a receiver; everything located within its 'field of vision' (5) may be viewed by the agents of the Party, though no one knows for sure whether or when they are being watched. This function contributes to the public's general state of fear and paranoia. Besides, the voices of the telescreen can also interfere with what private affairs by addressing individuals directly.

It is a daily routine for Winston to be woken up to the ‘Physical Jerks’ by an ‘ear-splitting whistle’ (37) from the telescreen. One morning, as he rather clumsily struggles to imitate the movements of the gym instructress on the screen, he lets his mind wander off, reflecting on past events and on the nature of history. Such reflections continue for a couple of pages, but they are repeatedly interrupted by the voice from the telescreen commanding Winston to follow the instructions. The commands are ‘yapped [by] a piercing female voice’ (37), they are ‘rapped out’ (37), they are ‘barked’ (40), and finally ‘the shrewish voice from the telescreen’ even screams out: ‘6079 Smith W! Yes, *you!* Bend lower, please! You can do better than that. You’re not trying. Lower, please!’ (42), as she addresses Winston directly. As can be witnessed from the above examples, loudness seems to be the most prominent quality of the voice from the telescreen. At any rate, its basic function is to intrude on the lives of the novel’s characters. Combined with the fact that the voice is issuing commands, this controlling function serves to demonstrate the great authority and power of Party over the individual.

As Simon-Vandenberghe has noted, the Oceanic ‘individual is as it were physically controlled [...] by the propaganda system’ – or, in Winston’s words:

Always the eyes watching you and *the voice enveloping you*. Asleep or awake, working or eating, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or in bed – no escape. Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull. (32, my emphasis)

Not only does the never-ending presence of the telescreen contribute to the claustrophobic feeling of constantly being surrounded or ‘enveloped’ by the Party’s voices, these voices may moreover be the subjects or ‘actors’ of material process clauses which express extreme forms of physical control, or even violence (ibid 1993: 71). The telescreen ‘*bruised* your ears with statistics’ (85, my emphasis). As a result of the interrogations in Miniluv ‘*the voice had battered* Winston into helplessness’ (308, my emphasis), and ‘in the end the *nagging voices*

broke him down more completely than the boots or fists of the guards' (278, my emphasis). Interestingly, it is actually *voices* who carry out the physical abuse of Winston, not human beings. Rendered through metaphors such as these it is therefore safe to say that the voices of the Party have a very brutal quality; their main function seems to be the overpowering of the individual with sheer force. And they may in fact have managed to succeed in this task. After some time in captivity, Winston becomes 'simply a mouth that uttered [...] whatever was demanded of him' (278).

Now if we go back to the details of the previous discussion of Newspeak language we recall that the very same idea – a whole person being reduced to a mouth that utters – has been encountered before. This is how the politically orthodox Party member in the canteen of Winston's workplace was characterized. I have previously argued that his character being nothing more than a disembodied voice serves to suggest that the brain is not involved as he speaks; he only knows how to express himself according to the Party line. Thus the ridiculous nature of orthodox behaviour is demonstrated in the novel, and a vital link between language and thought is emphasized. It may seem that the Party finally has succeeded in breaking rebellious Winston. However, I must add that if Winston really is turned into a mouth that utters whatever is demanded of him this is not solely because of the brutal qualities of the *voices* of the Party. It is important not to forget that the voices are part of a system of physical restrictions, fear and violence, something which such metaphors serve to express, and that Winston has been physically tortured in a most brutal way. This is the kind of treatment which awaits all opponents of Big Brother's regime.

When discussing the voices of the Party there is an important question which needs to be addressed: whose voices are they? Clearly, the voices referred to above assert the same fundamentally restrictive force as Newspeak language, and may as such be viewed as variations of the collective voice of the Party – but who are the individuals to whom they

belong? So far we have seen that at least one of them belongs to a gym instructress on the telescreen, that is, the voice has a body. Yet in most cases the speaker is either not identified, or – as is the case with the man in the canteen – he or she is reduced to a vocal apparatus. The latter characteristic may be applied to a woman whom Winston observes during one of the daily Two Minutes Hate sessions in the Records Department. As the collective hate of the Party's enemies rises to a frenzy, Winston notes that a 'little sandy haired woman had turned bright pink, and *her mouth was opening and shutting* like that of a landed fish' (17, my emphasis). The chief characteristic of the woman is a mouth, and, what is more, a mouth which gasps for air like that of a fish on land – but also, I will argue, a mouth which opens and shuts like that of a ventriloquist's dummy. 'The effect of making the articulators central is that attention is shifted towards the superficial level of speech production,' Simon-Vandenberg notes, 'and in most [cases] this conveys absence of the deeper level of the planning of meaning' (ibid: 72). Similarly to the man in the canteen, we could not care less about the words that pour out of the woman's mouth; whatever these may mean we can be sure of the fact that they are pure Party orthodoxy, and that she is reproducing them without any reflection on what she actually says. Party words have flooded her mind and narrowed down the range of thought. She is the perfected version of a Party member: the mindless dummy through which the voices of a system may have their outlet.

It becomes clear that in most cases the voices stemming from the telescreen are not identified as belonging to any distinct individual at all. As a matter of fact, they are not even associated with a vocal apparatus, as is the case with the sandy-haired woman and the man in the canteen. Rather, they are expressions of the kind of depersonalised speech which may be attributed to the Party, and as such they play a vital role in the Party's efforts to control and consciously mislead the public. Each voice, according to its characteristic trait, serves a particular purpose: an 'eager, youthful voice' (67) informs about Big Brother's decision to

raise the weekly chocolate ration to twenty grammes (Winston knows, of course, that only yesterday this was really *reduced* to twenty grammes), a ‘brassy female voice [squalls] out a patriotic song’ (116), while ‘an excited voice’ (341) gabbles away about a military victory on the African front. In prison, the voices command, yell, roar and bark at Winston. Their basic function is to tear him down with physical force. It is not so much about that which is actually said but rather about the way in which it is said. The different voices of the telescreen are like the various mechanical parts of the Party’s great propaganda machinery. The thought of there being no person behind a voice makes this image even more horrifying. It is precisely because such voices do not belong to any particular individual but all the same serve to establish the Party’s never-ending presence, that the horrors of power abuse in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are so vividly rendered. They are the disembodied voices of a system rather than live human beings. In order to break out of the pattern of power abuse in Oceania it is therefore necessary to take on not only the relatively few people in power (whoever they may be), but rather a diffuse and thus really unassailable system. This notion certainly makes such an undertaking more challenging.

My discussion has so far only briefly referred to aspects of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s satire. Nevertheless, I believe it is important to identify the satirical elements of the narrative, as these are crucial to an understanding of the novel’s thematics. The issue of satire will be the main concern of the following chapter.

Chapter 4: The satire of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Predominantly focusing on the historical context of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as well as its continuing relevance, a discussion of Orwell's novel as a satirical text will be particularly productive to the object of my thesis. Peter Petro links satire to the literary tradition of the anti-utopia (Petro 1982: 73). His general approach raises the issues of satirical targets and technique, both of which will be central to the following discussion, and which moreover provide a useful insight on the concept of doublethink. To begin with, however, I shall be addressing some relevant questions concerning genre and aspects of style.

Genre issues

In his introduction to the 1989 Penguin Books edition of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Pimlott characterizes Orwell's narrative as a non-fiction essay disguised as horror-comic fiction (Pimlott 1989: viii). Orwell was without doubt quite familiar with the essay format. All through his literary career he fervently employed not only the essay but also other non-fictional modes of writing – letters, reviews and miscellaneous journalistic pieces – to express his views on topics ranging from war-time propaganda and the British monarchy to Woolworth's line of rose bushes. The thematics appearing in his novels may quite often also be encountered in the essay form. Thus, in 'Politics and the English Language' Orwell discusses that which he finds to be 'the special connection between politics and the debasement of language' (Orwell 1968e: 135), while in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that connection is taken to a fictional extreme in the form of Newspeak totalitarian linguistics. Dissenting from Pimlott's assertion, I choose to read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* primarily as a fictional novel and not as an essay disguised as fiction. I have already mentioned, however, that Orwell's narrative includes some additional and highly interesting elements other than those we tend to

expect in fictional novels, and it is therefore worthwhile not to dispense with Pimlott's claim right away. A consideration of genre may be useful in a reading of the novel's thematics, as well as its satirical intentions. For that reason, I shall be focusing on some of those features which I believe point *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the direction of Pimlott's non-fiction essay.

One such feature could certainly be the juxtaposition of different styles within the novel, or the inclusion into the main narrative of passages which have the appearance of non-fiction. A brief survey of those passages follows here, but first I need to mention some of my reservations concerning the issue of defining genre. I am aware of the difficulty of giving a clear-cut definition of the novel as genre, as well as the potential limitations inherent in such a definition. Let me start off by saying that the novel is an immensely varied form of long prose fiction. The analysis in previous chapters should demonstrate that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a narrative with imaginary characters operating in a fictional world, and that there is a plot which, assuming the form of narrative discourse, moves forward from Winston's first diary entry to his reintegration into Oceanic society as a Party automaton. Thus, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a fictional novel. Still, there are elements in the narrative which appear to interrupt the kind of overall structure commonly associated with the novel, and which outside the context of a fictional novel most likely would be labelled non-fiction. This is why Mikhail Bakhtin's approach to the novel is particularly productive in a discussion of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Understanding the modern novel as the arena where dissimilar linguistic elements enter into dialogical relationships, Bakhtin envisions a hybrid form of fiction in which different styles and genres are productively juxtaposed and combined. Bakhtin mentions the epic as one of these genres, and the essay can be another. In what ways, then, does Orwell's narrative depart from the traditional structure of a novel? What are the integrated elements which make it a Bakhtinian narrative structure? First of all, there are Winston's frequent diary entries, serving as an outlet for 'the interminable restless monologue that had been running

inside his head' (10). Although quite similar to the effect generated by the use of free indirect discourse in most of the surrounding narrative, the style in these passages is naturally more subjective – a combination of personal impression and reflection commonly associated with diaries: *'theyll shoot me i dont care theyll shoot me in the back of the neck i dont care down with big brother'* (22). This particular passage is taken from Winston's first diary entry, 'a hurried untidy scrawl' (22) of staccato, incomplete sentences with no punctuation what so ever – words that seem to overpower Winston. It is as if years of unvoiced frustration are spilling over and down to the empty pages of his diary. In later diary entries the style becomes calmer, however. This gives the impression that his thoughts have become more collected, thus illustrating that through writing Winston is regaining some sense of individuality that has been lost over the years as one of the gray mass of Party members.

Moving on, the reader also encounters a selection of work-related notes and memos in the text. These certainly stand out from the rest of the narrative, not only in terms of style but also simply because they are inserted as quotations, and are as such separated from the surrounding text by font size and line spacing. One illustrative example is this brief note informing Winston which news-items in the *Times* it has been found necessary to rectify:

times 17.3.84 bb speech malreported africa rectify
times 19.12.83 forecasts 3 yp 4th quarter 83 misprints verify current issue
times 14.2.84 miniplenty malquoted chocolate rectify
times 3.12.83 reporting bb dayorder doubleplusungood refs unpersons rewrite
fullwise upsub antefiling (45)

The fact that this message is rendered largely in Newspeak words makes it stand out from the rest of the narrative all the more. The overall style is brief and fragmentary, consisting of lifeless but extremely concise formulations, the kind of abbreviated language which is used for efficiency rather than euphony.

On my first reading of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, two passages in particular struck me as the least ‘well-integrated’ into the rest of the narrative. These are the two longer essay-like sections of the novel: the thirty-four pages of Goldstein’s political manifesto, *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* (213), and finally the rather technical Appendix on ‘The Principles of Newspeak’ (343). Both of these segments resemble non-fictional modes of writing. Goldstein’s manifesto effectively analyses and attacks the political system of Oceania. The style of these pages may seem ‘objectively’ descriptive, but it is really evaluative at the same time, thus criticising the Party rule much in the same way as Trotsky’s *The Revolution Betrayed* attacked the ‘bureaucratisation’ of the Russian Revolution.²² While the manifesto takes up a large part of the novels’ second part, the Appendix is placed outside the novel entirely. Thus, when the reader has learned about Winston’s final defeat and total submission to the love of Big Brother the following page takes up a linguistic discussion of Newspeak language. The contrast between the different literary styles rendered in these pages is not just striking but also fascinating.

I have already mentioned that Orwell’s novels are very different from each other stylistically, and that he seldom was content with sticking to just one literary form throughout a narrative. This variation may perhaps in some cases complicate the issue of defining genre. Orwell’s novels are often characterized by transitions from personal commentary to realistic presentations; narrative is interspersed with essay-like analyses, quotations from non-literary texts and representations of various kinds of speech style (Fowler 1995: 9–10). In terms of style, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) is dramatically split in two; the first half being a graphic depiction life in poverty-stricken, Northern working-class Britain in the mid-thirties, followed by a long essay and personal commentary on class division and socialism. There is in *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) a similar mixture of description and discussion. At one point the reader is

²² Cf. Irving Howe (Howe 1963: 139).

even invited to skip the following chapter ‘if you are not interested in the horrors of party politics’, as Orwell is ‘trying to keep the political parts of [his] narrative in separate chapters for precisely that purpose’ (Orwell 1954: 47). This kind of stylistic variation in Orwell’s language not only marks it as a colourful and highly interesting subject of literary analysis, it may also contribute to causing confusion about how to read some of his novels. Pushing my claim to extreme: should they be read simply as fictional stories or are they really essays in the form of novels – like *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, according to Pimlott? This said, I must mention that it is not my intention to make any sweeping statements here about the issue of genre concerning *all* of Orwell’s books; these are highly diverse and as such demand to be read in different ways. I have only pointed to certain features of style in his novels which may complicate the question of genre, and perhaps especially in the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Both Goldstein’s manifesto and the Newspeak Appendix are rendered in quite different literary styles than the rest of the narrative of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and they both have the appearance of non-fiction. When taking on Orwell’s novel, the American Book-of-the-Month Club wanted to remove these two passages entirely. Orwell refused, however. Crick suggests that

Perhaps he had not solved the structural problem of integrating these two things into the narrative or perhaps their unintegrated documentary appearance was fully deliberate; but they are very much part of the meaning of the book, and if readers could not see their significance, they could not understand the book. (Crick 1980: 554)

Indeed, it is from the manifesto and the Appendix, perhaps more than anyplace else in the novel, that we learn about the totalitarian state and its use of language. And so these two elements are, in the words of Crick, very much part of the meaning of the book. Both structurally and also stylistically, they constitute ‘breaks’ or dissonance in the main narrative,

and must therefore at one level be understood as not wholly integrated. However, at the same time they are integrated in the narrative as important elements in the general discussion of power relations and the exercise of power. The issues discussed here have naturally been encountered before – through the narrated experiences and reflections of Winston Smith – but they certainly appear more concentrated and systematized in the manifesto and the Appendix. It is also through these two passages that the satire of the novel is formulated most directly. Clearly, it is not necessarily the literary qualities which stay with the reader of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, nor is it Winston and Julia's love story. The dramatic tension of the novel is not 'whether Winston will be able to revolt successfully against the Party, for such revolt is inconceivable' (Greenblatt 1965: 69–70). The inevitability of the ending, as previously pointed out, is signalled throughout.

Rather, the impact of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* lies in Orwell's portrayal of the mechanics of the totalitarian state, in the fascinating ideas on language and thought which are played out so brilliantly in his novel, and which must be understood as its central concern. Within the limits of its fictional world ideas are brought to life, they are developed, and their extreme consequences are explored. And so *Nineteen Eighty-Four* functions as a discussion of ideas (Jackman 2003: 2). At least in that sense – related to that which I think is the main objective or concern of the narrative – it is similar to the essay. We recall that the essay is a condensed development of an argument, a discussion with the aim of trying to persuade the reader to adopt a particular way of looking at a subject (Gray 1992: 109). In fact, the '[d]esire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people's ideas of the kind of society that they should strive after' (Orwell 1968a: 4) is a motive which Orwell quite openly admitted was central to his writing. Does this mean that *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as asserted by some of its critics, has a certain didactic motivation – not unlike the essay? I do not see it that way, or at least I do not wholly agree with the use of the term 'didactic' to describe the purpose the

novel. For one thing, it is a laden term. What strikes me as perhaps the most important concern of Orwell's novel is not its more or less explicit way of instructing the reader about the danger of oppressive forces – rather it is the picture which it presents of those who are victimized by these forces. In all of his narratives, Orwell tended to express sympathy with the victims, be it the poor and deprived, those who were part of an essentially oppressive system of class, or those who were the victims of the degrading system of imperialism.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is an exposure of the nature of power abuse and a protest against the debasement of language, especially as it is used in politics. The novel shows how human nature ultimately will suffer if we mindlessly accept such basically destructive forces. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* would not have had such a lasting impact on readers had it been written as an essay. Alex Zwerdling suggests that with *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 'Orwell had discovered the logical genre for someone drawn to both the implicit method of fiction and the explicit statement of the political essay' (Zwerdling 1971: 92). This is what he calls the genre of the didactic fantasy. Orwell no doubt makes an important statement through his novel. It is my opinion, however, that this is conveyed through means of satire, not through the strategies of the essay or the didactic fantasy. Satire is Orwell's perfect vehicle for identifying, and giving life to, alarming tendencies in the modern world.

Satire and the political anti-utopia

In his constructive criticism of modern satire, Peter Petro discusses some of those political fictions of the twentieth century which he considers to be the literary predecessors of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Petro 1982: 73). Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1940) is one of these. Telling the story of an old idealistic Bolshevik who is imprisoned and persuaded to confess crimes of which he is innocent against the state, the novel has been read as Koestler's reaction to the Moscow trials, and as his criticism of the essentially totalitarian

system in contemporary Communist Russia. Another work which recurrently has been mentioned in relation to Orwell is James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution* (1941). Resembling the geopolitical landscape of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Burnham theorizes in his novel that the future world is divided between three super-states, each ruled by a self-appointed élite. The potential state candidates are Germany, Japan, and finally the United States, also encompassing the British Empire. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* it is the three powers of Eurasia, Eastasia and Oceania which compete for world dominance. Roughly speaking, they cover the same areas as Burnham's super-states, respectively, except for the inclusion of the Soviet Union in Continental Europe, forming Eurasia.

Orwell no doubt knew Koestler and Burnham's works, and he commented on them in essayistic pieces. He also reviewed two other novels which deserve to be mentioned here: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and Evgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1924). Both of these, Petro points out, are major anti-utopian works of fiction often placed within the same literary tradition as *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Both thematically and on the level of story there are in fact several parallels between *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and these two former works. As discussed earlier, the supreme power of Oceania's ruling élite is founded on fear and psychological manipulation through language. In Huxley's *Brave New World* the individual is controlled by the state through means of conditioning and through drugs. People are mass-produced like puppets and moulded into highly specialized workers; at the embryonic stage, the complete outline of a person's life has already been determined by the state. It is this extreme version of the regulated society, not to speak of the mindless acceptance of it, that the novel's protagonist cannot come to terms with. Rather, he yearns for privacy and time for quiet contemplation. Likewise, D-503, the main character of *We*, finds that he suffers from urges to individuality. This is indeed also the misfortune of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s Winston Smith – whose remedy is the brutal 'reintegration' into Party society. Fortunately for D-503, it is

possible to be ‘cured’ from such urges by removing (by radiation) the faculty of imagination, although the result is no less frightening. Set in the twenty-sixth century AD, Zamyatin’s novel depicts a totalitarian society with no individuals left, where humans are known only by numbers. In his portrayal of the state ruler, a figure known as the Benefactor, we find echoes of Oceania’s own Big Brother, although it is safe to say that both of these titles carry quite the opposite connotations of that which they come to represent in the fictional worlds of both Zamyatin’s and Orwell’s novel.

Together with *We* and *Brave New World*, Petro sees *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as belonging to the genre of the ‘anti-utopian satire’. Orwell’s novel, he asserts, is ‘the criticism of *totalitarianism* through the medium of the *anti-utopia*’ (Petro 1982: 73, original emphasis). Tying in with Petro on this most central point, in my discussion of the satire of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* I shall therefore be examining his assertion more closely. It may be useful to first include a brief discussion of some of the relevant terms.

The fictional utopia, as first described by Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia* (1515–16), is nothing less than the ideal or perfect society. This accounts for the fact that the true utopia can never exist; it is an *impossible perfection*. The anti-utopia (or dystopia), on the other hand, can be described as a *possible imperfection*. It is possible in the sense that the anti-utopia ‘represent a very unpleasant imaginary world in which ominous tendencies of our present social, political, and technological order are projected into a disastrous future culmination’ (Abrams 1999: 328). In contrast to the utopia, the anti-utopia is thus a product of the real world; by presenting a disastrous and highly exaggerated version of contemporary social trends, it serves as a vehicle for satire on these. In the following I shall be looking at the kind of anti-utopia which *Nineteen Eighty-Four* portrays, relating this vision to the function of satire in the novel. I will first, however, approach the issue from a slightly different angle. It is

productive to establish what kind of perfect society the anti-utopia of Orwell's novel really is a reversal of.

According to Howe, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is 'a model of the totalitarian state in its 'pure' or 'essential' form and a vision of what this state can do to human life' (Howe 1992: 239). It becomes clear, then, that we are dealing with the 'perfect society' as envisioned in political ideologies which must be characterized as totalitarian, this is an important point which I will be returning to shortly. We have nevertheless seen that the totalitarian utopia of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* really is a sham. It is nothing but a nightmare of suppression and power abuse, an *anti-utopia* in the truest sense of the word. It is therefore safe to say that the 'utopianism' of certain political ideologies is criticized through the anti-utopia of Orwell's novel. More importantly, language in the novel plays an important part of such a criticism. There is, as Petro has pointed out, a basic 'discrepancy between the official picture [of Oceania] and the shabby reality' (Petro 1982: 80) which is encountered in the novel. Through some of the characteristic features of Party language this aspect becomes particularly visible, and this is where the satire of the novel is formulated most fiercely. I shall be elaborating on this point shortly, after a brief discussion of the term 'satire', some of its constituent aspects, and the use of it in this thesis.

There are a couple of important aspects which need to be highlighted in a discussion of the satire of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. I shall be establishing a working definition which primarily concentrates on these elements. M. H. Abrams asserts that 'for some literary writings, verse or prose, the attempt to diminish a subject by ridicule is the primary organizing principle, and these works constitute the formal *genre* labelled 'satires' (Abrams 1999: 276, original emphasis). Such a characterization applies also to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which I choose to look at from the perspective of genre. But what is the subject that Orwell's narrative attempts to diminish, and how is such a subject considered in his text? Petro

suggests a model of satire based on two ‘essentials’ which figure in most definitions of the term. These are the elements of *humour* and *criticism*:

Satire is the meeting point of criticism and humour in a *literary* work. [...] Satire is also situated somewhere between literature proper (Fiction), where the literary text does not necessarily enter into referential relationship with the world, and non-literature (Reality), where, as in everyday speech, there is a clear referential relationship. (Petro 1982: 128, original emphasis)

The satirical text, as can be understood from such a definition, makes use of humour to criticise a target outside the fictional work itself; it is a work of fiction through which features of reality are brought up for discussion. More importantly to the project of my thesis, is the manner by which the satirical text discusses or directs such an attack at its subject of ridicule. Consequently, there are two general questions which will guide my exploration of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as satire. First, what features of reality is criticized, or, what are the satirical targets of Orwell’s narrative? Second, how are aspects of language in the novel part of that satire? Responding to these two questions I will discuss significant features of Orwell’s satirical technique in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

A cross-section of political ideologies

Orwell witnessed the collapse of long-established European democracies and the rise of several powerful regimes whose political systems and strict methods of citizen control rightfully must be characterized as totalitarian. Unemployment and economic crisis were particularly favourable conditions for the growth of totalitarian ideologies. Mussolini’s fascists seized power in Italy, while Hitler’s version of *Nationalsozialismus* steadily gained more followers further north. Not long after Hitler succeeded in turning Germany into a one-Party state, declaring himself chancellor and *Führer* of the German Reich. George Orwell had

personally experienced the more expansive efforts of both these regimes. He had fought Italian Fascism in Spain, he had faced German Nazism in the Second World War, and – being a committed socialist intellectual – he was deeply concerned with what was going on in Communist Russia at the time. Clearly, the general target of Orwell’s satire in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is totalitarianism in all of these shades.

Whereas *Animal Farm* parodies the practises of one specific historical regime, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s ‘concept of totalitarianism [is] drawn from tendencies present throughout the modern world, drawing from and cutting across all ideologies’ (Crick 1980: 564). True, in the Oceanic Party’s political system it is possible to detect the traits of several political ideologies and historical institutions, above all Russian Communism and German Nazism. There is for instance in Oceania a cult of personality around the head of state which seems similar to the idolization of Hitler or Stalin in the ‘heyday’ of their rule. All three of these regimes are furthermore based on one-party systems, and central to all three ideologies is the total subordination of the individual to the governing body. More specifically, the contours of the German Secret Police (the *Gestapo*) can be recognised in Oceania’s Thought Police, and Big Brother’s Youth League resembles the *Hitlerjugend*, while familiar terms such as ‘Nazi, Gestapo, Comintern, Inprecor [and] Agitprop’ (350) must be characterized as real life Newspeak. Common features of these two historical regimes and that of the fictional Oceanic Party are besides the systematic removal of political opponents, as well as the extensive use of propaganda to make the citizens conform to state policy. Characteristic features of Oceanic totalitarianism are therefore drawn from several ideologies, as pointed out by Crick initially. There is, however, one source in particular which comes through as more clearly identifiable than others.

It should come as no surprise that central features of the Oceanic system of government are based on aspects of socialist ideology. Not only is *Ingsoc* Newspeak for

English Socialism – we moreover learn that Ingsoc has grown out of the socialist movement of the nineteenth century, from which it has ‘inherited its phraseology’ (236). Yet I believe it is a mistake to argue that Ingsoc is based solely on socialism, as some critics have tended to do, thus indicating that the roots of Nazism (*Nationalsozialismus* or National Socialism) really lie within socialist ideology. There were, as theorist of totalitarianism Hannah Arendt has shown, some similarities between the methods of rule in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. Nevertheless, the ‘socialism’ of the German National Socialists ‘appeared chiefly in Nazi propaganda and did not make any significant appearance in mature Nazi theory or practice’.²³ In contrast to Russian Socialism, the origins of Nazism can be found in the far-right nationalist movements (ibid), and several of the practices of Hitler’s regime certainly went against fundamental socialist values. I will be not going any further into this discussion here. Still, it may be useful to dwell on the proclaimed socialist origins of Ingsoc for a moment – as did also a number of the reviewers after the first release of Orwell’s novel in Britain. As a matter of fact, not only was *Nineteen Eighty-Four* referred to as an attack on the British Labour Party, it was also presented as essentially anti-Communist, and as a ‘comprehensive anti-socialist polemic’.²⁴ Orwell was not exactly pleased with such characterizations. Intending to explain the issue he wrote:

My recent novel is NOT intended as an attack on Socialism or on the British Labour Party (of which I am a supporter) but as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralized economy is liable and which have already been partly realized in Communism and Fascism. I do not believe that the kind of society I describe necessarily *will* arrive, but I believe (allowing of course for the fact that the book is a satire) that something resembling it *could* arrive. I believe also that totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences. The scene of the book is laid in Britain

²³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Totalitarianism>

²⁴ From *Time* and *Life* magazines (quoted in Crick 1980: 565).

in order to emphasize that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else and that totalitarianism, *if not fought against*, could triumph anywhere. (Orwell 1968g: 502, original emphasis)

Nineteen Eighty-Four is not a direct attack on the principles of socialism but rather on *totalitarianism* in the name of a regime such as Stalin's Communist Russia. From Goldstein's manifesto we learn that in Ingsoc's preceding systems of thought 'the aim of establishing liberty and equality was more and more openly abandoned' (233), while in the 1984 version of socialism (supposedly the final version) 'the Party rejects and vilifies every principle for which the Socialist movement originally stood, and it chooses to do so in the name of Socialism' (246). Needless to say, phraseology is not the same as ideology, and practice is not always consistent with idea. There is a basic discrepancy, as we shall see, between the proclaimed and the experienced version of Oceanic ideology.

I have so far in this discussion pointed to the general targets of Orwell's satire, or, according to Petro's definition of the term, those features of the real world which the literary text enters into a referential relationship with. The political system of the fictional state of Oceania is based on several recognisable historical sources, of which two major ones are the totalitarian regimes of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. More specifically, however, there is a clear reference to socialism, visible particularly in Ingsoc terminology. It also becomes clear that we are dealing with a basically English version of socialism, as the Oceanic state is placed in Britain, and furthermore in a society composed of three social levels similar to the British class-system. Pointing to several recognisable features of the real world, Ingsoc ideology must therefore be said to be both general and specific at the same time. And this particular aspect is a most important clue to an understanding of *Nineteen Eighty-Four's* satirical targets. The target of Orwell's satire, then, is not just the practice of one specific regime, nor is the novel merely a critique of Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia. Rather, in its

portrayal of a political system based on several sources, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* becomes a warning against totalitarian *tendencies* rather than individual regimes – tendencies that certainly were visible in totalitarian Germany and Russia but which Orwell thought also concerned the free world. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not an attack on Communism or Fascism as such, it is an attack on totalitarianism in the name of any political ideology. Its criticism includes any system of ideas which is used to defend inhumanity.

There is one question in particular which needs to be addressed at this point: if it is so central to the satire of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that Ingsoc is a cross-section of ideologies, then why did Orwell choose to describe a totalitarian regime whose political ideology has such a clear reference to socialism? I believe there are two basic motives behind this preference. To begin with, it was clear that many socialist intellectuals at the time saw the communists as the natural enemies of the growing fascist threat. Orwell himself belonged to the political left, and he was without doubt worried by reports of power abuse from the Soviet Union, ‘the ideal socialist commonwealth’ (Zwerdling 1971: 91). Clearly, he did not think that Russian Communism at the time was compatible with those principles which he perceived to be essentially socialist. Rather, he found disturbing parallels between Communism and Fascism; his concern, as can be recalled, was to write ‘*against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic socialism’ (Orwell 1968a: 5, original emphasis). As for the second motive, the choice of an *English* version of socialism was probably highly deliberate. Orwell identified elements of Oceania in his own nation, and he wanted to demonstrate that totalitarianism not only concerned foreign regimes. He stressed that the tendencies satirised in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* were relevant also here and now. ‘If not fought against,’ he warned his readers, totalitarianism ‘could triumph anywhere’ (Orwell 1968g: 502):

The most disturbing symptoms which had revealed themselves in the past decade were the worship of power and the extra-ordinary appeal of political myths. These

two forces were in fact connected, for the myths were necessary to protect committed people from the knowledge that the universal hunger for power threatened every political system, no matter how idealistically conceived. (Zwerdling 1971: 90)

I have argued that the general target of Orwell's satire in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is totalitarianism in its many shades, or, what I have previously referred to as the 'utopianism' of certain political ideologies. More specifically, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is an exploration of the dangers of totalitarianism as a mindset. Now what do I mean by this? There are several aspects of the Oceanic regime which seem to be founded on pure irrationality, something which certainly becomes apparent when we examine the ways in which the Party uses language to construct their own version of reality – a reality which is the very reverse of the bleak world we experience through the character of Winston. By showing us the extreme consequences it may have, Orwell thus satirizes that which he sees the acceptance of a basically 'totalitarian outlook' (Orwell 1968a: 5); the ways in which certain political truths are consumed mindlessly, as well as those consequences this mindless acceptance may have, not just on society as a whole but also on individual thought. Orwell is attacking especially those truths that are formulated in the name of political ideology, and among the major concerns of his novel is to disclose some of the more questionable ways in which language may be used to serve a political agenda. A satirical target is therefore the conscious misuse of language in politics. The next section of this chapter I shall be dealing with the ways in which features of Party language in the novel may be related to such an objective.

Aspects of satirical technique

The announcement from the Ministry of Plenty ended on another trumpet call and gave way to tinny music. Parsons, stirred to vague enthusiasm by the bombardment of figures, took his pipe out of his mouth.

‘The Ministry of Plenty’s certainly done a good job this year,’ he said with a knowing shake of his head. ‘By the way, Smith old boy, I suppose you haven’t got any razor blades you can let me have?’ (69–70)

Among the pet concerns of the government is no doubt the proclamation of the ‘new, happy life’ which the ‘wise leadership [of Big Brother] has bestowed upon’ the Oceanic citizen (67). According to announcements such as the one quoted above, post-revolutionary Oceania is not only mighty and victorious in war, the general standard of living has also been greatly improved, one of the reasons being an explosive rise in the output of consumption goods. Still, Winston has been using the same razor blade for six weeks. Due to a more or less permanent state ‘economy drive’ (4), he is constantly on the lookout for essentials such as blades and shoelaces, and every product of his diet seems to be made of some kind of surrogate quality. Now if we focus on those names which the Party has assigned to such foodstuffs and other products, it soon becomes clear that they imply quite the opposite of those qualities which they are described as having through the reflections of Winston:

[Winston] took down from the shelf a bottle of colourless liquid with a plain white label marked VICTORY GIN. It gave off a sickly, oily smell, as of Chinese rice-spirit. [...] He took a cigarette from a crumpled packet marked VICTORY CIGARETTES and incautiously held it upright, whereupon the tobacco fell out onto the floor. (7)

The Victory Cigarettes always have to be held carefully horizontal so that the tobacco will not fall out; it is one of Winston’s daily struggles, and also a source of humour in the novel.

Likewise, the conditions at Victory Mansions are everything but victorious. Such names are of course ironical. They suggest a basic discrepancy or incongruity between the word and the meaning that it comes to have in the novel, and are therefore part of the general satirical thrust in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Petro asserts that ‘[t]he irony of this discrepancy between the

official picture and the shabby reality has a cumulative effect, as the satirical picture of the world of *1984* is built, brick by brick, from the material of irony' (Petro 1982: 81). Oceania's official picture is conveyed largely through features of Party language, while the 'shabby reality' is rendered chiefly in the styles of Winston's voice, as described in chapter two. It is in the contrast between these styles or languages that I believe the satire of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is formulated most effectively.

In another example from the text the contrast between name and meaning is even more absurd. We recall that the names of the Oceanic Ministries embody that concise expressiveness which is advocated in Newspeak language. Nevertheless, what at first glance appears as a clarity of language really turns out to be something quite different. On the sixth day of Hate Week it is suddenly proclaimed that the enemy of Oceania is Eastasia and not Eurasia, which the collective hate of the nation has been directed at in the last few days. It is all rather embarrassing. Such a sudden change of allies requires that the Ministry of Truth (*Minitrue* in Newspeak) corrects the misinformation on all documents published over the past five years (that is, since the last change of enemy) which as much as mentions the war in the tiniest sub clause. Naturally, the task is enormous. Thus, we learn that the Ministry of Truth really concerns itself with lies. Likewise, the main function of the Ministry of Peace is to wage war, while the Ministry of Plenty deals with rationing and shortages, and the Ministry of Love with torture and imprisonment. Their names serve to cover up the underlying reality of their functions, suggesting the exact opposite of what those places really are, not unlike the politician in 'Politics and the English Language' who calls murder 'pacification' (Orwell 1968e: 136). And this brings us to what is the core of Orwell's criticism of totalitarian tendencies in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and more precisely, to a vital link between politics and language. When political practise so clearly diverges from political ideology this is because a necessary prerequisite for the political consciousness is 'a sort of schizophrenic manner of

thinking, in which words like ‘democracy’ can bear two irreconcilable meanings, and such things as concentration camps and mass deportation can be right and wrong simultaneously’ (Orwell 1968h: 410). Much of politics seems to be inherently absurd – as certainly becomes obvious when a political ideology whose principles of democracy and equality ruthlessly are being exploited to endorse dictatorship and inequality. Political language may conceal such irrationality. It is, after all, ‘an instrument which we shape for our own purposes’ (Orwell 1968e: 127). ‘In our time,’ Orwell comments in ‘Politics and the English Language’,

political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of the British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of the political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemisms, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. (ibid: 136)

The names of the Oceanic Ministries, although seemingly clear and precise, are really the euphemisms of political language which Orwell worries about in his essay. They are part of the Party’s effort to maintain a smooth façade while continuing to exercise power in a most unjust manner. This problem is at the centre of Orwell’s criticism of political language in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is when this kind of language is *consciously* used by someone to control or deceive others that it becomes an instrument of oppression.

Doublethink

Besides being a ‘deliberate reversal of the facts’, the contradictions inherent in the names of the Oceanic Ministries are ‘deliberate exercises in *doublethink*’ (246). The concept of doublethink is introduced as an important factor in the Party’s massive campaign of psychologically manipulating its members, and also serves as a constituent part of Orwell’s satire on the irrationality of politics.

Doublethink is one of the Party's mind-control techniques constructed to break down the capacity for independent thought, and its function is therefore related to the Newspeak project. In the third chapter of the novel Winston muses on the somewhat confusing nature of doublethink. He perceives it like this:

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 to be contradictory and believing in both of them; to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while lying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy; to forget whatever it was necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it 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. (40–41)

In my opinion, this is where a rather dubious point in the Party's notion of language and psychology is exposed. The concept of doublethink seems to be introduced in order to provide some kind of fundamental psychological explanation for the manipulation of people's thoughts through language, as if the Newspeak theory was not entirely reliable (incidentally, something which it is not). Furthermore, the reader can never fully understand this theory because of his or her own inability to exercise doublethink. Central to the thematics of both *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the essay 'Politics and the English Language' is the importance of language in shaping human thought. However, Newspeak language, designed to manipulate the minds of its speakers, comes through as an essentially unworkable project in the novel. Fowler asserts that

Newspeak is a fallacy, and Orwell knows it. There is a myth about *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to the effect that Orwell predicts a future in which thought can be controlled by

an artificial language. Although, as we have seen, Orwell does understand that there are vital relationships between language and thought, and he does believe that clear thought can be helped or hindered by language choices, he does not suggest that orthodoxy can be imposed by a government-controlled invented language. (Fowler 1995: 211)

Newspeak is the extreme projection of those ‘vital relationships between language and thought’ but it is not a warning about the future which should be taken literally. As argued in chapter three, Newspeak is an important element of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s satire on the nominalist idea that human consciousness is infinitely malleable. More importantly, among the satirical targets of Newspeak is the way in which political language is used – or, rather misused – to manipulate public opinion. Language is indeed a powerful medium through which privileged groups can strengthen already unequal power relations. But the ways in which language may be used in politics are also something which concerns us, and which everyone should be aware of. Doublethink is a central part of that satire. It is certainly difficult to accept that *language* alone is capable of inducing a state of mind like the one described by Winston in the passage above: holding two contradictory ideas in one’s mind at the same time, then discarding one of them and focusing on the other, or, if required, reversing the same process a couple of minutes later. In social psychology such a state is referred to as cognitive dissonance (Pynchon 2003: x). In Oceania, however, doublethink is a necessary condition of the obedient Party member and thus a parody of politically orthodox behaviour.

In one of the novel’s central scenes doublethink is put into practice. This is the episode in which Oceania on the sixth day of Hate Week suddenly changes ally. Eurasia, former ally, is now the new enemy. The announcement is made at a rally, right in the middle of a speech – even in mid-sentence – and the audience accept it as a fact immediately. All their old hatred of Eurasia is at once turned into new hatred of Eastasia, which, they are promptly convinced,

always has been the enemy. Being terribly ashamed of the fact that their posters and banners are decorated wrongly, some people even believe that they have been sabotaged by Goldstein's agents. I find it hard to believe that a transformation like this is rooted in doublethink and the power of Newspeak language alone, rather it has something to do with the brutal power of the Party and the people's corresponding fear of physical retributions. My point is perhaps made clearer through an examination of the Party's official slogans.

Inscribed in massive letters on the white face of the Ministry of Truth, the three slogans of the Party seem entirely illogical and are thus a typical example of the ambivalent character of doublethink: 'War is peace', 'Freedom is slavery', and 'Ignorance is strength' (31). In fact, there is an underlying truth to all of these statements. War really is peace in Oceania because having a common enemy keeps the people united, causing a constant fear of 'the others' rather than their own government. By the same token, freedom is slavery because the independent individual is doomed to go under in a totalitarian society like Oceania, and ignorance is strength because the inhabitants' apparent inability to think for themselves upholds the Party's supreme position of power. In order to grasp such truths it is not really necessary to exercise doublethink, one simply has to understand the general threat of sanctions. People know that as soon as they openly start questioning the truth of a Party announcement, such as that which states that Oceania always has been at war with Eastasia, they will be arrested, tortured, or even vaporized. Clearly, doublethink is not as effective as it should be, since the cellars of Miniluv are packed with people who have rebelled against the Party in one way or another. Instead of consciously inducing unconsciousness about their former allied nation, now enemy, it seems that the people of Oceania are consciously aware of the dreadful effects of not conforming to the Party line.

Doublethink, in company with Newspeak, is therefore a medium of satire in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. I have already mentioned that Newspeak, in the words of Fowler, is derived

from those vital relationships which Orwell thinks there are between language and thought. Now if we take this connection one step further, basing such a theory on an essentially extreme version of nominalism, then placing it within a political context, language becomes the most effective, and dangerous, political weapon that anyone seeking power could want. Orwell's satirical target, then, is the kind of language misuse which he thinks characteristic of much of politics. Newspeak is the extreme projection of such a misuse. Doublethink, I will argue, is another of Orwell's extreme projections. It is the absurd consequence of a wilful, and at the same time mindless, acceptance of a false system of ideas. Petro notes that doublethink 'manifests itself in the mental acrobatics of the apologist of totalitarian politics: it is a schizophrenic mental posture exhibiting a simultaneous acceptance of contradictory political stands' (Petro 1982: 96). Doublethink is the exercise of irrationality, and its satirical target becomes anyone who closes their eyes to, or even excuses, a political practice which so blatantly conflicts with asserted political principles.

Orwell's satire on language misuse through Newspeak and on the irrationality of politics through doublethink, just like his satire on those other totalitarian features which I have discussed previously in this chapter, all take the form of extreme projections of tendencies in the real world. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* they are drawn out to their extreme consequences, projected into a hauntingly fictional future nightmare. Orwell himself stated that what he tried to do in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was merely to 'draw [certain] ideas out to their logical consequences' (Orwell 1968g: 502). Logical or not, these consequences come through as highly absurd. I find this following of an idea to its absurd but seemingly logical conclusion to be characteristic of the satirical strategy in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Orwell's satire is not necessarily comical in the laughter-provoking sense of the word. Even so, the element of humour is certainly a fundamental part of its criticism. This, however, is conveyed through absurd projections of existing tendencies, as discussed above, and through the kind of

irony which lies in the discrepancy between the proclaimed and experienced Oceanic reality. Moreover, the story is set in an unusually dark and gloomy world where any sign of optimism is effectively crushed. It is important that features of Oceanic totalitarianism do not seem entirely implausible as the system must appear horrifying and not only comical.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The book fascinated [Winston], or more exactly it reassured him. In a sense it told him nothing that was new, but that was part of the attraction. [...] The best books, he perceived, are those that tell you what you know already. (229)

Some novels continue to haunt generations of readers. Perhaps they are considered stylistic masterpieces, emblematic of a literary epoch, or they record the moods or concerns of a particular period in time. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is probably one of the most widely-read novels of modern times, a status which seems to have remained unchanged through the nearly six decades which have followed after its first publication. Why, one might ask, would a novel that Orwell himself characterized as a ‘ghastly mess’ and ‘a good idea ruined’ (Crick 1980: 548) have such an enduring impact on readers? Possibly, I believe, because similar to the effect of Goldstein’s manifesto it tells us nothing that is new but rather that which we seem to know already. The Oceanic state, although clearly the product of a dark and fanciful imagination, is somehow strangely familiar – and even if such a notion does not actually feel reassuring, then it certainly opens our eyes to literature’s ability to confront reality.

The tripartite structure of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* organizes the story into three clearly identifiable phases of Winston’s opposition to the Party. Its first manifestations are the subversive words of an illicit diary; these are followed by the subversive actions of Winston and Julia as they volunteer to take part in the resistance of the Brotherhood; and finally, in the third stage of the narrative, we bear witness to Winston’s endeavours but ultimate failure to resist the mind-breaking techniques of his interrogators. The inevitability of the ending, the protagonist’s reintegration into Oceanic society as a Party automaton awaiting his final ‘evaporation’, is signalled in the proleptical nursery rhyme, ‘Oranges and Lemons’, and the gradually uncovering of its six constituent stanzas also binds the three parts of the narrative closer together.

Roger Fowler considers the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as an essentially heteroglossic make-up, inhabited by a whole range of voices, the most significant of which belongs to protagonist Winston Smith. His central consciousness enters the heteroglossia of Orwell's novel by incorporating a 'plethora of styles' (Fowler 1995: 203), two of which I have related to the evocation of a distinct atmosphere, thus demonstrating how the presentation of external surroundings in the novel contributes to the indirect characterization of Winston. Similar to the tripartite structure of Winston's oppositional journey, it is possible to detect an alteration in his physical condition which changes with the three stages of the narrative, and which is mirrored by varying external surroundings. In the novel's first part, Winston, like those rotting quarters of London in which he moves about, has clearly started to waste away. The second part introduces hope, both through the character of Julia and also with the long-awaited affirmation of the existence of the Brotherhood. As the atmosphere of the Golden Country turns out to be quite the reverse of that of the murky streets of London, Winston regains both spiritual and physical strength. Still, it all comes to an end in the third part of the narrative; it is impossible to remain unaffected by the artificial atmosphere of the cellars in Miniluv, and Winston's physical appearance in the closing scenes must be described as unnatural or even inhuman.

Narrative perspective in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is external and related to a detached third-person narrator but it is also closely associated with main character Winston. Through free indirect thought the consciousness of Winston is made 'real' to the reader. Not only is it a medium through which we experience the novel's fictional reality, it is also a narrative and stylistic variant which establishes a necessary sympathy with his fictional character. As in Kafka's *The Trial*, free indirect discourse in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* expresses Winston's feeling of confusion and vulnerability when facing the essentially depersonalised and thus really unassailable system of government in Oceania.

The novel includes other important expressions of this depersonalised system of power, as I have argued in chapter three. These manifestations are the many voices of the telescreen, the main function of which is to intrude on the life of the Oceanic individual by constantly monitoring while enveloping the citizen in propaganda. Devoid of human qualities, they are the disembodied voices of a system rather than live human beings, a fact which apparently does not prevent them from literally carrying out the physical abuse of Winston, as several metaphorical references to speech in the novel illustrate. Besides being part of an extremely efficient propaganda machine, the voices of the telescreen serve to establish the ubiquity of Big Brother. His infallibility, on the other hand, is maintained by the constant rewriting of history in order to bring the past ‘up to date’ (48), a highly elaborate scheme which also must be seen as related to the propaganda efforts of the Party. Also known as political revisionism, such an expression of truth engineering accentuates a most fundamental link between political power and the representation of information, a point which, I have argued, encourages a reading of the novel as oriented towards politically contemporaneous affairs but which also opens up for a discussion of its continuing significance.

It is important not to forget, however, as Party official O’Brien most readily points out, that the past not only exists in alterable documents, it is also present in human memory. This is why the Party has found it necessary to wage war on the memory of the citizens, itself only one of several elements of the great conspiracy to control individual consciousness in Oceania. Newspeak totalitarian linguistics is certainly the most fascinating outcome of such an attempt to control. Based on the general idea of a total language solution, I have demonstrated that Newspeak will be functioning by means of the manipulation *of* and *through* language. Similarly to Ogden’s Basic English, Newspeak is a greatly simplified version of Standard English, a language narrowed down to a bare minimum of essential words from which ‘all ambiguities and shades of meaning have been purged out’ (314). On the face of it,

Newspeak is therefore the embodiment of the simple and expressive language which is commended in Orwell's essay 'Politics and the English Language'. By examining features of its vocabulary more closely, however, it becomes clear that Newspeak is not only designed to impose a desirable mind-set on its speakers, its ultimate aim is to 'narrow the range of thought' (55), thus making it impossible to conceptualize dissent.

Newspeak is based on an essentially nominalist position: the notion that meanings derive from words or that names have no underlying universals. To this model, the Oceanic Party's language engineers add an extreme version of linguistic determinism, believing that the individual's world-view will be largely determined by the vocabulary and syntax available in his or her language. Through its characteristic features and intended function, a strictly regulated language like Newspeak will therefore manipulate the thoughts of its speakers, serving as the government's foremost instrument in the moulding of people's consciousness. After its final implementation it will simply be impossible to express – or even conceive of – a concept which deviates from the Party line, as illustrated by the mindless Party automaton in Winston's workplace, whose speech production clearly is independent of brain activity.

There are, nevertheless, several doubts about the Newspeak project worked into Orwell's text. In chapter three I have addressed the somewhat illogical nature of an artificial language that consists of such a restricted set of signs through some of the fundamental premises of Saussurean linguistics, and I have argued that Newspeak's basic assumption – the notion that human consciousness is infinitely malleable – should not be taken wholly seriously. Rather, Newspeak constitutes an important element of *Nineteen Eighty-Four's* satire on political language use. Newspeak language demonstrates that there is an important link between language and thought, and satirizes the ways in which political language may be used as a means of manipulation by showing the extreme consequences of such a linguistic and philosophic model by placing it in a totalitarian environment.

I have argued in chapter four that satire is Orwell's perfect vehicle for identifying, and giving life to, alarming tendencies in the modern world which he wanted to call attention to. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* belongs to the literary tradition of the anti-utopian satire. It is a product of the real world, a fictional illustration of a disastrous and highly exaggerated version of contemporary social trends. We have seen that the target of Orwell's satire is not only the practices of one particular historical regime, nor is the novel merely a critique of Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia. By portraying a system of government which encompasses a cross-section of political ideologies and totalitarian tendencies from the twentieth century, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* becomes a warning against totalitarian *tendencies* rather than individual regimes; it is an attack on *totalitarianism* in the name of any political ideology. This effect also opens up for the present world to provide us with a new framework to the reading of Orwell's literary masterpiece. Satire is conveyed largely through the kind of irony that lies in the discrepancy between the proclaimed and the experienced version of Oceanic reality, as some of the more absurd features of Party language in the novel demonstrate. Together with the concept of doublethink, the consciously inducing of unconsciousness, a further satirical target of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* becomes the blind acceptance of political practices in conflict with professed political principles, a parody of mindless orthodoxy.

Newspeak is the embodiment of Bakhtin's centripetal forces in a language, and by its very nature it is designed to have a restrictive effect on both the individual mind and on the Oceanic language community as a whole. Newspeak is the prime example of the *monologic* voices of Oceanic power structures – a voice which seeks to dominate discourse, forcing other voices to speak its own language. Still, for all its characteristic features and intended function, Newspeak does not represent the only and the definitive voice of the Party. I have examined several other expressions of Party voices in the novel, a majority of which are related to propaganda efforts. Similarly to Newspeak, their desired effect is to deceive, control and

dominate, or, in other words, to bombard the consciousness of the individual with ‘the voices of the other’. As a matter of fact, language in Oceania is best described as an amalgam of voices in dialogic interaction, a feature of which the many-faceted voice of common man Winston illustrates. His voice is important because it embodies a contrastive force to the monologic voice of the Party, thus denouncing Newspeak and demonstrating that language in Oceania in reality is diverse and flexible.

Parallel to the heteroglossic pattern of the Oceanic language community is the heteroglossia of Orwell’s novel, which, I have asserted in chapter four, must be perceived as a dialogic structure with linguistic, stylistic and generic voices in interaction. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* incorporates unfamiliar novelistic elements such as the manifesto of the Brotherhood and the Newspeak Appendix. Resembling non-fictional modes of writing, both the manifesto and the Appendix constitute ‘breaks’ or dissonance in the main narrative. And yet they are fully integrated as pieces of the novel’s general discussion of power relations and the exercise of power. I have suggested that this type of structure complicates the issue of defining genre, and several critics of the novel have arrived at different conclusions to such a question. Seeing *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a polyphonic novel, a structure which rejects one ultimate truth or one central voice by placing the novel’s dialogic voices on more or less equal terms, it becomes possible to conclude that the narrative’s political implication is to confront any central authority or total solution. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a forceful warning against totalitarianism everywhere and in all manifestations. It is an exposure of the exercise of power through language, and a protest against a mindless acceptance of politically destructive forces. But Orwell’s novel also provides us with hope. Language is portrayed as diverse, dynamic and flexible; it is a powerful medium of challenge.

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