

# Dystopian novels: A warning or an instruction manual

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DYSTOPIAN NOVELS – A WARNING  
OR AN INSTRUCTION MANUAL

Diplomski rad

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## ABSTRACT

Although the dystopian idea has been present in literature for over two thousand years, not until the second half of the nineteenth century did the dystopian literature become appreciated as an important cultural force. Dystopia found its roots in science fiction, but it has also blossomed in political fiction, and became a separate literary genre, following the developments of the first half of the twentieth century. The dystopian authors became social critics who examine the political practice of the world society. Two of the most important representatives of twentieth-century dystopian fiction -- George Orwell and Aldous Huxley -- both explored future states of their societies. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) George Orwell wanted to inform English society about the emerging political systems such as Bolsheviks or the Nazis. Orwell's aim was to satirize the emerging vanity and popularity of governments. Huxley's *Brave New World* (1931) portrayed a world where human beings were produced like clones and conditioned with artificial happiness through a never-ending variety of pleasures and seductions. These two visions may differ drastically because *Brave New World* is often perceived as a positive vision and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a nightmare vision of the future world. Yet, both Orwell and Huxley turned out to be prophets, and their dystopian novels became instruction manuals for many of today's politicians, corporations and governments.

Keywords: dystopian, surveillance, totalitarian, ideology, engineering, instruction manual, consumerism, pharmaceutical, mass-production

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## INTRODUCTION

Dystopian novels *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and *Brave New World* (1931) are among the most significant political novels written in the twentieth century, and their impact on the world is permanent. Huxley's and Orwell's visions of future societies have been both prophetic and challenging. This paper explores Orwell's and Huxley's vision that is more and more interpreted as instruction manual or a warning.

The first chapter of this paper discusses the definitions, etymological and historical facts about utopia and its major representatives. The second chapter continues to exemplify the literary genre of dystopia by presenting the most significant novels and authors of the twentieth-century dystopia.

The third chapter examines the thesis that George Orwell's novel is an instruction manual and provides an analysis of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, emphasizing the concepts of surveillance and control presented in the book. It also explores historical facts and ideas concerning the concept of total control. This chapter also analyzes military actions of the USA in modern history and how they actually resemble Orwell's theory of constant wars. The importance of language and its power is also examined, especially regarding the possibility of altering the past as the most powerful weapon of the present. In the last part of the third chapter we will explore Orwell's alerting vision of socialism through the prism of history.

The fourth chapter will present the novel *Brave New World*, analyzing it as an instruction manual and a prophecy. It explores the history of consumerism and advertising and various interpretations of the same. Manipulation of human nature through bio-engineering is thoroughly questioned throughout this chapter. Its last part also includes an analysis of pharmaceutical effects on humankind to further support the thesis that George Orwell's and Aldous Huxley's visions of future societies can be conceived of as instruction manuals for authorities around the world.

## 1. THE ETYMOLOGY OF DYSTOPIA

The word utopia was coined in 1516 by Sir Thomas More. He used the term to define an imaginary island with an exemplary political system depicted in his book *Libellus uere aureus nec minus salutaris quam festiuus de optimo reip. stat, deque noua Insula Vtopia* (*Concerning the Best State of a Commonwealth and the New Island of Utopia*), which was later simply called *Utopia*. While the word utopia is primarily explained as *outopos* (οὐ + τόπος; not + place), describing a non-existent place, Thomas More actually joined two words that in Greek sound alike, *outopos* and *eutopos*. Presented in Latin, the book was soon translated into German (1524), Italian (1548), French (1550), English (1551), and Dutch (1553). Soon, the word utopia accessed Western languages and it gained a standard usage status. Anyhow, More was the first one to conceive the prospect of a society more desirable than the current one, and to depict it in a form of a literary work.

The society of *Utopia* provided a much better life for its residents than More's society did. In Utopia there is no gap between the rich and the poor because they all share equally. Therefore, sixteenth-century readers saw Utopia as a paradise. On the contrary, the reader of the twenty-first century can hardly ever imagine such a society as perfect. As Frye argues, "every society imposes a good deal of prescribed social behaviour on its citizens" and it can also be seen as a "product of a conscious design" (111). Yet, the greatest disagreement in defining the literary utopia stems from More's definition of the meanings of *outopos* (a non-existent place) and *eutopos* (a non-existent good place). Consequently, scholars have defined the literary utopia in a very similar way. Suvin's definition describes literary utopia in the following way:

Utopia is the verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where socio-political institutions, norms, and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author's community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis. (qtd. in Sargent 6)

Suvin, thus, perceives utopia explicitly as a non-existent good place. The second definition, provided by L. T. Sargent, describes the literary utopia as:

A non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space. In standard usage utopia is used both as defined here and as an equivalent for eutopia or non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a considerably better than the society in which that reader lived. (6)

Sargent defines utopia as a broad category with two possible approaches: eutopia, as the result of envisioning the humankind's future with fear, and dystopia, as the result of envisioning the humankind's future with hope.

Dystopia, utopias antonym and generic sibling, is predominantly a modern literary phenomenon of the twentieth century. The term itself denotes a “non-existing bad place” and was coined by Stuart Mill who first used it in his parliamentary speech. Critics often refer to dystopia as inverted utopia, satiric utopia, regressive utopia, non- utopia and cacotopia. The most popular terms are dystopia and anti-utopia. As a form of social criticism, dystopia is strongly linked with satire. Yet, as Mohr argues, in the context of literature, dystopia differs greatly from utopian satire because it warns the population of readers of future developments and concepts of society calling them for action (28). On the other hand, according to Frye, satire mocks utopia by presenting “the same kind of social goal (of an ideal World State) in terms of slavery, tyranny or anarchy” (Frye quoted in Mohr 28). Mohr also points out that anti-utopia is a misleading implication of its own primary goal which is to attack the concept of utopia (28). Similarly, Erica Gottlieb defines dystopia in the following way:

Dystopian fiction looks at totalitarian dictatorship as its prototype, a society that puts its whole population continuously on trial, a society that finds its essence in concentration camps, that is, in disenfranchising and enslaving entire classes of its own citizens, a society that, by glorifying and justifying violence by law, preys upon itself. [...] dystopian society is what we would today call dysfunctional; it reveals the lack of the very qualities that traditionally justify or set the *raison d'être* for a community.” (41)

Merriam Webster's online dictionary defines dystopia as “an imaginary place where people lead dehumanised and often fearful lives”. Dystopia is in fact a state of a society that is always imaginary with a purpose to discuss and debate and, as Mohr points out, it is a

“gloomy prognostication” (28). According to Mohr, dystopian society puts an individual in opposition to the state (32). Likewise, Mihailescu defines dystopia in the following way:

Dystopias are stories that contrast the failure of the main character with the unstoppable advance of society towards totalitarianism. The loss of the self is the character’s final acknowledgment of, and ultimate contribution to, society being definitely victorious. This story of hope, deception, and decay strongly opposes dystopia to its eutopian predecessors. (quoted in Mohr 32)

The dehumanization of society is connected to the hazards or benefits of the technological process and, finally, dystopian stories explore the concept of reality manipulation.



## 2. DYSTOPIAN NOVELS EXEMPLIFIED

In the nineteenth century writers began to experiment with the idea of a perfect society by presenting us a nightmarish vision of future world societies. Instead of writing instruction manuals containing survival guidelines, they showed us the possible outcome of the way of life of that time. According to Mohr, many canonized twentieth century dystopian classics “attack collectivism and behavioural engineering” (32). Yevgeny Zamyatin was one of the pioneers of modern dystopia who attacked “ruthlessly the violations of freedom, the total thought control and brainwashing, the surveillance, terror, brutality and rationalization of totalitarianism” (Mohr 33). Since that time, issues such as conformity, surveillance or degradation have become standard dystopian features. In that line, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1931) predicted the possibility of cloning, and depicted the superiority of “selective genetic criteria” (Mohr 33). Huxley’s novel also predicted how medications could be used to manipulate and sedate the citizens

The supreme propaganda tool characteristic of dystopian novels is the media technology. It is implemented in novels in order to engineer, retell and adapt history to suit the needs of a regime. In novels such as Orwell’s *1984* the consumerist society is stupefied “into intellectual numbness” (Mohr 33); the accession to information, scholarship or literacy is restricted as the ideological control over language is exercised. Other similar dystopian novels, among others, include Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1931), Anthony Burgess’s *Clockwork Orange* (1962), Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) and George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (1945). When Orwell’s and Huxley’s novels were released, they seemed like ridiculous nightmares of a distant society. Today, however, *Nineteen Eighty Four* and *Brave New World* resonate with some contemporary social and political phenomena to such an extent that they could almost be regarded as non-fiction.

### 3. NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR AS AN ALERTING INSTRUCTION MANUAL

#### 3.1. SURVEILLANCE AND SECURITY GUIDELINES

The strength of the surveillance and propaganda in Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is immeasurable and these tools have an iconic status. One needs to distinguish two types of surveillance that Orwell refers to in the novel - the panoptical surveillance and the surreptitious surveillance. The concept of Panopticon refers to a virtual prison designed by Jeremy Bentham, an eighteenth-century British philosopher. Bentham described it as a tall, circular structure that contains a central observation tower in the middle and is surrounded by multiple small compartments. This simple design was intended to establish order in people's daily routine. Bentham's idea was that the *inspector's lodge* should occupy the centre of the building. For the purpose of surveillance, "the inner circumference of the cell is formed by an iron *grating*, so light as not to screen any part of the cell from the inspector's view" ( c.f. *The Panopticon Writings* 29-95). The essence of this concept lies in the possibility of seeing someone without being seen. Bentham defines a very important advantage of his concept:

Another very important advantage, whatever purposes the plan may be applied to, particularly where it is applied to the severest and most coercive purposes, is, that the *under* keepers or inspectors, the servants and subordinates of every kind, will be under the same irresistible control with respect to the *head* keeper or inspector, as the prisoners or other persons to be governed are with respect to *them*. (45)

Jeremy Bentham's ideas were seized on by Michel Foucault, a French sociologist who actually coined the word surveillance. According to Foucault, the major effect of the Panopticon is "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (201). This idea led Bentham to the fact that power should be "visible and unverifiable" (201). According to Foucault, Bentham's idea of visible power means that the inmate will constantly see the tall outline of the central tower from which "he is spied upon". On the contrary, the unverifiable power means that "the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so" (201). According to Foucault, each cell would feature one window facing the central tower and another one throwing the light on the inmate from behind. This

type of design engineering would allow an observer to surveil the prisoners who would only be able to see the face of the tower without seeing the inspector himself. As a result, if the observer succeeds to create a feeling in the minds of the observed inmates that they are being watched, they will probably avoid any type of misbehaviour that can lead to penalization or even punishment. This type of psycho-engineering is very convenient because the act of observation must not take place at all; yet the inmates will have a feeling of being observed and watched. Jeremy Bentham calls this “the inspection principle”, and he points out that “the more constantly the persons to be inspected are under the eyes of the persons who should inspect them, the more perfectly will the purpose *X* of the establishment have been attained” (94). Bentham differentiated between the panoptical and surreptitious surveillance, and he was very contended with the panoptic concept. The surreptitious concept, on the other hand, does not prevent speech or any kind of action, but it detects what people think or believe by monitoring their actions in the privacy of their homes. Yeo points out that the surreptitious concept would function only “if the person being surveilled has a belief opposite to the one necessary for panoptic surveillance” (54).

Similarly, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* deals with the panoptical effect of the telescreen surveillance and describes a dystopian society of Oceania whose citizens are ruled by several mechanisms of constant surveillance and security. Winston Smith, the main protagonist, censors his daily routine because he thinks that he is permanently being surveilled. The novel’s central part is the concept of telescreen. Winston describes the telescreen as the omnipresent apparatus that serves the party and helps them to keep citizens under control where “the instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely” (743). He acts freely when he thinks that he is out of the range of the telescreen. Orwell describes Winston’s daily routine and feelings:

It was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander when you were in any public place or within range of a telescreen. The smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself -- anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide. In any case, to wear an improper expression on your face (to look incredulous when a victory was announced, for example) was itself a punishable offence. There was even a word for it in Newspeak: *facecrime*, it was called. (779)

Winston fakes his true feelings and beliefs and he thinks like he is supposed to, but his real thoughts, feelings and beliefs are carefully disguised, deeply hidden and stored in his mind. The totality of the panoptical system in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is implemented through the Big Brother methods of the thought police - the dominating principle in the novel that serves as a substitute for God and rules as a ubiquitous gaze from the telescreens. This tele-device is mentioned again and again throughout Orwell's novel as the main tool of the Party, which exploits all of the possibilities that this device offers. Orwell describes the instrument as an "oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right hand wall" (743). Although it seems that that the description symbolizes a classic TV screen that we all are familiar with or a box where one can tune-in and watch a TV broadcast, the real picture differs. This device can transmit and sense or even "see" the actions or behaviour of every single inhabitant of Oceania to the extent that its omnipresence can almost be considered as a drug. George Orwell was not the one who coined the word telescreen. It was Francis Flagg, who wrote under a pseudonym George Henry Weiss, who mentioned the word in his *Wonder Stories* (1932), stating that "It was on the tele-screen that I viewed the mobs coursing through the streets; via the news-dispenser I listened to the latest tidings from all over the country" (*Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction* 1:233).

Clearly, the majority of Oceania's population is not addicted to drugs, but is intimidated by constant screen propaganda that has created an omnipresent state of insecurity, addiction and anxiety. Orwell describes the telescreen in the following way:

Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig-iron and the over fulfilment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live -- did live, from habit that became instinct -- in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized. (744)

Yet, Winston manages to escape the real range of the telescreen, using the atypical layout of his living room.

For some reason the telescreen in the living room was in an unusual position. Instead of being placed, as was normal, in the end wall, where it could command the whole room, it was in the longer wall, opposite the window. To one side of it there was a shallow alcove in which Winston was now sitting and which, when the flats were built, had probably been intended to hold bookshelves. By sitting in the alcove, and keeping well back, Winston was able to remain outside the range of the telescreen, so far as sight went. He could be heard, of course, but so long as he stayed in his present position he could not be seen. It was partly the unusual geography of the room that had suggested to him the thing that he was now about to do. (745)

Orwell's idea of constant surveillance through telescreens and its omnipresence is vividly depicted in the everyday routine of Oceania inhabitants. People in Oceania have a special way of waking up in the morning. Their everyday routine is automated and emotionless, and Orwell uses *Physical-Jerks* to depict it. Winston Smith lives in a world marked by tight timetables. Orwell describes the soldierly nature of Oceania during the morning exercise when Winston "sprang to attention in front of the telescreen, upon the image of a youngish woman who barked and screamed shrewish rapping out her instructions for the exercise". Orwell shows the telescreen power and the strictness of *Physical Jerks* at a certain point when the instructor screams at Winston, instructing him to "bend lower". Winston's face "remained completely inscrutable" (761).

Whereas most citizens of Oceania were subject to the telescreen routine and control, "The positions of trust were given only to the common criminals, especially the gangsters and the murderers, who formed a sort of aristocracy. All the dirty jobs were done by the political" (873). This quote not only brilliantly depicts Orwell's attitude towards politics and its poltroons but also allows for an obvious comparison between Oceania and modern-day social and political phenomena. One could even state that contemporary governments all over the world have been implementing parts of Orwell's novel as instruction manuals in their political practice. Sadly, in the contemporary world, like in Orwell's novel, the possibility of a collective revolt and a courageous action against injustice in order to change things for the better seems futile to many. In Winston's vision of the proletarians:

The proletarians will never revolt, not in a thousand years or a million. They cannot. I do not have to tell you the reason: you know it already. If you have ever cherished any dreams of violent insurrection, you must abandon them. There is no way in which the Party can be overthrown. The rule of the Party is forever. (894)

However, there are specific moments in the novel which reveal Winston's thoughts and beliefs that he has chosen the right way to fight the system of constant surveillance:

The telescreen was giving forth an ear-splitting whistle which continued on the same note for thirty seconds. It was nought seven fifteen, getting-up time for office workers. Winston wrenched his body out of bed -- naked, for a member of the Outer Party received only 3,000 clothing coupons annually, and a suit of pyjamas was 600 -- and seized a dingy singlet and a pair of shorts that were lying across a chair. The Physical Jerks would begin in three minutes. The next moment he was doubled up by a violent coughing fit which nearly always attacked him soon after waking up. It emptied his lungs so completely that he could only begin breathing again by lying on his back and taking a series of deep gasps. His veins had swelled with the effort of the cough, and the varicose ulcer had started itching. "Thirty to forty group!" yapped a piercing female voice. "Thirty to forty group! Take your places, please. Thirties to forties!" Winston sprang to attention in front of the telescreen, upon which the image of a youngish woman, scrawny but muscular, dressed in tunic and gym-shoes, had already appeared. "Arms bending and stretching!" she rapped out. "Take your time by me. One, two, three, four! One, two, three, four! Come on, comrades, put a bit of life into it! One, two, three, four! One, two, three, four! ..." (760-761)

During the time interval when Winston thinks he is out of the telescreen image, he is free and restrained; therefore he reveals his real beliefs, but deep in his heart Winston's mind drifts away and ponders about the destruction of the past. Suddenly Orwell brings up the force of the telescreen:

"Smith!" screamed the shrewish voice from the telescreen. "6079 Smith W.! Yes, you! Bend lower, please! You can do better than that. You're not trying. Lower, please! That's better, comrade. Now stand at ease, the whole squad, and watch me." A sudden hot sweat had broken out all over Winston's body. His face remained

completely inscrutable. Never show dismay! Never show resentment! A single flicker of the eyes could give you away. He stood watching while the instructress raised her arms above her head and -- one could not say gracefully, but with remarkable neatness and efficiency -- bent over and tucked the first joint of her fingers under her toes. "There, comrades! That's how I want to see you doing it. Watch me again. I'm thirty-nine and I've had four children. Now look." She bent over again. "You see my knees aren't bent. You can all do it if you want to," she added as she straightened herself up. "Anyone under forty-five is perfectly capable of touching his toes. We don't all have the privilege of fighting in the front line, but at least we can all keep fit. Remember our boys on the Malabar front! And the sailors in the Floating Fortresses! Just think what they have to put up with. Now try again. That's better, comrade, that's much better," she added encouragingly as Winston, with a violent lunge, succeeded in touching his toes with knees unbent, for the first time in several years. (763-764)

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* thus deals with both types of surveillance -- the panoptical and the surreptitious, whereby the surreptitious effect is seen from the telescreen's ability to detect what Winston thinks or tends to believe. These two types of surveillance could be regarded as contradictory, especially when we observe Winston's actions. He believes that the pervasive telescreen and propaganda are two concepts that are inescapable. Having this in his mind, he censors his daily routine:

It was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander when you were in any public place or within range of a telescreen. The smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself -- anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide. In any case, to wear an improper expression on your face (to look incredulous when a victory was announced, for example) was itself a punishable offence. There was even a word for it in Newspeak: *facecrime*, it was called. (779)

Deep inside, Winston thinks that at least sometimes he is out of the telescreen range and he reveals his thoughts without restraints.

The mechanism of surreptitious surveillance in Oceania makes the parallels between *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the world we live in even more obvious. Even though it is widely

thought that the USA is one of the most controlled countries on the planet, according to Murakami, Great Britain is “the most surveilled country in the world” with “4.2m CCTV cameras in Britain - about one for every 14 people” (BBC online). The ways of usage and misuse of modern surveillance technology should be worrying for common people. Yet, as we see that these cameras help prevent crime and promote public safety, we relax instantly and their purpose suddenly seems valid. Still, there are plenty of reasons to be upset. According to Mark Dice, the author of the book *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*, the European Union is planning to implement a project SAFEE, designed to restore full confidence of using air transportation. Dice states that the EU is cooperating with many companies, and of course universities, that are packed with young innovative geniuses who will use their brilliance to enhance the existing surveillance systems (11). Here is how this system should function, according to James Ferryman, one of the researchers in the project. It involves installing microphones and cameras on the back seats in airplanes, and their primary task is to monitor the passengers’ facial expressions and aim their conversation for suspicious words. The airlines personnel would be immediately alerted if this type of system detected specific combinations of facial expressions or, as Ferryman emphasizes, if “It is only triggered by well - specified combination” (quoted in Dice 11). As stated in the SAFEE brochure, the base line for the project are past experiences “which have demonstrated that hostile persons may go through different airport controls and security measures, access an aircraft, and even initiate hostile actions. There is therefore a need to secure the aircraft itself as the last barrier to attacks” (1). If the airplane surveillance project sees the light of the day, the passengers will also have to pay attention to their vocabulary. What happens when you have a bad, stressful day and you talk to your seat neighbour on the plane that has the same problem? If you do not watch your words, you and your neighbour might trigger a system whose alarm will mark you as suspects or maybe even terrorists. Such a system would be just another instance of privacy intrusion. Like in Orwell’s novel, it too would create a situation in which “a nervous tic or an unconscious look of anxiety could give you away” (779).

The essential activity related to surveillance in the novel is the propaganda and the self-censorship, including surreptitious actions that ease the process of monitoring. “Big Brother is watching you” is the term that is often associated with Orwell and the totalitarian surveillance. As we could read in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the real life telescreens do exist. Orwell wrote this novel at the point of history when the majority of computer-related



technology, without which our lives would be unimaginable, had not yet been invented. Today, however, we encounter *Big Brotherism* in every aspect of our lives, and are being watched all the time. Every click we make on the Internet is tracked and the collected information is securely stored on remote servers in the USA. Internet providers, web pages and various social sites invade our privacy on a daily basis<sup>1</sup>, as if following Orwell's instructions exactly.

Jeremy Bentham's concept of the Panopticon and Mark Zuckerberg's concept of Facebook have much in common. Facebook service has pushed its users to go public. So, what kind of world is being created with these sophisticated instruments, such as Facebook and Google? Social network concepts such as Facebook and its replicas, Google Buzz, Google + and Twitter, have managed to alter the whole world in the blink of an eye. They allow you to create your own homepage, so that you can exchange messages or photos with your friends and relatives. What attracts the most attention is that this service is free. You need to have internet access and you do not have to be an IT expert to use it. That sounds fantastic and a bit utopian, but what is really going on behind Zuckerberg's concept is the easiest and the most witless technique for the government, secret services and advertisers to collect crucial information from us. Our interests, names, family members, birthdates, photos and employment information are just some of the carefully stored data. This type of information exchange has made many individuals extremely self-absorbed, and they have turned themselves into their own idols because mainly young people love to get attention when they post a status or a photo. On the other hand, Facebook is a dream of every cyber-stalker. What is absolutely stunning is the amount of information one can access with ease. Dice points out that:

You don't even need to know a person's full name to find them online. For example, if a guy meets a girl at a party and is interested in her (or interested in stalking her) all he does is go to the page of a person he's already friends with that he knows is friends

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<sup>1</sup> Similarly, we are experiencing the era of VoIP telephony and an era of information exchange. The Croatian Telecom has started the implementation of IMS (IP Multimedia SubSystem) in the whole country, emphasizing its main advantage - "the possibility of using advanced technologies with your telephone line" (*Croatian Telecom Voip Manual* 1-2). TV coupons for the digital signal and the IMS technology equal the government and telecom efforts to digitalize the world people live in. During the times of analogy in telephony, tapping was no problem, but now with the digital signal that is widespread, a more advanced information exchange can take place.

with the girl he is interested in, and then scrolls through that person's friends list until he finds the girl he's stalking. This is easy since people are listed with their picture, as well as their first and last name. This is not looked at as creepy at all by most girls, but instead has become a normal part of our culture. (41)

I can remember when my father had some photos to show when I was a child, people who showed interest in the photos had to sit down around the chair or the table, and the whole family would get the chance to see the photos. Nowadays, the majority of photos you post on the internet are instantly widely available to the entire world. Google's application Picasa was updated in 2008 to the extent that the uploaded photos could be automatically identified, which means that if a person's face has already been tagged in the program, it could be identified automatically. The prevailing dominance of Google and its Big-Brother-like internet services is frightening. The next "free" application that is going to be available to the whole world is some kind of a search utility, equipped with facial recognition technology. Such systems would allow you to match the photos with a phrase, regardless of where they were posted. Social networks are also real gold mines for various advertising companies. Since Facebook has the right to sell the gathered information about their users, the advertising companies get it all on a plate, without having to conduct any opinion surveys to get to the golden information they need. The data in form of status updates, chat history and many more is securely stored and waits to be sold to the interested consumers. According to Facebook's terms of service, as a user you grant them "a non-exclusive, transferable, sub-licensable, royalty-free, worldwide license to use any IP content that you post on or in connection with Facebook (IP License). This IP License ends when you delete your IP content or your account, unless your content has been shared with others, and they have not deleted it". Dice emphasizes that, similarly, "Surveillance cameras have been common in banks, department stores, gas stations, and government buildings for decades in order to prevent shoplifting and robberies, or to identify those who commit crimes after the fact" (8). Such systems are helpful when the police needs assistance in arresting a criminal or a suspect, but this advanced technology is also very powerful and extremely dangerous because it is being ignored. In other words, just like in Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, modern-day citizens of the world are subject to both panoptical and surreptitious modes of high-tech surveillance and control. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* we witness a few people, including Winston, that are still trying to think critically and be independent in a way: "How often, or on what system, the

Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to” (744). This instrument of the Party successfully intimidates the population of the Airstrip One, and other people, children in particular, are turned into snitches and spies of their own families:

...they adored the Party and everything connected with it. The songs, the processions, the banners, the hiking, the drilling with dummy rifles, the yelling of slogans, the worship of Big Brother -- it was all a sort of glorious game to them. All their ferocity was turned outwards, against the enemies of the State, against foreigners, traitors, saboteurs, thought-criminals. It was almost normal for people over thirty to be frightened of their own children. And with good reason, for hardly a week passed in which *The Times* did not carry a paragraph describing how some eavesdropping little sneak – “child hero” was the phrase generally used - had overheard some compromising remark and denounced its parents to the Thought Police. (756-757)

Orwell’s dystopian society teaches and trains children to be successful spies, to keep their eyes on their parents and report any kind of suspicious activity. The family thus becomes an extended hand of the Thought Police. Similarly to Orwell’s vision, contemporary internet users are being watched in the same manner, surrounded by virtual Thought Police agents who know everything about us. Addicted to the Internet, the widest surveillance government tool, our children, are raised up in a snitch culture.

### 3.2. THE PRESENT “WAR ON TERROR” COPYRIGHTED BY THE USA

In the end he succeeded in forcing her memory back until she did dimly recall that at one time Eastasia and not Eurasia had been the enemy. But the issue still struck her as unimportant. “Who cares?” she said impatiently. “It's always one bloody war after another, and one knows the news is all lies anyway”. (835)

The constant battle of superpowers in Orwell's novel is an excuse for diverse shortages of food and other goods that people have to cope with during their short lives. As we have already mentioned, the telescreens announce victories and people have to conform and support the information they hear. Oceania is fighting Eastasia and they are allied with Eurasia, but later on the telescreens provide rather strange pieces of information. All of a sudden, Oceania is fighting Eurasia, and due to enormous propaganda, nobody notices it. Dice provides valuable argumentation, stating that “First they are fighting Eastasia (and allies with Eurasia), but later they are said to be battling Eurasia, and allies with Eastasia, but nobody notices. It's kind of like the switch from fighting the ‘War on Terror’ in Afghanistan starting in 2001, shortly after the 9/11 attacks, and later shifting to the War in Iraq in 2003 which then continued for many years” (77).

In the novel Winston and Julia discuss the war and the lies of the Party. At one point Julia says that she thinks there is no war happening at all. In some ways she is far more acute than Winston, and far less susceptible to Party propaganda:

Once when he happens in some connection to mention the war against Eurasia, she startles him by saying casually that in her opinion the war is not happening: The rocket bombs which fell daily on London were probably fired by the Government of Oceania itself, ‘just to keep people frightened’. This was an idea that had literally never occurred to him. (834)

Yet, what does Julia mean with her statement that the Government of Oceania is bombarding London? This is a clear reference to the concept of false flag terrorism. False flag tactics occur when a country or a certain group of people attack their own country, blaming someone else for that action. Then they can justify their military actions perceived as retaliation. Orwell explains that the war with Eurasia and Eastasia that Oceania is fighting is nothing more than a falsification that the Party in charge needs to destroy the society and the fruits of its labour.

As a resident of Oceania you cannot distinguish truth from lies. Pilger points at the contemporary relevance<sup>2</sup> of this tactics:

Oceania being continually at war, never wins one. The type of warfare from *Nineteen Eighty Four* resembles the current “war on terror” that the US is fighting. You cannot define your enemy easily and the idea of a traditional war has vanished. America is fighting a ghost war, which is fraud, but it must be fought because USA favours the concept of “world-peace”. The main purpose of this concept is to occupy the remote regions that are out of reach for modern day Oceania a.k.a the USA and to incite civil wars around the globe. John Pilger, a renowned investigative journalist and documentary film-maker, points out that Americans were successful inciting the civil war in Iraq and that they “...destroyed a multi-ethnic society”. They built walls between communities which had once intermarried, ethnically cleansing the Sunnis and driving millions out of the country. Embedded media reported this as "peace"; American academics bought by Washington and "security experts" briefed by the Pentagon appeared on the BBC to spread the good news. As in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the opposite was true. (New Statesman 2010)

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell points out that:

When a war becomes literally continuous, it also ceases to be dangerous. When war is continuous there is no such thing as military necessity. Technical progress can cease and the most palpable facts can be denied or disregarded. As we have seen, researches that could be called scientific are still carried out for the purposes of war, but they are essentially a kind of daydreaming, and their failure to show results is not important. Efficiency, even military efficiency, is no longer needed. (859)

As Dice argues, US Congress quickly passed the USA Patriot Act on October 26, 2001 in response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the USA. According to Dice, the Patriot Act “granted the government a wide range of unconstitutional powers so officials could allegedly prevent further terrorist attacks” (51). Dice specifies that there is also a symbolic message in the abbreviation of this bill and that it stands for “Uniting and

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<sup>2</sup> According to Pilger, the same concept worked in the regions of ex-Yugoslavia. It was not in favour of the US that such a country existed, powerful as it was, with one of the most powerful industries in the whole world. Pilger concludes that the civil wars in ex-Yugoslavia were orchestrated “where ethnic – sectarian partition wiped out once a peaceful society” (New Statesman 2010).

Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism” (51). Dice also emphasizes that you could choose to support the bill, and if you were an American who loved your country, a patriot, this was the name that you wanted to hear. This Act, thus, empowered the US government to engage its troops in secret surveillance actions, meaning that they could search your house without your knowledge or a search warrant (51). Thereupon, a dystopian scenario that took place on September 11, 2001 has brought about a significant change in the scope of the governmental public control. Imagining the future as a replay of disaster has allowed for an extended use of surveillance mechanisms and the usurping of privacy in the name of security.

### 3.3 LANGUAGE ENGINEERS OF THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, people speak a rather weird language. It is reduced to some basic nouns and verbs with the intention of stupefying the population. This language is called Newspeak. Each year a new dictionary is published, containing only the words that are approved for the society. The Party's goal to erode language and reduce the word list is evident when Winston talks to his co-worker:

“The Eleventh Edition is the definitive edition,” he said. “We're getting the language into its final shape - the shape it's going to have when nobody speaks anything else. When we've finished with it, people like you will have to learn it all over again. 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.” (772)

There is also a very helpful slogan that we can find repeatedly throughout the novel: “Who controls the past, controls the future, who controls the present, controls the past!” (762). The slogan is one of the “sacred principles” of the Ingsoc, and these principles are devised to meet the ideological needs of the Oceania Party. Newspeak aims at the destruction of words and to alter the past, using language as a political instrument. We must not forget that the Newspeak concept was used to alter history in order to meet the regime demands in Oceania. One of the most frightening possibilities of Newspeak is that it can narrow the range of one's thought:

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. Already, in the Eleventh Edition, we're not far from that point. But the process will still be continuing long after you and I are dead. Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller. Even now, of course, there's no reason or excuse for committing thoughtcrime. It's merely a question of self-discipline, reality-control. But in the end there won't be any need even for that. The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect. Newspeak is Ingsoc and Ingsoc is Newspeak,” he added with a sort of mystical satisfaction. “Has it

ever occurred to you, Winston, that by the year 2050, at the very latest, not a single human being will be alive who could understand such a conversation as we are having now?" (773)

Besides the telescreen surveillance and propaganda, the binding force that keeps Oceania alive is the Newspeak concept. The inhabitants of Oceania are enslaved through the reduction of the dictionary and they must accept it, although it is deprived of creativity and meaning. The Oldspeak, or standard English, should be stripped, according to the Party, and Newspeak promoters wish to replace the Oldspeak as quickly as possible in order to eradicate the notion of an opposing idea, or any kind of idea, in general. This tool is intimidating and ideal for purging intellectuals. It is impossible for you to tell the truth using Newspeak, because you have to conform your thoughts to the Party and its needs:

After all, what justification is there for a word which is simply the opposite of some other word? A word contains its opposite in itself. Take "good", for instance. If you have a word like "good", what need is there for a word like "bad"? "Ungood" will do just as well -- better, because it's an exact opposite, which the other is not. Or again, if you want a stronger version of "good", what sense is there in having a whole string of vague useless words like "excellent" and "splendid" and all the rest of them? "Plusgood" covers the meaning, or "doubleplusgood" if you want something stronger still. (773)

According to Jura, Oceania's Newspeak is in many ways comparable to contemporary social network Twitter:

You could compare Newspeak to Twitter. It's the destruction of the language to make it very simple. When you simplify the language you simplify the thoughts that language can convey and express. When you eliminate language you eliminate the thought process. And the powers-that-be have figured that out. 140 characters is all you can do. It's a very important component of 1984 -- Newspeak. It's destroying words, it's destroying language, it's destroying the ability of people to communicate thoughts because thought is crime -- thoughtcrime. It's a crime to think. (Jura)

The text messaging, one could add, is yet another popular language form similar to the instruments of Newspeak. As Sinclair points out, "text messages were only intended to be 160 characters or less and are sometimes called SMS (or Short Message Service)". The limited



characters led to the narrowing of thought and abbreviations became very popular. This type of communicational environment led also to the destruction of the thought process and the production of sophisticated ideas vanished. The Party used the language as a tool in order to create reality. Yet, Newspeak is not the only instrument which was adopted by the Party. The rules and doctrines of the party were also influenced by the doublethink technique, which was one of the sacred concepts of the Party and its policy:

Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them. The Party intellectual knows in which direction his memories must be altered; he therefore knows that he is playing tricks with reality; but by the exercise of doublethink he also satisfies himself that reality is not violated. The process has to be conscious, or it would not be carried out with sufficient precision, but it also has to be unconscious, or it would bring with it a feeling of falsity and hence of guilt. Doublethink lies at the very heart of Ingsoc, since the essential act of the Party is to use conscious deception while retaining the firmness of purpose that goes with complete honesty. To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies - all this is indispensably necessary. Even in using the word doublethink it is necessary to exercise doublethink. For by using the word one admits that one is tampering with reality; by a fresh act of doublethink one erases this knowledge; and so on indefinitely, with the lie always one leap ahead of the truth. Ultimately it is by means of doublethink that the Party has been able - and may, for all we know, continue to be able for thousands of years - to arrest the course of history. (865)

Doublethink conditions the language by distorting its logical structure, and by ignorance of “the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously” (865). This concept is illustrated with a slogan “War is peace, freedom is slavery, Ignorance is strength” (745).

By manipulating all forms of information, the Party creates a positive and successful image of itself, and they also create a fictional, false past. The idea of doublethink can be

again be applied to contemporary social and political phenomena. Today there are endless possibilities of modifying the language according to the needs of a certain interest group. For example, some totalitarian regimes call themselves “oligarchies”, while guerrilla wars are observed “liberation wars” and prostitutes become “sex-care providers”. The use of the political language, especially the use of euphemisms, is of extreme importance in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The aim of the linguistic strategy employed in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is to eradicate independent and reflective thinking. Euphemisms in the novel purge the precision of the *Oldspeak* and shape the language to conform it to the Party goals and needs. One should start to appreciate the power of language and become more aware of the power of language. In his essay *Politics and the English Language* Orwell emphasizes that “if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought” (7).

Even those who have never read Orwell’s novel are familiar with the term “Orwellian”, as Orwell’s influence is manifested mainly through words he left to the literary world, such as: “*Orwellian*”, *doublethink* or *thoughtcrime*. According to J. Daryl Charles, words that are associated with the “Orwellian” concept have achieved a widespread currency. “Orwellian” depicts the invasiveness of specific technologies or government policies. The term “Orwellian” is always used in a negative context. The TIA (Total Information Awareness) program of the NSA is a recent example of the Orwellian language:

The Total Information Awareness (TIA) program was a mammoth data mining program that envisioned programming computers to trawl through an extensive list of databases containing personal information about Americans – including communications, medical, travel, education and financial data – in an attempt to detect supposedly “suspicious” patterns. Congress shut down the program amid bipartisan objections that it was the most far-reaching domestic surveillance proposal that had ever been offered. (American Civil Liberties Union)

According to Caroline Fredrickson, Congress shut down the TIA because it represented a massive and unjustified governmental intrusion into personal lives of Americans. The goal of this program was to create huge databases that should contain personal data of citizens, including e-mails, phone records etc. The Terrorist Information Program sounded less “Orwellian”, so they eventually decided to get rid of their initial idea of Total Information Awareness. After public criticism in 2003 the office was shut down.

According to Geoffrey Nunberg, from the *New York Times*, political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and a murder respectable. It also gives an appearance of solidity to pure wind, as Orwell points out. According to Nunberg, political language is something we should be aware of, claiming that the modern language of control is more effective than the Soviet Newspeak. George Orwell needed an audience that is unable to think reflexively or critically; more precisely, he required individuals with a “reduced state of consciousness” (*Politics and the English Language*). Orwell achieved a vivid depiction of his shocking dystopian environment through *Newspeak* and *Doublethink*, serious concepts used for language manipulation. This type of mind control squashed the notion of free thought and speech.

### 3.4 THE ALERTING VISION OF TOTALITARIANISM

Nineteen Eighty-Four was written in a post-World War II era, and it resists the changes that were inevitable and promised by both Soviet communism and American capitalism. When George Orwell wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which was published in 1945, the majority of the population saw Stalin in the character of Big Brother. This imaginative character was a symbol of agencies that were rising at that point of history, especially in America and Britain. According to Goodman, Orwell also explicitly stated that his book was not a manual or a “sermon on what Socialism in England should lead to”, but that it was rather a warning (*The New American* 34). Sadly, he was not right. Orwell had a vision of a totalitarian state, and his novel shows evident elements of totalitarian Stalinism as it depicts people disappearing in Oceania. The concept of Oceania is definitely a vision of totalitarianism, although it could be, as Howe states, regarded as a “post totalitarian” society as well (quoted in Bloom 137). Hannah Arendt, a German American political theorist, clearly states that “it would mean the end of history itself if rudimentary classes did not form so that they in turn could ‘wither away’ under the hands of totalitarian rulers” (qtd. in Bloom, 137). This statement again invites Orwell’s theory of continual warfare. According to Bloom, the population in Oceania was programmed effectively and, as a result, the majority of rebel actions were fabricated (138). Doublethink became internalized and there was no need for real monitoring because “a habit became an instinct” (139).

One of the fundamental themes of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the conflict between an individual and the social state system. Orwell was against totalitarianism which he presented in the novel through O’Brien, a member of The Inner Party. O’Brien has the power to read Winston’s mind and react to his thoughts, as Winston cannot remember a word O’Brien says “the word you are trying to find is solipsism” (897). The totalitarianism does not stem only from the state; the weakness of its citizens additionally contributes to its power. Orwell envisions the end of history and he is very pessimistic towards the Revolution in a post-totalitarian state such as Oceania. What the inhabitants need is a revolutionary idea, but where are they supposed to find it? *The Theory of Oligarchic Collectivism* does not offer the expected solutions. To be more precise, there is no ideological opposition to the Party in Goldstein’s book. Even Julia falls asleep while Winston is reading Goldstein’s book to her. Oceania’s residents are stripped of independent thought, and the possession of glass objects or even sexual intercourse can be observed as a serious offence. As Orwell states, once the

threshold has been passed, a return to ideological struggle is impossible. Orwell presents a nightmare in his vision of Oceania as a society deprived of possibilities. Human behaviour being compartmentalized results in a soulless state, stripped of its own ideology. Oceania's main aim is to destroy its rivals, but also to continue their daily routine that is grey, endless and pointless. One of the many critics of Orwell, Gordon Beauchamp, points out that Orwell offers not a prophecy, but a warning (quoted in Bloom 143). Sadly, he was also wrong. As Arendt argues, the ultimate aim of the totalitarian concept of terror is that victims are chosen randomly (5). The whole point of Orwell's novel is that Winston and Julia are pursued because of their total reprobation of the Oceania system. Arendt argues that in totalitarian society, freedom is nothing but an illusion. According to her experience, the totalitarian terror mocks the appearance and disappearance of potentially free men and women. There is also a profound paradox between the totalitarian belief of eradication of humanity and the possibility that humans could bring up some new ideas. During the post-war years, Orwell saw a major threat in Communism and its negative influence on personal freedom. He attacked an imaginative totalitarian government through his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and this novel will be remembered as both a prophetic warning and an instruction manual for governments around the world.

## 4. BRAVE NEW WORLD AS AN INSTRUCTION MANUAL

### 4.1. CONSUMERISM, ADVERTISEMENT AND HENRY FORD

According to Spierings and van Houtum, Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World* is a portrait of a world in which humans are being produced like clones and their happiness is conditioned through various forms of pleasure and distraction (899). The rest of the inhabitants are called "savages" and they live in reservations. This is a reflection of the early twentieth-century society when the novel was written. In the novel *Brave New World* John protests against the artificial state of happiness and individual fulfilment. Henry Ford is the founder of the brave new society, which economizes the human life related to the principles of assembly line mass production that was introduced also by Ford. The notion of God is lost and Ford is worshipped as the new God in Huxley's novel. The Christian symbolism disappeared and the Ford's T-model symbol replaced the cross that symbolizes Christianity.

The omnipresent substitution for distraction, which we encounter often through the novel, is "soma". It is available at any time. The classes in Huxley's *Brave New World* will not rebel or question their lives as long as they are kept contented with pleasures such as *soma* - a stimulant to amuse the population and to distract them from government control. This state-produced drug provides an immediate sense of delight and is used as a means of escape from any kind of emotional pain such as disappointment. The consumption of soma could mean that people have become more detached from their humanity. As there are no negative effects of soma, it enables its consumers to pursue happiness through "soma - holidays" (103). *Soma* represents a dominant influence of science engineering and technology on society, and it also influences the tone of Huxley's novel which is light-hearted and pleasant thanks to feelings of pleasure that this drug provides. Huxley's ideas of mass-production, human engineering, and the brainwashing tactics, that are also present in our society, was inspiring for many narratives. Yet, how is our modern society nowadays linked with Huxley's totalitarian vision of *Brave New World*?

The link between hyper – capitalism and Huxley's vision of the grand machinery is evident. Grand machinery is to be understood as an apparatus without which the idea of mass-consumption would vanish instantly. Today, we live in a mass-consumption society where economy and its subsystems of production are turned upside down. This type of system is called post-Fordism or even post-modernism, in which a consumer makes the choice and sets

the standards. One of the most significant features of the already mentioned post-Fordian society emphasizes the individual and his/ her needs. As Spierings and van Houtum argue, “everybody is required to be somebody” (901). You cannot escape the fact of having an identity in the world of mass-individualism. Spierings and van Houtum discuss whether mass-consumers are really in control and if the grand production machinery depends on their consumer’s needs (901). Do we have the right to choose? All evidence points to the fact that we are being enslaved by very sophisticated and competent marketing controllers. The status and the human identity is established and reproduced when people buy and consume certain objects. People buy their identities and consumer goods, as well as shopping environments because by consuming the above mentioned they establish their own identity. Consumer goods and fresh, new shopping environments plan to construct our own identities. Buying and consuming certain products is only of temporary nature and an attempt to construct our identity, mostly without our consent. The system of economy provides its consumers with new desires and pleasures, preventing them directly to construct their identities on their own and to stop when they are done. Young people mainly want to belong to a group, and in order to distinguish themselves from others and make themselves recognizable, they stare at goods and buy them in order to define their identity. Spierings and van Houtum point out that people are invited to step into the dream world of shopping, forget their worrisome reality and spend timeless time in the spaceless space of the consumer paradise (902). This fantasy world becomes imaginatively real and the mass-production machinery urges its consumers to update their “I”. The constant change and new offers create a situation in which consumers are never satisfied with their “outdated” identities. We are also affected with global fashion trends, forcing us to compare our clothes, goods or consumption spaces to the imposed ideal. Urban street cultures are being copied and marketed across the globe and this process leads to endless competition between the fashion- machineries and the production of permanent desire that one cannot subdue. Spierings and van Houtum argue that the majority of adolescents, as well as the rest of the population, buy their clothes according to latest fashion trends while believing that they are different and unique in a way. Yet, on the contrary, we give our consent to be observed and treated as products that are involved in an endless cycle of sameness. The population is an unfinished product, meaning that most people are conditioned to consume nearly everything that is being served to them by mass production machinery. Like Orwell’s novel, Huxley’s novel too is a masterpiece and a perfect instruction manual – in this case for the grand mass-production machinery

“We condition the masses to hate the country,” concluded the Director. “But simultaneously we condition them to love all country sports. At the same time, we see to it that all country sports shall entail the use of elaborate apparatus. So that they consume manufactured articles as well as transport. Hence those electric shocks. (16)

Nowadays, society is bombarded with commercials related to sports, fashion and many more. The advertisement of the experience of goods has become more important than the goods and services themselves. However, the diverse offer of commodities relieves us only temporarily because the stress and desire are continuous. One of the main features of consumerism is the fact that people began to appreciate the time spent aiming for goods as a precious part of their lives<sup>3</sup>. In other words, the majority of the world’s population today is addicted to some kind of *soma*, and today people know this drug as consumerism.

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<sup>3</sup> Window-shopping is the best possible example of this theory.



## 4.2 MANIPULATING THE HUMAN NATURE

Human nature is a patient lying on the operating desk and waiting to be conditioned and rendered. Huxley's novel *Brave New World* is also a perfect example of a free instruction manual for bioengineers worldwide. It vividly presents the subtle strategies of manipulation of the human mind used by the governments to control their subjects. The novel depicts the worst possible nightmare - the government's involvement in procreation. Huxley opens his novel with a Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Center tour where the Bokanovsky's process is firstly introduced to the reader. Huxley describes it as "a series of arrests of development... We check the normal growth and, paradoxically enough, the egg responds by budding." (7). The Director of the Centre explains the process to the students on the tour:

One egg, one embryo, one adult-normality. But a bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo, and every embryo into a full-sized adult. Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress. "Essentially," the D.H.C. concluded, "bokanovskification consists of a series of arrests of development. We check the normal growth and, paradoxically enough, the egg responds by budding." Responds by budding. The pencils were busy. He pointed. On a very slowly moving band a rack-full of test-tubes was entering a large metal box, another, rack-full was emerging. Machinery faintly purred. It took eight minutes for the tubes to go through, he told them. Eight minutes of hard X-rays being about as much as an egg can stand. A few died; of the rest, the least susceptible divided into two; most put out four buds; some eight; all were returned to the incubators, where the buds began to develop; then, after two days, were suddenly chilled, chilled and checked. Two, four, eight, the buds in their turn budded; and having budded were dosed almost to death with alcohol; consequently burgeoned again and having budded—bud out of bud out of bud—were thereafter—further arrest being generally fatal—left to develop in peace. By which time the original egg was in a fair way to becoming anything from eight to ninety-six embryos— a prodigious improvement, you will agree, on nature. Identical twins—but not in piddling twos and threes as in the old viviparous days, when an egg would sometimes accidentally divide; actually by dozens, by scores at a time. (7)

At a certain point during the tour, one of the students asks the director about the advantages of the Bokanovsky's process. As Huxley points out, "one of the student was fool enough to ask" (7). The director emphasizes that "Bokanovsky's Process is one of the major instruments of social stability" (7). It guarantees the needed duplicates that are conditioned just to do the assembly line jobs. More precisely, this principle of mass production is applied to biotechnology. In the world of Bokanovsky's process there are no depressed or unhappy people. It became a method used to accomplish public good among the residents of the World State. The genetic discoveries are not here to help us, but to be sold to ordinary people, just like any other product of the grand production machinery. Similarly, do we in the contemporary world, deal with enemy soldiers, terrorists or even armies trained and prepared for destruction? The armies we should worry about do their tasks in laboratories. These groups of bioengineers and associated scientists of all kinds are the real threat. Among them one could find a few ruthless fanatics that sell their ingeniousness to the pharmaceutical companies and governments. In that sense, *Brave New World* is quite remarkable because of its accurate predictions about technology, science, bioengineering, consumerism and many more contemporary phenomena, including the future of biogenetics. Thus, there are numerous examples in the novel that confirm the thesis that Huxley is a prophet and that his book is an instruction manual, not a warning.

The mankind hopes and looks forward to cures regarding the worst illnesses of the present time such as depression, cancer, AIDS, and many more. In the leading laboratories there are teams of creative scientists that improve their skills. According to Leon R. Kass, regarding the transformation powers, we know much about the Pill, in vitro fertilization, Bottled embryos, Cloning, Viagra, Prozac and many more (1). The society of the future will probably deliver the most wanted pleasures: comfort, safety and health. People can reach that state only with the power of our individual choice without the intervention of the World State. Slowly, we are getting used to the picture of human transformation. We see our children more as some kind of product that needs to be improved, than as a gift that we should treasure. The population is becoming comfortable in turning procreation into manufacture, as Leon R. Kass argues (1). He also points out that our population is trying to achieve endless lives with their ageless bodies. Are we able to respond to the threatening practical dangers of the *Brave New World* and bioengineering? As we read Huxley's novel, we get the insight into our own biotechnized world and become aware that there is nothing beautiful or "brave" in it.

The opening of Huxley's instruction manual clearly shows that the setting of the novel is in the future, "A SQUAT grey building of only thirty-four stories. Over the main entrance the words, CENTRAL LONDON HATCHERY AND CONDITIONING CENTRE, and, in a shield, the World State's motto, COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY" (5). The reader is puzzled with new words such as hatchery or fertilizer. It is also very symptomatic that we cannot find the word freedom in the motto of the World State. Huxley's Director baffles us with a large amount of scientific data without giving us enough time to understand their meaning. This is exactly the point where Huxley uses the Director to provide the readers with some new ideas that they should think about. The frightening fact is that the World State breeds as few or as many people they decide are needed, so Huxley's novel is also a prophecy. He deals with the familiar problems of the world we live in, and one of them is the overpopulation. Aldous Huxley was extremely concerned with the notion of overpopulation. One of the methods described in the novel is the "Malthusian" birth control method. "They're so hateful, the women here. And of course they don't know anything about Malthusian Drill, or bottles, or decanting, or anything of that sort. So they're having children all the time—like dogs" (81). Likewise, there are many instruments in countries all over the world that reward or penalize the number of children in a family. One of the best examples is the One Child Policy in China. This policy was first implemented in 1978 and is still in use. On the other hand, world citizens were more disturbed by the logic of that policy, where a communist government simply exerts power in a person's most private sphere. It has been estimated that this policy reduced the population of China by 300 million, disrupting its citizens' lifestyle and violating their basic freedom.

### 4.3. LET'S GET SOMAFIED

It is rare to miss the news about scientific achievements related to human reproduction or reproductive technology. In Huxley's World State, where everything is about amusement, economy and distraction, every individual has to be "socially useful" (63). Just like in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, one's facial expression can reveal one's true feelings. If the inhabitants of the World State need some kind of "distraction", they find it in *soma*. Supposedly it takes you on "a holiday from reality" (37). Soma also includes a religious experience and Huxley describes it as "Christianity without tears" (162). Of course we can relate "soma" to alcohol and, according to Harold Bloom, soma is the ideal intoxicant with all the advantages of an alcoholic drink (70) and even more "Euphoric, narcotic, pleasantly hallucinant" (37). The usage of soma is encouraged by the World Controllers, obviously for the state benefit, and it is a good thing for all the pleasure-focused inhabitants of the World State. It is also very effective and it disables people to feel some emotions or deal with problems of the daily routine: "Swallowing half an hour before closing time, that second dose of *soma* had raised a quite impenetrable wall between the actual universe and their minds" (52). These ideas are greatly depicted in Bernard's desire to "feel something strongly" (63). The interests of individuals that are addicted to soma are being subordinated and their thoughts and feelings vanish. With the soma they are completely incapable of dealing with life and this drug is pure evil, although "Evil's an unreality if you take a couple of grammes" (118). No one is even allowed to love a person too much. One cannot resist soma and for every unpleasant moment there is always soma as a remedy.

Huxley's novel clearly shows a picture of a dystopian nightmare and the usage of drugs. This image of drugs that can alter one's mood has been reflected and analyzed in numerous contemporary commentaries regarding the ethics of drug use. The authors of these commentaries fear the de-humanizing effects of soma-like drugs. These psychotropic drugs are being adopted and tested by scientists and bioengineers all over the world. On the "market" there are already instances of *soma* that can create artificial happiness and show the escape route from reality. Today one of the most dangerous drugs is MDMA (methylenedioxyamphetamine), but it is better known on the street as ecstasy. Huxley's soma and ecstasy both cause joy and euphoria; on the contrary MDMA has a lot of psychological side effects such as confusion or depression.

We do not have to search long for the real-life parallels between the drugs in Huxley's fiction and those in our own present world. *Brave New World Revisited* is his analysis of *Brave New World's* main components and their alteration since the novel's publication. Huxley outlined his vision of pharmacology in his speech at the U.C. Berkeley in 1962:

There will be, in the next generation or so, a pharmacological method of making people love their servitude, and producing dictatorship without tears, so to speak, producing a kind of painless concentration camp for entire societies, so that people will in fact have their liberties taken away from them, but will rather enjoy it, because they will be distracted from any desire to rebel by propaganda or brainwashing, or brainwashing enhanced by pharmacological methods. And this seems to be the final revolution. (Tavistock Group, California Medical School, 1961)

His clear vision of the pharmacological revolution is stunning. A variety of prescription drugs have been developed since the publication of Huxley's novel, and one of the most famous ones and most used worldwide is Prozac. Needless to mention, the USA has seen a huge increase in its consumption since its approval in December 1987. America has become a Prozac Nation. Prozac has been touted as a unique antidepressant with minimal side effects, but Kramer's book *Listening to Prozac* sparked off public discussion about the miraculous effect of the drug. According to Dr. Kramer, "Prozac has the power, to transform the whole person- illness and temperament" (247). Kramer's book raises some questions regarding the medical ethics. In his review of *Listening to Prozac*, Mahmood argues that it is not "ethical to prescribe a drug that increases things such as a person's self-confidence, resilience, and energy level without any ill effect, even when there is no underlying manifestation of illness" (quoted in *Listening to Prozac Review*). The overuse of Prozac may lead to a conclusion that sickness has become an intrinsic constituent of culture itself.

Pharmaceutical companies have accepted Huxley's ideas eagerly. Since pharmacy is one of the most lucrative businesses on the planet, their primary goal is to collect and discover as much as they can about what the public needs. Businesses often turn to advertising companies in order to put their products on the market. Disease-mongering, a term which was coined in the early 90s by a health-science writer Lynn Payer, is still attracting the attention of the public. As Payer argues, disease-mongering is actually the selling of a sickness and "trying to convince essentially well people that they are sick, or slightly sick people that they

are very ill” (1). In other words, the pharmaceutical companies see their chance in advertising. They spend a great deal of money on their manipulative advertising campaigns that increase the customers’ dubiousness. Their profit is enormous, and they maintain it simply by creating diseases where none so far existed by claiming that their drug is the only acceptable treatment. Consequently, we are bombarded with commercials that contain disease-mongering tactics, telling us that we are sick and that we need to be cured. Possible safety risks are mainly omitted or only briefly highlighted at the end of the ad. According to Dossey, “the concept of disease-mongering originates in the nineteenth century, more precisely in 1879” (Huffington Post). A decisive product in the disease-mongering history, maybe even pharmacological history in general, is a drug named Listerine. It was originally used as a surgical antiseptic due to the high concentration of alcohol. Its inventors, Dr. Joseph Lawrence and Jordan W. Lambert, marketed their product in a concentrated form as a treatment for both gonorrhoea and as a floor cleaner. In 1895 the doctors began to market it for dentists and it became the first mouthwash on the US market. According to Lynn Payer, The Lambert Pharmacal Company, the maker of Listerine, was confident, that they found a cure, but what is the purpose of a cure when you do not have the appropriate disease? They had to make one up. It was *halitosis*. Before the Listerine era, *halitosis* had been an unknown medical term. Yet, advertising companies promoted Listerine as its cure, which resulted in an outbreak of halitosis. One of the tricks used by disease mongers was to pathologize common everyday situations in the name of the profit. According to Harvard’s psychologist William James, we should treat the authors of disease-mongering commercials as public enemies (qtd. in Dossey), and, I would also add, genuine terrorists. Lynn Payer identifies some tactics that are used in the process of disease-mongering. She emphasizes that its creators “take a normal function and imply that something is wrong with it and needs to be cured” (88). According to Payer, they input suffering that is not necessarily there. The disease-mongering tactic, that describes a large proportion of the population as if they were suffering from a “disease”, is the most spread along with the disease-mongering idea of “taking a common symptom that could mean anything and make it sound as if it is a sign of a serious disease” (88).

We must certainly worry about these ideas that are taken from Huxley. It is the state of our minds that counts, as the treatment of these illnesses with drugs is very expensive. Our imagination is under pressure caused by permanent propaganda proclaiming “illness” for the majority of people. Comparing ourselves to soma-addicted characters of *Brave New World*,

we must learn how to defend ourselves against the Big Pharma messages broadcast mainly via telescreens and to resist the pharmaceutical mass consumption systems of control. Recent bribery controversy involving the Pharmaceutical corporation Pfizer speaks to that as well. According to SEC (The Securities and Exchange Commission),

... employees and agents of Pfizer's subsidiaries in Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Italy, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Serbia made improper payments to foreign officials to obtain regulatory and formulary approvals, sales, and increased prescriptions for the company's pharmaceutical products. They tried to conceal the bribery by improperly recording the transactions in accounting records as legitimate expenses for promotional activities, marketing, training, travel and entertainment, clinical trials, freight, conferences, and advertising. (SEC)

Brockmeyer argues that "Pfizer subsidiaries in several countries had bribery so entwined in their sales culture that they offered points and bonus programs to improperly reward foreign officials who proved to be their best customers. (SEC)

*Brave New World* indeed seems to be an inspiration and an instruction manual for the Big Pharma machinery and the rise of preventive health concepts that make people even more greedy. Taking Huxley's novel as a case in point, one learns that the only way to resist the machinery of consumerism, profit and disease-mongering is to start changing our lifestyle and to value the way we live. People should turn to alternative medicine and crush the profit of pharmaceutical companies in that manner.

## CONCLUSION

Although the majority of literary critics claim that George Orwell and Aldous Huxley wrote their novels as a warning about what could happen with socialism in future time, both of these novels present a pleasant and appealing life in a utopian society as far as its members conform to the rules of the state. However, when one does not conform to the rules of the all-mighty governments, one is branded as a dissident and punished as a traitor. Orwell used his main character to show how the government would use propaganda and fear in order to control people's thoughts. Huxley's vision is at first more positive, but the second reading baffles the reader. *Brave New World* portrays a life where people are unable to formulate their own ideas and lose their innate individuality. The majority of people cannot imagine their lives as members of a lower caste. Yet, lower castes are the most numerous ones. Is it not true that our lives consist of working and resting? By drawing parallels between the two novels and some contemporary world issues, this paper emphasizes the upsetting fact that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Brave New World* are instruction manuals. Whereas Orwell's novel is a guideline to total control and eradication of thought, Huxley's novel provides an insight in the world of total eradication of families. Both concepts can be seen in the modern world. Security cameras monitor all activities and governments have the ability to plant fear among individuals who never know whether they are being monitored or not. It is up to us to judge whether we accept the fact that today there is no privacy at all.

Even though at first the two dystopian novels were related to communist totalitarian regimes, especially during the Cold War era, their profound critique is equally applicable to twenty-first century social phenomena, capitalist ethos in particular. Working conditions and the stressful way of life that allows for no space or time to think about the world one lives in, as well as the fact that communities around the world are slowly on the way to becoming just like the ones in Orwell's and Huxley's novels, speaks of the timeless value of these two writers and the need to observe them as ingenious prophets of the world's present state.



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