

**MARCELO PELISSIOLI**

**FROM ALLEGORY INTO SYMBOL: REVISITING GEORGE  
ORWELL'S *ANIMAL FARM* AND *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*  
IN THE LIGHT OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY VIEWS OF  
TOTALITARIANISM**

**PORTO ALEGRE  
2008**

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IN THE LIGHT OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY VIEWS OF  
TOTALITARIANISM**

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**PORTO ALEGRE  
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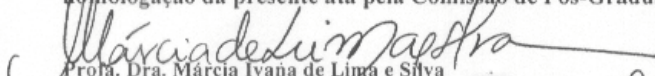
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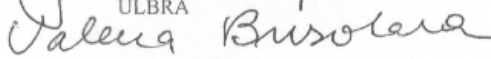
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Aos dezesesseis dias do mês de junho de dois mil e oito (18/11/2008), às 14 horas, no Auditório do Instituto de Letras da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Campus do Vale, reunida a Banca Examinadora, realizou-se em sessão pública a avaliação da **Dissertação de Mestrado** intitulada *From Allegory into Symbol: Revisiting George Orwell's Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four in the Light of 21st Century Views of Totalitarianism*, área de Estudos de Literatura, especialidade de Literaturas Estrangeiras Modernas e ênfase em Literaturas de Língua Inglesa. Após a arguição feita nos termos regimentais à Dissertação apresentada pelo Professor **Marcelo Pelissoli**, procedeu-se à discussão sobre o conceito a ser atribuído ao referido trabalho. A Banca Examinadora, por **UNANIMIDADE**, conferiu à candidato o conceito "**A**". E, por ser verdade, foi lavrada a presente ATA, que será lida e assinada pela Banca Examinadora e visado pela Coordenação do Programa.

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*ANIMAL FARM* AND *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR* IN THE LIGHT OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
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*For that which can foresee by the exercise of mind is by nature intended to be lord and master, and that which can with its body give effect to such foresight is a subject, and by nature a slave; hence master and slave have the same interest.*

Aristotle, *Politics*.

## RESUMO

Os primeiros textos do escritor inglês George Orwell consideram o apelo do ideário comunista, ao passo que seus dois últimos romances, *A Revolução dos Bichos* (publicado em 1946) e *1984* (publicado em 1949) se contrapõem radicalmente a esse regime. Ao longo da segunda metade do século XX, foi-se estabelecendo a mística de uma forte ligação entre a obra de Orwell e o histórico do regime comunista, de modo que, com a queda do Comunismo, o desinteresse pelo assunto parece haver provocado uma diminuição no conceito dos méritos do escritor. O argumento da presente dissertação é que estamos frente a um momento nevrálgico no desenrolar da fortuna crítica de George Orwell, no qual a leitura alegórica feita até aqui deve ser substituída pela leitura simbólica, para que os textos do autor possam transcender à derrocada do movimento Comunista, sustentando-se na estética de sua literariedade e na atemporalidade de seu apelo ético. Em outras palavras, não é o texto de Orwell que precisa ser mudado, e sim, o ângulo de abordagem daqueles que constroem a fortuna crítica do autor, pois as referências temporais desgastadas diminuem a potencialidade interpretativa das obras. Um ponto comum que permanece, e que transpassa a obra literária de Orwell, é a opressão exercida por quaisquer sistemas políticos que possam ter atitudes consideradas totalitárias. Esta observação não remete apenas ao sistema comunista, mas também ao imperialista, ao autocrático, e até mesmo ao democrático. Orwell demonstra que um sistema não é totalitário por si só, mas através de suas atitudes em relação ao povo. Se, na época de seus lançamentos, a temática totalitária foi relacionada ao comunismo, tomando-se os textos como alegorias irreversíveis do discurso anti-comunista, a queda daquele regime, ou sua gradual abertura a práticas capitalistas, não basta para condenar as obras de Orwell ao anacronismo, descartando maiores possibilidades interpretativas. Ao propor uma releitura de *A Revolução dos Bichos* e *1984* substituindo as referências ao comunismo por qualquer tipo de prática totalitária — e concentrar o foco das observações no que é simbólico, ao invés de alegórico — acredito estar cumprindo minha parte neste processo de resgate da fortuna crítica de um escritor que considero ser um dos mais honestos e competentes de seu tempo.

Palavras-chave: Totalitarismo, *A Revolução dos Bichos*, *1984*, Alegoria, Símbolo.



## ABSTRACT

The first texts of the English writer George Orwell approach the appeal of Communist views; however, his two last novels, *Animal Farm* (published in 1946) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (published in 1949) radically oppose this regime. Along the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, strong bonds were established between Orwell's works and the history of the Communist regime, however, with the fall of Communism, the lack of interest for the subject seems to have generated a diminution in the merits and recognition of the writer. The argumentation of this thesis is that we have been facing a central moment in the unfolding of George Orwell's critical heritage, in which the allegorical reading done so far must be replaced by the symbolical reading, so that the texts of the author can transcend the fall of the Communist movement, supported by the esthetic of the literariety and atemporality of their ethic appeal. In other words, it is not the text of Orwell which must be changed, but the angle of the approach of those who build the author's critical heritage, because outdated temporal references impair the interpretative possibility of the works. A remaining point that seems to cross all Orwell's literary works is the oppression exerted by any political systems that can have attitudes considered totalitarian ones. This remark does not address only the Communist system, but also the Imperialist, the autocratic and even the Democratic ones. Orwell demonstrates that a system is not totalitarian on its own, but through its manifestations towards people. If, at the age of their launchings, the totalitarian theme was connected to Communism, taking the texts as irreversible allegories of the anti-Communist discourse, the fall of that regime, or its gradual opening to Capitalist practices, is not enough to condemn Orwell's works to anachronism, discharging more comprehensive interpretative possibilities. I believe that, by proposing a new reading of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, replacing the references to Communism for references to any kind of totalitarian practice--, and concentrating the focus of the observation on what is symbolical – I will be doing my part in this process of rescuing the critical heritage of a writer who I consider one of the most honest and competent authors of his time.

Keywords: Totalitarianism, *Animal Farm*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Allegory, Symbol.

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## INTRODUCTION

Writers have always proved as interested as philosophers in the investigation of elements that can differentiate human sciences from natural sciences, and the ways in which the production of knowledge is achieved in both areas. Among such scholars, I call the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1989), whose first reflection on the subject was the realization of the normative function of the natural sciences, like Mathematics and Physics, where the objective is to reach a final explanation to the phenomena, once the objects of investigation (numbers and natural laws) are of such a nature that they hardly evolve, making the creation of definitive theories possible. This fact operates differently in the field of human sciences, which are more dependent on cognitive involvement and interpretation, due to the much more fluid nature of their object of study. In the case of Literature, the object would be the language as discourse. Gadamer also prefers to adapt the expression from *human sciences* to *sciences of the spirit*, as long as, to him, all sciences are human.

As in the natural sciences, however, what is considered true in the sciences of the spirit must also be subordinated to methodological concepts of verification of modern sciences. The concept of truth in the sciences of the spirit is connected to the discovery and interpretation of a *possible* reality, and not of a definitive reality, as in the case of the natural sciences. Thus, the contextual comprehension of a determined interpreter with what is interpreted becomes scientifically possible to be proved within the patterns of the sciences of the spirit: the development of knowledge through the interpretation of language as discourse, bringing up facts and details that could still be concealed in that discourse. It is possible to say that this disclosing of interpretations is the scientific search of Literature.

With this in mind, the argumentative character of this thesis matches the conviction of Gadamer in what concerns the fact that the presentation of the analysis of the objects of study will not come up with a normative truth, proper of the natural

sciences, but rather, with *one possible* reading among the multiple possibilities allowed in the field of interpretation, proper of the natural sciences.

If the interpretation of the intention of the writer on a determined text was once the goal of a literary analysis <sup>1</sup>, after the establishment of Literary theory, in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the concept of interpretation suffers a deep change: it is not a matter of finding *the* hidden truth of the text, but simply, a *possible* truth. In the 60`s and in the 70`s, the contribution of literary theories like Reader-Response Criticism, that brought importance not just to the writer but also to the role of the reader in creating meaning, are fundamental <sup>2</sup>. Besides providing Literature with a scientific character, a different dimension of interpretation became possible: now, it is the reader who builds the sense of the text, which may get new meanings along the time. With this, the former goal, the discovery of the intention of the writer is undone, proving that the symbolic principle<sup>3</sup> of the texts is more durable and more powerful than the philological meaning. This building of sense, what a text signifies to a determined reader in a determined time, is provided by a set of conclusions taken under the action of the most diverse aspects of human psychology, as intellectual level, political ideology and religious beliefs, for example. In spite of it, it is in the reading of the texts that their values are applied: the text in itself does not mean absolutely, and may even acquire different interpretations according to the interpreter's times and ideological values. Thus, it is always possible to update the subjects of texts in order to develop a dialogue with the present reality.

This makes the closure of the hermeneutic circle possible: the relation between the reader, the one who interprets something, with what is being interpreted. This conquest of freedom - not simply to accept the sense that the others want to impose, but also to build our own reading - depends on the understanding of an evolving line of concepts: comprehension – interpretation – criticism, where

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<sup>1</sup> Interpretative techniques originated from the medieval exegesis, when only the divine reason found in texts could be the fundament of truth to the human being. It was God who provided the enlightenment of reason so that men might understand the rigorous order in which God created the world.

<sup>2</sup> Here I refer specifically to the contributions of Umberto Eco described in the book *Open Work* (1962) and Wolfgang Iser's work *The Act of Reading* (1981).

<sup>3</sup> The expression *symbolic principle* is chosen instead of *allegorical principle* due to my understanding that the meaning of allegories may have a more fixed character than the meaning of symbols, that can acquire different meanings along the time. This is exactly one of the main intentions of this thesis: to associate the symbolism of the objects of study to more updated meanings.

comprehension is related to the building of meaning, interpretation to the creation of a possible signification, and criticism to the attempt to provide some kind of explanation and judgment.

The *corpus* of this study consists of the two best-known works written by the English author George Orwell (1903 – 1950), in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first book is *Animal Farm*, published in 1946; the second is *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a science fiction work published in 1949. These two works are going to be analyzed, supported by the evolution of the concept of interpretation: at first, the role of interpretation was investigative, there was an attempt to decipher the occult truth of the work. However, for us, contemporary readers, producers of meaning, there is not one unique truth any longer, but multiple perspectives that can raise multiple readings, and this makes the re-creation and updating of literary works possible.

Much of George Orwell's work, especially *Animal Farm*, addresses the field of allegory, and allegory tends to be fixed in time and space. Maybe, for this reason, and also for the theme of the works, I have the impression that the literary criticism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has tended to associate the works of Orwell, a self-called leftist writer, with the criticism on Communism. Communism, on its turn, was substituted by other political regimes, or found its own way to survive in some countries. However, it has become progressively different from what it originally was, mainly in what concerns economic affairs<sup>4</sup>. With this, the interest in the subject *Communism* decreased, and it seems that the interest in George Orwell's works decreased in the same proportion.

I see in the works of Orwell a political treatise bigger than one or another political regime that may have been in evidence in a determined historical moment. The values discussed in *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* relate to justice, equality and ethics, and are to remain. They are symbolic and, for this reason, may suffer modifications and updating. What is ethical in a determined age is not necessarily the same in another age. However, the symbol remains, waiting for a new shading of meaning.

This thesis argues towards a new stage in the discussion of the critical heritage on Orwell, to prevent his work from being considered simply linked to a past

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<sup>4</sup> Some examples are the opening of the markets of Communist regimes to capitalist countries, as happened with Russia in the beginning of the 90's and as has been happening with China nowadays.

historical moment. So as to develop my argument, I am to stretch this discussion – which is often restricted to analogies with Communism – towards our contemporary political panorama, where instances of totalitarianism can be found not only in the scattered remains of the Communist project, but also in many other systems, including the sphere of democratic capitalism. In order to do so, I will make use of footnotes, throughout the work, to establish this kind of connection.

My intention is to approach the duo *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in two ways, both as aesthetic constructs and as political documents. As to the former, I believe that if these books transcend the historic circumstances under which they have been created, this is due to their literary, artistic dimension. If these works survive in any way, it is because they were given importance within the parameters of Literature. I want to investigate the structural elements in them that caused them to rise to the level of artistic creations. As to the latter, the point I want to emphasize is that, if these two texts are political works, they are political in the deeper, in the nobler sense of the term. They refer to the inherent human characteristics that make men prone to adopt, now and then, an authoritarian code of behavior, rather than a specific (and minor) ideological political agenda. It is to emphasize this trait that I mean to establish connections between what we have in Orwell's two books and instances of the same political phenomenon that can be found now, in our contemporary reality, in the years in which the thesis is being written.

It is significant to say that *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are George Orwell's last works. This points to the fact that the author died in a moment when he was reaching full maturity as a writer. It also matters that these novels - that have in common the fear of the totalitarian policies that came up after the World War II – are Orwell's most famous works<sup>5</sup>. Although the reception of those books, in a first moment, was not the best, as time passed, the critical reaction became positive for the opportune treatment of the political scenario of Europe in the 40's and for the satirical portrayal of society, not to mention the original aesthetic choice of constructions shaped as fable and science fiction, respectively.

Because of their political content, the reception of the books was dependant

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<sup>5</sup> This assertion is corroborated by the number of translations and adaptations to other kinds of media along the second half of the last century.

on the setting of their publication <sup>6</sup>. As the political circumstances evolved, with the passing of some decades, there came the sense of a dated work in the articles and criticism on them <sup>7</sup>. Thus, resorting to the freedom to create sense and signification mentioned by Gadamer, this thesis proposes to revitalize and update the political discussion through the association of both works, in an analytical-interpretative form, with the current state of art in the political discussion of what matters.

So that my aim can be achieved, elements that are external to the texts will be considered whenever necessary, as pre-textual facts connected with George Orwell's personal life and experience, which caused him to feel and perceive things in one or other way, and that eventually provoked a deep change in his political views. Nevertheless, these changing political views, allied to some other hints to the historical context of the creation of the objects of study, will serve as a means of support, and not as a basis for interpretation.

This thesis deals with the two novels because the connections established between the two texts provide a wider dimension of the totalitarian views that George Orwell feared when some possible linking points between the works are established, culminating with the evolution of the views of the writer as a humanist and a political being. The evidences found after these inferences lead to the need of investigation of certain associations between both works, analyzing the points that exert the same function in the texts.

Thus, the purpose of this thesis is the search for more human and universal values in the novels in question, approaching them with a contemporary view, dislocating the fixed allegorical perspective that general criticism emphasizes to a symbolic perspective, where there is more flexibility of interpretation. I offer my reading of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as novels that complement each other through elements that, although shaped differently, have similar roles in their settings, proposing to revitalize the political discussion implied, and counter-arguing on the idea of the text being dated by means of examining their structure as literary

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<sup>6</sup> I. Anisimov, in the Russian newspaper *Pravda*, writes that the books by Aldous Huxley and George Orwell are "gruesome prognostications which are being made in our times by a whole army of venal writers on the orders and instigation of Wall Street, being attacks against the people of the world". (ANISIMOV, pp. 14-15)

<sup>7</sup> Like the article about *Animal Farm*, by Kingsley Martin (1945), where he writes that "there is plenty in the U.S.S.R. to satirise, and Mr. Orwell does it well". Another proof of it is the 1949 criticism on *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, by Diana Trilling. She writes that "what he (Orwell) was telling us is that along the path the Russian revolution has followed to the destruction of all the decent human values".

works of art, not to mention the rescue of the works of George Orwell from the sameness that general criticism presents, Orwell = Communist affairs. This will imply a revision of Orwell's still short critical heritage, as well as some formal considerations about literary concepts such as allegory, symbol, satire, fable, science fiction - and also about political concepts as totalitarianism, socialism, communism. The joint reading of both works can help the treatment of the political issues because it enlightens the continuum of the totalitarian society of *Animal Farm* into the totalitarian society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which are read separately, but that can acquire a different though their linking points, and consequent transitions, which are considered so that a more comprehensive study of the evolution of the subject *totalitarianism* becomes possible.

Because we are dealing with an artistic construct, the treatment of the subject simultaneously contemplates two aspects of the discussion: first, the reflection upon the aesthetic implication involving the allegorical dimension of *Animal Farm* and of the science fiction piece *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and how these formal choices may function to support the theme of both works, which is the development of totalitarian policies on societies that are not able to recognize the signs that precede the establishment of such policies. Two further concepts, of utopia and dystopia are used to characterize the setting of the works. The second specific aspect relates to the analysis of the narrative point of view, which determines the vision of the characters in *Animal Farm*, and in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where the standpoint of the narrative is set from middle-class. This analysis is headed towards to the study of why these two societies can be considered totalitarian, demonstrating the links among the characters of the works and their roles in the plot, besides the links of the happenings that can connect *Animal Farm* to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Connections with the political circumstances of our present times will justify the title of this thesis, being provided mainly in footnotes. Such connections are what prove that *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* may be viewed as contemporary works.

I hope, with this thesis, to bring up my interpretation of the voice of a self-considered left-wing writer, in our contemporary moment of history in which we contemplate not only the established left-wing governments like in Cuba and China, but also the ascension of left-wing governments with very distinct practices in many other countries, mainly in Latin America such as in Ecuador, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela and Bolivia. Besides, due to the increasing participation of the



USA in world affairs, the word *imperialism*, meaning a kind of policy whose social effects Orwell has always been alert and on his guard against, has never been so spread.

The English Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of Manchester and literary critic Terry Eagleton asks in *Literary Theory: an Introduction* (1983, rev 1996): “What is the finality of the literary theory?” (p. 267). In a world filled with problems and poverty, Eagleton calls the attention to the necessity of bringing politics to the environment of the question, being aware that the theories are always linked to the ideological values of the age, because, in fact, they can serve to reinforce certain political presuppositions. Eagleton gets to the point of saying that the purity of literary theory is an *academic myth*, once they consciously or not, serve, in their attempt of being scientific or universal, some kinds of ideologies. (p. 268). The important thing should not be the discourses presented, but the effects produced by this discourse, and the way it was produced.

Literature is related to existential situations of the human life. Terry Eagleton reinforces this belief by stating that literary theory is “rather concrete than abstract, presenting life in all its rich variety and rejecting the conceptual barren investigation, preferring the feeling and taste of being alive” (1983, p. 269 – 270). And I share this view, to the point that I believe that the urgency of some social happenings must be approached through literary criticism, not ideologically, but rather, politically.

Thus, to a certain extent, this thesis matches the views of Terry Eagleton, mainly in what concerns the need to be aware of the political effects of literary texts, demonstrating, as Eagleton says, that Literature is not a particularly privileged object, the aesthetical element must not be apart from the social determiners. (EAGLETON, 1996, pp. 283). On the contrary, Literature has the power to bring up citizens able to mind about the political situations as a whole, in a concrete and practical form. (Idem, p. 286).

In spite of the inevitable link of this paper with History, it is not my intention to associate the plot of *Animal Farm* or *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with historical moments or facts. Neither will I deal on the association of characters and historical persons, both because this kind of analysis has already been done extensively <sup>8</sup>, and because I

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<sup>8</sup> Some examples of the association of the works to the present historical moment are the critical articles published about *Animal Farm* by Kingsley Martin, Isaac Rosenfeld and Edmund Wilson. About *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, some examples are the articles produced by Philip Rahv and Golo Mann.

believe this practice has been harmful, provoking the sense of datedness imposed upon Orwell's works. Besides, this mere association of characters and historical persons is avoided also because I believe that this sort of analysis may cause a loss in the real extent that Literature can reach in terms of metaphor, restricting the symbolism of the works from further analyses, and limiting the text to historical mimesis.

This thesis is structured into three chapters: the first refers to the historical context in which *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* were produced, as well as to post-World War II. The second chapter discusses the relevance of the formal choices made by Orwell regarding the use of satire, allegory, fable and science fiction in order to explore their meanings and also to explore their possibilities and effects in Literature, like, for example, to what extent the allegory of *Animal Farm* points to a past scenario of utopia, and the science-fiction of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* points to a possible dystopian future. The third chapter focuses on the analysis of the linking points between *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, verifying to what extent these works complement each other concerning the discussion on anti-totalitarianism. Also, this chapter offers my close-reading of the objects of study, demonstrating how some topics can address 21<sup>st</sup> century world affairs. As already mentioned, these links with our present-day circumstances are made predominantly through footnotes.

Finally, the same freedom of interpretation that was provided by the development of the theories such as Gadamer's, that gave voice to the reader, making interpretations possible to be verified and designed as truth, evokes the pursuit of freedom that was a constant trait in the works of George Orwell. In the same sense, my claim in this thesis is that Orwell's works deserve more than being simply associated to historical moments, or treated as entertainment or political manifestos. They are outstanding literary constructs that can also serve as honest intellectual tools to enhance the freedom of thought necessary to the development of an honest political individual, and consequently as relevant to the freedom of man, as these works were in the days of their production, as they are nowadays, and as they can be in the future as well.

## 1 JUSTICE AND LIBERTY: THE MAKING OF AN AUTHOR

“Justice and liberty”: these terms may lead one into the field of philosophy, where the first element has been defined by Plato as “the harmonious function of diverse elements of society or of the distinct souls within an individual person” (KEMERLIN, 2007). Aristotle has then contributed that justice is concerned with the equitability or fairness in interpersonal relations, offering an account of distributive justice that makes allowances for the social rectification of individual wrongs (KEMERLIN, 2007). As for the second term, Liberty, for the sake of this thesis, the concept is to be taken as the human capacity to act - or not to act - as we choose or prefer, without any external compulsion or restraint.

Transposed to the political fields, the motto “justice and liberty” is mainly linked to democratic left-wing tendencies. According to Stanislao G. Pugliese’s book *Carlo Rosselli: Socialist Heretic and Antifascist Exile*, a biography about the Italian intellectual and socialist activist that acted during the periods that comprehended the World Wars I and II, “it is not the socialization of the means of production nor the proletariat in power nor simple material equality. “Socialism, grasped in its essential aspect, is the progressive actualization of the principle of liberty and justice among men”, and that these same principles should remain “a movement rather than a party”.

Nowadays these terms have been transformed in mere rhetoric instruments of speech and may have lost their full potential to serve as a North for the reaching of a society where human beings can live with dignity and respect, having real chances to fulfill their wishes. Under the Early Socialist perspective, these words concerned political and economic equality among citizens, in a criticism to liberal economy and to private property. These concepts, starting from a political dimension that end up reaching a philosophical sense, be it in a larger or lesser scale, are always present in the works of George Orwell, a writer who admitted that his works were in favor of social democracy (ORWELL, 2000j, p. 5). However, the expression of this social democracy seemed to be a kind of political search for policies that were able to

refrain political extremes that could lead to totalitarian systems rather than being a simple ideological demonstration.

### **1.1 Britain at the Turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

The scenery of the United Kingdom that was advancing to the twentieth century underwent dramatic changes until the end of World War II. Facts like the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 brought the end of the Victorian age. Allied to it, the falling of the British Empire, the sedimentation of urban cities and of the proletarian and middle-classes, besides revolutions of philosophical, political, esthetic and religious concepts and values consequently led to gradual changes in the set of beliefs and behavior that, allied to World War I in 1918, gave birth to new concepts in many sectors of both society and arts.

Thus, the period that George Orwell lived, from 1903 to 1950, was this changing time in England. Many of these changes had a great relevance in the development of the writer George Orwell and would influence the way that his works would follow in the future. This chapter is going to establish links among the person, the circumstances of his existence in his setting, the ideological changes that happened in this same setting, and how Orwell felt and reacted to all of them. The objective is to present the facts that led to the process of birth of the writer, with comments of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and also of works that preceded them, once this can present a good mapping of the political, ideological and even esthetic development of the author.

The former Victorian times, in spite of normally being reminded just for being rather conservative, were also times when England witnessed the first movements of feminism, unionization of workers, socialism, the development of science and the spreading of Evangelical movements. Also, the financial growth provided with the age brought a great number of new readers, with money to spend in books and periodicals. In Literature, the most popular form of writing was the novel, which often expressed political and social affairs. The Romantic cult of emotion gave place to a new scientific precision of observation. It was a transitional time between the Romantic and the Modern period.

After the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, King Edward VII takes over, starting

the Edwardian times, when all those changes in the English society became more evident. In arts, this period is known as the *Belle Époque*, and there is the rise of the avant-garde Aesthetic Movement of “Art for the Art's sake”, mainly influenced by Oscar Wilde and the role he played in such movement. In the preface of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde writes that,

those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupted without being charming. This is a fault. Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated....The only excuse for making a useless thing is that is that one admires it intensely. (WILDE, 2006, p. 3)

Even so, up to the end of the post-World War I period, a mixture of depression and sobriety was present in the field of arts, for the war had been “more than a military and political event that changed the map of Europe” (McDONNAN, 1982 p. 578). One of the consequences of the coming of the post-Victorian and Edwardian 20's and 30's was the more enhanced expression of the individual, one of the consequences of the liberation from certain repressions of the Victorian age.

In the field of arts, more precisely in Literature, the environment was propitious to the reaching of such expression of individuality. Since the enforcement of the Education Act, in 1870, millions of new readers, of the most varied levels, had been coming out, making new kinds of journalism and Literature appear, widening the gap between what was considered popular or sophisticated Literature. This is one of the reasons why Literature differed from other forms of art of that period.

Besides, the early twentieth century had presented some different features. England witnessed the coming out of the Bloomsbury Group – a group of intellectuals that opt for an agnostic and pragmatic philosophy of life, preaching that the human being must occupy his time appreciating what is beautiful and cultivating personal relationships. In poetry, there is the Imagist movement, which was influenced by the philosopher-poet T. E. Hulme and his precise images against the excess of emotionalism in poetry. In drama, the picturing of the common citizen, still astonished by the atrocities of the war, or trying to ascend socially took place substantially, although with a certain irony, in works by Bernard Shaw and Noël Coward. In fiction, names like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf innovated with the technique of stream of consciousness. However, there was more in the field of Arts happening than the deeply psychological and individual expression.

The reflections of the world's economic depression and unemployment of the

30's were also felt in England. The descent of the Empire into Commonwealth was becoming a reality, as well as the perception that policies based on Capitalism were not strong enough to deal with the arising Hitlerism that was giving signs of power in Germany. The pact between Germany and URSS <sup>1</sup> in 1939 made many left-wing writers frustrated with Communism, marking the end of the so-called red decade, when young intellectuals self-assumed of left-wing ideologies started to suspect left politics. The Spanish Civil War <sup>2</sup> in 1936 seemed to be an announcement of the war that was coming on.

If in 1940, although it escaped being invaded by the German Army, like happened in Paris, London (as well as many other European cities) had been bombarded and faced chaos due to the Nazi raids in World War II, the post-war context, however, brought up an England that managed to overcome the conflict among the victorious countries. For some artists and writers, World War II had become an example of how far mankind could go when power is at stake. One of the facts observed was the indifference that the ruling class or government could demonstrate towards the lower classes; another one, how easy it is to be dominated by a government based on rhetoric, force and fear. A famous statement about that is Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*, a piece of painting named after a Spanish village that was bombarded by Nazi airplanes during the Spanish Civil War. In Literature, George Orwell was one of the writers to whom the use of force to determine the fate of a people was something not to be tolerated.

In a close perspective, two passages of Orwell's 1946 essay "Why I Write" demonstrate the way that the author stood regarding such issues. That essay starts with the early conviction of Orwell about becoming a writer,

From a very early age, perhaps the age of five or six, I knew that when I grew up I should be a writer. Between the ages of about seventeen and twenty-four I tried to abandon this idea, but I did so with the consciousness that I was outraging my true nature and that sooner or later I should have to settle down and write books. (ORWELL, 2000e, p.1)

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<sup>1</sup> The URSS – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - was composed of 15 republics, 20 autonomous republics and 8 autonomous regions. This union was created in 1922, after the victory of the Communists over the Monarchists in the civil war, becoming the most powerful Communist country in the world. From 1985 on, there is the beginning of a series of economic and political reforms, opening its markets to the Western economy. In 1991, there is the end of the union.

<sup>2</sup> A conflict that had origin in the economic crisis that had been extended since the beginning of the century, opposing the Republicans (Socialists) that were in power and the Military forces led by Francisco Franco. The war ended in 1939, with one million casualties and the implementation of a dictatorship.

Orwell eventually became a writer, who is best known for his two political satires, *Animal Farm*, published in 1946 and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, published in 1949, not coincidentally his last fictional works, produced after the accumulation of experience in political affairs. Besides his novels, essays, reports and articles, Orwell has his name in the universe of Literature for having some literary prizes named after him. The best known is the *Orwell Prize*, an annual award granted in England to writings concerned to political thought produced in accessible language. Besides, we have also the creation of the adjective “Orwellian”. According to Hitchens,

to describe a state of affairs as ‘Orwellian’ is to imply crushing tyranny and fear and conformism. To describe a piece of writing as ‘Orwellian’ is to recognize that human resistance to these terrors is unquenchable. Not bad for one short lifetime.” (2002, p. 5)

If those two late works, mainly *Animal Farm*, brought Orwell success and financial stability, it is because the building of his previous writings and political views were closely related. The facts lived by him since his childhood gave Orwell enough experience to provide a basis for his ideas.

Therefore, the political content in the works of Orwell is not there by chance. If the beginning of the essay “Why I Write” is about the gift of being a writer, the last words regard the style and the conclusion of what is going to be an Orwell's hallmark,

[...] looking back through my work, I see that it is invariably where I lacked a political purpose that I wrote lifeless books and was betrayed into purple passages, sentences without meaning, decorative adjectives and humbug generally. (ORWELL, 2000e, p.7)

## **1.2 Life Shaping Work: Of how Eric Blair Became George Orwell**

This biographical and bibliographical retaken of Orwell's life has as main objectives the mapping of the building of the sense of identity of an English citizen who was born in India, who acted as an agent of the British Empire in the colony of Burma and who felt shocked at the later understanding of the role that he exerted in that function. This colonial experience was propitious to the still young and idealist Orwell to develop resistance to Imperial affairs and a political posture in favor of Communism. With this, what followed was the immersion in the life of lower social

classes and the worry to discover ways to improve the life of such classes. Along this process, the impact was so deep that, depending on the setting, Orwell would have a different name: as a middle-class citizen, he was Eric Blair. As a tramp in Paris and London, P. S. Burton. Finally, as an author, George Orwell.

Thus, when there is the mention of *Eric Blair* in this thesis, I will be referring to the citizen, and when I refer to *George Orwell*, I will be referring to the author. This distinction is needed because some facts of the citizen's life will be reflected in some of the author's works. Even being aware that there are specific studies in the area of Biography, the aim of this thesis does not point to that direction and, for this reason, I will not deepen into this subject. Likewise, I want to make clear that in this work, the expression *George Orwell* will sometimes coincide with the point of view expressed by the characters discussed, and other times with the narrative point of views. Again, the subtleties of the matter will be disregarded so that I do not lose track of my main goals, which are the pursuit of the political discussion and the necessity of a reassessment to some critical concepts usually related to Orwell's works.

Along this chapter, I will refer to the following texts written by Orwell: *Burmese Days*, *A Clergyman's Daughter*, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, *Coming up for Air*, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, *Homage to Catalonia* and the memory *Down and Out in Paris and London*, as well as *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. By establishing a connection between the meta-fictional elements here contained, I consider to be possible to make a good mapping of the development of Orwell's political thought. From this general view, I will build the comments that aim at the analysis of the change that happens when his last works, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eight-Four* are created.

As for the factual data, Eric Arthur Blair was born in a British colony called Motihary, in Bengal, India, where his father, Richard Walmesley Blair had been sent to work as a Royal inspector for the Opium Department of the Civil Service. With him, the wife Ida Mabel Limouzin and the then only-child, Marjorie Frances, born in 1898. On June 25, 1903, the couple had their second child, a boy, who was named Eric Arthur Blair. In the future, Eric would become the world famous writer of the classics *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Eric Blair was brought back to England by the mother at one year of age, settling in Henley-on-Thames, in Oxfordshire. They would not see Richard Blair again until 1907, when he visited England for three months, leaving it again until 1912.



During that time, the young Eric attended Sunnylands day-school, run by nuns. The couple Blair would still have a third child, Avril, born in 1908.

When he was five years old, Eric Blair was sent to a small Anglican school in Henley. His performance there rendered him, two years later, recommendations to the headmaster of one of the most successful preparatory schools in England in those times, St. Cyprian's school, in Eastbourne, Sussex. The scholarship he got allowed his parents to pay just half of the usual fee, since they never advanced socially more than to "the lower upper middle class", according to Orwell's own words in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (p. 119). Once more, his performance as a student at St. Cyprian rendered him scholarships to two other schools, Wellington and Eton.

In spite of this, in one of his late essays, "Such, such were the joys", written in 1947, Orwell refers to the difficulties of being a child in an environment that demanded early maturity and, more than this, the acceptance of being a child from a family without many financial resources. About the need for a maturity that should happen before the right time, exemplified in the passage about the wetting of his bed, Orwell writes that,

Nowadays, I believe, beating in such circumstances is taken for granted. It is a normal reaction in children who have been removed from their homes to a strange place. In those days, however, it was looked on as a disgusting crime which the child committed on purpose and for which the proper cure was a beating. (ORWELL, 2000e, p. 416)

Thus, Orwell demonstrates that physical punishment was one of the horrors of school days. To make matters worse, Orwell describes the fictionalized memory of himself as a weak and sick child. It is interesting to mention that this natural horror of physical punishment is going to be present in the scenes of torture that the protagonist of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* suffers, and which are going to make the character Winston Smith give up his beliefs in a revolution. However, not just this fear, but also the economic condition of the Blair family should have helped maximize the sufferings of Eric's childhood. About the lack of better financial resources, there is the description of this fact:

A Russian boy, large and fair-haired, a year older than myself, was questioning me.  
'How much a year has your father got?'  
I told him what I thought it was, adding a few hundreds to make it sound better. The Russian boy, neat in his habits, produced a pencil and a small note-book and made a calculation:  
'My father has over two hundred times as much as yours', he announced

with a sort of amused contempt. (ORWELL, 2000e, p.449)

This constant sensation of humiliation and of privacy of being poor among the rich, weak among the strong, seems to be at the root of the political views that are going to permeate, in the future, George Orwell's works, starting from the bullying on the weak children. This passage about a fight he had at school is clarifying,

One day, when we were taking off our overcoats in the changing-room, Hale picked on me for some reason. I answered him back', whereupon he gripped my wrist, twisted it round and bent my forearm back upon itself, in a hideously painful way...He was, I think, older than I, besides being enormously stronger. As he let go of me a terrible, wicked resolve formed itself in my heart. I would get back on him by hitting him when he did not expect it... I let perhaps a minute go by, walked up to Hale with the most harmless air I could assume, and then, getting the weight of my body behind it, smashed my fist into his face. (Orwell, 2000e, p.445)

Despite being scared of receiving back the insult, what made the young Eric scared, it ended up not happening, and "gradually, the matter tailed off, and there was no fight" (p. 446). When the writer George Orwell comes out, the answer to such abuse is going to be in the form of novels, essays and articles.

As it can be seen, the not-always fair social cog-wheels made part of the life of George Orwell since very early, and made him learn how to get along with his own setbacks. Even so, very early could the futurity's remarkable consciousness of reaction against oppressive powers be realized. On October 2, 1914, Eric Blair had, for the first time, one of his poems published, named *Awake Young Man of England*, in the local newspaper *Henley & South Oxfordshire Standard*. The poem was intended to enhance nationalism in England during World War I. Its last stanza claims, "Awake! Oh you young men of England,/ For if, when your Country's in need,/ You do not enlist by the thousand, You truly are cowards indeed." The fear of totalitarianism was taking shape.

Eric Blair stayed in St. Cyprian's until 1916. In leaving the school, he went to Wellington, and, after a term, in 1917, he moved to Eton, where he became a King's scholar, in a school where "you had a room for yourself – a room which might even have a fire in it" (p. 448), and which allowed its students considerable independence. These ups and downs in Eric Blair's life were constant: if on the one hand he came from a family with limited economic resources, on the other hand, he managed to be accepted in one of the most privileged schools of England. In the future, other facts would provide the writer with paradoxical situations, and his writings would bring it:

the expression of unusual perspectives, that vary from the English settler in a colony to the overwhelmed subject of a totalitarian state. For this reason, the complexity and sophistication of Orwell cannot be reduced to a simple anti-Communist reading.

After finishing his studies at Eton in 1921, and having no prospects of getting a university scholarship either by his own merit, or from his family's financial assistance, in 1922 Eric Blair left behind the possibility of an emerging intellectual life in Europe in favor of the Indian Imperial Police in the British colony of Burma, (presently Myanmar), having worked for five years for the imperial forces. Data from the time mention a yearly income of £ 660, which could be considered a great pay at the time. Moreover, these five years are going to brand many of Orwell's political views, too. The excess of authoritarianism and exploitation and, to a certain extent, snobbishness that Eric Blair realized in the way that the British citizens acted toward the native Burmese caused him a strong repulse against imperialist and capitalist policies, and these facts are going to be mentioned in several of his works and essays.

The denial of collaborating with that "malign despotism", as Orwell wrote, was the outcome of belonging to an oppressive system and of the personal experiences lived by him, as the contact with prisoners, convicts waiting for the capital punishment and the ill-treatment given by the British settlers towards the natives. Orwell is going to report this weight in his consciousness and use part of his experience in his next books. Progressively, his feelings will change from a sense of expiation to rage against the empire.

In 1927, Eric Blair returned to England for summer vacation. He decided not to return to Burma anymore. Due to the previous experiences in that place and the sensation that the oppressed sectors of society should be known, an increasing socialist belief motivated him to visit some ghettos of the Londoner East End zone districts, as Limehouse and Whitechapel, the poorest parts of the city, in order to analyse the effects of capitalist policies on low-class communities. After his pilgrimage through these areas, and with the intention of retaking the old gift of making Literature, Eric Blair decided to move to Paris, in the spring of 1928, staying in a little hotel called "*Quarter Latin*". After some time supporting himself by teaching English, Orwell finally had an article published. in the newspaper *Le Monde*, on October 6, 1928. This first publication was, translated to French, "La Censure en Angleterre?". His first publication in the British media happened between December

1928 and May 1929, "A Farthing Newspaper", in the *G.K's Weekly*, a newspaper to which Orwell would contribute with articles about subjects that varied from unemployment to his years in Burma, among other things. In fifteen months, Orwell wrote two novels (whose manuscripts were never found) and a series of short stories, "The Sea God", "The Petition Crown" and "The Man in the Kid Gloves", all rejected by the editors. Running out of money, Eric got to the point of starvation. He found himself forced to get jobs in small hotels and restaurants, which would provide him with supplying no more than the most basic needs. Then, seeing his intention of launching his career as a writer in Paris ruin, Eric Blair returned to England at the end of 1929, attracted by the offer of a job to be a patient's assistant. However, the job became not more than a promise until 1932, and within this meantime, Eric Blair worked in varied jobs, from schoolteacher to bookshop assistant. During that time, he lived mostly with his parents at the number 3 of Queen Street, in Southwold, never giving up writing. He wrote about his experience in Paris, wrote poems and abstracts for the newspapers *New English Weekly* and articles for *The New Statesman* and *Nation*, and contributed with other forms of texts for the cultural magazine *Adelphi*. At this prolific time as a writer, Orwell prepared the sketch and the first chapters of what would later become *Burmese Days*.

Getting a better job as a private tutor for three kids, his financial condition improved, but not sufficiently for him to have his *Burmese Days* published (at the time, the book did not have a title yet). In order to save money to have it published, between August and November 1931, Orwell moves to a little bedroom in Bermondsey and Paddington, getting in touch with the low-class, not to say with misery.

Also around this time, Eric would give the final shape to another book, *Days in London and Paris*, a diary-like book about his time living in the underground of those two cities. After much rejection, the manuscript was presented to the socialist editor Victor Gollancz, who suggested some changes in the book, starting from the title, that was published as *Down and Out in Paris and London*, in January 9th, 1933. Eric Blair published the book under the pen name George Orwell. "George" is probably a reference to St. George, patron of England, and also a possible reference to King George V, who was the king of England at that time. "Orwell" is possibly a reference to a river in Suffolk, said to be one of Eric Blair's most beloved sites in his childhood.

*Down and Out in Paris and London* reflects a still increasing social

consciousness by exposing direct experience and, to a certain extent, personal involvement in human degradation in the late 20's. The depiction of workers in considered under jobs, like in hotels and restaurants, lived and even how beggars were portrayed and lived provides a certain psychology of poverty, something that Orwell had known well in his years after Burma,

I should also add that this book does not pretend to give a complete picture of life in Paris and London, but only to describe one special aspect of it. Since all the personal scenes and events have something repulsive about them, it is quite possible that I have unconsciously portrayed Paris and London as abominable cities. This has not been my intention, and if I am misunderstood, it is simple because the subject of my book – poverty – essentially lacks charm. When you haven't a penny in your pocket, you begin to see any city and any country in the most unfavorable light, and every human being, or almost everyone, appears to you either as a company in suffering or an enemy. (ORWELL apud MEYERS, 1975, p.40)

The writer Orwell was making books, and his books were making the writer Orwell. His varied experiences, from being a student at Eton to an almost beggar in Paris, from intellectual in Europe to policeman in Burma, had much effect on his ideological and political moves, provoking his interest for socialist matters. The consequences of *Down and Out in Paris and London* in the evolution of the political thinking of Orwell are going to be deep, not just for the ideological connection to Socialism, but mainly because Orwell became aware and involved, for the first time with the working class of Europe, whose values would become later one of the basis for his political hope against totalitarian regimes. It is important to remember that, chronologically, the return to England after resigning as a policeman in Burma and living for some time “down and out” makes the order of the publication of the books inverted. About the decision of leaving Burma, Orwell writes that

I felt that I had got to escape not merely from imperialism but from every form of man's dominion over man. I wanted to submerge myself, to get right down among the oppressed, to be one of them and on their side against their tyrants... It was in this way that my thoughts turned towards the English working class. (ORWELL, 2000e, pp. 149-150)

In 1934, George Orwell had finally published what has been considered his first fictional novel, *Burmese Days*, where the main character, Flory, a British businessman tries to make fortune in Burma. However, the involvement of this character with other British citizens and his friendship with the natives that struggle to enter the desired “British Club”, a symbol of whiteness and civilization for the Burmese, finishes up involving him in a paradox. Flory wants to act as a native,

respecting the local customs but cannot give up his imperialist commodities and comfort, as in the case of “buying” a Burmese lover, Ma Hla May. In the end, the solitude of the place becomes unbearable, and triggers his unsuccessful attempt to marry the British Elizabeth Lackersteen, who prefers a better marriage in terms of status, choosing Verral, a British police officer, for a husband. That finishes up causing the suicide of the protagonist. *Burmese Days* does not only expose imperialist policies’ effect upon the common citizen, but also how the colonial setting has influenced the British settler. The scene in which the English Club is surrounded by natives who want their revenge from the eye-puncturing of a Burmese boy by the British Ellis, shows a riot just controlled by police action, This atmosphere of oppression and tension on both sides was retaken in the essay “Shooting an Elephant”, of 1936, where, at the moment that the native crowd exerted pressure, the representative power of the Empire had to react with violence, as in this case, where one soldier felt the need to slaughter an elephant that had got too near to the village. (It is possible that the soldier in question was Eric Blair himself). This matter of intolerance is also present in the essay “A Hanging”, written in 1931, where, still writing as Eric Blair, Orwell mentions death penalty, instituted by the Empire,

It is curious, but till that moment I had never realized what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man. When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle, I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide. This man was not dying, he was alive just as we were alive. (ORWELL, 2000e, p. 16)

According to Kubal, *Burmese Days* and its central character are based on Orwell’s experiences in the East. Moreover, Kubal wrote that the character “Flory [...] might be seen as what Orwell feared he would have become if he had not left the service.”. (KUBAL, 1972, p. 11). This book implies a high disappointment toward colonial policies and, consequently, toward imperialism.

In 1935, Orwell had his second novel published: *A Clergyman’s Daughter*. In this novel, the protagonist, Dorothy Hare is the only daughter of a widowed Anglican curate who educated the daughter to live under religious habits and keep an almost automaton’s faith. Suddenly, Dorothy loses her memory and starts a life among migrant workers, bums and prostitutes, an experience that is going to teach her how to cope with the existence of the underworld and also how to keep alive in such an environment. By regaining her memory, she returns to her father, but is not able to accept her blind faith innocently anymore. She discovers that she is able to live on

her own, and that she has the strength to endure life, after knowing the under and working classes. This work echoes the biographical experience of Orwell's life, mainly to what is associated with the impossibility of believing in the things that you used to believe after discovering the different reality of the working class and of the marginalized people. Once more, there may be a certain criticism of the Imperial policies and of the indifference to poverty, this time, expressed indirectly through a character, a different consciousness.

*Keep the Aspidistra Flying* is Orwell's third fictional novel. Published in 1936, it tells the story of Gordon Constock, a clerk in a bookshop, the last member of a middle-class family who is scared by the possibility of failure, mainly in what concerns the reflection upon keeping to writing books that he knows that nobody will ever read, or admitting the impossibility of fighting the appeals of mass culture, linked to the middle-class, accepting that his destiny was to become a clerk for good. This book expresses, to a certain extent, a mixture of criticism and admiration for the middle-class values. Criticism is reflected in the fact that the protagonist hardly has any money to afford his cigarettes, and is obliged to serve middle-class citizens who look for books in the bookshop. Admiration is revealed in Gordon's realization that all those middle-class virtues and commodities are exactly the ones he was looking forward to reaching.

About these two last works mentioned, Orwell wrote something curious:

There are two or three books which I am ashamed of and have not allowed to be reprinted or translated, and that [*Keep the Aspidistra Flying*] is one of them. There is an even worse one called *A Clergyman's Daughter*. This was written simply as an exercise and I oughtn't to have published it, but I was desperate for money, ditto when I wrote *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. At that time I simply hadn't a book in me, but I was half starved and had to turn out something to bring in £ 100 or so. (ORWELL apud MEYERS, 1975, p. 205)

Although the two works mentioned in the quotation above do not vary much in terms of narrative and aesthetic form when compared to the previous works, the political content is not as evident. In these works, the focus turns to the social environment of the characters, exploring how these characters manage to live in a way that they do not need to deny their past beliefs and that their present be lived, if not with wealth, be, at least, with dignity. This seems to match Orwell's concerns in that time, too, and is going to add a new dimension to his next works: the acceptance of Orwell's origins in a middle-class family.

Thus, the half-positive expression of middle-class virtues of *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* rather than a political criticism on it started to be more present in Orwell's writings, leading to a reflection upon the fact that the combination of working and middle-classes virtues could be the answer to the worries which are going to be expressed more explicitly in his late works, as the future of totalitarian regimes. Orwell perceived that the working classes had a high instinct of survival and held to the ideas of family and traditional morality, while the middle-class had its considered respectable virtues and were normally culturally imitated.

In July, 1936, Orwell married Eileen O'Shaughnessy, and the couple settled down to have a village shop at Wallington, in Hertfordshire, opening the shop in the afternoons so that Orwell could write in the mornings. Such an acceptance of Orwell's middle-class origins, the marriage and the progressive career as a writer were defined by Rees as "the beginning of a more 'cheerful period' in his life (1961, p. 138)

Some months before the release of *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, in January 1936, Orwell was paid by his editor Victor Gollancz and by the Left Book Club to write a personal report about the social and economic conditions of industrial areas in Northern England. In March 1937, this experience of interviewing coal miners and analyzing their life conditions was published under the name *The Road to Wigan Pier*. In the first part of this book, there is the report about the miners of Lancashire and Yorkshire, with vivid details that go from the physical description of the miners, facts about their families, routines, up to charts about wages and the price of needs that were necessary to keep a family, demonstrating how, many times, the relation involving company/worker was of clear exploitation resorting to Capitalism, which generated a class of proletarians who were far from social dignity.

In the second part of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Orwell not just attacks the right-wing capitalist ideology. He adds that that moment of history was no more than "a sort of mound of wreckage left behind when the tide of Victorian prosperity receded", but also attacks the left-wing socialist ideology<sup>3</sup>, mainly by criticizing the ones who spread the socialist prerogatives not as a means to reach a better society, but simply for being against capitalism. Orwell also states that "all of us censor imperialism", but actually no one really wanted the disintegration of the British Empire and the

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<sup>3</sup> This technique of first presenting the understanding of the weak points of something to later discuss how to make them stronger is also going to be found in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Come Up for Air*.



consequent commodities that were provided from the colonies, mainly because the sense of liberty in England did not arise from any interest on what was happening in the British colonies.

The end of distinction among social classes, historically one of the most praised bases of Socialism, is another point stressed by Orwell. In *The Road to Wigan Pier*, however, knowing himself to be a middle-class citizen, he states that the idea of equality is a fraud, since all the ideas, feelings, tastes and patterns of good language generally come from the middle-class, which would therefore be a constant model to be followed. To him, the repetition of claims that socialists used to spread was no more than words that in practical terms would never come to be. Middle-classed Socialism would not become egalitarianism in economic terms. The fundamental socialist objectives of justice and liberty were never clear to most of the ones who called themselves socialists. Above all, "Socialism means justice and common decency" (p. 172)

Besides, Orwell writes that Socialism seems to be able to attract all kinds of people, even the ones whose behavior is so eccentric that can make Socialism lose credibility, as vegetarians, nudists, bohemians and radical feminists, making Socialism become, to the eyes of society, an ideology with no links with the rest of the world. About the socialist attacks on democracy, to Orwell, they were a "stupidity", a kind of "sawing off the branch you are sitting on" (p. 208). However, to finish up, Orwell states that the only way to save England from the menace of Fascism would be to form an efficient socialist party (p. 223).

In the middle of the 1930's, people who had already undergone the traumatic experience of World War I started to witness the rise of a second conflict and the consequent coming up of Nazism in Germany, Fascism in Italy, and later, the ultra right-wing dictatorship of Francisco Franco in Spain. For this reason, at that time, the worries about the spread of totalitarian policies became clearer, in a first moment, as to what concerned right-wing policies. Even so, Orwell could not trust the way that socialism was going on. Rather than offering concrete solutions, it existed mainly in the field of ideas, and its aura of utopia that claimed for total equality among men could be easily misunderstood or used as a rhetorical device to make people believe exactly the opposite of what was meant. According to Kubal,

If socialism were to create a moral framework for the future and attract the working and middle-classes, it was necessary for success, certain changes

would have to be made. In its present state, again according to Orwell, socialism was not leading man towards freedom, but rather towards fascism. (p.21)

In the words of Orwell, in *The Road to Wigan Pier*,

There is no chance of righting the condition I described in the earlier chapters of this book, or of saving England from Fascism, unless we can bring an *effective*<sup>4</sup> socialist party into existence. (2000j, p. 22)

But, for Orwell, the kind of Socialism that would be really *effective*, that should prevail, was one that possessed the instinct of survival from the working class and the respectable virtues of the middle class. To him, Socialism was, and should be, an individualized idea, and that was the way that Orwell viewed the possibility of establishment of socialist policies that would go right and could refrain the menace of totalitarianism over England.

In December, 1936, five months after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Orwell moved to Spain in order to write newspaper articles. However, he immediately joined one of the republican militias that were fighting the right-wing dictatorship of Francisco Franco. Orwell stayed in the Lenin barracks in Barcelona, with the militia P.O.U.M (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*), serving in the city of Huesca. The report of this war and the frustrations lived by Orwell are found in the book *Homage to Catalonia*, published in 1938, where Orwell highlights the sense of equality and ranklessness of his militia, that matched his ideas of a possible real classless, or, at least, minimally classed society. After having suffered privations from the lack of conditions of the militia, which included food and ammunition shortage, not to mention natural setbacks as the cold climate and the problems with his weak health, Orwell also reports the complex cobweb of left-wing militias that formed the republican army, a numberless set of abbreviations such as C.N.T., (*Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores*), F.A.I., (*Federación Anarquista Ibérica*) U.G.T, (*Unión General de Trabajadores*)., P.S.U.C, (*Partido Sociologista Unificado de Cataluña*) and many others, each one with their own ideology. The Trotskyist ideology that the P.O.U.M. was accused to follow made them targets of an internal conflict behind the republican lines, which were supported by the Soviet Union. After becoming blacklisted in Spain, having to hide from republican militias of different left-wing ideologies, Orwell ended up being shot in the neck by a sniper of the Communist

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<sup>4</sup> My italics.

Brigades. That served for reflection on the way Communism was going in the Soviet Union.

Besides, Orwell also mentions the way information was manipulated in terms that make P.O.U.M. seem a criminal faction, in a way that links P.O.U.M. to Francisco Franco's dictatorial intentions, as can be seen in the following excerpt,

It is very difficult to write accurately about the Spanish war, because of the lack of non-propagandist documents. I warn everyone against my bias, and I warn everyone against my mistakes. Still, I have done my best to be honest. But it will be seen that the account I have given is completely different from that which appeared in the foreign and especially the Communist press. It is necessary to examine the Communist version, because it was published all over the world, has been supplemented at short intervals ever since, and is probably the most widely accepted one. In the Communist and pro-Communist press the entire blame for the Barcelona fighting was laid upon the P.O.U.M. The affair was represented not as a spontaneous outbreak, but as a deliberate, planned insurrection against the Government, engineered solely by the P.O.U.M. with the aid of a few misguided 'uncontrollables'. More than this, it was definitely a Fascist plot, carried out under Fascist orders with the idea of starting civil war in the rear and thus paralyzing the Government. The P.O.U.M. was 'Franco's Fifth Column'--a 'Trotskyist' organization working in league with the Fascists. According to the Daily Worker (11 May): The German and Italian agents, who poured into Barcelona ostensibly to 'prepare' the notorious 'Congress of the Fourth International', had one big task. It was this: They were--in cooperation with the local Trotskyists--to prepare a situation of disorder and bloodshed, in which it would be possible for the Germans and Italians to declare that they were 'unable to exercise naval control of the Catalan coasts effectively because of the disorder prevailing in Barcelona' and were, therefore, 'unable to do otherwise than land forces in Barcelona'. In other words, what was being prepared was a situation in which the German and Italian Governments could land troops or marines quite openly on the Catalan coasts, declaring that they were doing so 'in order to preserve order'. . . . The instrument for all this lay ready to hand for the Germans and Italians in the shape of the Trotskyist organization known as the P.O.U.M. (ORWELL, 2000j, p. 168-169)

The civil war rendered Orwell also an essay, "Looking back on the Spanish war" (1943), where one of the main points detached is once more the manipulation of information and the way that the means of communication romanticized the war, whereas Orwell wanted to prove that there was nothing to be glorified,

I have little direct evidence about the atrocities in the Spanish civil war. I know that some were committed by the Republicans, and far more (they are still continuing) by the Fascists. But what impressed me then, and has impressed me ever since, is that atrocities are believed in or disbelieved in solely on grounds of political predilection. Everyone believes in the atrocities of the enemy and disbelieves in those of his own side, without ever bothering to examine the evidence. Recently I drew up a table of atrocities

during the period between 1918 and the present; there was never a year when atrocities were not occurring somewhere or other, and there was hardly a single case when the Left and the Right believed in the same stories simultaneously. And stranger yet, at any moment the situation can suddenly reverse itself and yesterday's proved-to-the-hilt atrocity story can become a ridiculous lie, merely because the political landscape has changed. (ORWELL, 2000j, p. 218)

In the end, fighting against the ultra right-wing Fascism, Orwell concluded that political beliefs, whatever they could be, if taken to their extremes, would inevitably lead to the use of violence and to totalitarian regimes which would drive the society to unpredictable outcomes. The reflection on what had happened to him in Spain included left-wing regimes in this possibility, which could also lead to the establishment of a totalitarian state.

In March 1938, Orwell fell ill with tuberculosis and moved, in the winter, to the warm climate of Morocco, where he wrote his fourth novel, *Coming Up for Air*, published in June, 1939, shortly before the break of World War II. According to Meyers (1975, p. 16 ) *Coming Up for Air* is “Orwell’s transitional work. It is at once synthetic and seminal, gathering the themes that had been explored in the poverty books of the 1930’s and anticipating the cultural essays and political satires of the next decade”.

In *Coming Up for Air*, there is the exemplification of the hopelessness of a near-war condition, probably through the lens of Orwell's World War I memories. In this novel, George Bowling is a middle-aged man that complains along the novel about his fatness and about his mean wife and children. The character also describes his participation in World War I, and, not standing his ordinary rhythm of life anymore, decides to take a week-vacation to return to the place of his childhood, the little city of Upper Bienfield, in order to fish “carps the length of an arm” (p.475) at a secret pond that he had discovered when he was a child, and that could give him motivation to prove that he was still alive, in a kind of *ego-trip* to really “come up for air”. After visiting the city and having nostalgic insights, the character discovers that the pool had changed into something else,

It was my pool, all right. They'd drained the water off. It made a great round hole, like an enormous well, twenty or thirty feet deep. Already it was full of tin cans.

I stood looking at the tin cans. (ORWELL, 2000j, p. 559)

To finish this time-travel with the melancholy statement: “What’s the good of

trying to revisit the scenes of your boyhood? They don't exist. Coming up for air! But there isn't any air. The dustbin that we're in reaches up the stratosphere". (p. 560).

This attempt to revisit his own life before another war starts is constantly urged by airplane bombers passing during various parts of the novel, which finishes with the scene of bombing trainings. Besides this, in many respects, *Coming up for Air* seems to reinforce some facts already described in Orwell's previous books, but also bringing the anticipation of some others that are going to be presented in his future works.

A good example is a scene (that reminds one of the two-minute hate in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, when George Bowling attends a lecture named "The Menace of Fascism" (p. 515), which will be delivered by a "well-known anti-fascist". As the lecture starts, it is filled with jargons as "bestial atrocities... concentration camps...act before it is too late... fascism... democracy...fascism...democracy... (p.516), not to mention schoolchildren passing, marching with shirts where you can read: "We are ready, are you?" Like in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, this situation of hating before understanding is presented. Orwell, before exposing his points about Socialism, tries to enhance the bad points of it, in order to bring all weaknesses into light to open discussion about them and just after that, to bring the good points. This procedure is also used in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It seems that in Orwell's works, before telling he readers what to do, he invites them to keep a wider view of the facts to better understand the situation.

Until 1940, Orwell could support himself by writing book reviews for the *New English Weekly*. During World War II, he became a member of the Home Guard and, in 1941, Orwell started working for the *BBC Eastern Service*, in radio programs bound to bring Indian and East Asian countries into Britain's war efforts. Orwell seemed to become aware of the free propaganda and resigned in 1943, becoming the literary editor of the newspaper *Tribune*, a left-wing weekly, contributing with a regular column called "As I please".

Yet between November 1943 and February 1944 Orwell started writing the first of the books that would finally make him largely recognized as a writer: *Animal Farm*, a political allegory told in the format of a fable. It is the story of the animals of Manor Farm, which take control over the place after a revolution against the farmer Jones, under the leadership of the pigs. After some time, this revolution proves to fail. The plot has been constantly perceived as an allusion to the Soviet revolution. The

great critical acclaim and popular success provided Orwell with a comfortable income for the first time in his adult life. However, the novel was firstly rejected, mainly for political reasons, by Gollancz, who had published most of Orwell's works. Facing it, Orwell threatened editors that he would publish it himself. Finally, *Animal Farm* was published by Secker & Warburg in August 1945, a crucial period for the world history, because

In the previous four months, Roosevelt, Mussolini and Hitler had died. Churchill had been voted out of office, Germany had surrendered and, on 6 August, the atomic bomb had exploded over Hiroshima. Of the Big Three, only Stalin still survived. (MEYERS, 1975, p. 20)

The reasons for the early rejection are easy to understand: the association of *Animal Farm* with the Russian Revolution and the strong feeling of solidarity with the Russians, who even in defeat had deflected Hitler from England. However, along the time, that same story that had been previously rejected got an animated television version in 1954, being the first British animated feature released worldwide, directed by John Halas and Joy Batchelor. In the year of 1999, *Animal Farm* would even receive a cinematographic version, directed by John Stephenson and with Pete Postlethwaite and Caroline Gray. Both plots keep most of the essence of the book, with some small media's transpositions.

From 1945 onwards, Orwell becomes a war correspondent for the *Observer* and later contributes to the *Manchester Evening News*. In that year, his wife Eileen dies, and Orwell, worse from his tuberculosis, stays with his son Richard, the boy who the couple had adopted. After traveling for the *Observer*, Orwell goes to the island of Jura, in the Scottish shore, to write and to recover from his physical and melancholic condition. In August 1946, he starts *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, finishing it in November 1948, already seriously ill. During the writing of this novel, that would be the last, he had to be interned in hospital several times.

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published on June 8, 1949, during the first years of the Cold War. About it, Orwell writes,

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 centralised economy is liable and which have already been partly realised in Communism and Fascism. I do not believe that the kind of society I describe necessarily will arrive, but I believe (allowing the course for the fact that the book is a satire) that something resembling it could arrive... the scene of the book is laid in Britain in order to emphasise

that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else and that totalitarianism, if not fought against, could triumph anywhere. (ORWELL, 2000e, p. 24)

Firstly intended to be named *The Last Man in Europe, Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the portrayal of a hypothetical country called Oceania, a dystopian society strongly divided in classes ruled by a totalitarian regime, the Inner Party, depicting the possibilities that such a kind of government could get under the perspective of the protagonist Winston Smith. His final alliance to the system, represented by the Big Brother, was a symbolical fact of what could be Orwell's worst nightmares and what he contested in his works, directly or indirectly.

About this change of name to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Judith N. Shklar, Professor of Government at Harvard University writes that it was so shocking and meaningful that "If he (Orwell) and his publisher had not renamed it, I would not be talking about it today". (SHKLAR, 1998, p. 339). However, the image that this title could bring about the future "is not a prophecy at all". In fact, Orwell meant it to draw on the logical implications of the thinking of his fellow intellectuals who were blind (at the time) to the character of Stalin's and Hitler's regimes (Idem, p. 341). Even so, Shklar states that "As a satire, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is, in any case, about illusions and attitudes rather than about characters" (Ibidem, p. 340), proving that the novels have potential to unchain different interpretations along the years and providing space for symbolical manifestations, instead of unchangeable allegorical associations.

In the same way as in the case of *Animal Farm*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was represented by other media, getting two cinematographic versions. The most famous was released exactly in the year of Nineteen Eighty-Four, directed by Michel Radford, and with John Hurt, Richard Burton and Suzanna Hamilton in the cast. Besides, there were adaptations to the radio, TV and even an opera. This interest for the works may be a prove that subjects contained in *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* had a connection with the world of that time, as they have with our contemporary time.

In the autumn of 1949, Orwell married Sonia Brownell, and, in this same year, collaborated with the Information Research Department (IRD), an institution set up by the Labour Party, to publish pro-democratic and anti-communist propaganda. For this department, Orwell got to the extreme of producing a list of 37 names of writers and

artists who could have pro-communist leanings, including names as Michael Redgrave and Charles Chaplin, making his anti-Stalinist view come up more clearly. With this, it is possible to see in what way Communism made part of Orwell's life. It went from the acceptance of ideological extremes to the point of its total refusal.

Orwell died in London on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1950, at the age of 46, from the persistent illness that constantly haunted him, tuberculosis. He is buried at All Saints Churchyard, in Sutton, Countway, Oxfordshire. At the time of his death, he was already considered one of the greatest writers of his generation.

Considering his fictional and non-fictional works, it is important to mention other very remarkable works, mainly his essays. Among the most acclaimed by critics, are the already mentioned "Why I Write", of 1946, "Looking Back in the Spanish Civil War", of 1942, "Such, Such Were the Joys"(1947), "A Hanging"(1931), "Shooting an Elephant"(1936) and others, such as "Inside the Whale", of 1940, where Orwell writes that,

For the fact is that being inside a whale is a very comfortable, cosy, homelike thought. The historical Jonah, if he can be so called, was glad enough to escape, but in imagination, in day-dream, countless people have envied him. It is, of course, quite obvious why. The whale's belly is simply a womb big enough for an adult. There you are, in the dark, cushioned space that exactly fits you, with yards of blubber between yourself and reality, able to keep up an attitude of the completest indifference, no matter *what* happens. A storm that would sink all the battleships in the world would hardly reach you as an echo. Even the whale's own movements would probably be imperceptible to you. He might be wallowing among the surface waves or shooting down into the blackness of the middle seas (a mile deep, according to Herman Melville), but you would never notice the difference.  
(ORWELL, 2000e, p. 127)

This speech is mainly directed against political indifference, and against writers, who should be courageous enough to be "outside the whale" and take a position concerning the social and political facts. "The Lion and the Unicorn", is another essay of 1940, where Orwell analyzes the distinctive cultural characteristics and class structure of England, attacking the political system from a left-wing point of view. Among his claims, are the nationalization of lands, mines, railways, banks and major industries, better distribution of income, reform of the educational system, the possibility of giving independence to India, passing it to a status of dominium, formation of an Imperial general Council and declaration of formal alliance with countries victims of Fascist power.

In "The Prevention of Literature"(1946), Orwell states that Literature under



totalitarian regimes would become useless, because instead of writers, there would be “literary prostitutes” who would write what many times their conscience disapproved. If there were total control over what was produced in writing, the possibility of an honest Literature would be null, because

At some time in the future, if the human mind becomes something totally different from what it now is, we may learn to separate literary creation from intellectual honesty. At present we know only that the imagination, like certain animals, will not breed in captivity. (ORWELL, 2000e, p. 340)

In “Politics and the English Language” (1947), Orwell complains about the emptiness of some speeches and writings, mainly full of over-repeated metaphors that have already lost their effect. Besides these ones, many other essays were as famous as Orwell’s fiction and reports, such as the essays on Charles Dickens and on *Gulliver’s Travels*, not to mention the numberless articles for magazines and newspapers.

### 1.3 Criticism

This sub-section is going to present some readings and criticism of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* done by Orwell’s respected critics, in order to prove that the emphasis given on the anti-Communist matter, in spite of being valid and pertinent, provoked a disturbing sense of dated work that may have condemned both author and works to oblivion if their critical heritage is not updated.

Generally, criticism on *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* focus the analogy of the themes of these works on Communism, facing them as an alert against the way that Communism was taking in the Soviet Union, which was, more and more, restricting civil rights in the name of the maintenance of the regime.

If for Kubal, *Animal Farm* is Orwell’s best artistic achievement, “a successful attempt to unify [Orwell’s] political thought and artistic purpose” (p. 37), most of criticism highlights the association of the themes to an anti-Communist intention, reinforcing the link of the animals of the fable to Lenin, Trotsky and Marx. In the article of the *New Statesman* of September 8, 1945, Kingsley Martin writes that: “His (Orwell’s) latest satire, beautifully written, amusing and, if you don’t take it too seriously, a fair corrective of much silly worship of the Soviet Union” (1945, p. 165).

To Martin, Orwell is leaving the realm of idealism, and is getting to an age of cynicism. That can be accomplished in the construction of the character donkey Benjamin. The article finishes with the question: "What will Mr. Orwell do next?" (idem, p.166). Cyril Connolly, in the *Horizon*, writes that *Animal Farm* "breaks down the artificial reserve with which Russia is written about or not written about." (1945, pp. 215), comparing the style of Orwell to the "penetration and verbal economy of Swift" (p.216). Northrop Frye, in the *Canadian Forum*, of December 1946 writes that, besides the references to the Russian revolution, the fable also corresponds to the German invasion, in spite of "the end be(ing) a fantastic disruption of the sober logic of the tale" (p. 211). Even 21<sup>st</sup> century reviews still enhance the allusions of *Animal Farm* to the Soviet Union of the mid-forties. Christopher Hitchens, in his *Why Orwell Matters* (2002), states that

The aims and principles of the Russian revolution are given face-value credit throughout; this is a revolution betrayed, not a revolution that is monstrous from its inception. The details are sometimes uncannily exact, from the fate of the Third International to Stalin's eventual compromise – via Moses the fabulist raven – with the Russian Orthodox Church. (HITCHENS, 2002, p. 187).

Criticism on *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, although normally more diversified, does not leave the association to anti-Communism behind. Fredric Warburg, in a piece of criticism of 1949 on *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, written in 1949, states that "This is amongst the most terrifying books I have ever read. The savagery of Swift has passed to a successor who looks upon life and finds it becoming more and more intolerable". (1975, p. 103). Warburg sees *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a continuation of *Animal Farm*, "a picture of man unmanned, of humanity without heart, ... the Soviet Union in the nth degree". For Harold Nicolson, in the *Observer*, in June 1949, "*Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be approached either as a novel embodying a political argument or as an indictment of materialism cast in fictional form". (NICOLSON, 1949, p. 7). The society pictured in this "cautionary tale", for Nicolson, is the world against which Mr Orwell warns us ..., which emerged after the atomic war of 1950", mainly inspired by the atomic bombs on Japan. In the *Nation* of June, 1949, Diana Trilling writes that

we are being warned against the extremes to which the contemporary totalitarian spirit can carry us, not only so that we will be warned against

Russia, but also so that we will understand the ultimate dangers involved wherever powers moves under the guise of order and rationality.  
(TRILLING, 1949, p. 716)

Recent reviews keep following the same trend. Hitchens, once more, links *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to Stalinism:

In truth, the idea that two and two makes five, for instance, was suggested by multiple sources. Stalin's propagandists were fond of saying that they completed the First Year Plan in four years; this was sometimes rendered for the simple-minded as  $2+2=5$ . (HITCHENS, 2002, p. 189).

Undoubtedly, this traditional criticism, that links the works in question to subjects concerning the Soviet Union are still valid and important readings. Nevertheless, the works have survived along the decades and did not lose their capacity to be linked to other revolutions or even to other historical moments. Much can be seen in *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that may help understand the social and political situation of our contemporary times, increasing in impact if read taking into consideration the possible links between them, which is exactly the purpose of this thesis.

In these few words, it is possible to have at least a superficial idea of the depth of the set of works of George Orwell, and the ways followed by him, which molded his political concepts and provided him with experience to produce masterpieces as *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The difficult times of a middle-class child who very early had to face humiliations to keep himself in a good and expensive school worked as a trigger to awake Orwell's views on the weak one, be it a person or a whole country. His journeys among the poor and the increasing sense of injustice that the society gave him granted him with an approach to socialist ideas, which soon moved Orwell to action, to a war that, in the end, opened his eyes to the injustice of political extremes. With this, the fear was not that the poor ones would not have food on their tables: the fear became bigger, the fear of political regimes that would not just discharge the poor, but all the citizens who did not accept the ruling political ideology. The message for "justice and liberty" was not just a matter of diminishing the differences among social classes anymore: it became a matter of intellectual survival.

Orwell's plea, in *Coming Up for Air*, is that rather than hating them, what we need is to understand concepts and words like Socialism, Communism, Fascism, and other political terms. So as to open the way to that, the next chapter will propose

some brief definitions for these concepts and to what extent totalitarianism has to do with them, as well as other literary terms related to philosophy, as utopia and dystopia and terms of Literature that hover around *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, such as satire, allegory, fable and science fiction will also be explored.

## 2 DEFINING THE TERMS

The need of an updating in the critical heritage of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that this thesis defends, besides being supported by Gadamer and his belief that, in the *Sciences of the Spirit* there is not *one* definitive truth, but so, that multiple possible truths may arise, finds theoretical back up in the Reception Theory, as proposed by Hans Robert Jauss. In terms of Literature, this theory provides a means of how a text is read and interpreted by the readers taking into consideration the setting and the background of these readers. It means, new interpretations may come up through the interaction of a certain reader and his background and a text. As seen in the previous chapter, it seems to be common sense that criticism on the works in question tended to link them to Communist affairs. However, when a 21<sup>st</sup> century reader approaches these works, the perception can be totally different, once Communism is perceived differently in present's world affairs. Thus, the relationship between today's readers and the works may produce new interpretations, if taken into consideration many factors that can influence this interpretation, as the Reception Theory preaches. One of them is exactly the time of this interpretation: the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Among the most common literary definitions concerning *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* there is the concept that these works are, simultaneously, satires and allegories. More specifically, *Animal Farm* is connected to the word "fable", while *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is described as "science fiction". Therefore, in a first moment, this chapter is going to bring considerations about the narrative genres chosen by the author to shape the pieces of Literature in question, in order to delimit the use of such concepts and to raise some points that are going to back up the next chapter. The direction of the argument raised is that the view of these works as allegories devised to create the political satire impairs our response to the novels in the present days.

If aesthetically *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are different, the

subject that permeates both works is one of oppression and final helplessness within a totalitarian atmosphere. As seen in the previous chapter, it seems to be common sense among the criticism that *Animal Farm* is a satire that refers to the Soviet Revolution, and that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does the same, offering a picture of what Soviet Communism could become in case totalitarian policies followed their ways in an unbridled form. However, this thesis aims at analyzing the evolution of this totalitarian atmosphere, avoiding pre-conceived value judgments about concepts that up to nowadays are feared by many citizens and that, to a certain extent, became synonyms of evil in history, such as Communism, Fascism and Nazism. The way in which such concepts are to be taken within the context of this thesis is to be presented in the present chapter, so that the emotional charge connected to them can be diminished and the metaphors they are associated with can be disentangled. The reason why the terms must be redefined is the need to connect, or re-connect, or understand, the variances that occur in their meaning in three different moments in time: the moment in which the works were conceived, written and first published, the moment in which the critics connected Orwell's production so tightly to the Soviet Revolution, and our contemporary moment in time, when new (post-Communism) readers, can have access to Orwell's work, unless the author sinks into oblivion due to the falling of the Communist platform. The understanding of how delicate this issue is is fundamental in this thesis, since the intention of this analysis is the avoidance of ideological sympathies, as pointed in the already mentioned passages of *Coming Up for Air*, when the main character George complains that "Fascism" is practically a "slogan" (ORWELL, 1938, p. 517). Also, in the essay "Politics and the English Language", Orwell states, in a general way, that many metaphors lose their impact exactly by their repetition, and that many words become empty, and make people think that they know clearly what they mean (1946). This impression of reality, or the vision of a partial reality, is one of the subjects of the two works that this thesis analyses. For this reason, it is necessary to bring light onto another concept, Totalitarianism, that unifies in a different level of discourse concepts as Socialism, Communism, Nazism and Fascism, political items which are implied in the political discussion of the works. Besides, some other important elements that are part of the critical analyses of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are the concepts of Utopia and Dystopia. Thus, all these concepts will be briefly theorized, following the theorization of literary concepts mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

## 2.1 Choice of genre: Satire, allegory, fable, and science fiction

In terms of literary style, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are considered satires; in the case of the latter, a horrific satire, whereas the former is seen as a comic satire. From satire and its unfolding, some different styles may come up, as fable, and science fiction. With the goal of bringing elements to back up the discussion of chapter 3, all these literary concepts are going to be briefly mapped. As for the historical references that permeate the explanations, I use the *Companion to Literature in English* (1992).

The origins of satire are linked to magical cursing through the use of words, as in the case of the Greek poet Archilocus (6th century BC), who created satires about people who would even commit suicide when “cursed” by them.

The term consists of the Latin word *satira*, which comes from *lanx satira*, a kind of offering of fruits to the goddess Ceres. In the Ancient Greek Drama, the Latin term got related to *satyr*, the mythological being half man, half goat, what characterized the magical element of satire. Satires convey a dissimulated form of criticism of institutions or people, censorship of the evils of society or of certain individuals. The target of satire is held up to ridicule, with a strong vein of sarcasm and irony, permeated by a certain doses of anger. This doses of anger is what differs satire from other humoristic literary styles. A satirical work <sup>1</sup> tends to lose its power along the years, once the target of the attack may be overcome and forgotten.

Thus, if *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are seen as satires fixed in time, they will probably be connected to past-Communist occurrences and matters, being, sooner or later, literary documents of a past historical moment. However, the uses of sub-genres as fable and science fiction serve to counter-balance this effect, opening the works to more symbolical possibilities of interpretation.

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<sup>1</sup> Political satire has been largely used since classical times, as in the case of the Greek playwright Aristophanes, who wrote the *The Knights*, criticizing the commercial power of Cleon. In Rome, Quintilianus, Lucilius, Horace and Juvenal also resorted to this literary genre. Some tales of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* are also satirical, mainly in what concerns the difference between private and public behaviours. However, this term is strongly related to the Irish writer Jonathan Swift, the author of satires as *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726), a satire against monarchy and to other social institutions, *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), a vehement and comprehensive satire on contemporary intellectual abuses, and *A Modest Proposal* (1729) a pamphlet which suggested that, in order to make the Irish economy stable, parents should eat or sell their children as food, being it a moral fiction attacking the indifference to the poor.

As for the term allegory, in this thesis, it refers to a narrative or description in which the literal events contain a sustained reference to a simultaneous structure of other ideas or events. According to the *Companion to Literature in English* (1992), “the subject of the secondary level(s) may be philosophical, historical, theological or moral”. (p. 18).

Etymologically, allegory comes from the Greek, meaning “another speech”, a speech that makes language hide another meaning. Massaud Moises, in his *Dicionário de Termos Literários* (2002), explains allegory as “all the concretization, through images, pictures and people, of ideas or abstract entities. The material aspect of works as a disguise, dissimulation, or covering, of the fictional, moral or ideal aspect <sup>2</sup>”. (p.15).

Allegory has its origins in myths, fictional narratives which propose an explanation of existential questions, which contain universal facts of human nature and of the material world. Religious practices, filled with allegories, are a clear example of that. So, allegory is generally intended to elucidate rather than obscure, its original purpose being accessible to human understanding in general. Although the term is Greek, it has its origins connected to ancient Asian peoples, like Persians, Arabs and Jews.

Along history, it is possible to mention some outstanding uses of allegories, like in the speech of the Roman consul Menenius Agrippa who, in 494 BC, gave a speech to his soldiers stating that all the limbs of the body had to work, while the stomach seemed to do nothing. Even so, if the stomach stopped working, all the body would perish, in an allusion to how the plebs (the limbs) needed and depended on the stomach (the patricians). Another good example, and arguably the best allegory is Plato’s myth of the cave, which is part of the book VII of Plato’s *Republic*, written approximately in 360 BC. The allegorical connotation of the difficulty that the human being has to perceive reality is expressed in this dialogue between Socrates and Glaucus:

S : And now, I said, let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened: — Behold! human beings living in a underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners

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<sup>2</sup> Translation mine.



there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

G : I see.

S : And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

G : You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

S : Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

G : True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

S : And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

G : Yes, he said.

S : And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?

G : Very true.

S : And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the passing shadow?

G : No question, he replied.

S : To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

G : That is certain.<sup>3</sup>

Aristotle, in his *Poetics* was probably the first to conceptualize something close to allegory, still calling it a metaphor. In chapter 21, Aristotle wrote that

Metaphor is the application of an alien name by transference either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy, that is, proportion. Thus from genus to species, as: 'There lies my ship'; for lying at anchor is a species of lying. From species to genus, as: 'Verily ten thousand noble deeds hath Odysseus wrought'; for ten thousand is a species of large number, and is here used for a large number generally.<sup>4</sup>

After Aristotle, other classical Roman theoreticians conceptualized allegory, as Cicero and Quintilianus. Advancing to the European middle-ages, allegory developed

<sup>3</sup> Available at: <[http://www.constitution.org/pla/repub\\_07.htm](http://www.constitution.org/pla/repub_07.htm)>

<sup>4</sup> Available at: <<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/classics/resources/poetics/poettran.htm>> Translated by S.H.

mainly in the knightly-Christian Literature, mingling biblical doctrines and classic mythologies. Besides these already mentioned works that contain allegorical aspects, we can mention the *Fables*, by Aesop (6th century BC), *The Divine Comedy* (1321), by Dante Alighieri, *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), by Jonathan Swift, and *The Crucible* (1953), by Arthur Miller, among many others.

However, allegory does not constitute a simple substitution of actions or objects for others. It relies on correspondences between the literal and metaphorical levels to help elucidate some meaning. Thus, allegory is commonly distinguished from the metaphor for being more extensive and rich in details.

Furthermore, this distinction between metaphor and allegory matches the distinction between symbol and allegory. While allegories tend to acquire everlasting meanings, symbols “suggest a number of referents and an indefinite reverberation”. (*Companion to Literature in English* (1992)). For this, there is the example of William Blake’s poem *The Sick Rose*, whose word rose supports indefinite interpretations. However, instead of bringing a translation to that word, the poem offers itself as a complex unit of which all the interpretations are all inseparable parts.

Although allegory may be found in realistic painting and also in other forms of representative art, allegory is generally treated as a figure of rhetoric. An allegory is sustained longer and fuller in its details than a metaphor, as already mentioned. Nevertheless, again, in Massaud Moises, we find that

The narrative constitutes the best environment for the concretization of the abstract world and, thus, allegory systematically implies a plot, theatrical or novelesque, giving the impression that it is equivalent to a logically ordered sequence of metaphors. The agreement between the concrete plan and the abstract plan happens in its details, in its elements, and not in its totality”. (MOISES, 1974, p.15)<sup>5</sup>

The qualities and characteristics of a familiar object are used to hint at the nature of the unknown. Besides, in literary texts, allegory may also serve as a general term that covers other forms of allegorical variations, keeping its movement into a rhetoric space where it may co-exist with the *fable*, a satirical or pedagogical allusion to the human beings through animal characters, the *apologue*, a short

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Butcher.

<sup>5</sup> Translation mine. Originally, “Visto que a narração constitui o expediente mais adequado à concretização do mundo abstrato, tem-se mais como certo que a alegoria implica sistematicamente um enredo, teatral ou novelesco. E daí a impressão de equivaler a uma seqüência logicamente ordenada de metáforas: o acordo entre o plano concreto e o plano abstrato processa-se minúcia a minúcia, elemento a elemento, e não em sua totalidade”.

narrative containing an implicit or explicit moral with protagonists that are inanimate objects, the *parable*, which is also a short narrative with a moralizing intention, but represented by human characters, among others.

In terms of time, Paul de Man in his essay “Pascal’s allegory of persuasion” (1986) writes that the topic of an allegorical narration is not necessarily temporal at all, and this implies that the referential status of language is going to be prior in relation to the semantic function of the words and, exactly for this reason, is going to frame a clearer reality. In the mentioned essay, Paul de Man raises a pertinent question: “why is it that the furthest reaching truths about ourselves and the world have to be stated in such a lopsided referentially indirect mode?”, as allegory does. Returning to the propose of this thesis, the referred superiority of language over the semantic function of words reinforces that, in a determined context, literary works fit certain historical moments, but do not necessarily need to be stuck to them. As in the case of Orwell’s works, that can, nowadays, assume other symbolical meanings than just questions about Communism or Fascism.

Joel Fineman’s “The structure of allegorical desire” (1986) adds that allegory “arises in periods of loss, periods in which an once powerful, theological, political or familial authority is threatened with effacement”, used as a psychological tool to express what “for political or metaphysical reasons...cannot be said”. (p. 28). Once more, we have in *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* great examples of this emergence of allegorical works in difficult moments. Both were produced in the post-II World War period, when Europe was still rising after the victory of the allies, who depended totally on the Soviet Army. Thus, how could works that criticized the Communist Revolution and the Soviet Union be produced in England? Therefore, Orwell found in allegory a form to express artistically his political cravings at the time of their production.

However, looking though a different perspective, allegory can also mean the crystallization of conservatism, because it may propose to give an eternal meaning to the picture expressed by the plot of the story, which points to a determined conclusion as the only possible truth. Generally, this truth tends to be accepted without questioning, and ratifies a form of ideological domination, normally, a domination from the right-wing, to let things remain as they are. Flávio Rene Kothe, in his book *A Alegoria* (1986), mentions the famous fable *The cicada and the ant*, where the ant works during the summer to store food for the winter, contrary to the

cicada, who prefers to play during the summer and starves in the winter. For Kothe, the message that is necessary to join goods for tough phases in life can also extrapolate and approach a certain capitalist ideology, because the point of view of the cicada may be presented in a distorted way in the fable. In the works analyzed in this thesis, it is clear: the fixation of the relation Orwell's works and Communism solidified itself in such a way that nothing more seems to be possible to be seen in the works. Retaking the words of Kothe, I conclude that the maintenance of this unique interpretation may also become a form of domination, once the symbolic perspective of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* brings much more comprehensive and contemporary elements than facts exclusively related to Communism.

Besides allegory, another literary concept related to *Animal Farm* is the concept of fable. In the field of the allegories, fable can be defined as a narrative relating the actions of anthropomorphized animals and objects and distinguished by a consciously derived moral. The term comes from the Latin word *fabula*, which means "brief narration".

In general, the animals are irrational and the behavior of their characters preserve proper features, working as allusions, normally satirical, on the behavior of human beings. Fables were written in verses until the XVIII century, when prose was adopted more commonly as a means of expression. The oriental origin, mainly in relation to religious Indian stories that provided the fabulist elements in the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* made fable famous in fact in the classical antiquity, Hesiod is credited for having written the first complete fable, *The hawk and the nightingale*, in the 8th century BC. Phaedrus was also an important name in terms of fable creation, but it is the name of Aesop that stands as the main reference to this kind of narrative. In Greece, in the 6th century BC, that Phrygian slave created some fables that have been popular up to contemporary times, such as the already mentioned *The cicada and the ant*, *The turtle and the hare*, and *The fox and the grapes*. These fables were compiled by Barbrus, in the *Aesopica* (II or III century BC), all in verse. Later, La Fontaine became famous retelling and adapting fables from Aesop and other ancient writers, as Portuguese arcades did as well.

As it can be seen, *Animal Farm* has many allegorical features. In the moment of its production, and during the first decades of criticism related to the work, the allegorical features directly concerned the historical moment in which it was written,

the end of World War II, and made reference to a revolution that did not keep its ideology as time went by. It refers to governments that, due to the abuse of power and violence, implemented a totalitarian regime where the society could do no more than accept the governmental rules, under the hazard of capital punishment. Even if most of the criticism on *Animal Farm* relates this allegory to the Soviet Revolution and the consequent hardening of some policies in the Soviet Union to the establishment of Communism, the point of view defended in this paper is that *Animal Farm* can be seen as a more comprehensive symbol of any kind of society where this same hardening and obscuring in policies happens, in a bigger or lesser proportion.

Thus, the allegorical elements already commented of *Animal Farm* are developed through the fable<sup>6</sup>, firstly because of the use of animals as characters, and secondly, for the warning atmosphere that the text can arise, trying to express a moral. Even so, the fact that at the end of the book, pigs and humans become practically the same, gives this fable a unique feature, that is the transformation of the animals of the fable to a state of metamorphosis, something that classical fables had not presented so far.

The use of a fable helps preserve the aesthetic value of *Animal Farm*, once the history of the animals is out of the time. That makes the dissociation of the plot with a single subject, as Communism, possible, and acquire different symbologies through the years and decades. Considering that the esthetic value of a work of Literature is its capacity of holding different interpretations and being appealing to new readers along the years, *Animal Farm* has this capacity of transcending this allegorical fixed theme of Communism and become a symbol of fear of any totalitarian regime.

However, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it is science-fiction which substitutes for fable as the chosen medium to present his political satire. The conceptual range of the expression “science fiction” is wide. In general terms, it refers to stories in which the contemporary setting is disrupted by an imaginary device such as the introduction of a new intention or an alien being.

Initially called “scientific romances”, they differ from other kinds of fantastic narrative by the claim that they, to a certain extent, respect the limits of scientific

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<sup>6</sup> In Literary Criticism, the Russian formalists use the term under a different perspective, referring to the way meaning relates to connotation, plot, or the series of happenings linked among them.

possibility, and that their innovations are plausible extrapolations from modern technology. The expression “science fiction”<sup>7</sup> was created in the USA by H. Gerusback, in the comics *Amazing Stories*, in 1926. Gerusback was the editor of the magazine, which specialized in the publication of a sort of prose fiction with didactical and prophetic features having contemporary scientific knowledge as a basis. The notion was progressively established that in a good science fiction story, the ability of the author to produce a plausible reality counts more than the actual scientificity, availability, possibility or predictability of the elements given in the plot. (FIKER, 1985, p. 20). The fictional world presented in this sub-genre is normally radically different from the one we know, although it is in a way related to it. It is usually a world in the future, where problems contemporary to the author are oversized. In this world, there is normally the discovery of a solution to these problems, but normally at the cost of the humanity or the liberty of the individual.

The connection between science fiction and satire lies in the indirect references made to the reality external to the fictional world, and to problematic circumstances contemporary to the moment of production of the literary text. Although science fiction usually presents a radically different background to our real

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<sup>7</sup> The advance of science in the 19<sup>th</sup> century inspired many writers to resort to science in their writings both in Europe and in the USA. A good sample of that emerging scientificism is 1818 Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, a book that mentions the possibilities of electricity as if it were able to produce life. Along that century, tales about imaginary travels became popular, normally involving time travels and flying machines. The consequent speculation about the possibilities of new scientific discoveries made authors like H. G. Wells and his books *The Time Machine*, *The Island of Dr Moreau*, *The Invisible Man* and *The War of the Worlds* become actual classics of the genre during the transition from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. After the I World War, the British science fiction was dominated by the idea that a hypothetical new war could have the power to destroy the human civilization, creating books like *People of the Ruins* (1920) by Edward Shanks, *Last and First Man*, (1930), by Olaf Stapledon, and *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley. Another important name to be mentioned was C. S. Lewis, and his science fiction trilogy *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), *Perelandra* (1939) and *That Hideous Strength* (1945).

On the other hand, science fiction narratives in the United States of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had interplanetary affairs as a background, having as one of the best icons the book *A Princess of Mars* (1912), written by Edgar Rice Burroughs. With this, many different pulp magazines on the subject started to come up and made popular that kind of narrative. Besides, the American science fiction of the time seemed to be more optimistic than the British: in American narratives, the powers of human creativity, deployed in new technologies, would enable mankind to conquer the universe. This style went on up to the 30’s, assuaged by the consequent atmosphere of sobriety of the Great Depression Times. A more realistic and intellectual approach was presented by a new generation of writers that included Isaac Asimov (*I, Robot* (1950), *The End of Eternity* (1955), *The Bicentennial Man and Other Stories* (1976)), Theodore Sturgeon, (*More than Human*) and Robert A. Heinlein (*Starship Troopers* (1959) *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961), *The Past through Tomorrow* (1967)). With the time and the popularity of paperbacks, other names would become popular in the genre, like, Ray Bradbury (*Fahrenheit 451* (1953), *The Martian Chronicles* (1959)), and Arthur C. Clarke (*The City and the Stars* (1956), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *2010: Odyssey Two* (1982)).

world, they always – although indirectly - report to it. This feature is one of the main elements of satire, in what concerns its relation to reality through the plot. In science fiction there is also this strategy to imagine societies of other worlds or of past or future times which are generally the own writer's society expressed in a different form. A difference however, is that the amount of anger is more subtle in science fiction texts than in satirical ones, and the doses of humour are lesser, or inexistent. Like with the fable, there is usually a didactic aspect to the text, which corroborates a set of belief that goes against or criticises the operation of a given society.

Maybe the first aspect of science fiction in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the futuristic sensation that the title conveys to the original 1948 reader. Although science fiction can also report to alternative pasts, the connection between the development of science and the future seems to be stronger than its connection to the past. Thus, it is an alternative future that the reader is going to face, a future that extrapolates the science of the time with instruments able to spy on the life of the whole society. Therefore, if at the same time that science fiction provides the text an aesthetic amplitude that easily transcends the specific historical moment which it confronts, on the other hand, there is the social function of the work, once, in 1948, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* brings the view of a dark and oppressive future under totalitarian rules some decades ahead. It means, if society wants to avoid this future, there is time. This point is even constant in science fiction works.

Besides, the dystopian society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is also typical of science fiction novels, since utopias and dystopias are normally related to technological advancement, tending more to dystopia (FIKER, 1985, p. 53).

## 2.2 Utopia and Dystopia

The concept of utopia has its origin in a pun of words with two Greek terms: *eutopos* (a good place) and *outopos* (no place). In general terms, it refers to an imaginary, ideal civilization, which may range from a city to a world, regarded to be attainable in the future. The efforts to create this perfect society is called utopianism, and the ideas with these features are called utopian ones. On the other hand, the term "utopian" can also have a negative connotation, meaning ideas that are too advanced, radical or optimistic to happen.

The roots of the concept can be found in Plato's *Republic*, and on Plutarch's reports on the Spartan Commonwealth, works where there is the designation of a society with equality and a general pacifist attitude, although the citizens are all ready to fight if needed, against all evils of society, like poverty and misery. These concepts are later used in the homonymous book of the Christian English writer Thomas More, printed in Louvain, in 1516, containing explanations from a certain Portuguese traveler Raphael Hythlodæus, about a happy island state where all things are held in common, gold is despised and the people, the "Utopians", live communally. Along parts I and II of the book, there is criticism on the way that justice was held in England, mainly to what concerned death penalty for theft, and also on corruption from both monarchy and the nobles. The third part of the book has More's reflections on the reports of Raphael Hythlodæus about Utopia, with some things that More did not agree and others he would like to see implemented in Europe, although More confesses this to be difficult exactly for being too Utopian, in the sense of the term that means "unattainable".

The idea of utopia, in a first moment, brings to mind the concept of a perfect society. However, when analyzing deeper to whom this society is perfect, some not-so-clear facts can come up. Once the point of observation changes, it means, when looking from the perspective of the individual, it is seen that the good working of these societies is just possible with many prohibitions to this individual, including many aspects of his liberty. In More's *Utopia*, Plato's *Republic* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the price to be paid for us, 21<sup>st</sup> century readers, to reach this perfection in society is too high, once our contemporary view of society privileges common things like good feeding and good sanitary conditions, but, more than that, privileges the freedom to make choices. For More, Plato and Big Brother, the focus of the perception is another one: a perfect society is where the maintenance of the village, city or country is reached in a competent way, not mattering the cost of it for the population. So, the concept of what is perfect is never homogeneous: what is good for somebody may be terrible to others.

This idea of perfection spread to areas like economy, mainly from the XIX century on, mainly because of the social disruption created by the development of commercialism and capitalism. The claim for an egalitarian distribution of goods and for liberty to work on what you like is called an utopian socialism. On the other hand, "libertarian utopias" also exist, being the philosophies in which capitalism is the basis



for a perfect market economy.

In the political field, the utopia is linked to the kinds of governments which establish a society that reports itself in a near-perfection condition, although generally being harsh in the execution of laws, allowing little individualism, and avoiding conflict toward their primary goals. The nullification of religious and family values is part of this controlled society.

Both *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* have as background utopian societies. In the case of the revolution of Manor Farm, the project of a perfect life without the presence of humans generates a society where all the animals work for the farm with the belief that all of them are and will be treated as equals. With the use of violence and the despicable change of rules that the ruler pig Napoleon resorts to, the view of perfection to be reached started to blur, causing confusion among the animals, who start to doubt whether the way that the farm was following would really get to the stage that was promised before the revolution. This feeling of discontent can be taken as the first expression of a dystopian society, although the animals could not realize that difference. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the utopian propaganda comes from the Inner Party, but there is at least one character that seems to be aware of the outcome of that utopia, the protagonist Winston Smith<sup>8</sup>. He starts to understand that the truth about Oceania is quite different from what the media advertises, and this individual process of awareness about the utopian society that the rulers announce unchains the certainty that this same utopia is no more than a curtain that hides a dystopian existence.

The term “dystopia” appeared first in a parliamentary speech by the English politician John Stuart Mill in the House of Commons, on March 12th, 1868, using the new word as a synonym of a “bad place”. The Greek referent (*dystopia*, or *kakotopia*) implies a fictional society that is the antithesis of a utopian one. The term progressively turned into a reference to a kind of society that exerts strong control over its citizens, claiming to be perfect – when it is, in effect, corrupted in its means of control of the state, institutions or corporations.

In terms of expression of social dystopia, the dystopian society hides many problems, pretending to be good and presented as a utopia, and social stratification

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<sup>8</sup> About the name of this character, “Winston” reminds addresses the highest aristocracy at Orwell’s age, with Winston Churchill. “Smith” points to the common man, whose surname expresses a profession of the simple man (blacksmith). This way, this character may be understood as the fusion

is common. This kind of society is normally ruled by the upper class that is far from democratic actions, imposing its force on citizens. There is also total control of the state in all economic activities, so as in propaganda, which is used to convince society that life under the regime is good. In *Animal Farm*, it is possible to find all these dystopian elements: a place where individuals do not have liberty but are made believe so and the social stratification that the pigs impose, allied to the constant favorable propaganda of the regime.

Normally, the overwhelming majority of the expression of dystopias have some connection to our world, but offer it in a imaginary future or in an alternative historical past, normally brought up by human actions. In most of the cases, the portrayal of nightmare of what the future can be is the setting, as the biblical example of the book of *Revelation*, akin to the end of times<sup>9</sup>.

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* may be considered one of the best expressions of dystopian novels of all times, mainly in what concerns the description of an alternative future under extreme political regimes and the imposition of force of the state on citizens that do not endorse the prerogatives of the ruling class. The sensation that nothing can be done to fight the Inner Party is enhanced by the conversion of Smith to the ideology of the Party and his consequent and symbolical murder, in a clear report to the historical moment when the book was written, post-World War II. Also, the unbreakable division of the society in Inner Party, Outer Party and the proles is typical of a social dystopia. In the end, we realize that utopias and dystopias cannot be apart from each other.

If in philosophical terms the total control of the state has to do with utopia and dystopia, in political terms this total control may be called totalitarianism, a concept which, during the second half of the twentieth-century, has been commonly linked to Communist, Fascist and Nazi policies. Such policies are now taken as persisting only in retrograde countries, and as ephemeral manifestations in the countries where these regimes were formerly implemented. According to the words of Eberstein, however, the solidity of these totalitarian political systems proved to be capable of

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of the common man with high objectives.

<sup>9</sup> In spite of it, the features of dystopia seem to be constant in science fiction, in books like *The Begum's Fortune* (1880) by Jules Verne, *The Revolt of Man* (1882), by Walter Besant, the already mentioned science fiction works of H. G. Wells, *We* (1925), by Yevgeny Zamyatin, and many others. Cinema also had its dystopian representation, beginning with Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), and going up to our days with *Matrix* (1999), a dystopian view of what is known about reality.

maintenance, not only in the Soviet Union with Stalin, Italy, with Mussolini and in Germany with Hitler, but also with Mao Tsé-Tung in China and Francisco Franco in Spain. In the remaining portion of the chapter, this discussion is going to be approached on two levels. First I will deal with these largely commented political systems and their association to totalitarian tendencies; and then I will develop my understanding of what a totalitarian society is.

### **2.3 The implied political discussion: Socialism, Communism, Fascism, Nazism.**

It is safe to say that much before that time, the political thinkers had already cared about poverty and inequality in the society, however, the term *Socialism* just appeared in the beginning of the 19th century. The economic problems created by capitalism in the 19th century, mainly after the Industrial Revolution, generated ideas that criticized capitalism and liberalism, in order to achieve a more social-economic fair society, in an attempt to reach a new social organization based on a new economic structure. This ideology was called Socialism. In a first moment, the *utopian socialism* preached drastic reforms in society as the egalitarian distribution of wealth, the transformation of society into small communities in which private property would be abolished, the protection of the individual through social laws, the abolishment of money and the equality of rights for man and women. It was a big idealization of a perfect society, defended mainly in the works of Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, Louis Blanc and Robert Owen

However, Socialism only became a political doctrine in the mid-19th century with the *scientific socialism*, when Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels developed the theory of Socialism as the result of the class struggles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, that should culminate in a utopian transition from Capitalism into Communism, when the private property would be abolished, and humanity would reach a better stage of existence.

In Marx's *Capital* (1993), in the third volume, there is an excerpt that can summarize the aim of Socialism:

In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is

determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilised man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human Nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working-day is its basic prerequisite. (p. 954)

Therefore, Socialism became a term that comprehended policies linked to social welfare and the way that wealth would be invested in a state. With the time, different trends within Socialism came up, as the *orthodox* sectors that defended the complete nationalization of the means of production, opposing to the *social-democrats*, who defended the nationalization of only some key institutions framed in a mixed economy, *social Marxists*, who defended the creation of centrally planned economies, *market socialists*, who advocated a reconciliation of the state with the free market, offering advantages in this cooperation for both, among others.

Although the words Socialism and Communism are sometimes felt as synonyms, it is important to verify that Communism is one among several political possibilities within the Socialist concepts and perspectives. Even so, Communism also was a political ideology based on the collective property of the means of production.

In the *Communist Manifesto*, of 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels state that the history of all existing societies was a history of struggles, and that Communism would be the final stage of the economic-political human organization, free from classes or the presence of the state. To reach a communist society, there is the preview of an intermediate stage, Socialism, which is going to create conditions to the proletariat to take control and install a dictatorship, which would abolish the bourgeoisie and social classes, developing means of production in such a way that every individual could give his contribution according to his capacities and be rewarded according to his needs.

The Socialism mentioned in the *Communist Manifesto* was the same ideology

from the 19th century, opposing to Capitalism and Liberalism of the time. After it, in the stage of Communism, Marx and Engels propose the end of the private property, the end of the classes and of the so-called exploitation of man by man, still linked to utopist socialist principles. Scientific socialism appear more clearly in the Manifesto when the principles of the materialistic concept of history are exposed, the exploitation of the proletarian class, which provides a quantity of not-paid work – the value-added, that culminates in the joining of capital. The socialization of the means of production would make this accumulation of capital disappear, and make society more egalitarian.

The Catholic Church also gives its opinion about this affair. Pope Leo XIII recognizes the gravity of the social question that Capitalism could provoke in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1878), but rejects revolutionary solutions for that, preferring to preach the applying of Christian teachings to correct the evils of Capitalism. It was called *Christian socialism*.

With the Russian revolution in 1917 and the establishment of Communism as political ideology, the government of Vladimir Lenin creates the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, as Marx recommended <sup>10</sup>, in an attempt to provide the transition from Capitalism to Socialism. After the death of Lenin, Josef Stalin accelerates the process by suppressing practically all kinds of political opposition, promoting the collectivization of the land and controlling all the Communist parties of the world. The price to pay for the change included arresting dissidents in concentration camps in Siberia and the vanishing and murder of millions of Russians that were considered dangerous or enemies of the Communist project.

By its turn, Fascism is the regime implemented by Benito Mussolini in Italy in 1924 with the victory of the Fascist Party in a country that was facing a serious economic crisis, imposing the subordination of the individual to the state, in an attempt to express a kind of nationalism that forced to the achievement of a cohesive

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<sup>10</sup> Erich Fromm, in his *Marx's Concept of Man* writes that the Communist Revolution tried to “convince the world that its practice obeyed Marx’s ideas. With this, the western world accepted their allegations and admitted that the position of Marx corresponded to the Russian opinion and practices. Among them, “man’s supreme psychological motivation for his wish for monetary advantage, which would be the maximal incentive of the human race. Complementing this idea, there is the supposition that Marx would have neglected the value of the individual, and of not having respect for man’s spiritual necessities, once this man is well fed”. However, Fromm states that “this popular image of materialism and its anti-spiritual tendency, allied to its wish of uniformity and subordination is entirely false”, once “the aim of Marx was the spiritual emancipation of man, his liberation from the fetters of the economic determinism his reintegration as a human being, and his aptitude to find unity and harmony with his pairs and with nature.”(p. 14-15) (Translation mine)

society, with all the institutions under the eyes of the state. Defined in Mussolini's *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism* (1932) its main features are authoritarianism from the government, militarism, collectivism, corporatism, anti-communism and strong opposition to economic and political liberalism. Although normally reported as a right-wing ideology, Fascism can also be faced as a populist movement in order to protect the interests of the middle-class.

The term derives from the Latin word *fasces*, a bundle of rods tied to an axe that used to be a symbol of authority in the ancient Roman Empire, meaning that one rod could easily break, but the union of rods would be much stronger. This image expresses well the anti-individualistic policies of Fascism, since individual interests were just acceptable if they coincided with the interests of the state. Historically in Italy, the implementation of Fascism was able to modernize the industrial economy and to diminish the unemployment rate in Italy, although the cuts in the civil and political liberty, allied to the extinction of work unions and the limitations of businessmen to manage their capital were some side effects of the regime, not to mention the reports on the vanishing of considered enemies of the fascist ideology.

Thus, the state was an organic entity rather than an organization to protect individual rights. There are resemblances between Italian Fascism and German Nazism, although the racial element was much more present in the latter. For Fascism, the individual is subordinated to the state, while in Nazism the individual *and* the state are subordinated to the race.

Nazism comprehends the national-socialist doctrines formulated by Adolf Hitler, synthesized in his book *Mein Kampf* (1925). The word derives from the first syllables of *National Socialism*, as pronounced in German. Basically, this ideology defends the superiority of the Arian race, denies the democratic institutions and the socialist revolution and fights for the expansionism of Germany. The moment that Nazism comes to be was of chaos in Germany, and the nationalist claim of the ideology fast conquered minds and hearts.

After the World War I, by determination of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany had lost territories and was obliged to pay financial reparations to the winner countries. These penalties lead the country into a hard recession and the political stability of the country is in danger, what creates favorable conditions for the expansion of Nazism, spreading its ideology through speeches to masses, parades, radio, newspapers and cinema with the appeal of revenge.

Nazi government is marked by the suppression of all other political parties, the dissolution of work unions, the establishment of censorship to the media and the creation of paramilitary organizations, as SA (the army guard), SS (the special guard) and Gestapo (political police) and the attempt to reach a total Arian society, with the persecution and genocide of Jews, Gypsies and other ethnic groups, considered inferior or dangerous. The sequels of this movement are the World War II and later the Neo-Nazi manifestations.

In spite of being different from each other, the political regimes discussed above have in common the fact of being political totalitarian representations. These policies impose great restrictions to the individual liberties and resort to strong mechanisms of control in behalf of the system. As seen before, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are satires of political regimes that are kept at the cost of individual liberty. However, this kind of policy does not mean to be Communism, Fascism or Nazism themselves, but a form to approach and use political power: Totalitarianism.

## 2.4 Totalitarianism

Before considering any state or government totalitarian, it is important to avoid the so-called “bad man theory” and accept that totalitarianism is a new way to rule over people. Friedrich and Berzeninski mention in their book, *Totalitarian Dictatorship & Autocracy*:

The debate about the cause or origins to totalitarianism has run all the way from a primitive bad-man theory to the “moral of our time” kind of argument. A detailed inspection of the available evidence suggests that virtually every one of the factors which has been offered by itself as an explanation of the origin totalitarianism has played its role. For example, in the case of Germany, Hitler’s moral and personal defects, certain traits involved in the German “national character”, the Versailles treaty and its aftermath[...]all have played a role in the total configuration of factors contributing to the over-all result[...] But, at the present time, we cannot fully explain the rise of totalitarian dictatorship[...]which is a new phenomenon. There has never been anything quite like it before (p. 18-19)

These two theoreticians say that, along history, what happened first in some societies was the establishment of a state of *autocracy*, a state that tries to control the political activities of the citizens, and where liberty is relatively tolerated in terms

of religion, family and commercial activities, provided that such activities do not interfere in politics. Even so, this policy to rule the people did not seek to get hold of the entire person, but were mainly satisfied in excluding him from certain spheres and exploiting him in others, in a more or less merciless level according to the case.

Thus, there have been many types of autocracies in the history of governments. Certain forms of primitive kingship, the several forms of despotism, normally with a deification of the ruler (as in the orient), and in the Roman Empire, the tyranny in Greek city-states and in Renaissance Italy, not to mention the absolutist monarchies of modern Europe, including tsarist Russia, there are examples of autocracy in these regimes. The ruler is not accountable to any one else for what he does, the ruler makes the decisions and reaps the results.

The autocratic states, along time, have been responsible for higher or lesser degrees of violence on behalf of their maintenance, mainly in moments when the state was forced to defend itself from revolutionary movements. The totalitarian traces of a state appear, according to Friedrich, exactly when extreme violence has to be used in the name of the maintenance of the regime, when there is no way to keep the ideology of the party in logical terms, always supported by propaganda, technology and mass legitimating, allied to the use of secret police, torture and murdering and the creation of concentration fields and slave work. It is important to comment that the term is not linked to right or left-wings, but that both extremes of political ideologies can come up to totalitarian states. In the totalitarian movements of the 20th century, the use of violence that marks the beginning of a totalitarian regime may represent the outcome of movements directed against the disintegration of the state in the liberal age.

According to Ebeinstein (1967), Sparta must have been the first totalitarian state of the world, because the lives of the citizens were regulated since their birth, and the power of the state was on everything. However, the totalitarian spirit is always the same, and it does not depend on how it is showed in a determined place or along history, being present in the most varied places like Egypt or in the Inca Empire. However, there is something new in the 21<sup>st</sup>. century totalitarian states: the fast advance of new kinds of technology, that in other ages did not exist. (p.44). This characteristic of the modern totalitarian state does not mean that it is necessary a high technology to keep the ideology, but it gives a strong support to the government, in the field of military arms and communications, for example.



The stress of a certain ideology, which is going to be the official doctrine, normally radically rejects the existing society in terms of a chiliastic proposal, for a new one. It contains strongly utopian elements, offering a kind of paradise on earth. Marx called religion the opium of the people, but, according to Friedrich, the totalitarian ideologies may also become a kind of religion, because they may substitute faith for reason, magic exhortation for knowledge and criticism.

Technology can also lead an autocracy into a totalitarian dictatorship due to mass legitimating. This is another factor present in totalitarian states. Hannah Arendt in *O Sistema Totalitário* (1978)<sup>11</sup> mentions the example of Hitler, who ascended to power within the majority system, what kept him in power even with the inter-party disputes, because of the support of masses. The same happened with Stalin.

About mass legitimating, Arendt says that totalitarian movements are just possible where masses exist, that, for one reason or another, developed a certain taste for political organization. Arendt also says that the masses do not join for the consciousness of a common interest, but that they are a great number of people who cannot participate in a professional organization or union, being politically indifferent. (p. 399).

To form these masses, propaganda is largely used. In the cases that totalitarianism has the absolute control, there is a substitution of propaganda by indoctrination, and violence happens not specifically to scare the people, but also to give a sense of reality to the ideological doctrines (p.433), and this propaganda is, many times, related to scientific and technological advances. Practically the creation of a new world.(p.447)

Friedrich adds that this kind of government does not come into existence by a simple "seizure of power"(p. 367), but by seizing the control of the existing government, and a dictatorship is set up in order to perform the totalitarian ideology of the party. Yet in Friedrich, There is the delimitation of the moment when totalitarian governments emerge. (p. 369). This totalitarian dictatorship emerge from

the total transformation of the existing society, that this new ideology calls for quickly runs into numerous and formidable obstacles. The series of critical situations thus created give rise to the swift enlargement of power and the totalitarian radicalization of the means of control; in the course of this process, the totalitarian dictatorship comes into being. (p. 367)

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<sup>11</sup> Translation by Roberto Raposo of the original *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

To summarize, the main aspects of totalitarianism in Friedrich include a) an elaborate ideology: the doctrine covering all aspects of man's existence to which everyone must believe. This doctrine is normally projected on a perfect final state of mankind, rejecting the existing societies of other parts of the world when they do not fit the party's ideology. b) a single mass party: the party of the dictator, which normally consists of a small percentage of the population which does never question the ideology of the party, ready to accept and assist the party in all its requests. c) a system of terror: be it physical or psychic, the use of secret policies provides such a system, not only towards declared enemies of the system but also against selected classes of the population that can represent danger for the continuation of the establishment of the ideology. This system of terror normally includes contemporary scientific features in order to torture or kill enemies. d) a technological conditioned monopoly of control: all the means of communication stay in the hands of the party. e) monopoly of weapons or armed combat. f) a central control and direction of the entire economy. (p. 22).

In an objective way, this chapter brought into discussion the literary concepts like allegory, satire, fable and science fiction, as well as provided some quick information about political regimes that have been associated to totalitarianism. Also, the concept of totalitarianism was discussed, supported by some of the main theoreticians on the subject. These concepts were necessary in order to establish bridges between *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and also to guide the reader to definitions of what this paper intends when some of those conceptualized terms are used. Thus, supported by the two previous chapters, the demonstration of the linking points between both novels, allied to the development of the political consciousness of Orwell in what concerns the future of totalitarianism becomes possible, as well as the updating of the critical heritage of the works.

### **3 SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS IN *ANIMAL FARM* AND *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR***

According to the project of this thesis, the objective of the previous chapter has been to conceptualise some literary and political issues that underlie the discussion carried on concerning the decaying interest, on the part of literary criticism, on the work of George Orwell. Among all the points analyzed, I call the attention to the distinction proposed between the terms *allegory* and *symbol*: an allegory is immovable, it tends to get stuck to some meaning. It is a code artistically produced to be remembered as an unchangeable expression of something in-between lines. A symbol, on the other hand, tends to admit new meanings according to the perspective and to the setting of the analysis. While an allegory may, with the time, become a signifier filled with a pre-established signified, a symbol may be understood as a significant that is waiting for the filling of a signifier.

In this chapter I present my reading of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, demonstrating how it is possible to empty these signifiers from their critical signified and from their constant references to anti-Communism, filling them with more contemporary signifieds, with facts that have been happening in the world scenario and that have been urging to be analyzed through the focus of the novels in question. With this, my intention is that new signifieds may fill the novels and these works will, at least for some time, take a new breath in the literary canon. As mentioned before, these new signifieds and consequently facts of our contemporary world will be addressed mainly in footnotes along the chapter. As a consequence, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* will be approached so that some points of this transition from allegory into symbol become more evident. Some possible points of connection between the works will also be discussed. Along this effort, I hope to stress the artistic dimension of the works analyzed, which belong to the realm of Literature – and is precisely their artistic value that makes them survive and allow the possibility

of new readings. That would not be the case if we were dealing with strictly pamphleteering political documents.

One of the first remarks is that the transition from an allegorical to a symbolical analysis matches the transition from the animal condition of the characters of *Animal Farm*, who simply accepted what was imposed on them, to a rational human condition, like the main character of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* who was at least able to see further when all the sights of reality were limited by oppression. This awakening and evolution of a political consciousness that happens when reading the novels as a sequence, from the irrational to the rational state of perception, to a certain extent, keeps up with the need of critical novelty that contemporary readers may provide to artistic works of Literature.

### **3.1 – Revisiting Manor Farm and Oceania: what a 21<sup>st</sup> century reader finds in common with his contemporary world**

In 1942, when still working for the Indian section of the British Broadcasting Corporation, George Orwell was reported by the Special Branch, the intelligence service of the British police as having “advanced communist views”, and was told to be seen attending communist meetings. After years of investigation, the conclusion was that Orwell was not so dangerous to England, since his views did not match the views of a traditional communist, but of a “heterodox communist”<sup>1</sup>. These files were opened recently, in 2005 together with others, as the ones that the British espionage agency MI5 kept about George Orwell. These documents cover Orwell’s life from 1929 up to 1950, when he died, and were started mainly for the danger of his supposed communist activities in Wigan, when Orwell lived among the miners collecting material to write *The Road to Wigan Pier*. The government asked this same agency if it was possible to trust Orwell to receive the credentials of journalist in the allied armies in World War II. The answer was that “The security service have records of this man, but raise no objection to his appointment”. These facts, combined with the socialist content of his books and the criticism that normally linked

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: < <http://www.online-literature.com/forums/showthread.php>> Accessed on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008.

Orwell to past historical moments <sup>2</sup> (related sometimes to Communism and other times against Communism) have contributed to this certain sensation of being dated in his works. When approached through a different conceptual range, however, this rancid and limited view which constantly connects Orwell's works and Communism can be transcended. The study of the two novels that form the corpus of this thesis, and the connections that these works can have with each other may even offer tools to help understand some political issues of our present times as well.

According to Kubal, "Orwell did not succeed in writing realistic books. He expressed his ideas better using allegory... and *Animal Farm* remains as the only completely successful combination of aesthetic and political intentions". (p. 127). Allegory, in this case, is to be understood in its comprehensive sense, almost as a metaphor, and not the allegory that associates works and facts in a not dissoluble way. As to the use of animals in stories, there are several instances of that in Orwell's works. For example, there is the Indian pony that carries little charts in *Down and Out in Paris and London*, as an symbol of unnecessary luxurious needs of the middle-class. In "Inside the Whale", the whale of the title is used as an image of protection for the intellectuals who prefer to remain silent, without criticizing the harmful *status quo*. In *Burmese Days* the character Flory, kills his own companion dog before committing suicide, in an expression of human despair and of the fragility of the animals in the hands of human beings, facts that are also present in the scene of tiger hunting, in the same work. In "Shooting an Elephant", there is something similar to that, when an elephant is shot and dies after hours of agony. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the reference is to the coral, that curiously, is involved in glass, in a strong reference meaning that nature could become pretty much artificial in the future, not to say untouchable. However, these connections with animals or nature and the human reality may go beyond those passages of Orwell's works: they may serve as the basis for the transition from an allegorical past criticism to an updated symbolic analysis.

The transitional points that may be identified between *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are many, and such connections open the possibility to read the two novels as a continuum on the same theme, forming a story that starts with the dream of Old Major in the fable of the animals of Manor Farm and finishes with

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<sup>2</sup> See chapter 1

the symbological death of Winston Smith in the futuristic pessimistic view of Oceania, establishing the view of a unique totalitarian society in progress.

Besides, the way in which the two works are presented, *Animal Farm* in form of a fable, culminating in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in form of science fiction collaborates to enlighten the utopian past of revolutions, which may become dystopian futures if they are left to follow their own ways with a centralizing government, since the popular motto “total power corrupts totally” seems to find its place in the works. These links may not only serve as a means to explore the way totalitarian societies have developed, since totalitarianism got historically linked to Nazi and Communist policies, but mainly to totalitarian *attitudes*, that seem to be subtly spread in a fluid way in many world affairs nowadays, in some cases, exactly through the same apparatus of propaganda and manipulation of reality, not to mention the use of violence and torture. And this may be considered the first element where allegory opens space to symbol: Totalitarian actions did not cease with the fall of Nazism or Communism, but so, they are still relatively common practices in our globalized contemporary world<sup>3</sup>.

In *Animal Farm*, everything starts with the dream of Old Major, the boar, who triggers the animals into believing in the creation of a farm where the animals would not need to serve the exploiting humans was possible,

"Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: our lives are miserable, laborious, and short. We are born, we are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies, and those of us who are capable of it are forced to work to the last atom of our strength; and the very instant that our usefulness has come to an end we are slaughtered with hideous cruelty. No animal in England knows the meaning of happiness or leisure after he is a year old. No animal in England is free. The life of an animal is misery and slavery: that is the plain truth... There, comrades, is the answer to all our problems. It is summed up in a single word—Man. Man is

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<sup>3</sup> Something that proves this is the situation of Myanmar, formerly Burma, the place where Orwell worked as a policeman and denounced the totalitarian imperial attitudes of England on the natives, already discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. *Burmese Days* was written more than 70 years ago, but the country still suffers under totalitarian policies. Between September and October 2007, there was a riot led by Buddhist monks in the name of Democracy in the country, which was violently repressed, with the execution of at least five monks and more than 200 murders, not to mention the thousands of disappearances. However, the newspaper *New Light of Myanmar*, published by the government, reported the fact as if some people had attacked the National Guard with no justification. Myanmar has a history of being ruled by Totalitarian polices: after the departure of English settlers in 1937, this country was invaded by Japan, which left the country after a series of *coups d'état* that led to power dictators who threw the country into an ethnic civil war . In 1990, the political opposition party, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won the elections but the electoral council ignored the result. Nobel Prize of Peace in 1991, Suu Kyi has being kept arrested up to nowadays in household prison.

the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished for ever". (p. 14-15)

Following this assumption, the animals rebel and make the revolution in the name of better conditions of life. One of the most inspiring things is the change of name from *Manor Farm* to *Animal Farm*, and a change of name may bring within itself many ideological questions <sup>4</sup>. This revolution was implemented in terms of equality among the animals, where, the utopia of reaching a society where all animals were equal and would have their individualities respected is led by the pigs, who, in a first moment, become the great leaders and strategists of the revolution. With this, the first division that can be realized in that society begins: there is a gap dividing the pigs, more precisely Snowball and Napoleon, from the other animals, who are meant to follow the pigs' orders. However, the taste for power that the swine ruling class samples has such a force that opens the possibility of corruption and, with this, gradually, the revolutionary utopian ideals fade away, giving place to a system where the rulers, the pigs, change their attitudes so much that they get to the point of being confused with the former enemies, the humans. At this point, it is impossible to know who is a friend and who is an enemy:

Twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which. (p. 69)

The animals become subordinate to a work force and to a centralized ideology dominated by a privileged class, in the name of the good of the farm. Although some of the animals start to doubt whether their lives are better under the rule of the pigs, than when they were under the whip of Mr. Jones. They are unable to get to a conclusion, mainly due to the fact that they had never lived such a situation to compare these two moments. Kubal states that the animals cannot evaluate the situation properly "not because the new situation springs from revolution, but

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<sup>4</sup> *Burma* also changed its name: in 1988, it became Myanmar. The name *Burma* was originated from the way that the English settlers used to call the local ethnicity at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After that year, the military forces in power changed the name of the country to Myanmar, as the country is known in the native language, the Burmese. Another case of change in the name of a country happened in 1999. The Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez decided to change the name of the country from *Republica de Venezuela* to *Republica Bolivariana de Venezuela*, in order to be more in tune with the ruling ideology.

because it lacks an established political tradition. The animals do not have a “racial” memory, nor an idea of justice and equality, to fall back on”. (p. 39). And, as it is seen, for this lack of a political tradition, or furthermore, for the lack of a political interest, the result is that the animals practically become slaves of the political system of the pigs<sup>5</sup>.

What follows is the rupture between Napoleon and Snowball, when the former becomes the symbol of hatred and betrayal, while the latter receives the title of greatest leader of the animals. As time advances, these animals really start to see Napoleon as the unique leader of the revolution and of the farm, even when more serious distrusts come up, mainly concerning the ideology and the behavior of the ruling pigs. With this, a strange process of vanishing of animals start to take place, allied to murders of animals who oddly started to confess crimes. The ignorance of the animals about political affairs and the fear of self-expression hinder them from of a new revolution against Napoleon. They submit to accept the orders of the ruling pig, first, because they really believe in the utopian dream of equality, but later for the massive propaganda that the pig Squealer produces, not to mention the brutal force of the watch dogs who protect not only Napoleon, but also his ideology. This use of propaganda and of violence in the name of the maintenance of an ideology, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is one of the main characterizations of a totalitarian state. Besides, the animals are immersed in positive propaganda of the pigs’ ideology, to the point that they can not tell reality from rhetoric anymore. At last, Snowball becomes the symbol of hatred, Napoleon, the savior and absolute ruler, Squealer, the expression of the link between the ruling system and the other animals of the farm, a simple mass that must work for the government without questioning what the pigs say, under the risk of torture and death punishment.

At this point, we may see the beginning of the transition to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. When the maintenance of the ruling ideology depends on the spreading of terror and the justification of present actions depends on clarifying the past, the

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<sup>5</sup> Brazil, which faced a military dictatorial system from 1964 until 1985, fought for direct presidential elections during this time. In 1984, huge manifestations took place all around the country, that got mobilized with the campaign “Diretas Já”. After that, Brazil had direct election in 1989. However, in an interview to the newspaper *Zero Hora* (August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008), some people who participated in those manifestations declared a present total frustration for political issues, allied to a feeling of resigned indignation. One of the persons interviewed stated that the “Brazilian people seems to be under the effect of anesthesia with everything which has been happening concerning corruption, violence, economic scandals. A people who quiets down may be very dangerous to Democracy”. (Translation mine).



previous utopia starts to become a dystopia. Napoleon becomes not only the total leader of the farm, but also the total owner of reality. Along with his silent changes in laws and control of what way news might be spread, once more, the allegory to Communism finds equivalency in the symbolism of some present world affairs, such as the attempts of some governments to stay longer in office than the constitutions of their countries predict, dissolving rival parties and also exerting control on the means of communication <sup>6</sup>. In *Animal Farm*, these things are represented in the increasing number of pigs in the farm, that prevents the sharing of power with other races impossible, since this new class, or this new kind, the pigs, have been from early life educated by Napoleon, who was also the biological father of this kind:

In the autumn the four sows had all littered about simultaneously, producing thirty-one young pigs between them. The young pigs were piebald and as Napoleon was the only boar on the farm, it was possible to guess at their parentage. It was announced that later, when bricks and timber had been purchased, a schoolroom would be built in the farmhouse garden. For the time being, the young pigs were given their instruction by Napoleon himself in the farmhouse kitchen. They took their exercise in the garden, and were discouraged from playing with the other young animals. About this time, too, it was laid down as a rule that when a pig and any other animal met on the path, the other animal must stand aside: and also that all pigs, of whatever degree, were to have the privilege of wearing green ribbons on their tails on Sundays. (p. 55)

This new kind may participate of the government, of course, but in different levels. Thus, there is the establishment of the “Inner Party” of the pigs, with Napoleon and his assistants. At the same time, there is the creation of a kind of “Outer Party”, formed by pigs that received education from Napoleon and helped spread their ideology, and the outsiders, the “proles”, formed by the rest of the population of animals in the farm.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the equivalent to Napoleon is the Big Brother, the one who symbolizes all which must be believed and consequently decides in what things the society must believe. Snowball develops into Goldenstein, the new symbol of betrayal and hatred. As already mentioned, the privileged class of the pigs

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<sup>6</sup> Although Venezuela is still considered a democracy, some present actions of president Hugo Chávez since he took office in 1999 may be discussed. The Venezuelan Congress does not have any rival party to Chávez, who is trying to alter the constitution of the country to change the time of incumbency in power from 6 to 7 years, with the possibility of innumerable successive re-elections. Besides, Chávez took the autonomy of the economy from the Central Bank, what gives him the control of all natural sources in the country. Such attitudes, allied to the purchase of arms and war airplanes has established a sense of military unbalance on the neighbor countries like Brazil, which agreed with the increase in three times of the budget for the purchase of military equipment for the year of 2008.

becomes the inner party, some of them the outer party, who, although belonging to the ruling party, do not enjoy the same individual benefits, and the rest of the animals compose the proles. Squealer, the one who was responsible for the spread of news, always flowered with lies, becomes the Ministry of Truth. Boxer, the symbol of hard-working, abnegation and trust in the government becomes Mr Parsons, a member of the Outer Party totally loyal to Big Brother. Both die in the hands of the ruling system. If the raven Moses in *Animal Farm* symbolizes religion, teaching the animals to work and not complain, in order to reach the "Sugar Mountain", this evolves in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to the more abstract connection between religion and power, clearly expressed in the words of O'Brien: "we are the priests of power: God is power" (p. 896). And, still in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world, religion and politics are entwined <sup>7</sup>. In the case of *Animal Farm*, the individuals who compose that society have the mark of innocence of the animals, not presenting any sign of a past culture to be kept to face the new order of the pigs, they do not have roots with the past, and therefore, they do not openly rebel against the new totalitarian ruling system <sup>8</sup>. This

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<sup>7</sup> Although Western countries tend to consider themselves secular states, this relation between political power and religion has taken first plan in the last millenniums. Allegorically, the junction of Religion and State seems to be mainly linked to Eastern Muslim nations. However, symbolically, Eastern and Western countries deal with the subject in different proportions, but it is impossible to say that religion and politics do not interfere in each other at all. Fredric Jameson writes that "the resultant absence of any Left (wing) alternative means that popular revolt and resistance in the Third World countries have nowhere to go but into religious and "fundamentalist" forms. Available at: <<http://cairopost.blogspot.com/2008/02/26/where-are-our-biometric-passports/>>. To Edward Said, the attitude of the North American government calling the anti-terror war "a war of good against evil" demonstrated that "George W. Bush drew God and America into alignment, declaring war on the "folks" (Muslims), who are now wanted dead of alive". The result of that in the USA is that "hundred of shopkeepers, students, women in *hejab* and ordinary citizens have had insults hurled at them, while posters and graffiti announce their imminent death spring up all over the places". (Available at: <[http://www.lrb.co.uk/v23/n19/mult01\\_.html](http://www.lrb.co.uk/v23/n19/mult01_.html)>). Umberto Eco simplifies the matter mentioning that "every war of religion that has bloodied the world across the centuries began as a passionate belief in a simplistic comparison like, us vs. them, good vs. bad, or black vs. white." And concludes: "It seems that, nowadays, the defense of the Western values has now become the banner of the Right, while the Left are a bunch of Islamic sympathizers." (Available at: <[http://www.themodernword.com/eco/eco\\_writings.html](http://www.themodernword.com/eco/eco_writings.html)>)

<sup>8</sup> In our present world, some countries are still kept under clear dictatorial totalitarian regimes. Some examples are Libya, where Col. Muammar Kadafi has been in office since 1969 after a *coup d'état* that displaced the Monarchy. He has been condemned by the International Community for the supposed participation in terrorist actions and for the violation of human rights in the country. Another example is North Korea, where president Kim Jong-Il has been for 15 years in office. He is known for the maintenance of personal ultra-expensive eccentricities while most of the population of the country lives in misery. The country is also known as being one of the most restrictive ones in terms of freedom of press. Gabon has the dictator who has been longer in power: Omar Bongo, who has already been re-elected six times since 1967 and is accused of fraud in all these elections. In Sudan, Omar Al-Bashir has been in power for 18 years. That country is pointed out by the international organization Human Rights Watch as the worst dictatorship of the world, due to the way that Gen.

may be understood as a metaphor of the human political consciousness, that evolves in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, since there is one individual that wishes that the truth be revealed, that the reality expressed by the inner party is a fake, and that the proles, with their past culture, are the last possibility of salvation. This character, which reminds us of the pigs who received instruction from Napoleon in *Animal Farm* becomes Winston Smith, the protagonist in Orwell's last novel. This might be understood as a metaphor of the evolution of the political consciousness, when somebody becomes able to raise questions about the *status quo*, passing from an animalistic (irrational) understanding of the situation to a human (rational) understanding. Winston looks for individual rights in a place where absolutely no individuality is permitted, a trace from the time when metaphorically Oceania was still called Animal Farm. With this, as much as the "traitors" like Snowball – Goldstein must be hated to death, Winston Smith must also die for this treason. In other words, Smith wants to show that the utopia preached by Big Brother is false, something that the animal condition of the characters of *Animal Farm* prevented them from doing. Smith, as a rational being, has the desire to dismantle the dystopia that the society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* really is, but, alone, he does not have strength to overcome the power of that totalitarian state, that can break Smith under torture. If the animals were naïve enough to the point of accepting Napoleon as a total leader, the evolution of the plot seen as a continuum finished up in a plain inertia to what concerns the rational but marginalized proles of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, because they were also, to a certain extent, kept as animals, with no education nor decent conditions of life.

Following the prerogatives of Friedrich, the totalitarian traces of the society of *Animal Farm* evolve significantly into Oceania, starting from the establishment of an elaborate ideology, in which everyone who lived in those societies was obliged to adhere, at least passively. In *Animal Farm*, this ideology preaches that the pigs must always get the best portions of food and stay with the "brainwork" (p. 26), being all the other animals, servants of the pigs, and not exactly of the farm itself. This ideology evolves to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the same form, where not the pigs anymore, but then the Inner Party is responsible for the maintenance of the *status*

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Omar conquered power, extinguishing all the political parties, dissolving parliament and censoring the press. Nowadays, Sudan lives one of the biggest humanitarian crises of the modern times, in the civil war in the province of Darfur. (Newspaper *Zero Hora*, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008, p. 37).

*quo* and for the strict division of the society, where no one can ascend, and where the Big Brother is the greatest symbol of the power of this ideology. With this, the existence of a single mass party led by the dictator, also took place in *Animal Farm*, although not being a political party in the moulds that we can picture nowadays, obviously due to the still precarious political capability of organization of the animals. This beginning party consisted of a small percentage of the population of the farm, however, the unquestioning participation of pigs and even of some other animals, like the sheep, worked to promote a sense of general acceptance, what in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* evolves to the Inner party, which holds the least number of inhabitants in Oceania, but that is the one that controls the whole land and also promotes that similar sense of general acceptance. In both cases, such a sense is supported by the manipulation of reality and by a strong system of repression. If allegorically these systems of repression remind us of Communism, Nazism and Fascism, it is important to realize that such systems are still realities in many parts of the world. This emphasizes the symbolism that the works in question bring into discussion.

The use of secret polices in order to support and supervise the party for its leaders ends up originating a system of terror that, in *Animal Farm*, starts with the orders to kill animals contrary to the pigs and culminates in the so-called “vaporizations” of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, summary executions of considered dangerous citizens<sup>9</sup>. Being this terror physical or psychic, Napoleon, by taking the puppies from their mothers to rear them, and using them to spread terror on the ones who dared question his decisions and authority, commits murders in front of the other animals not only to eliminate potentially dangerous enemies of his ideology, but also to show these murders as examples to the animals who might come to develop any kind of criticism on the ruling class, as happened with Winston Smith. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Big Brother does no more than continue this practice, maybe, the strongest characteristic of the totalitarian society, by providing public demonstrations

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<sup>9</sup> In the fashion of the KGB actions in the Soviet Union and Gestapo in the Nazi Germany, many of them which motivated the allegorical readings of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, recent reports state that in Russia, in 2006, around 10 reporters who were political activists and critics of the authority of the government were interned in a madhouse with the diagnosis of being mentally disturbed. A noticeable case is of the journalist Andrey Novikov, the owner of a newspaper in the city of Rybinsk, in central Russia. His criticism on the Russian policies against Chechenia led him to a madhouse, and his diagnosis states that “It will take the necessary time so that his mental health be completely restored”. (Translation mine). (Newspaper *Jornal do Comércio*, September 5th, 2007).

of executions of war prisoners. However, there is a subtle evolution from the physical terror to an enhancement of the psychic terror, in such a way that one never knew if their actions might be considered offensive or not to the eyes of Big Brother, and the constant fact of people who were seen everyday and suddenly disappeared from sight helped increase this terror and the necessity to abolish any thought that could be considered a threaten to the Party, because the dogs of Napoleon became the Thought Police of Big Brother. In both cases, any sign of treason, or anything that the rulers could consider treason was punished with torture and execution. These are many historical evidences that Communist and Nazi regimes adopted such practices toward the considered “enemies of the State” but the symbols found in *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are much more comprehensive. It suffices to mention the military dictatorships that spread around South America in the 60’s and 70’s, when thousands of people reported having been tortured, and the same rate of people who were blacklisted by these governments have been, up to nowadays, considered disappeared.

The monopoly of technology and education was another reality common to totalitarian states and, consequently, in *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In the first, Napoleon creates a school that is supposed to be attended exclusively by the little pigs, and furthermore, it was a school where he was the teacher, in a clear attempt to impose the ideology of the ruling class on the animals since very early <sup>10</sup>. Although some animals developed a rudimentary capability of reading, and were even triggered to learn more in the first days after the establishment of the revolution, it seems that the hardening of Napoleon’s policies brought together the need to keep the animals the least educated as possible. On the other hand, the pigs could read very well and Napoleon was preparing a new generation of pigs to rule over the farm. Besides, they had the monopoly of the available technology of the farm by having access to some magazines left by Jones, on carpentry, electricity and other useful affairs. So much as the pigs were the only animals who were able to shoot with guns during the fable. These monopolies evolve in Oceania and become more perceptible in their high technology, used to the advantage of the party, mainly by the monitoring

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<sup>10</sup> This symbol is very comprehensive. Something similar has been happening in Venezuela, where the president wants to establish syllabuses that match the “Bolivarian ideology”. However, this has been happening in many countries, including in Brazil during dictatorial times, when there was the enhancement of the use of symbols of the country in schools.

of all citizens through the telescreens <sup>11</sup>, and nothing is mentioned in this science fiction about the education of the proles, the greatest percentage of Oceania, (85%) besides that every time they were focused on the plot, they look ignorant and marginalized, what fitted well to the goals of the party: the more ignorant, the easier to manipulate, and the proles did not seem to be able to perceive this, expressing even a kind of primitive patriotism that kept them indifferent to the situation. This monopoly on technology and education is enhanced by the central control of the economy, that simply passes from the hands (paws?) of Napoleon, who by himself decided what to do with all the wealth of the farm to the (fictitious?) hands of Big Brother, who more and more invested on the maintenance of their own ideology by spying on people's lives and making constant wars.

Another monopoly was of all means of effective mass communication, which is another totalitarian characteristic that Napoleon resorted to keep himself in power. The news about the battles, strange changes of the seven commandments of Animalism and working orders were spread mainly through the pig Squealer, who was able to make those news seem to be convincing and favorable to Napoleon, since the moment Snowball became a renegade up to the moment when the horse Boxer, the most hard-working of the animals, was sold to a glue factory, a fact that was reported as if he had been mercifully sent to an animal clinic. However, Squealer announced the death of Boxer in this way:

"It was the most affecting sight I have ever seen!" said Squealer, lifting his trotter and wiping away a tear. "I was at his bedside at the very last. And at the end, almost too weak to speak, he whispered in my ear that his sole sorrow was to have passed on before the windmill was finished. 'Forward, comrades!' he whispered. 'Forward in the name of the Rebellion. Long live Animal Farm! Long live Comrade Napoleon! Napoleon is always right.' Those were his very last words, comrades." (p. 59)

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the profession of the protagonist is very meaningful. Winston Smith works for the Ministry of Truth, a place responsible for the production

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<sup>11</sup> Another fact that can be raised about the datedness of interpretations that link the espionage on citizens to Communism is that, in a capitalist country as England, there are figures that prove that there is one camera for every 14 people, installed for security reasons. It is said that, on average, the same person may appear 300 times in different cameras a day. (Newspaper *O Sul*, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006). Furthermore, the control on e-mails and espionage on people after 9-11 in the USA was another meaningful fact in terms of how technology can be used to control the actions of the population to monitor undesired attitudes. Similarly, in the months that followed the attacks to the World Trade Center in 2001, the North American government brought into force laws to track the exchange of e-mails and telephone calls of people who could have been considered suspects. Many people had their lives investigated and were called to interrogatories.

of news that should become always favorable to the Party, even if, for this, the elimination of entire issues of books and magazines was necessary, not to mention the montages in pictures, to show that certain people were never seen together<sup>12</sup>. Winston had the option, and his awakening political consciousness shows that it is possible to develop such a consciousness when you know more clearly how reality can be approached from diverse angles by the means of communication. And this capability of interpreting what media broadcasts is what may be the difference from allegorical interpretations of reality, as if everything were already ready to be accepted, and symbolic interpretations of this same reality, when there is the concern to evaluate what a certain news means, at a given place and time<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Even with the little technology available, this montage in pictures was a common practice during the first decades of the Communist Soviet regime in Russia. There is no doubt that this is a point where the allegory of Communism is strong. However, if nowadays, the modern resources to transform pictures have been mainly used for aesthetic reasons, sometimes they are still used for political practices as well. On July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008, newspapers of all the world showed pictures of military tests of missiles in Iran. The picture showed four missiles being launched. However, experts in photography stated that, in fact, one of the missiles had been added on the picture to cover one of the launching bases that had failed. This attitude led the USA to reinforce their military presence in the Middle East. (Newspaper *Zero Hora*, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

<sup>13</sup> The popular support for a war on Afghanistan in the following weeks after 9-11 got to numbers superior to 90%. On the same day of the terrorist attack, High-ranked American militaries went to American TV channels to announce the number of casualties (around 3.000) was the same number of casualties in the Japanese attack to Pearl Harbour, which motivated the USA to enter the II World War. It is important to remember that the first number pointed to 30.000 casualties, and that there were menaces of bombs in the Whitehouse and that there were shopping malls and supermarkets on fire around the country, news that, being true or not, increased the dramatic sensation of chaos that the destruction of the towers had already caused. About media covering right after 9-11, Fredric Jameson called it a “nauseating media reception, whose cheap pathos seemed unconsciously dictated by a White House intent on smothering the situation in sentiment in order to demonstrate the indemonstrable: namely, that “Americans are united as never before since Pearl Harbor. I suppose this means that they are united by the fear of saying anything that contradicts this completely spurious media consensus”. (Available at: <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v23/n20/letters.html>) On September 2002, Susan Sontag writes an article entitled “Real Battles and Empty Metaphors”, reminded that the North American anti-terror war on Afghanistan which was going on was “a phantom war and therefore in need of an anniversary”. Sontag concludes with a hard criticism on the USA writing that “there are no endless wars; but there are declarations of the extension of power by a state that believes it cannot be challenged”. (Available at: <http://humanities.psydeshow.org/political/sontag-2.htm>). It reminds the wars of the Oceania of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* against Eurasia and Eastasia, always colorfully brought up by media and, even so, always suspect of being real wars. In the article *L'ésprit du terrorisme* (The spirit of terrorism, 2002) translated by Dr Rachel Bloul, Jean Baudrillard writes, about the sense of uncertainty of whom really is the enemy to be fought: “the first war ended European supremacy and the colonial era. The second ended Nazism. The third, which did happen, as a dissuasive Cold War, ended Communism. From one war to the other, one went further each time toward a unique world order. Today the latter, virtually accomplished, is confronted by antagonistic forces, diffused in the very heart of the global, in all its actual convulsions. Fractal war in which all cells, all singularities revolt as antibodies do. It is a conflict so unfathomable that, from time to time, one must preserve the idea of war through spectacular productions such as the Gulf (production) and today Afghanistan's. But the fourth World War is elsewhere. It is that which haunts every global order, every hegemonic domination. (Available at: < <http://cryptome.org/baud-terr.htm>>

With this, I offer another common feature that could be identified in a totalitarian society, one that seems to be more subtle than the ones described above: the manipulation of a dystopian reality through media. I consider this feature a totalitarian one because it is the intromission of the state in things that, ethically, the state should not have access to. Reality may not be another thing than what happens, and the media must bring this information in the most neutral form <sup>14</sup>. In *Animal Farm*, reality seems to be no more than a mental state which can be manipulated by the superiors. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this goes on, where the true facts remain in the shadow of the perceived reality. Much of this manipulation of reality through the control of thoughts is performed by the pigs through songs, as *Beasts of England*, which was the anthem of the revolution, and through the seven commandments of Animalism, that were constantly repeated by the sheep <sup>15</sup>. These commandments finish up being oversimplified to only one, the famous motto “all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others”. This oversimplification justifies the constant secret changes of laws in the farm, because the animals did not seem to be able to assimilate what was happening. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, however, there are no oversimplifications of laws, since that could be more easily perceived in a human society, but there is the constant simplification of language – Newspeak - , since it is through language that thoughts are formed, and the simpler the language was, the simpler the thoughts of the people would be. In

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<sup>14</sup> When this information is not favorable to the government, the most common action is to close this means of communication, as happened in Ecuador in 2007, when president Rafael Correa prohibited the broadcasting of press records not authorized by the government. In the same year, another problem with press took place in Venezuela with the TV channel RCTV, a channel that operated for 53 years, being the oldest and most watched in Venezuela, and in Brazil, where, in 2004, the president Lula announced a project to create the ANCINAV (Agência Nacional de Cinema e Audiovisual), to control the cinematographic and TV works, which could even operate in the edition of the programs and films. The Brazilian magazine *Veja* called this action “the most severe attack to the liberty of press in the country since the military regime (1964 – 1985). (Veja, August 18, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Writing about the way that language can manipulate one’s beliefs, Umberto Eco writes about his childhood in Italy, remembering something that he was said to believe: “Fascism taught me in school that “God hates Englishmen”, because they ate five meals a day and were therefore a bunch of gluttons, inferior to us, Italians, who were lithe and Spartan”. (Available at: <[http://www.themodernword.com/eco/eco\\_writings.html](http://www.themodernword.com/eco/eco_writings.html)>). Furthermore, the psychoanalyst Mario Corso wrote, in an article for the newspaper *Zero Hora* (October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008), that there is a clear impoverishment of language when analyzing the speeches of political candidates. This occurs due to the intention of always saying what is politically correct, instead of saying what they really think. As time goes by, people get convinced that the politically correct is the way that they must think, too. And this repetition of ready sentences is exactly the absence of thought in language. For this reason, Corso states that democratic societies are not immune to the corruption of language, because “the politically correct in politics is not just a way of speaking, but a way of not thinking, generating new



terms of transition from one book to the other, this is also meaningful, because if in *Animal Farm* the pigs had to openly change their maxims to keep their ideology, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the initial principles that ignorance is strength, war is freedom and freedom is slavery do not change, but what changes is the capability of people to interpret this maxim. At this point, dealing with *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as allegories of Communism seems to be rather simplistic, once the action of interpretation of what political rulers say and demand is not on the kind of regime, but so, on political rhetoric, which is much more comprehensive. For this reason, I consider the constant changes of laws of *Animal Farm* and the changes in language Newspeak in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* a symbol of political rhetoric that served for obscure ends, causing misunderstandings among the ones who had to submit to these rules and laws <sup>16</sup>.

At this level, as mentioned before, totalitarianism, which got historically linked mainly to Nazi and Communist policies, seems to have gone beyond and spread its tentacles, taking place in any political regime through attitudes that appeal to totalitarian practices, including Democracies, exactly through the same apparatus of propaganda of certain ideologies. The maintenance of the pig's ideology in *Animal Farm* was possible not only because of repression, but also because of propaganda on the actions of Napoleon, that could be great failures, but were always optimized and approached as marvelous initiatives, to an extent that made the animals sure that they were being well treated. As Boxer always repeated "Napoleon is always right" (p. 34). This evolves to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in a magnified way, with the publications of endless numbers of production of material and constant reduction and increasing of food <sup>17</sup>, confusing the population, who got to the point of not even knowing against which country Oceania was in war. These practices, far from being exclusively allegorical references to past historical moments, are symbols of many

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forms of *Newspeak*. (Translation mine).

<sup>16</sup> A local example of use of rhetoric that may cause misunderstandings is the Brazilian law 9311, of October 24, 1996, which institutes the CPMF, a tax whose funds should go integrally to Health, according to its 18<sup>th</sup> article. However, according to a survey done by fiscal auditors of the Federal Revenue Secretariat, almost 20% of the total amount of this tax is not applied on health or in social programs. Since its enforcement, in 1997 up to 1996, this percentage corresponds to 33 billion Reais. At the time of this writing, the CPMF was extinguished, in spite of the governmental attempts to bring it back.

<sup>17</sup> This technique of administration is already mentioned by Machiavel's *The Prince*: When you have to do the evil, do it at once. The good, you do it slowly.

present political attitudes <sup>18</sup>.

The revolution of *Animal Farm* starts with a dream of Old Major, the utopia of a farm without human beings to exploit the animals. With the rebellion and the victory in the battle of Cowshed, a first sight at the former Manor Farm would give the impression that the utopian state could really be reached. Under the seven commandments of Animalism, the animals felt that they had the same rights and that human comforts ought to be avoided. However, since the beginning, it is possible to see that “the pigs did not actually work, but directed and supervised the others”. (p. 22). With this, there is, in *Animal Farm*, the first moment when there seems to be something wrong in the attitude of the pigs: it is in the milk episode, when the cows ask to be milked and Napoleon presents himself to milk them, while the other animals should work in the harvest, “and when they came back in the evening it was noticed that the milk had disappeared”. (p.22).

Whether Napoleon had the intention of getting things on his self-interest, or if the view of so much milk at his disposal corrupted him is what Friedrich calls a “bad man” theory. It is not that Napoleon was bad in his essence, or that he intended to take advantage of his position before the establishment of the revolution. The fact is that the sequence of events corrupts Napoleon, making him guilty for not respecting the equalitarian fundamentals of the revolution, as the taking of the puppies, who return in the future as fierce watch dogs brain-washed by the pigs’ ideology and the sudden attack on his former partner Snowball. However, even at this point, it is not a safe assurance to say that this society is under a totalitarian regime - the primordial propaganda that is overspread among the animals with the song *Beasts of England* and Squealer’s always-favorable-to-Napoleon news, and the monopoly of technology that the pigs have by getting Jones’s magazines about some practical works, *Animal Farm*, can still be seen as an autocracy (see chapter 2). It becomes clearly a totalitarian society when the state, represented by Napoleon, makes the first drop of

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<sup>18</sup> Not just the manipulation, but also the censorship on information may be considered one of the great evils that some societies have to undergo. Some modern known examples are the restriction of the use of the internet in Myanmar and North Korea, considered by the world press as the most censored country in the world. In that country, absolutely all means of media spread are controlled by the government. Turkmenistan, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Eritrea, Cuba, Uzbekistan, Syria and Belarus are also included in the top-ten most censored countries, normally for having the same features: the cult of the image of the ruler, the news on the popular devotion for this ruler and the practically inexistent negative coverage, including the negligence on welfare coverage. Source: < <http://www.cpj.org/censored/index.html>> Another famous case is the censorship of China on some entrances of Google. Entrances like “Tibet”, “Taiwan China”, “equality”, and “democracy China” have been blocked. Source: < <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/12/03/tech/main531567.shtml>>.

blood fall from another animal, in a sequence of executions that include four pigs, not by chance “the same four pigs as had protested when Napoleon abolished the Sunday Meetings”(p. 44), three hens, a goose and three sheep. In the dystopian future of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, we are going to see that the public executions performed in order to “teach” the society are going to become commonplace, with public hangings and the two-minute hate sessions. Approaching these attitudes as totalitarian ones, as they really are, the allegorical reference to the past may serve as a dangerous blindfold for political attitudes of nowadays. Once more, it is in the present time’s symbolism that the force of those executions and general spread of hatred may be more clearly felt by 21<sup>st</sup> century readers <sup>19</sup>.

From then on, the utopia of the new farm starts to ruin. Although the animals used to “work like slaves” (p. 57), they used to keep faith. But when the confusion of laws that seemed to be changed according to the necessity (including the one about one animal killing another animal) grows, faith starts to fade in the same proportion. The two farms that were beside Animal Farm, Foxwood and Pinchfield were sometimes allies, sometimes enemies, but never both at the same time. Who was who depended on the news (true or not) of where the traitor Snowball was. The relations with these two neighbors were very similar to what happens to Eurasia and Eastasia, the two nations which Airstrip One is constantly fighting one or the other, according to the convenience. This is something that brings the strong symbolism of what happens in present world affairs. What defines alliances or rivalries among countries lies, nowadays, much more in the field of economy than in the field of ideology. However, sometimes the identification of enemies or friends is no more than a matter of the moment <sup>20</sup>. The change of the slogan from “death to Frederick”

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<sup>19</sup> The American writer Gore Vidal, writing about the covering of media during 9-11 attacks to the World Trade Center remembers that, along with the frequent repetition of the scenes of destruction, “meanwhile, the media were assigned their familiar task of inciting public opinion against bin Laden, still not the proven mastermind”. (Available at: < <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/EnemyWithin.pdf>>)

<sup>20</sup> Terry Eagleton, writing about the relation between the ill-treatment to Muslim citizens after 9-11 and the continuous claim for freedom that the USA preach, remembers that it is the same country that, among other facts, “massacred Cambodians, financed terrorist thugs like the Contras and embargoed Iraqi children to death”. He calls it a “no conscious hypocrisy”, and believes that, “when the USA wake, they will recognize that the question of who is who one is always dialogical”, complementing that “Most ideology works by a distinction between what one does and what one says one does”. (Available at: < [http://www.lrb.co.uk/v23/n19/milt01\\_.html](http://www.lrb.co.uk/v23/n19/milt01_.html)>). In the same atmosphere of post 9-11, Noam Chomsky writes that the Western vs. Eastern face that the anti-terror war assumed has deep political intentions: it is not that the Arab world hates the USA, but “what they hate is official policies that deny them the freedom to which they too aspire”. (Available at: <http://humanities.psydeshow.org/political/chomsky-4.htm>). Still about the convenience of regarding someone as good or evil, Eduardo Galeano refers to

to “death to Pilkington” (p.50) is very clarifying in this sense, since it is the same that is going to happen with Eurasia and Eastasia. This constant state of a possible attack, be it from Jones or from the other farms kept the animals in an even warring alert, something that is going to become common in the atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

At this moment, for example, in 1984 (if it was 1984), Oceania was at war with Eurasia and in alliance with Eastasia. In no public or private utterance was it ever admitted that the three powers had at any time been grouped along different lines. Actually, as Winston well knew, it was only four years since Oceania had been at war with Eastasia and in alliance with Eurasia. But that was merely a piece of furtive knowledge which he happened to possess because his memory was not satisfactorily under control. Officially the change of partners had never happened. Oceania was at war with Eurasia: therefore Oceania had always been at war with Eurasia. The enemy of the moment always represented absolute evil, and it followed that any past or future agreement with him was impossible. (p. 762)

Even so, the animals wanted to believe that all the setbacks were responsibility of the renegade pig Snowball. Not even the great mistake that Napoleon made, by selling timber from Animal Farm to Frederick and accepting forged bank-notes seemed to be a good reason to hate Napoleon. The risk of being involved in capitalist affairs was a hard lesson that the animals had to learn, and that would be one of the most hated things in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, at least according to the Party’s propaganda. However, Napoleon dealt well with that public scandal of wasting the funds of the farm, making the situation favorable to him, because, shortly after that, the attack suffered from Foxwood, and the consequent destruction of the windmill was transformed into a victory in the rhetoric of Squealer. The spokesman for the government promised that they would build six windmills “if they felt like”. (p. 52)<sup>21</sup>. With the attack, “the unfortunate affair of the bank-notes was forgotten”, in a strategy of news substitution that made the animal society forget the government

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the German scientist Werner von Braun, who “was evil (in the eyes of the USA) when he invented the V-2 bombers that Hitler used against London, but became good when he used his talents in the service of the US”. (Available at: <http://www.zmag.org/galeanocalam.htm>>). It is needless to remember that Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein have already been North American allies.

<sup>21</sup> Symbolically, this beckons to the attacks of 9-11 to the Twin Towers, that, shortly after their fallings, were promised to be rebuilt, but, this time, much bigger and more impressive, in an attempt to show that the land had not succumbed and was strong enough to overcome the disaster. Nowadays, at the place of World Trade Center, there is a memorial for the victims of the attacks, but there is a project called Project Rebirth which is planning the construction of the Freedom Tower. However, after successive revisions, this building is going to be lower than the Twin Towers, with 76 floors, instead of the 110 of the former one.

mistakes and admire Napoleon even more, by giving credibility to the thesis that the battle had been a victory for the Farm, and not a tragedy that cost the lives of animals and ruined two years of hard work, with the destruction of the windmill.

However, even to this point, the years passed, the routine took control and the animals did not complain, although they had a feeling that something seemed to be wrong. They could not remember if life was better or worse before the revolution. This is very relevant: the lack of a political past, the lack of involvement with the power and the absent sense of individuality was determinant to the fate of the animals. Nevertheless, the doctrine of the pig's ideology "four legs good, two legs bad" was deeply rooted in their hearts and minds, but seeing a pig walking on his hind legs" (p. 62), and the new doctrine that claimed "four legs good, two legs better" may have been the final hit on the dream of Old Major. This is so true that all the symbols of the revolution are abolished, as the green flag and the song, in an attempt to avoid the birth of any kind of culture, that could serve as a basis for the awakening of a political consciousness. The animals witness the moment when, although distortedly, the pig is not a pig anymore: it is a being getting into a metamorphosis from an animal condition to a human condition, becoming a rational and political being, that may still take advantage of the power on his self-interest.

The new and unique commandment of "All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others", creates the law that proclaims the race of pigs the superior race <sup>22</sup>. The birth of thirty-one sows motivated the construction of a schoolroom, where Napoleon would teach. Symbolically, it is from this privileged class, from the pigs, that Winston Smith derives. He was somebody who was taught to follow all the prerogatives of the ruling party (symbolically, his past of irrational political being), but who was also able to reflect upon the results of those prerogatives on the life of people (developing a rational political awareness). This is something that Orwell had already called the attention in previous books: the basis of a rational political and stable society should join the instinct of survival of the low-classes with the high education and good manners of the middle-class. This means that the need for liberty to which the human being aspires is connected to his

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<sup>22</sup> As the Nazism preached concerning the Arian race. For the Nazi, all peoples considered white, like Jews, Blacks, Asians and Arabs should be treated as inferior races. Nowadays, there are many controversies about the term "white". An example is the United States, that do not consider Latin people as "White", but as "Latin".

capacity to think about his own present reality.

As mentioned before, it is possible to understand that the race of pigs of *Animal Farm* becomes the Inner Party of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. On the very first pages of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, right after the sentence “Big Brother is watching you”, the voice that comes from the telescreens is mentioning figures about the production of *pig-iron*. Of course that it means no more than raw iron, but, instead of using the expression “raw iron”, it was preferred to use the one that mentions the name of the ruling class of *Animal Farm*, and more, relating it to the propaganda of the party. Besides, “swine” is the word that the character Julia uses to refer to the Inner Party, first on page 813, saying that “there’s always the chance of one of those *swine* recognize your voice” and on page 817, when Winston asks Julia if she had had secret affairs with members of the party. “Not with those *swine*, no”. was the answer. On page, 841, once more the word “swine” is referred to, when Winston is telling Julia about the way that he caused harm to his mother and sister by not leaving any chocolate to them. Julia says: “I expect you were a beastly *swine* in those days’ she said indistinctively. All children are *swine*”. This last statement can be understood mainly in two ways, the first, as if the children are usually just worried about their own feelings and needs, instinctively, like animals. The second, it can be a reference to the already mentioned “pigs” of the party, once that saying that all children are swine matches the part where children are leaving school as if they were marching, being described as the most effective agents of the party (p. 822). However, the connection of Winston to a “swine” when he was a child matches the times of *Animal Farm*, when Winston was still metaphorically another pig that acted according to the rules of Napoleon. This also has a connection with a passage from the book *Coming Up for Air*, when schoolchildren march on the street in an array wearing t-shirts that claim for the readiness of the war. Still about the relation between mothers and children, a clear transition from *Animal Farm* to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the “sacrifice of mothers”. In the farm, the animals could freely procreate and chickens were encouraged to lay eggs, however, it is necessary to remember what happened with the puppies that were taken from their mothers: they became the police of Napoleon. In the case of the eggs, they were sold, and this fact causes the unique rebellion against Napoleon: the chicken decided to break their own eggs instead of seeing their “children” being sold. In a desperate attempt to save themselves, they flew to the highest woods of the barn, and could not go down because the dogs would kill

them for disobedience, so they starved to death<sup>23</sup>. This maternal instinct evolves in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the character of the mother of Winston, who practically abandons herself and the little baby-daughter to help Winston survive, because, although she had tried hard to keep both children alive, the food was so little that she knew that only one could survive. She chose the son, who, at his childhood, was symbolically already under the ideology of the pigs.

The revolution of *Animal Farm* establishes a kind of society that, in a first moment avoids at any cost the involvement of the animals with human affairs, and it includes the use of money. However, as already mentioned, Napoleon gets involved with the sale of timber, and despite being cheated in his adventures in the capitalist world, he goes on, although secretly, buying loads of whiskey for him and for the privileged class of the pigs. Thus, capitalism is a form of social organization that the animals of the farm are taught to avoid, but that the rulers take self-advantage. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it seems that the Inner Party abominates any kind of connection with capitalism as well, but a closer look is going to show that, in the same way of the pigs, the members of the Inner Party may also have secret affairs with merchandise that the Outer party and the proles are forbidden to have. A good example is on page 826, in one of the secret meetings of Julia and Winston:

She was carrying a tool-bag of coarse brown canvas, such as he had sometimes seen her carrying to and fro at the Ministry. He started forward to take her in his arms, but she disengaged herself rather hurriedly, partly because she was still holding the tool-bag. 'Half a second,' she said. 'Just let me show you what I've brought. Did you bring some of that filthy Victory Coffee? I thought you would. You can chuck it away again, because we shan't be needing it. Look here.' She fell on her knees, threw open the bag, and tumbled out some spanners and a screwdriver that filled the top part of it. Underneath were a number of neat paper packets. The first packet that she passed to Winston had a strange and yet vaguely familiar feeling. It was filled with some kind of heavy, sand-like stuff which yielded wherever you touched it. 'It isn't sugar?' he said. 'Real sugar. Not saccharine, sugar. And here's a loaf of bread proper white bread, not our bloody stuff - and a little pot of jam. And here's a tin of milk - but look! This is the one I'm really proud of. I had to wrap

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<sup>23</sup> A fact that, to a certain extent, reminds us of the *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*, a movement of mothers in Argentina, created in 1977 and composed by mothers who have joined in front of the Casa Rosada and protested against the vanishing of their children during the dictatorial times between 1976 and 1983. Their final annual march happened in 2006, but the Thursday meetings in the square will go on. Another reference of the extreme maternal protection may be found in the book *Beloved*, by Tony Morrison, where Sethe, a slave, prefers to kill her baby daughter so as not to see her become a slave as the mother was.

a bit of sacking round it, because-'But she did not need to tell him why she had wrapped it up. The smell was already filling the room, a rich hot smell which seemed like an emanation from his early childhood, but which one did occasionally meet with even now, blowing down a passage-way before a door slammed, or diffusing itself mysteriously in a crowded street, sniffed for an instant and then lost again.

'It's coffee,' he murmured, 'real coffee.'

'It's Inner Party coffee. There's a whole kilo here, she said. 'How did you manage to get hold of all these things?'

'It's all Inner Party stuff. There's nothing those *swine* don't have, nothing. But of course waiters and servants

and people pinch things, and - look, I got a little packet of tea as well.'

Winston had squatted down beside her. He tore open a corner of the packet.

'It's real tea. Not blackberry leaves.' (pp. 826 – 827)

The sensations that Winston felt by smelling trivial things such as coffee and jam, common tastes which were linked to his childhood, may be the call of nature to what the human being is in his inside, a return to the mixture of instinct and rationality peculiar to human nature. In other words, Winston would remember his childhood as a young pig, with no bonds with party ideologies nor social concepts. In addition to that, the development of his sexual instinct, is another mark of this recalling of the past. The avoidance of sex was described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a form of transferring the energy spent on sexual pulsing to the hatred, and the secret meetings with Julia collaborate both to make him rediscover his symbolic animal past (the pig) and the rational awakening present (the human being), because then, Winston had something that could make his life worth living: Julia (the satisfaction of instinct) and the hope in the Brotherhood (the complement of his rational human nature). For this, Winston and Julia first met in the woods (nature), but soon, decided to rent a room in the city, in an attempt to demonstrate that their humanity was evolving: to have meetings in a room, as average human beings would normally have.

About this room, the sentence "The room was a world, a pocket of the past where extinct animals could walk" (p. 833) may show that the secret room that Winston had rented served also as a metaphor for the mind, impenetrable, where both his instincts of extinct animal could be satisfied (making sex with Julia) and also by being the place where they started reading the book supposedly written by Goldstein, being the room a world apart where his increasing political intellectuality of extinct human being could be exerted. Winston affirmed more than once that the mind was the only thing that really belonged to you. For this reason, the room was a



world for “extinct animals”, from which the human beings evolved. With the paperweight with a coral inside, once more there is the expression of the wish to a past condition of nature, a search for a form of getting back to a world that was apparently covered with a hard surface, but that deep inside, still existed.

Thus, the hope is on the proles. The proles had a culture that they kept, they were still human beings that the Party maintained under control by making them consume culture that prevented them from fully developing their intellectuality and, consequently, not to reflect upon the actions of the party. The proles, which constituted 85% of the whole population of Oceania, were a natural evolution of the excluded animals of *Animal Farm*, with the difference that the proles had already developed their own culture, but could not remember their lives before the revolution. In *Animal Farm*, the donkey Benjamin is a symbol of this memory, he even mentions that for being the oldest of the animals, he has already seen many things that the other animals have not, but, even so, Benjamin does not state that life was better or worse before the revolution, preferring to keep his cynical attitude toward the revolution. About this character, Kubal writes that

Benjamin, the donkey, appears unsettled, for it is he who remembers what conditions were like before and at the beginning of the revolution. The other animals accept the new rule as a matter of course, because they do not know what equality is in the first place and cannot recall another time vividly enough to evaluate their present position. (p. 39)

Benjamin evolves, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, to a character who Winston meets in a pub, an old man that does not have even a name in the novel, to whom the protagonist asks questions about life before the revolution, to what Winston does not get any intelligible answer, once the old man is able to remember no more than isolated facts, but not the way life was without the presence of the party. He was a kind of old Benjamin who was not free from the actions and influence of the Inner Party, who had already suffered a loss of memory caused by the transformation of the reality of the Party. Even so, the proles continued to survive with an inherent sense of morality, with a vague and fragmented memory of the past. Thinking in allegorical terms, a 21<sup>st</sup>. century reader may feel relieved, because if this fragmented memory strictly refers to the past, that does not make much difference. It is by thinking symbolically that we, present readers, revisiting *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* update the symbols that the works present and ratify them as works of

art worth being read with contemporary eyes, discovering that those novels have much to help us analyze the reality of today's world.

### 3.2 The aesthetic importance of the works

The choice of a fable format in *Animal Farm* may be understood as a symbol of the preparation for the scientific fiction horror of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The use of animals is a metaphor of the political man, what is going to finish up in the evolution of the society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This may be understood because the fables normally point out an indefinite past time, while, normally, science fiction points to the future. Fables evoke childhood times, a time of ingenuousness, when adults tell stories which children listen and trust the implicit moral condition without questioning. This way, adult *Animal Farm* readers may activate these same past mechanisms by approaching the text, not to accept any implicit moral, but so, to awake a critical view on the *status quo* of the farm, distinguishing from the animals of the fable. In *Nineteen Eight-Four*, the tactics is different: the tradition of science fiction texts metaphorically points out a future. In this case, an undesirable future of which there is still time to be avoided. It is a conscious warning that appeals to an adult and active reader in order to take initiatives to avoid the establishment of a society, as the one of Oceania, that destroys the hopes and the life of the protagonist of the narrative.

Thus, *Animal Farm* may be understood as a message of something that has already happened, exposing how totalitarian states can come up even when the intentions seem to be good, getting to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as a kind of alert to what can happen if the political man does not develop his own political intellectuality by participating more actively in political affairs, becoming an easy puppet in the hands of the state. This idea corroborates the transition of the analysis from an allegorical criticism to a symbolical perspective of the works. There is no doubt that the links of the works to Communism were undeniable, but that does not mean that the views on them must be frozen in time. *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* will survive in the literary canon, along with many other pieces of Literature, through their aesthetic value, which gives the works opportunities to be re-interpreted through symbolical readings.

Besides, the narrative point of view of the two works is also meaningful. In *Animal Farm*, the narration happens in 3<sup>rd</sup> person. That may mean that none of the animals could be narrators or that their point of view could be important in the plot, since that their political intellect was just being born. Their perspective on what was happening was so null that, if the voice of the book were that of a 1<sup>st</sup>. person narrator, it would probably be an unreliable narrator. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, although being also narrated in 3<sup>rd</sup> person too, the point of view changes to the protagonist Winston, and the plot unfolds around him, because, this time, there is a character who becomes a full political being, lacking him only the liberty that individuals must have to express that, the same liberty lost in *Animal Farm*, but, who is trying to join elements to organize his thoughts and become a political man of his time. The problem is that the Party and its totalitarian oppression are going to annihilate the possibilities of such a full development, and are going to penetrate in Winston's mind in such a way that not even "the little space of your skull" (as Winston referred to his mind) is going to be safe, due to the advanced, practically irreversible point that totalitarianism managed to reach in Oceania. It is not surprising that this double story - that started in a revolution that preached that all individuals were equal and got to the point of stating that some were more equal than others, finishing up in a society where freedom was slavery, ignorance was strength and war was peace. Allegorical Communist readings of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* seemed to be like the narration of *Animal Farm*. Along the years, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, represented by the critics, seemed to become the only voice to be followed. However, the increase of political sense that gave voice to the thoughts of Winston Smith matches the importance of the 21<sup>st</sup> century reader, who is able to create a more comprehensive and independent meaning through his own existence and knowledge, and that must be also considered.

The passage from a fable to science fiction in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also marks the passage from the dream of utopia to the horror of dystopia, and it is important to remember that it is already possible to identify dystopian elements before the transition to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, because still in *Animal Farm* the utopian ideals of the revolution end up being destroyed and practically everything, including the former name of the farm, resume their places. Consequently, the evolution of the plot already starts with this dystopian view of the state, that, this time seems to be enlarged by the narration's point of view, because it is through the

pessimistic view of Winston that the reader explores the reality of Oceania.

Thus, Orwell shows that the justice and liberty that he searched to express along his works is not something that is going to be reached simply by this or that kind of political ideology. Before that, it is just going to happen at the moment when the political man lives in a state where his opinion is respected, but not imposed on others, and that any kind of political ideology can lead to a totalitarian state, in a major or lesser degree. Not just Communism, Nazism or Fascism could lead to totalitarian states, but even Orwell's socialism could lead to it, with the Ingsoc ideology of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a parody of the English Socialism. The second generation of pigs learned from Napoleon how to become a man, but just one of the pigs, Winston, was close to become a political man. He did not succeed because of the lack of liberty of his environment. Thus, Orwell finally shows that as long as society does not have liberty to express their political points of view or, having it, does not fight to improve their conditions as individuals and as society as a whole, the state is going to continue to claim that two plus two makes five, and the transformation of reality is going to prevail. In the same way, as long as readers are not able to produce meaning independently from general criticism, Literature may become a tool of dissemination of distorted ideas or a fetter of conservatism.

## CONCLUSION

Resuming the discussion held in the Introduction to this thesis, according to the German philosopher Hans-Georg GADAMER (1989), Literature is one of the *sciences of the spirit*. In this field, the notion of truth is connected with the discovery and interpretation of possible ways to perceive reality, and not the contemplation of a unique and normative Truth, as often may be the case with the natural sciences. Furthermore, the concept of interpretation, provided by the literary theories that came up, mainly from the 1960`s on, had a deep change, giving the reader the chance to create meaning and amplify his understanding about a determined work of Literature through his own interpretation. Thus, the goal was not to discover the *intention* of the writer in the works anymore (a kind of practice that, for a long time, did no more than fix literary works in the time. Then, the building of sense, that is, what a text *signifies* to a determined reader in a determined time, is provided for a set of conclusions taken under the action of the most diverse aspects that concern the reader, such as his intellectual level or political ideology, for example. It is in the reading of the texts that these values are applied, acquiring different interpretations according to the interpreter's times, settings and ideology. With this, there is the opening of the possibility for an update of the subjects of texts, providing interpretations that do not pursue the "intention of the reader" or the freezing of the works in a determined historical age. There is the search for the symbolical (that which evolves along the time) instead of the allegorical (that which is fixed), through a view that considers the aesthetic value of the works before any other thing.

The works of George Orwell seem to have been over-criticized through allegorical perspectives, since, in general terms, the kind of criticism that has been made on his works, since the end of the 40's, has usually connected Orwell to Socialism and then to Communism. However, with the publication of *Animal Farm*, in 1946, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in 1949, the critical view changed: then these works were considered to be a warning against Communism, and the critics invariably

linked them to the way that the Russian revolution was taking. With this, and along the years, these works became attached to that historical period.

Nevertheless, in our contemporary times, the Communism that rose in the Soviet Union and that spread to Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland and other countries mainly after World War II, and that Orwell met in life, does not exist in the same form anymore. After the symbolic fall of the Wall of Berlin and the fragmentation of the U.S.S.R in the 1980's, Communism does not exist unless in a different rate in Cuba and some other underdeveloped countries. Even in China, that seems to be the most powerful among the Communist countries in the world now, the opening of markets introduced a great parcel of capitalism into their system. Thus, if new perspectives on the literary works are not done, such works run the hazard of an endless sense of being dated, what may condemn both, works and author, to obsolescence and oblivion. Many times, it is not the literary object itself that has become surpassed, but so, the critical focus that has been provided, causing a certain conditioning to find in these objects always the same settings and themes.

If Terry Eagleton (1996) once asked about the finality of literary theory, in a world filled with much more urgent problems to be solved, he claimed for the bringing of politics to the discussion, since theories tend to be ideological. For this reason, this bringing of politics into the question should contemplate not just the discourse itself, but also the effects of this discourse. However, in the preface of his *Illusions of Postmodernism* (1996), this same Terry Eagleton, a renowned Marxist critic, wrote about the need of honesty and sense of contemporariness in this kind of approach:

Throughout this study, I have judged postmodernism from a broadly socialist perspective; but this should not of course be taken to imply that socialism does not have its problems, too. On the contrary, it is now probably more plagued and notional an idea than at any stage in its turbulent career. It would be intellectual dishonesty to pretend that *Marxism is any longer a living political reality*<sup>1</sup>, or that the prospects for socialist change, for the moment at least, are anything but exceedingly remote. (1997, p. ix)

This courage to admit that certain convictions and beliefs, if not put at test regularly may become archaic and no more than a shadow of what they originally were, is the same need that this thesis resorts to. In Literature, if always the same kind of criticism is given on the works, not taking into consideration the constant

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<sup>1</sup> My italics.

changes of concepts that the world has been facing, there is the risk of not recognizing in the literary text its capacity of responding to new facets of reality. Not only Orwell, but also other writers that had been exposed to this sort of ill-treatment, having their works fixed in time with a considered unchangeable thematic become obsolete and forgotten. If the reader is the great producer of meaning (ISER, 1980), literary works must be constantly fed with new contemporary interpretations.

By making use of this liberty in interpretation, moving within the scientific patterns of the sciences of the spirit, the development of knowledge through the interpretation of language as discourse, this thesis proposes a change in the perspective of the analysis of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the transition from a regular allegorical reading to a symbolic re-presentation of the novels, is a necessity in order to provide a reading that appeals to the 21<sup>st</sup> century reader. The change of emphasis from the allegorical into the symbolical meant to unbalance the idea of political evil or politically good, and to concentrate the attention on what is common to both works - totalitarianism and totalitarian attitudes, that may come from any political regime, in any time. In this thesis, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* have been approached through their possible points of connection, demonstrating that these novels can be read as continuation of a single story, which starts in a totalitarian environment where the characters do not have any political participation and finishes in the unique possible outcome of that kind of society - - the establishment of an irreversible barrier to the fulfillment of human expression in Oceania.

Chapter one brought a brief outline of the life and works of Eric Blair, the person, focusing on some decisive moments of his biography that contributed to the birth and development of George Orwell, the author. From Blair's middle-class childhood, he profited a good education taken from the best schools of his time, so as a set of moral values to learn how to get along being the "poorest among the rich ones". From his youth during World War I, Blair developed a kind of balanced patriotism, and this exposition to different points of view and to varied circumstances provided him with a rich material to be worked aesthetically. Eric's traumatic experience as a representative of the British Empire in a colony – India - affected him so deeply that the need to write flourished and made him into a writer who used to focus on the political atmosphere of the settings of his books. The maturing of these political views, allied to a certain disappointment on things that he believed

made of Orwell an author who became famous mainly for his warnings against totalitarian regimes. With this, books as *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* came to be.

Certainly, these pre-textual facts may not serve as a unique basis for analysis. However, the connections of the author's life with the historical context that his books were created cannot be scorned. The common theme of the two works in question – totalitarianism – come from the environment of the post - World War II in Europe. These works were produced in different styles. *Animal Farm* was written in the form of a fable and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the form of a science fiction, the fable connected to the past and the science fiction to the future. Even so, there are strong points of connection between these two forms. The most noticeable is the satirical element, that is the chain to link the totalitarian society of the first book to the totalitarian society of the second. For this reason, Chapter Two brought theoretical bases for the concepts used in this thesis, both literary and political ones. If the literary concepts were necessary to support my interpretative views, the political concepts were brought to clarify the notion of totalitarianism, which is normally connected to Nazi, Fascist and Communist ideologies, but that, in fact, is much more related to attitudes taken than political regimes themselves. Allied to all this, some concepts about utopia and dystopia make part of this chapter, since these concepts were mentioned in the next chapter.

Finally, Chapter Three offers my reading of the works mentioned, as a 21<sup>st</sup> century reader that I am, demonstrating that *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* may be also read through a symbolic perspective, instead of the allegorical one. This symbolic perspective is what may update the critical heritage on the works and, furthermore, serve as a rescue of George Orwell as a canonic writer. Along Chapter Three, several footnotes were used to bring up some contemporary world affairs that prove that *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* have a high aesthetic and artistic value, and are not just political pamphlets. Through the analysis of some elements that exert the same function in their plots and the connections found in both works, there is the sense that we are dealing with a unique story. Beginning with the utopia of *Animal Farm* and finishing with the dystopia of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, there is the complete outline for the desired update: what is seen is not a plain horror view of the future, but so, the unfolding of how the lack of political understanding may cause the coming up of not a declared totalitarian regime. Thus, Orwell gives the reader the



chance to reflect upon the dangers of some totalitarian attitudes on the population, the worst of them being the loss of liberty.

As mentioned before, this chapter had footnotes that brought some present happenings of the world affairs that prove to what extent these works bring diverse elements that are part of our changing modern times. A proof of that is that, from the moment when this thesis began to be produced, many new facts could be mentioned, and some of them became even a little outdated, obliging me to keep in constant attention to the subjects that base my hypothesis. Even some concepts that once seemed to be safe assurances are presently very fluid: one of them is the concept of left-wing. The diversity of so-called Leftist governments is so ample that it is not possible to say that all of them belong absolutely to the same ideology. The same happens with the concept of Western and Eastern countries. The location of the country in the map does not say much about it anymore, and their political behavior is much more hybrid than it once was.

Obviously, this thesis does not aim to comprehend absolutely all connections that the books may have with our contemporary times, but to provide some exemplification as to state that Literature, as well as our times, are endlessly in movement and must be always in phase. Thus, it was demonstrated that the totalitarianism exposed in the works analyzed is not a declared form of administration, but so, a set of attitudes that restrict the liberty of people not only concerning to what they can do, but mainly to what they can think.

The complete works of George Orwell include not only novels, but also journalistic articles and essays. In all of them, there seems to be a search to make justice come up, even when it is against you. Orwell is best remembered as the author of the two works that were analyzed in this thesis, however, his previous works already contained many of the features of these books, such as the political focus without being a pamphleteer, and the concern about the oppressed ones.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in the scene of torture of Winston, O'Brian tells him that the future is in the hands of the party, that all loyalty, all art and all science will be dependent on the party. Then, O'Brian gives Winston an image of the future of what will happen to all the ones who do not follow the prerogatives of the ruling party::

Winston , always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is

helpless. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face - for ever.' (p. 898)

In other words, the search for absolute power, in all levels, is going to turn, more and more, the society into a prey in the hands of the institutions that have the political and informative control in their hands, making reality be what the ones in power want it to be.

With Orwell, Literature finds a way to become a powerful tool to generate reflection upon the status quo, be it political, social or cultural. The value of the works of this author urge to be rescued and, not only the fictional works, but also the essays and journalist articles need to be read more and more and have their criticism updated also, once that this thesis proved that it is possible. These contemporary times and the political, cultural, economic and social courses that the world is following need people who do not simply prefer to hide "inside the whale" (ORWELL, 1940) but so, integral human beings able to express their thoughts and receive impartial information from the media. Otherwise, we will remain forever simple animals in a farm that are constantly manipulated by harmful rulers, unable to have a clear understanding of things. And if that happens, Orwell gave us the warning of what is to come: Oceania, and boots stamping on our faces for ever, limiting our capacity to tell what is right from what is wrong, what is true from what is false. And then, when/if this time comes, maybe, it will be too late to make those boots an object of museum and try to fight for liberty or to have another chance to reach an equitable balance in society.

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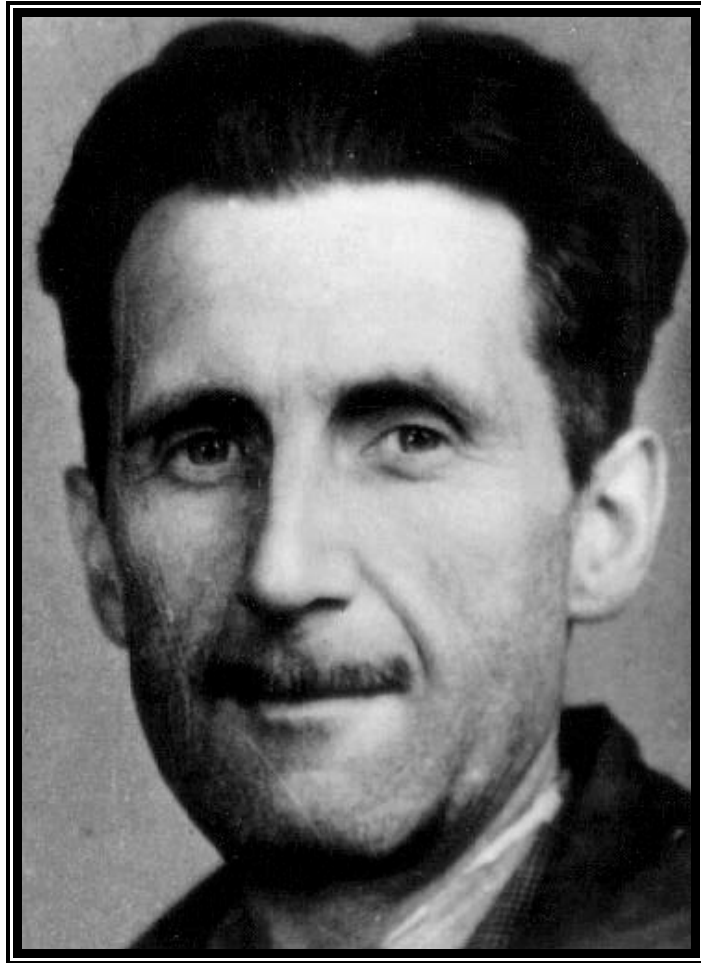
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Front Cover – “to walk a mile.. a soldier’s boots”.

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**APPENDIXES**



George Orwell

Available at: <<http://www.k-1.com/Orwell/site/about/pictures.html?expand=25#image>>  
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Eton School, where Orwell studied

Available at: <[http://www.photoconnect.net/aapic/ThumbPage\\_100379.php](http://www.photoconnect.net/aapic/ThumbPage_100379.php)  
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1923 - Burma Provincial Police Training School, Mandalay (Eric Blair standing third from the left)

Available at: <<http://www.k-1.com/Orwell/site/about/pictures.html?expand=16#image>>  
 Accessed on : November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006



Burma, presently Myanmar.

Available at: <http://www.karaweit--kandawgyi-lake-yangon-burma.jpg>  
Accessed on : November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006



1934 – Leaving the “Down and Out Times”

Available at: <http://www.k1.com/Orwell/site/about/pictures.html?expand=18#image>  
Accessed on : November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006



March 1937 - On the Aragon front at Huesca: Orwell is the tall figure standing in the centre, Eileen Blair is crouching in front of him.

Available at: <<http://www.k-1.com/Orwell/site/about/pictures.html?expand=11#image>>

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1944 – The wife Eileen Blair and the son, Richard

Available at: <<http://www.k-1.com/Orwell/site/about/pictures.html?expand=21#image>>

Accessed on : November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006





1945 - Orwell and his son, Richard

Available at: <<http://www.k-1.com/Orwell/site/about/pictures.html?expand=20#image>>

Accessed on : November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006



Orwell's grave on a graveyard in Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire

Available at: <<http://www.k-1.com/Orwell/site/about/pictures.html?expand=8#image>>

Accessed on : November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006



Poster of the 1999 cinematographic version of *Animal Farm*

Available at: < <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0204824/>>

Accessed on : November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006



Scene of the movie *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, of 1984

Available at: < <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0087803/>>

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