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# The Room above the Junkshop in Nineteen Eighty-Four: an Approach from Non-Places Theory and a Deconstructive Analysis

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En la coexistencia de lugares y de no lugares,  
el mayor obstáculo será siempre político.

(Marc Augé, *Los No Lugares*)

El personaje está en su casa cuando está  
a gusto con la retórica de la gente  
con la que comparte su vida.

(Vincent Descombes, *Proust: philosophie du roman*)

## Introduction

George Orwell is most popularly known because of his novels dealing with the issue of totalitarian governments or states: *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The former, deals with the topic by means of satire; while the latter, deals with it by means of a dystopia. Orwell's dystopia, which is the novel to be studied in this graduate thesis paper, is set in London, in the year 1984. It has been more than twenty-five years from that date, however the threats of a state of that kind and, the worst all, the many reflections of the novel in our society have not disappeared, nor, perhaps, diminished.

In the following work, I will study the issue of places and non-places in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Evidently, it is not my intention to analyse all places and non-places present in this novel but mainly one, which is, from my perspective, the room Winston rents to the fake antique dealer. For this purpose, I will analyse selected passages and episodes from the object novel of this thesis, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, especially those that relate with Winston's experiences in the city and the room.

In *Nineteen...*, the bureaucratic apparatus of the state seems desperate to control everything and everyone; nature and subjects. The lives and spaces are unified under a *telescreen*, none can be practised out of the rule, and none can be an individual propriety. Orwell, then, shows us the extremity of the public, i.e. what is proper to the state, the collective body. Nevertheless, the author manages to light up this dim atmosphere, to give a sense of equilibrium to the reader, by introducing other spaces that go against the rule in the city, such the room above the junkshop, and, besides, by showing up Winston as a human subject -the last?- in comparison with most of the other outer-party members.

The room above the antique shop, in fact, is a milestone that allows Winston to develop new insights into his own situation. Consequently, as the character grows more complex, the novel gains momentum, thus prompting the display of a highly compelling story. Inside the room Winston is able to experience the pleasure of freedom, a notion and feeling that for him is rather new and indefinite due to the ideological deformations. Having these points in mind, this work intends to explore how the room, by switching from non-place to place, and then alternating between them, allows Winston a space of individual consciousness and of actual human socialisation and, therefore, of resistance to the uniformity imposed. Winston acknowledges himself from the beginning as against the party and the Big Brother before he rents the room, but the maturity of his rebellious thoughts and actions can only be seen properly under development while he is experiencing his freedom inside the room, whether alone or in company with Julia.

In order to examine this problem, I apply a conceptual framework based on the category of non-places as opposed to places explained by the French anthropologist and critic Marc Augé in his book *Los No-Lugares: Espacios del Anonimato* (English title: *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*). He coined the concept of non-places in order to refer to places of transience that lack of history, identity and social function. There, the subject is alone, away from the pressure his society exerts on him; there he assesses his reality and individuality. The term non-place, as the author illustrates it, may be a supermarket, or a motorway, or a gas station, or a hotel room.

Besides this, in order to analyse specific themes and concepts related to the issue of the room, I propose the application of a determined critical perspective, the post-structuralist theory of Deconstruction. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida introduced

this term in 1967 in his book *On Grammatology*, though he had introduced part of his ideas before in his work *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences* (1966), and it was a leading part of a new set of thinking that went against the structuralist tradition. A core theme of deconstruction is the critical study of “binary oppositions” through their breakdown into their ideological implications. The proposal of deconstruction implies the analysis of texts by shredding them, stripping off the language and the meanings within the text. Deconstruction seems to be the most useful approach for analysing the *metaphysical presence* of certain ideas that relate to the rented room. In fact, deconstruction could serve as method for analysing the novel as a whole since it is based on the reversal of many fundamental concepts.

These two aspects, non-places theory and deconstructive theory, will be explained in more depth in the next chapter dedicated to the theoretical framework of this work. Also in the following chapter, as a starting point, it will be defined the type of novel we are dealing with, i.e. a dystopia. It is important to determine what involves saying that a work is a dystopia, what differences it bears in regard to utopia, since it will give a certain previous idea of the environment, the atmosphere the story bears and is going to use throughout the plot.

The analysis and interpretation will be covered in the sections following the framework. The analysis starts examining the city, London, and the different images, symbols and ironies relating this general but important topic. This is a relevant basis to understand in a better way the discussion of the next chapter about the room and the issue of places and non-places. After this, as a last part of the analysis and interpretation, there will be a deconstructive analysis of two main oppositions: obedience–disobedience and

abstinence–promiscuity, both in direct relation with the ideas entailed by rented room. Finally, this graduate thesis comes to an end after the conclusion, where I suggest the most important implications of the novel, its main themes and some possible ways to tackle the novel.



## **Theoretical Framework**

### Dystopia: A Utopia that is not an Eutopia

The concept of dystopia is strongly rooted in the idea of utopia, which is older and, as it will be explained soon, wider. Their relation is widely known, usually understood as counterparts. However, this view is too simplistic and short in specificity. In the introduction of *The Utopia Reader*, an anthology of excerpts from the most influential books of this kind, the editors state, “as a literary genre, utopia refers to works that describe an imaginary society in some detail.” (Claeys and Sargent 1) This definition of utopia as literary genre gives some lights about what kind of relation exists between utopia and dystopia. It tells us that latter is part of the utopia genre, but it does not show them as counterparts of a main idea. Actually, in order to show the complexity of the term and the genre, the introduction of *The Utopia...* goes further and provides us a very interesting classification from which I have selected the most relevant for my purpose:

*“Utopianism –social dreaming*

*Utopia –a nonexistent society described in detail and normally located in time and space*

*Eutopia or positive utopia –a utopia that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which the reader lived*

Dystopia or negative utopia –a utopia that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which the reader lived

Utopian satire –a utopia that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a criticism of the existing society

Anti-utopia –a utopia that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a criticism of utopianism or of some particular eutopia”

(Claeys and Sargent 1-2)

This classification serves as an appropriate guide to orient our conceptualisation of the novel. Thus, following this categorisation, we must say that, firstly, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is part of an ancient cultural and literary tradition of *utopianism*. Secondly, our novel is inherently a *utopia* since it refers to a society that is not our actual one, in spite the fact their similarities. Thirdly, apart from the previous formalisms, the novel is both a *dystopia* and a *utopian satire*, idea that can be supported by Orwell’s reflections on his novel<sup>1</sup>. Lastly, the novel works also as an *anti-utopia*, since it is widely accepted that *Nineteen...* is a direct criticism not only to Stalinist socialism but to every totalitarian ideology known –or to be known.

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<sup>1</sup> “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 of course for the fact that the book is a satire) that something resembling it could arrive. I believe also that totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences.” [Part of a letter, since lost, written on 16 June 1949 by Orwell to Francis A. Henson of the United Automobile Workers answers questions about *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Excerpts from the letter were published in *Life*, 25 July 1949, and the *New York Times Book Review*, 31 July 1949.] (*Bloom’s Guides: 1984*, Bloom, Harold, Ed., Chelsea House, New York, 2004)

I must say that, at first sight, the categorisation given above, apart from resulting very interesting and useful, was somewhat unusual since it considered details I had not seen in other definitions of the concept. In this sense, the distinction between utopia and eutopia forced in me a change in the paradigm I had about utopia. Thus, I had to apply this distinction in other conceptualisations I had found about the topic, depending if they were referring to the genre or to the positive imagined ideal.

The relation between dystopias and eutopias, then, do not only lie in their lineage in common to the concept of utopia. Another connection to take into account is that,

*“Like utopias [for us, eutopias], dystopias are didactic fictional narratives that describe particular, alternative societies and usually take the form of realistic novels set in a place distant in time or space from the author’s own society. In the case of dystopias, the intent is to shock and warn the reader against what the author considers to be undesirable future trends.”* (Gossin 115)

This pedagogical feature attributed to eutopias and dystopias is important because not only it may reflect the possible intentions of writers –which is always debatable- but also it may reflect their motivations. Dystopias in general *“expresses a fear of scientific principles being applied to social organizations and expectations. They decry behaviorism and other forms of scientific conditioning. They object to humans being treated as cogs in a social machinery.”* (Gossin 115) This becomes evident if we consider the fact that dystopias appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century, after and during great scientific and

technical advances but, above all, after a war that changed the face of warfare, and during new and increasing social problems.

Nevertheless, we must be careful about this: usually, what was seen as an eutopia at a certain time, it may be seen as a dystopia in the present; however, not because of this it must be defined as a dystopia. The following quote is an example of this:

*“...the very first ideal of commonwealth was devised by Plato. In his republic, Plato depicted a state in which rulers are philosophers, goods and woman are communally owned, slavery is taken for granted, and the breeding of children is controlled on eugenic lines. There was not to be art or drama and next to no poetry. It was a Spartan utopia; indeed, the prototype of the totalitarian state.” (Cuddon 958)*

Another example:

*“More’s welfare state was also communistic. No private property, free universal education, six hours ‘ manual work a day, utility clothes, free medical treatment, meals in civic restaurants... the penal code, especially in sexual matters, was harsh; adultery led to slavery; repeated offences to death.” (Cuddon 958)*

Taking these, among others, examples into consideration, it can be conclude, first, that dystopia is a rather new thematic trend in writing utopias, since it emerged in the last past century, and it must not be confused with previous eutopias that may turn out “dystopian” for us now. A second conclusion, and in relation with the latter, is that eutopias

and dystopias –as well as the other varieties of utopia- are dependent on the culture in which they are conceived, they reflect the ideals and weaknesses of their society and imagine them whether solved or worsened.

Nineteen Eighty-Four, thus, may be defined as a dystopia, with some tones of irony and satire, that works at the same time as an anti-utopia since it condemns openly the totalitarian ideals or projects posing them as gross distortions that only bastardised humanity. Those ideologies that based their projects in inflexible and harsh aims and methods marked Orwell's time. In fact, we could say that he conceived his imagined totalitarian Superstate "eugenically," i.e. he mixed the "best" characteristics of the totalitarian ideologies and governments he witnessed and produced an "ideal" totalitarian system.

Among this totalitarian "gene pool," one of the most noticeable and reflecting feature of this kind of system is the transvaluation of the private as counterpart of the public. A Nazi minister of work, Robert Ley, claimed once that in their *Reich* only dreams will be private (Jackson). Orwell, though, goes beyond this "limit" and imagines the manipulation of dreams. Moreover, the destruction and re-formation of the language were the methods and aims, at the same time, that Winston considered the foundation stone of any totalitarian project. In the Soviet Union, in the Nazi Germany language, its lexicon was intervened, and consequently thought was corrupted to such extent that even those who intellectually opposed those systems sounded and somehow thought like an adherent.

Nonetheless, our society has not overcome yet the dangers Orwell posed in his novel, thence it has not lost its force as a dystopia likely to happen. The fictional world

created by Orwell has broken the boundaries between literature and society, inasmuch as it has kept as a plausible the threat of the unlimited power concentrated in one body, namely, the State, which nowadays might transmute into the global corporation.

### Place, non-place and space.

The imagined loss of sane individualism and the distortion of thought through language are the main destroyers of non-places in the novel. On the one hand, the eradication of private spaces and the Machiavellian manipulation of the public generate places that inevitably carry the identity of the body politic as group. On the other hand, the deep intervention on language seeks to shape thought and (un)consciousness in order to avoid interpretations and therefore to rule out intellectual places or individual points of view. These are what make possible to establish a connection between Orwell's novel and Augé's anthropological nomenclature of places, non-places, and spaces. In this regard it is of the utmost importance to define this set of concepts well and clearly for they could be applied without inconvenience.

Marc Augé organises his set first by defining place. As in many other binary opposites, it is enough to define one in order to grasp the idea of both: "*Si un lugar puede definirse como lugar de identidad, relacional e histórico, un espacio que no puede definirse ni como espacio de identidad ni como relacional ni como histórico, definirá un no lugar.*" (83) Then, this means that a non-place cannot bear any socio-cultural significance for the subject, i.e. they must not "activate" in the subject any remembrance about or any inner connection with that space in his memory.

In spite of their differences, places and non-places have similar natures, similar behaviours:

*“...un no lugar existe igual que un lugar: no existe nunca bajo una forma pura [...] El lugar y el no lugar son más bien polaridades falsas: el primero no queda nunca completamente borrado y el segundo no se cumple nunca totalmente: son palimpsestos donde se reinscribe sin cesar el juego intrincado de la identidad y de la relación.” (Augé 84)*

This tells us that places and non-places are not absolute categories, and that in fact it would be possible to find places switching to non-places and vice versa. This is highly importance for analysing the room since it solves the issue of the ambivalence of the room in this sense.

The concept of space is the element that connects the other two concepts:

*“La distinción entre lugares y no lugares pasa por la oposición del lugar con el espacio. [...]El espacio, para él (Michel de Certeau), es un "lugar practicado", "un cruce de elementos en movimiento": los caminantes son los que transforman en espacio la calle geoméricamente definida como lugar por el urbanismo. [...] el lugar como conjunto de elementos que coexisten en un cierto orden y el espacio como animación de estos lugares por el desplazamiento de un elemento móvil” (Augé 83)*

A practised place or non-place is a space. Both place and non-place when articulated by the subject become space. The practise of them is based in the movement of the subjects, but the sense given to that makes the difference between place and non-place and determines

whether it is one or another. Thus, “*el movimiento que "desplaza las líneas" y atraviesa los lugares es, por definición, creador de itinerarios, es decir, de palabras y de no lugares.*” (Augé 90) The “movement that displaces the lines and goes through the lines” is the movement of a traveller, whose space is, for Augé, “the archetype of the non-place.” However, this is not any traveller but only

*“entre los "viajeros" solitarios del siglo pasado, no los viajeros profesionales o los eruditos sino los viajeros de humor, de pretexto o de ocasión, donde encontremos la evocación profética de espacios donde ni la identidad ni la relación ni la historia tienen verdadero sentido, donde la soledad se experimenta como exceso o vaciamiento de la individualidad [...]” (92)*

At the non-places, what it is important is not the identity, nor the relation, nor the history, but only individuality, loneliness in its good sense, where the individual can experience a self-conscience. On the contrary, places carry a heavier content, a compound that is significant for more than one individual; and more than one subject establishes a society. Thus:

*El lugar, tal como se lo define aquí... es el lugar del sentido inscripto y simbolizado, el lugar antropológico. [...] incluimos en la noción de lugar antropológico la posibilidad de los recorridos que en él se efectúan, los discursos que allí se sostienen y el lenguaje que lo caracteriza. (Augé 86-87)*

Then, “The anthropological place” is the place shared by the group, it contains the group and the group contains it in their memory. Thus, the individual finds the group reflected in



the place; they find their identity, their relation, and their history there. The non-place does not create any of those but only “loneliness and sameness.”

Augé claims that supermodernity is the greatest cause of non-places: “*La sobremodernidad (que procede simultáneamente de las tres figuras del exceso que son la superabundancia de acontecimientos, la superabundancia espacial y la individualización de las referencias) encuentra naturalmente su expresión completa en los no lugares.*”

(112) Supermodernity opposes to modernity. Modernity mixes the spaces in one singularity; supermodernity cannot do this. Non-places of supermodernity “*no operan ninguna síntesis, no integran nada, autorizan solamente el tiempo de un recorrido, la coexistencia de individualidades distintas.*” (114) Supermodern non-places, therefore, become uncomfortable spaces for those who seek the totalisation of spaces and individualities: “*aquellos que reivindicán nuevas socializaciones y nuevas localizaciones no pueden ver en ello [the non-places] sino la negación de su ideal.*” He concludes from this that: “*El no lugar es lo contrario de la utopía: existe y no postula ninguna sociedad orgánica.*” (114)

From this point, he reaches the idea, later on, that:

“*El Imperio, pensado como universo "totalitario", no es nunca un no lugar. La imagen que está asociada con él es, al contrario, la de un universo donde nadie está nunca solo, donde todo el mundo está bajo control inmediato, donde el pasado como tal es rechazado (se ha hecho tabla rasa con él). El Imperio, como el mundo de Orwell o el de Kafka, no es premoderno sino "paramoderno..." (Augé 117)*

By para-modern, I understand that it is part of the modern but outside, beyond the modern, however working at the same time. Modernism gestated Totalitarian empires; however, the latter never replaced the former. Later on, Augé continues:

“[The empire] *Insensible a la aceleración de la historia, la reescribe; preserva a los que dependen de su jurisdicción del sentimiento de achicamiento del espacio limitando la libertad de circulación y de información; por eso mismo (y como se ve en sus reacciones crispadas ante las iniciativas tornadas en favor del respeto a los derechos del hombre), separa de su ideología la referencia individual y asume el riesgo de proyectarla al exterior de sus fronteras, como figura cambiante del mal absoluto o de la seducción suprema.*” (117)

Individuality, subjectivity is the basic reflection of the rise of non-places. Any ideology or political project based on the centralisation of events, spaces, and individualities will be at war with a reality where non-places abound. This closing paragraph of his book confirms the difficulty of finding places in the novel studied here. However, this difficulty may not necessarily become impossibility.

### Deconstruction

Imagining a world apart from the actual one involves an ideological commitment of the author in the creation of it. In the case of our dystopian novel, Orwell expresses his beliefs in the form of criticisms against some ideals somewhat accepted at his time, and as well as nowadays. Nonetheless, his novel, as any text, commits itself to a logocentric Western culture, which serves to it as a conceptual repository. That is to say, the novel, in

spite the fact its “author” intention, reflects a superior force, logocentric tradition, which dominates the author’s own ideology or intended meaning, who seems unaware of it.

The philosopher and critic Jacques Derrida supported his perspective based on this relation between culture –Western culture, specifically- and text. This critical perspective he called it Deconstruction. Derrida, proposed his deconstructive theory in his books *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences* (1966) and *Of Grammatology* (1967). Thus, he began a new critical movement, which has been one of the most influential features of post-structuralism. In order to introduce this critical perspective, I would like to cite a definition of the American critic Barbara Johnson about deconstruction that I found in a specialised reference book:

*“Deconstruction is not synonymous with “destruction”, however. It is in fact much closer to the original meaning of the word “analysis” itself, which etymologically means “to undo”... The deconstruction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or arbitrary subversion, but by the careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text itself. If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not the text, but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another. A deconstructive reading is a reading which analyses the specificity of a text’s critical difference from itself.” (Cuddon 210)*

A text was usually thought as bearing one stable meaning, which was decided by an author, an external agent, who “conveyed” a determined message. However, deconstruction claims the independence of the text and the incapacity of the author to control its meaning.

In general, it defines a new way of reading text practice:

*“(La deconstrucción) es una manera de leer que mira dentro de un texto a otro, que incorpora textos en otro texto. La deconstrucción es una propuesta metodológica... que le quita poder al autor para imponer el sentido final de su texto. Implica hasta cierto punto desconectar un texto de su autor, romperlo para revelar sus jerarquías internas y sus presuposiciones que tienen que ver con el impacto o la presencia de otros textos dentro de él.”*

(Larrain 62)

Those *texts* that precede a text and whose author is somewhat unconscious of the effects that such they have on the meaning he wanted to impress on his text. Any text, then, will be under the influence of a past repository of texts that influence its meanings. This influence is based on a logocentric tradition that has configured the meanings in hierarchies.

Logocentrism is the metaphysical thought-system Western culture makes use. As Eagleton explains, Derrida *“labels as ‘metaphysical’ any such thought-system which depends on an unassailable foundation, a first principle or unimpeachable ground upon which a whole hierarchy of meanings may be constructed.”*(132). Thus, within Western culture *“certain meanings are elevated by social ideologies to a privileged position, or made the centres around which other meanings are forced to turn.”* (Eagleton 131) i.e. we base the generation of thought on the establishment of “centres of meaning.” These centres give certain orientation to the structure of meanings and values (logical, axiological, etc.) which is ideologically biased, and, therefore, arbitrary. This happens because people need

to give certain ground to structures, a guaranty of *being as presence* or a *metaphysical presence*.

Deconstruction bases its analysis on the selection of binary oppositions. They form the classical idea of a couple of signs that are directly opposed to each other in meaning or in value. This idea of binary oppositions is proper of structuralism since for this stream words define their value or meaning in contrast with the rest of the system. Binary oppositions is the basis of logocentrism since in such oppositions one term is “better” than the other; one is a positive term and the other is negative.

However, they are not just opposing one another. Western culture is somewhat dependent, addicted to the idea of hierarchy, or centres if we take the term used before. Then, in a pair of terms, let us say, taking the example given by Jonathan Culler, *cause* and *effect*, the hierarchical term is *cause* over *effect* since the first comes before and provokes the *effect*. However, Derrida argues that these hierarchies are inherently violent since hierarchies are not simply given but “taken,” owned unilaterally. As Selden explains, “*Western philosophy has supported this ranking in order to preserve presence*” (Selden, *A Reader’s Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* 86) and, therefore, preserve certain stability. Methodologically speaking, the process of a deconstructive reading, as Selden explains it, “*begins by noting the hierarchy, proceeds to reverse it, and finally resists the assertion of a new hierarchy by displacing the second term from a position of superiority too.*” (Selden, *A Reader’s... 87*)

The first purpose of deconstruction is to reverse the violent hierarchy. This can be made taking into consideration the idea of “supplement.” In a pair of terms such as cause-

effect, the latter is considered the supplement of the first; it is the completion of the pair. Derrida argues that, following the example, the latter term, effect, besides being the supplement, can take the place of cause, since an effect is what provokes the search of a cause. Selden asserts, "*all human activity involves this supplementarity (addition-substitution).*" (Selden, *A Reader's...* 86)

In this sense, it is important to explain another key concept in Derrida's Deconstruction: Difference. In spite the fact that in a binary opposition one sign is the centre or hierarchy of the pair, which is arbitrary and ideological, Derrida understands that signs convey different meanings. Deconstruction, then, criticizes the hierarchy of one term over another; nevertheless, these terms "differ" from one another independently of their violent relation.

## **Analysis and Interpretation**

### The Dystopian London

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, descriptions of the city do not abound, though they give us a profound feeling of sadness and despair. The novel starts giving us an image of what Winston is able to see. Dust and grey are the emblems of the city, they dominate the cityscape; they define London. Dust is practically the same than air in London, making wind anything but something pleasant and covering every surface whether in the city or inside buildings. Almost full of grey, even in sunny spring days, London and everything within it has lost its colour and shine. The only sources of colour in the city, apart from the sunny, blue sky, are the propaganda posters that spread out throughout London expanding the watchful presence of the “*black-mustachio 'd face*” known as the Big Brother.

In a panoramic view of the city, only four buildings could be highlighted due to their size and shape, dominating the landscape. These buildings are the ministerial buildings of the INGSOC: the Ministry of Truth, the Ministry of Peace, the Ministry of Plenty and the Ministry of Love. One of them, the Ministry of Truth, is Winston’s workplace: a white and huge mole of concrete. What may draw the attention of the reader about this particular building is the description that the narrator gives of it:

*“The Ministry of Truth (...) was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, three hundred meters into the air.(...) [it] contained, it was said, three thousand rooms above ground level, and corresponding ramifications below.”*(2)

After reading this, the image a reader may have of this building is one of a tree, a lonely, gigantic, leafy, pine tree, strong and ancient due to its underground “ramifications”, the roots of a living organism that has won its dominant position over the landscape and nature. Besides, the *glittering white* may be read as a symbol for celestial divinity and purity, which, if taken into account, may give an alternative or additional image of the previous description of the building as a temple, one resembling to an Egyptian or, more likely, a Central American pyramid.

Apart from these huge buildings, the rest of London seems to be crumbly, eroded by an everlasting war and shortage of everything. War has been a constant since the Party has taken the control; in fact, peace is just an illusion of the future, and a matter of the past at the same time. In a city with such warring atmosphere it is ironical the fact that many products of the party are preceded by a particular adjective: *Victory*. Some places such as the Victory Square (seemingly, former Trafalgar Square) and the Victory Mansions, the apartment blocks where Winston and the other outer-party members live in, are also part of this fashion. The aims of the party at giving these places and objects this adjective are two in my opinion: first, making the objects and places official and, second, *boosting* people’s morale. Nevertheless, as I have said recently, the use of this word is ironical: they are named as “*Victory*” but they have not won any war yet and, as O’Brian reveals us at the ending chapters, the party do not intends to win it. Besides, the quality of the products (gin, coffee, and cigarettes) and the “*mansions*” is anything but something victorious, it is just the opposite, they are the worst. The narrator illustrate us the astonishingly poor quality of these products in a couple of passages of the novel. Here is a description of the gin and the cigarettes:



*He took down from the shelf a bottle of colourless liquid with a plain white label marked VICTORY GIN. It gave off a sickly, oily smell, as of Chinese rice-spirit. ... The stuff was like nitric acid, and moreover, in swallowing it one had the sensation of being hit on the back of the head with a rubber club. The next moment, however, the burning in his belly died down and the world began to look more cheerful. He took a cigarette from a crumpled packet marked VICTORY CIGARETTES and incautiously held it upright, whereupon the tobacco fell out on to the floor. With the next he was more successful. (8)*

Later on, some pages forward, the narrator says this about the mansions where Winston lived:

*“Victory Mansions were old flats, built in 1930 or thereabouts, and were falling to pieces. The plaster flaked constantly from ceilings and walls, the pipes burst in every hard frost, the roof leaked whenever there was snow, the heating system was usually running at half steam when it was not closed down altogether from motives of economy.” (21)*

This irony of the adjective *victory* gains the strength of a satire when we realise –or just remember- the fact that the British Government used the very same word for naming many civil-defence operations, among other things, within London during the Luftwaffe bombing over London in the Second World War.

The striking similarities we find in *Nineteen...* between its London and the capital city of Britain seem to be supported when the narrator explains the how the world how changed, and it is now distributed; however, not everything seems to have changed:

*Everything had been different then. Even the names of countries, and their shapes on the map, had been different. Airstrip One, for instance, had not been so called in those days: it had been called England or Britain, though London, he felt fairly certain, had always been called London. (30)*

In his attempts for remembering the most possible, Winston recalls that the current Airstrip One was the former England; the world and its distribution have changed abruptly. However, London has always been London, not only as name of a place but also as a place in itself. The narrator is telling us that London has not changed since the Second World War; but at the same time it may mean that the London of the novel is not a totally fictional London but the actual capital city of England, the war-torn London of Orwell. Like a frozen mummy, like Pompeii, London has been perpetuated by its greatest tragedy.

### The Room above the Junkshop

Among all the spaces used by Winston in the city (his flat, his workplace, the streets) the room above the junkshop is the most transcendental for the development of Winston as a resistant member of the party; it is, or will become, his –their- greatest tactic against the party's oppression. The question of how could the room be labelled under the Marc Augé's categorisation of places and non-places is not simple. In order to define this issue, it is important to analyse how the room interacts with Winston, and later decide what kind of "place" this room is.

The first encounter Winston and we have with the room is in the chapter VIII of the first part. There Winston gets lost in the proles' quarter, and by mere "coincidence" arrives to the same shop where he had bought the diary in which he started to write at the

beginning of the story. In this place, after he buys the paperweight, the owner offers to show him other antiques that are placed in another room. The description of this room goes as follows:

*“...a room which did not give on the street but looked out on a cobbled yard and a forest of chimney-pots. Winston noticed that the furniture was still arranged as though the room were meant to be lived in. There was a strip of carpet on the floor, a picture or two on the walls, and a deep, slatternly arm-chair drawn up to the fireplace. An old-fashioned glass clock with a twelve-hour face was ticking away on the mantelpiece. Under the window, and occupying nearly a quarter of the room, was an enormous bed with the mattress still on it.”* (81)

In fact, there were antiques, but Winston did not care about the pieces anymore. The room, its arrangement of the furniture, its air of mystery was more important than the objects isolated. During the episode of presentation of the room, many warnings appear about the dangers it holds within. The reader may become aware of these at many occasions; for instance, Mr. Charrington sings an old tune, which bewitches Winston. Its last stanza was: *“Here comes a candle to light you to bed, here comes a chopper to chop off your head.”* Then, the old man explains: *“It was a kind of a dance.”* The tune from Mr. Charrington may be easily understood as a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. This last part of the tune sounds very frightening despite the fact it was a traditional, childish dance. However, what may reflect a prediction is the description that the shop-owner gives of its moves: he explains, *“They held out their arms for you to pass under, and when they came to “Here comes a chopper to chop off your head” they brought their arms down and caught you.”* (83) Winston and Julia are allowed to “pass,” but suddenly the same who allowed

their passing, Mr. Charrington, catches them. Moreover, the last phrase is quite revealing and sarcastic: the word *arms* here must be understood as “weapons” instead of actual “arms,” referring to the thought police arriving with their arms to arrest them.

Another warning, a bit more disguised this time, appears in the following lines:

*“But he lingered for some minutes more, talking to the old man, whose name, he discovered, was not Weeks--as one might have gathered from the inscription over the shop-front--but Charrington.”*(84)

The name of the shop, Weeks, is perhaps one of the many puns in the novel. The word “week(s)” sounds the same as the word “weak(s)”. The inscription, then, works in a humorous way, as if it were an advert for people like Winston. This is one of the many signals indicating something dark about the junkshop. Somehow, the novel alerts the reader about the dangerous quality of the shop and the room, and obviously of its owner, Mr. Charrington.

Additionally, there may be a much more concealed forewarn. The last name of the junkshop owner, Charrington, has been, from my point of view, carefully chosen. The stem “charring” comes from the verb “to char” which means to burn something to the point that the outside becomes black; the other sense of this verb is to work as a cleaner. These two senses are reconcilable: fire or the act of burning has been seen usually as a way of purging the evils. For instance, puritans used to burn “witches” and sinners, in other words, they were trying to cleanse from their society the behaviours associated to the devil. Therefore, Mr. Charrington may represent that burning and purging force of the party’s Thought Police.

Nevertheless, along this episode, the naivety of Winston becomes evident, despite of his constant feelings of being pursued. After he leaves the shop, he admits his folly but the strong spell of the room blocks his sensibility. The reasons of Winston for renting the room are rather clear: the first reason is the feelings it awakes in him, as the following passage expresses:

*“...the room had awakened in him a sort of nostalgia, a sort of ancestral memory. It seemed to him that he knew exactly what it felt like to sit in a room like this, in an arm-chair beside an open fire with your feet in the fender and a kettle on the hob; utterly alone, utterly secure, with nobody watching you, no voice pursuing you, no sound except the singing of the kettle and the friendly ticking of the clock.”* (82)

The room for him is both a familiar and an exotic place at the same time. It resembles to what he thinks the life in the past was like and at the same time, it is unknown and irresistibly attractive. His increasingly addictive need for revealing the truth from an uncertain past and the fragmented memories of his childhood transform this place into the realization of a myth.

The second reason is the most evident for this is the one that triggers Winston's final decision of renting the room: the love affair with Julia. The possibility of being alone and having sex when desired, but above all to be with the person he wants to be, provides a new stimulus, one much stronger than simply buying antiques. Besides, in terms of the “laws” of the party, having sex for love and/or pleasure was much more penalised than “buying in the free market”, therefore it was more significant as act of disobedience. Later on, I will analyse in more depth these themes of disobedience and sex.

When Winston has rented the room for the first time, he is alone first and starts to remember an episode that had occurred to him a couple of days ago: Julia had told him that she could not be able to meet him the following day in the country. When she told him that, he felt *violently angry* and got very jealous of Julia. He felt the need, then, of a place where “*they could be alone together without feeling the obligation to make love every time they met.*” (Orwell 116) Why does Winston want to look for a different place than the outskirts of London? Perhaps an answer to this is that for Winston the countryside projects the basic instincts of human beings and, therefore, they could only have sex in those encounters there. The room, on the other hand, represents something different for Winston: the establishment of a couple’s own home. In contrast with the country, the room is within the boundaries of the city, therefore within the city boundaries. However, in spite of this, the room is separated from the reality of the city; it re-presents and re-creates a past mode of life, an anachronism. This is because the room holds in it cultural patterns already extinct in Winston’s world. That is why he thinks of the room when he starts analysing his options. It represents for Winston the possibility of a life similar to how, he thinks, it was in the past when there was no INGSOC and no Big Brother.

### *Place or Non-Place*

The room Winston rents is a polyvalent space, i.e. along the whole time Winston rents it and use it, the room acquires different values that make it switch between being a place or a non-place, depending on the perspective we may read it.

A preliminary, first value is that the room is a *place* since it is unified by the telescreen. It was said that the world imagined in the novel would be full of places since it

consisted in a totalitarian empire where the spaces are incorporated to the empire's body under extensive and intensive surveillance. Besides, "*a party member had no spare time and was never alone except in bed*" (70); to do the contrary had a name in Newspeak: *ownlife*, one of the so many crimes related to individual separation from the body called the Party. Examples of these unified spaces abound in *Nineteen Eighty-Four's* London, e.g. the flats of Victory Mansions, Winston's workplace as well as any other workplace, squares, etc. Therefore, non-places and individual life are extrinsic spaces and values, respectively, in the totalised empire of Oceania. Quite on the contrary, we said in the theoretical framework that non-places could only exist in a world like ours, a supermodern society, and not a modern or a paramodern society.

Nonetheless, a second value we may find is based on the fact that the first image we have of the room is one of an individual *non-place*, since Winston reflects there he could feel "*utterly alone,*" rid of the comrades, rid of the party, and, the best of all, rid of Big Brother in the form of a telescreen. This feeling of loneliness and is proper of non-places. The room did not seem to have the typical telescreen to which Winston was accustomed to face; hence, it did not seem to be part of the unified places of the rest of the city. It may be not so surprising, however, to find such places so unwatched, so individual, since we know that the Party let the proles live their lives, as they deem appropriate, in spite the fact that they kept them intellectually, economically and politically controlled.

A third value the room acquires is of a *place* that establishes an identity of tactical resistance for Winston and Julia; therefore, it would be a place since it is a *place of identity*. When Winston rented the room, they were already lovers; therefore, they were criminals, enemies of the State, inherently resistant subjects. Consequently, the room becomes their

hiding place; it conceals their heroic but indirect crimes against the Superstate. This identification, however, is not immediate but it does not take too long too. Besides, it allows, them, especially Winston, to develop or improve their conscience as resistance, which strengthens the effect of O'Brian over Winston.

The fourth value is somewhat related to the previous one. Under this reading, the room becomes a *place* due to Winston and Julia "live" together in the room, establishing a strong relationship between them. Hence, it would be a *place of relation* according to Augé's description. Winston rents the room for this purpose: to be together with Julia "without feeling the obligation to make love every time they met" (116). They have a relationship that goes beyond mere lovers; they are nearer to an engaged or just married couple. Without doubt, such relationship, which involves sharing a determined space, achieves two aims: to identify the place as their space for love and for friendship, both instances of actual personal interrelation, kinds of interrelation forbidden in the rest of places which are unified under the Party.

The fifth value is as a *non-place* where Winston can experiment true individuality, a space to free himself and set his own thoughts and memory loose. *Ownlife* was a kind of life forbidden to party members and it was considered a crime, but as the room works as a hiding place too, it is possible for Winston to experience that life. However, this way of experiencing his self is new for Winston and bewitches him with the possibilities of being free from Party's control and of reconstructing his vague memories from the past.

Somehow, any attempt of analysis of the room as place or non-place seem to become truncated because it comes to our knowledge that the room has always being



watched, even before Winston could rent it, and therefore, it was never a normal room but only a mousetrap. Since it was always under the surveillance of a telescreen, the room never stopped being a unified place of the Superstate. Therefore, even though the experiences Winston along with Julia lived within, the room above the junkshop was only an illusion of a non-place and the illusion of an non-unified place or just, in Augé's words, an anthropological place. In other words, what Marc Augé said about the empires' treatment of spaces is verified by Orwell's novel.

#### A deconstructive analysis: two pairs of opposites

In this last section, I am going to make a reading of some concepts or ideas that are related both to the room and among them aspects of the novel following a deconstructive orientation. The pairs are, first, abstinence-promiscuity and, second, conformism-resistance. These pairs are intimately connected between them since in the novel to be promiscuous is a way of being an outlaw, therefore a way of resistance against the state, at the same way to be celibate, among other things, is to conform to the rules of the party. Moreover, promiscuity is related to resistance, then, both are related to the room which is the main space of resistance for Winston, and for Julia as well.

#### *Obedience-Disobedience*

This pair is strongly embedded in our culture since we base our political beliefs on the acceptance of a hierarchy or leadership. Our political imaginary has always been a pyramidal chart of duties and rights. Law, then, promotes these duties and rights, which must be obeyed with no question. Therefore, we have that obedience is our hierarchical

term in the pair, the one that is pure and dominates axiologically to disobedience, which contaminates the normal process of following orders.

However, while one may obey to some force of command, also we might be disobeying another, and vice versa. In a situation like the imagined in the novel, Winston is between the commandments of the party and his feelings and thoughts, his instincts and needs. The forces in conflict here, then, can be represented as the public and the private. Both here do not use laws for establishing their will; instead, the public and the private base their demands over the individual by means of experience.

In Nineteen... laws are not written, they are only “known.”

*“The thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. This was not illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least by twenty-five years in a forced-labour camp.” (9)*

The way to know a law, in other words, the way of the State to teach a law, was “applying” it, i.e. by means of the example. However, what happened with the private? An answer to this is that Winston’s body do punish him. There are many passages where his varicose veins itched or other instances when he barely could hold himself from vociferating against the telescreen. His body, his nature was claiming for caring about himself. With potential punishment or physical harm comes enforcement.

The fact that party’s laws are not documented is reasonable if we think that we are dealing with a totalitarian state. Hence, written documents as laws are a guarantee of right;

however, they might be interpreted depending on who reads them and on the context they read them. On the contrary, the rumour, the collective knowledge of its application and the collective memory of these examples do the work of the document of making official a determined law. The court in the novel is only a monument without memory, an instrument of the party to be used against the common criminals and the political criminals, the enemies of the state. Overall, justice is the party's justice and nothing else.

Then, to disobey is to go against the commandments of the party not the law. This word, commandment, results very convenient due to its religious entailment. When Moses went to Mount Sinai and received God's Ten Commandments, he had them written in a couple of tables. When he returns, he witnesses the sacrilegious acts the people were committing and, filled with wrath, he smashes the tables with the commandments written in it. After that, he punishes the heretics by killing them. The previous example of the popular episode of the Exodus provides some lights on the issue we are dealing with now: the commandments given by god, although they were "written", nobody, except Moses, knew them when he arrived, much less that specifically one of them, the first, said: *Thou shalt have no other gods, No graven images or likenesses*. However, the example made the commandments an object of obedience: in general, nobody wants to be killed because of a pair of broken tables.

Totalitarian governments are usually associated to religions. Actually, totalitarian states act as religions or adopt features proper to religions in order to reinforce their unilateral practise of political power by the use of dogmas and axioms regarded as incontrovertible –the elites in general use to do this. In the novel, images of this spiritual relationship between religion and totalitarianism abound throughout the whole book. One

example may be one already given about the last name of the junkshop's owner, Mr. Charrington, which recreates the idea of the purifying fire, popular method some centuries ago among Catholics and Protestants.

Another very representative episode of this is when the narrator describes the event of the Two Minutes of Hate. This compulsory event is actually a rite, an ideological rite. The narrator describes this rite in full detail in an extended sequence of paragraphs. However, I think that, among those paragraphs, the following passage is the most representative of the religious feature of this rite:

*The little sandy-haired woman had flung herself forward over the back of the chair in front of her. With a tremulous murmur that sounded like 'My Saviour!' she extended her arms towards the screen. Then she buried her face in her hands. It was apparent that she was uttering a prayer. (17)*

The similarity with many Christian masses or cults is striking though not surprising. Christian churches, most especially some protestant churches such as the Pentecostal church, make use of this kind of cults based on collective hysteria and ecstasy; induced rebuke, which becomes unconscious, drives people to the climax of their hatred towards the enemy and then... revelation.

The revelation of absolute truth represented in an image that defeats the disturbing and fearing image of the evil enemy. The little sandy-haired woman feels the warm spirit of her saviour filling her empty heart and mind. The experience of divine overflow drives her to reaffirm her complete conviction of the god-like leader. Now it is not the absolute truth of the party, is her absolute truth because she has experienced it.

Winston, as opposed to this particular woman, is not convinced at all of that truth or any other party's truth. He may believe in the existence of the big brother or in the ideological imposition of the party such as Goldstein as the vital public enemy number one. However, he doubts strongly about everything the party shows as real, especially the big brother, as he has expressed repeatedly along the first two parts.

It is central to take into account this distinction between conviction and belief in order to understand, first, why Winston rebels against the system and, second, why, in spite of this rebelliousness, he is never quite sure about the effectiveness of his actions against the party. Therefore, even though he is always doubtful to the party and all it involves, he is not convinced of his rebelliousness as well, in spite of the fact he believes he is doing the right thing in going against the party's commandments.

Probably, the reason why Winston is not fully convinced of his disobedient acts is because of the effect of punishment on his mind. In the same way as the rest of the outer-party members, Winston obeys or is inclined to obey due to the potential harm that could provoke to disobey. In spite of the fact he is fearful of the consequences his disobedient attitude may bring to him, he acts. However, he does not take direct disobedient action but conceals. Concealment is the basis for his tactics to disobey: the corner out of the telescreen range in his flat, the wandering through the streets in the proles quarter and the spontaneous shopping, the afternoons in the countryside with Julia, the room above the junkshop.

Winston disobeys but at the same time, he obeys to another force: his will. He has followed that interior force that has led him into disobedience to the Party. This changes

when he meets O'Brien and goes, along with Julia, to his place. There Winston "confirms" his hunch about O'Brien's rebellious intentions. However, O'Brien tricks Winston –in fact, he deceives himself- and, naively, Winston commits himself to his "cause":

*"...-In general terms, what are you prepared to do?"*

*-'Anything that we are capable of,' said Winston...." (142)*

Abruptly, Winston changes his way of disobeying. From now, he is not disobeying by obeying his will, but he starts to disobey by obeying an external force that supposedly is contrary to the Party.

Therefore, Winston, as both cases shows us, actually disobeys because he obeys another force. Besides, when he commits himself to Goldstein's cause -actually O'Brien's cause, he expresses his absolute readiness to commit the most barbaric acts due to the fact that the cause and the actions it may need to be done are supposedly thought for the sake of the greater good, a similar logic to the one the Party uses to support his actions. Consequently, to obey and disobey are two sides of the same coin. The dominance of obedience over disobedience is certain; the only difference is the point from what we see it. Obedience to a force is a way people learnt to identify themselves with a certain centre of power. Evidently, the usual centre of power people identifies with is the dominating one, the winner's side. Why? Naturally, because they are obeying another force: instinct.

### *Abstinence–Promiscuity*

In Orwell's dystopia, sex and romantic love are serious crimes. The only option for sexual intercourse is after being married. However, marriage cannot be due to physical

attraction or love, indeed, and it is strictly regulated. Therefore, couples had sexual intercourse specifically for the sake of reproduction. The only love feeling allowed is the love for the Big Brother. Thus, if there is not an aim of having children for the Party, abstinence is the only alternative.

Perhaps it may be important to make a distinction regarding to the term abstinence: I do not see this term as equal to celibacy. The latter I see it as complete abstention from both sexual relations and marriage, while the former I see it as abstaining from sex only, especially as pleasure. Therefore, even though both terms fit to the Party's ideal, the most appropriate is abstinence.

The idea of abstinence is well known in our Western culture due to its early introduction by Christianity, which has shaped our culture from its basis, especially Catholicism. Here, again, appears a similar reflection of Christian religions in Winston's Party: we know the Party and Christianity make use of dogmas, and the sinful nature of sex is another dogma they have in common. Besides, both promote abstinence upon this basis of sex as sin. In addition, and also in correlation with the case presented in the previous chapter, one of the most important goals of promoting, successfully, abstinence is the controlling of bodies and, consequently, people's will. An anthropocentric argument in favour to abstinence is the exclusive rationality of human beings that permits them to tame their basic instincts and control them at will. Nevertheless, this argument becomes invalid if applied to Winston's context: the Party do not seek to strengthen people's rationality but only to condition their behaviours.

In addition to this conditioning, the Party plays mean games with people's physical needs. One of the instruments the Party has for promoting sexual abstinence is by means of the Anti-Sex Junior League, a sort of special high school or college where "students" were taught and trained to eradicate their lustful instincts. Young girls at that organisation wore distinctive scarlet sash:

*"A narrow scarlet sash, emblem of the Junior Anti-Sex League, was wound several times round the waist of her overalls, just tightly enough to bring out the shapeliness of her hips."* (12)

First, this "scarlet sash" quite resembles of Hawthorne's scarlet letter. This fact is expressed in many different ways: firstly, both the sash and the letter are of the same colour which symbolises the original sin (in the scarlet letter and here sex out of law is a harshly punishable act); secondly, the sash and the letter are attached only to women; thirdly, both are social signs that stand for a kind of socio-sexual quarantine; fourthly, both highlight a particularly erotic, feminine area (the sash highlights the hips and the letter, the breast).

We can witness the conflict that this piece of cloth might provoke in men's mind in the novel after the narrator's account of Winston's feelings when he sees Julia during the Two Minutes of Hate:

*"He would flog her to death with a rubber truncheon. He would tie her naked to a stake and shoot her full of arrows like Saint Sebastian. He would ravish her and cut her throat at the moment of climax. Better than before, moreover, he realized WHY it was that he hated her. He hated her because she was young and pretty and sexless, because he wanted to go to bed with her and would never do so, because*



*round her sweet supple waist, which seemed to ask you to encircle it with your arm, there was only the odious scarlet sash, aggressive symbol of chastity.” (16-17)*

We cannot know exactly what is provoking in him such hatred towards her and those hallucinations of ravishing and killing her. It might be whether the hysterical rite of two minutes or actually the tempting shape the sash made round her hips, or, most probably, it might be both of them.

In spite the fact that Julia is part of the League and she appears to be a true zealot, she is just pretending since she has always been against the Party’s commandments, especially those related with sexual matters. In fact, she is the exemplification of promiscuity in the novel. Winston is never sure about what are Julia’s intentions until he receives swiftly a note from her at the ministry that said, “*I Love You.*” From that moment, Winston and Julia begin a love affair that will change their lives.

They first meet at some place in the countryside, in the outskirts of London. There they have sex for the first time. Before they start the intercourse, they talk about her promiscuous past:

*“-‘Have you done this before?’*

*-‘Of course. Hundreds of times--well, scores of times, anyway.’*

.....  
*“His heart leapt. Scores of times she had done it: he wished it had been hundreds--thousands. Anything that hinted at corruption always filled him with a wild hope.”*

.....  
*-‘Listen. The more men you've had, the more I love you. Do you understand that?’*

*-‘Yes, perfectly.’*

*-I hate purity, I hate goodness! I don't want any virtue to exist anywhere. I want everyone to be corrupt to the bones.'*

*-Well then, I ought to suit you, dear. I'm corrupt to the bones.'*

*-You like doing this? I don't mean simply me: I mean the thing in itself?*

*-I adore it.'*

*That was above all what he wanted to hear. Not merely the love of one person but the animal instinct.... (104-105)*

Winston, then, sees reflected in Julia a hope for the slow destruction of the Party by the corruption of their nonsensical values.

Throughout the novel, male chauvinism dominates the relationships between men and woman. As we have seen in the previous episode, Winston is always highlighting how good is that Julia is a promiscuous person. They keep their love affair in the room above the junkshop and the first afternoon they meet there, Winston remembers that Julia told him a couple of days before they meet in the room that she would not be able to meet him the next day at the country. The narrator communicate us Winston internal reaction:

*“For a moment he was violently angry. During the month that he had known her the nature of his desire for her had changed. ... Their first love-making had been simply an act of the will. But after the second time it was different. The smell of her hair, the taste of her mouth, the feeling of her skin seemed to have got inside him, or into the air all round him. She had become a physical necessity, something that he not only wanted but felt that he had a right to. When she said that she could not come, he had the feeling that she was cheating him. ... It struck him that when one lived with a woman this particular disappointment must be a normal, recurring event; and a deep tenderness, such as he had not felt for her before, suddenly took hold of*

*him. He wished that they were a married couple of ten years' standing. ... He wished above all that they had some place where they could be alone together without feeling the obligation to make love every time they met.*“ (113-114)

Winston's male chauvinism makes him change his mind very quickly, as though his praises for Julia's promiscuous behaviour were not anymore valid or just an emotion of the moment. Her past makes him think she could be cheating on him. Now he feels Julia as *something*, and as *his right*, and he wishes above all to be married to Julia or something the most similar to that, and live with her in a *place where they could be alone together without feeling the obligation to make love every time they met*, i.e. a place most resembling to a home of a just-married couple.

These feelings reflect the true ideology present in the novel regarding this issue of sex. Abstinence is the dominant element in the hierarchy while promiscuity, thus, is the contaminating concept. Abstinence works as a cultural impulse to control animal instincts of human beings, i.e. sex is a natural act, proper of every living being; besides, before the rise of Christendom as the ruling axiological ideology, Roman culture worshiped sex and mundane pleasures and, therefore, abstinence was not an ideal of their time. Christianity has enforced abstinence by means of well-known means such as the idea of original sin and devil's temptations.

Promiscuity, on the other hand, as I have suggested in the last paragraph, is closer to the basic needs of people. Centuries of severe physical and social punishment have made of the concept a taboo word and there have always been harsh words to refer to the people who behave in this fashion. Winston first is interested and excited because Julia's promiscuous attitude. However, his affection for her grows quickly as well as a mixture of tenderness and master-like jealousy. Then, suddenly, Winston is not interested in Julia's

promiscuous tactic of resistance and starts to think like a classical Western man, just like a man before the revolution and all wars.

## **Conclusion**

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* was one of the first dystopian novels I read many years ago. At that moment, I did not take into account the multiplicity of aspects I took into account now I am reaching my university grade. Then I could not foresee that I was going to make my graduate thesis about it and that I would find such a variety of themes and possible perspectives in a novel I first read due to a friend's suggestion. I remember he told me that the novel was amazing and told me that if I read it, I would change my perspective of politics and its future. And, in fact, it made me think differently. However, I was too young and too inexperienced to realise that the novel referred to and imagined a more complex reality.

Its complexity is demonstrated in its wide range of themes, from which I have identified a few as the most relevant. For instance, the theme of the Superstate or Global State, which may involve a criticism towards globalisation and the theories of global government. Besides, another issue is the control of language as thought control, which involves necessarily the issue of discourse and truth. These themes can be raised using a post-structuralist approach, specifically Foucault's critical approach on power, in addition to Said's post-colonial criticism.

Another set of themes are, first, male chauvinism, which is widely represented throughout the novel, and, in close interrelation to this, the issue of the body politics that touches the topics of sex and body control. Consequently, these themes can be raised, mainly, through the feminist perspective, specifically those of issues by Julia Kristeva.

Apart from the multiple possibilities of reading the novel, other aspects, which I suggested at the beginning of this ending, make his author a writer of an immense intellectual capacity, so great that he projected his novel in time for an undetermined period. I

mean, Orwell's novel keeps functioning as a solid dystopia, but, most importantly, it keeps projecting in time as a science fiction dystopia. That is to say, Oceania keeps echoing as a possibility, as a reality likely to happen if we do drop our guard against totalising centres of power. However, this projection may have changed or worsen, since nowadays theories like the New World Order –in spite the fact they may sound like deliriums- which do not involve politic power as basis but economic power. Nonetheless, the danger of totalitarian regimes as we have known them are still likely to happen, even though lesser.

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