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The Power of Language and Propaganda in 1984 and A Clockwork
Orange

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I hereby declare that this diploma thesis, titled “The Power of Language and Propaganda in *1984* and *A Clockwork Orange*”, is the result of my own work and that I used only the cited sources.

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyse language and its influence on shaping thought and reality. I examine this topic with the help of George Orwell's *1984* and Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*. In this thesis I describe the misuse of language for political propaganda. To demonstrate this, I use examples of specific languages from both books, Newspeak and Nadsat. A further aim is the determination of political and social functions of Newspeak and Nadsat in the context of both *1984* and *A Clockwork Orange*. Throughout the whole thesis I pay special attention to contrasting the vocabulary and usage of Newspeak and Nadsat.

This thesis is divided into six parts. The first part deals with the importance of language and literacy. I am illustrating this with the system of control of American slaves using excerpts from texts by Frederic Douglass. The second part deals with the differences between Nadsat and Newspeak and their respective roles in the political reality of both books. In the third part I take a closer look at the main protagonists of *1984* and *A Clockwork Orange* – Winston and Alex. I analyze their engagement in politics and the effect Newspeak and Nadsat have on their lives. The fourth part deals with propaganda and population control. In this part I contrast Newspeak with current examples from media. In the fifth part I examine written language, taking a closer look at Alex as a narrator and Winston as an author of his own fate. The last part deals with the analysis of spoken discourse and the communicative, informative and social functions of language.

Abstrakt

V této práci se zabývám rozborem jazyka a jeho vlivu na utváření myšlení a obrazu světa. Toto téma rozebírám za pomoci analýzy knih *1984* od George Orwella a *Mechanického pomeranče* od Anthonyho Burgesse. Cílem práce je obecná analýza jazyka a politické propagandy s příklady z detailní analýzy jazyků zvolených knih, tedy Newspeaku a Nadsatu. Dále pak také zjištění sociálních a politických funkcí, které Newspeak a Nadsat plní v kontextu obou knih. Zvláštní pozornost pak v celé práci věnuji srovnávání Nadsatu a Newspeaku, rozdílům v jejich slovní zásobě a použití.

Práce je rozdělena na šest částí. V první se zabývám důležitostí jazyka a gramotnosti pro formování názorů a politického uvědomění. Tento fakt pokládám historickým příkladem systém kontroly amerických otrok textů s příklady z textů Fredericka Douglassa. Druhá část se zabývá rozdílnou funkcí Nadsatu a Newspeaku, jejich odlišných rolích pro politickou situaci v obou knihách. V třetí části se blíže zaměřuji na hlavní postavy knih, Alexe a Winstona. Rozebírám jejich politickou angažovanost a roli jazyka pro jejich osudy. Čtvrtá část se zabývá propagandou její funkcí pro kontrolu populace, využívám zde srovnání Newspeaku se současným jazykem médií. Pátá část se zabývá psaným jazykem, Alexem jakožto vypravěčem a Winstonem jakožto autorem svého vlastního osudu. Poslední část je pak analýzou mluveného slova, komunikačních, informačních a sociálních funkcí řeči.

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Introduction

“The most astounding and developed symbolic device humanity has evolved is language. It is by virtue of language that we can think, remember, imagine, and finally conceive a universe of facts” (Langer 1016).

Language is a powerful tool through which all our thoughts, ideas and feelings are filtered so that they can be conceived, vocalized and shared. There would be no thoughts without words to express them. It would be impossible to shape ideas in our minds without concepts and words to formulate them. However, as with any tool, language can be used for both good and bad purposes. There is a great danger of manipulation through language, especially for political purposes.

1984, (1949) and *A Clockwork Orange*, (1962) both deal with language and propaganda, the danger of endless repetition of empty slogans. In *1984* we are met with Newspeak, “the only language in the world whose vocabulary gets smaller every year” (1984 19). In *A Clockwork Orange* we get to know the peculiar mixture of English and Russian called Nadsat. Each book takes a different approach to language, yet they both show the importance that language has for the society, its ability to limit thought, to brainwash and manipulate.

Today, we are still far from Newspeak with its mechanical system of words devoid of any real meaning. Yet, it would be a mistake to think our language clear of the attempts to blur reality with misleading concepts. An example could be the intentional use of euphemism in words such as “no-fly zone” or “humanitarian intervention”, which have penetrated the language of media without much notice. I find it vital to take *1984* and *A Clockwork Orange* as deterrent examples of how not to treat our language. That is why I chose the theme power of language and propaganda as the topic for my thesis.

Language shaping thought and reality

“Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious” (1984 41). This is the thought of Winston Smith, the main protagonist of *1984*, as he reflects on the proles. Proles, the working class of the dystopian world in the book form the biggest part of population. They are uneducated, poor and exploited by the minority that holds power over them. As Winston points out earlier in the chapter, the proles “needed only to rise up and shake themselves like a horse shaking off flies. If they chose they could blow the party to pieces tomorrow morning” (1984 40). Yet time goes by and the proles remain as they were, seemingly content in their position of silent workforce. Why this is so is explained in the first quotation. The proles cannot rebel because they are not conscious of the fact that there is anything wrong with their position. They rebel against what the propaganda tells them they should rebel against. The policy of keeping the proles uneducated and poor makes prevents them from understanding their position as slaves of the party.

Let us have a look at a quote by Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave, later to become a statesman and one of the most important leaders of the American abolitionist movement. In his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave*, (1845) he writes:

... if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself... ...It would make him discontented and unhappy. ... The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come. ... I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition... ...In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. Anything, no matter what, to get rid of thinking! It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. (Douglass 58)

The connection between slaves, prohibited from learning to read and write, and the proles in the society of *1984* is clear. Keeping the slaves/proles ignorant of their

position keeps them from understanding their place in society. Without understanding the concept of slavery a slave cannot rebel against it. They do not know enough about the system to understand the inequity of any human being forced into the position of a slave. How can the slaves rebel if they have no idea of a different possible world order, how can they rebel against their position, if they do not understand what this position entails? The same concept applies to the proles. Orwell did not have to go far to find the inspiration for the solution to keep the majority of the population uneducated, poor and working. The Party has only to ensure, that none of the promising proles can gather a group of followers, therefore effectively blocking any chance of their revolt. The proles are the majority, but are kept ignorant and therefore easy to manipulate. The importance and power of education and communication are made clear exactly by the enormous effort to subdue them.

Language as a means of oppression and rebellion

Nadsat plays just as important role in *A Clockwork Orange* as Newspeak in *1984*. However, the way they are used could not be more different. As Ralph Waldo Emerson writes in his essay *The Language of the Street*, (1840): “[t]he language of the street is always strong. ... Cut these words and they would bleed; they are vascular and alive; they walk and run” (Emerson 320). Where Newspeak is a means to stifle free thought and establish utter submission, Nadsat is a manifestation of vitality and defiance. Also the contrast in usage is worth noticing. Newspeak is an artificial language created and imposed by the government, whereas Nadsat is a mixture of slang and argot, self-propagating language of social outcasts and misfits. By speaking Nadsat, one joins the crowd of the officially problematic and unwanted, but hopefully curable with Ludovico’s technique. Indeed, in a world where Ludovico’s method is an acceptable solution to the ‘illness’, Nadsat can well be described as a symptom.

Newspeak and Nadsat differ in their goals and social standing, but they have the same timeless qualities. Burgess originally planned to write *A Clockwork Orange* in a current slang but in the end decided against it, because inevitably even the latest most radical language of the street would become obsolete in a few years. “This first version presented the world ... in the slang that was current at the time among the hooligan groups known as the Teddyboys and the Mods and Rockers. I had the sense to realise,

that by the time the book came to be out, that slang would already be outdated” (A Prefatory Note).

Robert M. Adams comments on this fact in his essay called *Dirty Stuff* (1973), which deals with the notion of obscenity in literature.

But there is such a thing as a verbal climate, and it changes over the years ... Verbal artists particularly are dependent for the basic materials of their work on the common linguistic heritage, the common linguistic habits. Apart from the colloquial patterns of his day, a writer lives in a tangible tradition of language, which has imposed value-laden connotations on words and concepts he is bound to use. He lives also in a haphazard but necessary linguistic projection (“What am I going to sound like fifty or a hundred years from now?”) (Adams 316)

The success of both *1984* and *A Clockwork Orange* lies partially in using an artificial language. No real language or slang of the world could work as well. Newspeak will always be shocking for the reader with its broken syntax and computer like compounds such as “doubleplusgood”, “speakwrite” and “thoughtcrime”. By being fictional, Nadsat will never go out of fashion.

Language and Politics

The political usage of Newspeak is clear to any reader just from reading page one of *1984*. “Ministry of Love” concerns itself with torture, “Victory Cigarettes” fall apart and “Big Brother” is somebody to be feared. It is evident that the power of naming things lies fully in the hands of the party. The names do not correspond with reality anymore. Before we get into a deeper analysis of the systematic propaganda in *1984*, let us take a closer look at the complicated relationship of politics and language in *A Clockwork Orange*. In his prefatory note to *A Clockwork Orange: A Play with Music* Burgess writes:

It struck me that it might be a good idea to create a kind of young hooligan who bestrode the iron curtain and spoke an argot compounded of the two most powerful political languages in the world – Anglo-American and Russian. The

irony of the style would lie in the hero-narrator's being totally unpolitical. (A Prefatory Note)

Is it possible, though, to stay totally apolitical in the world of *A Clockwork Orange*? Throughout the whole book the readers get little glimpses at the current political situation. The Government is “[r]ecruiting brutal young roughs for the police. Proposing debilitation and will-sapping techniques of conditioning” (*A Clockwork Orange* 151). The opposition is introduced by the character of F. Alexander and his group, which is quickly eradicated by the Government with the help of Alex. We also learn about the production of statefilms, a clear mark of propaganda. In chapter two, Alex expresses his disdain for the role of mass media as he describes the stupor of the nondescript grey mass of consumer public being diverted by yet another vapid show:

... and in the windows of all the flats you could viddy like blue dancing light. This would be the telly. Tonight was what they called a worldcast, meaning that the same programme was being viddied by everybody in the world that wanted to, that being mostly the middle-aged middle-class lewdies. There would be some big famous stupid comic chelloveck or black singer, and it was all being bounced off the special telly satellites in outer space, my brothers. (*A Clockwork Orange* 25)

This is the majority of society Alex lives with. The resigned, telly-watching, ‘middle-everything’ people. Just as in *1984*, the public is being dehumanized, the society acting more and more like a machine. Hence one of the possible explanations of *A Clockwork Orange* being the contrast of the bright and juicy orange with the precision and mindlessness of a clockwork.

Alex and his friends do not comply with the imposed rules of this society. That can already be seen as a political act. Nadsat only emphasizes the contrast between the public with its middle-people, totalitarian government and proper English and the outlaws with their violence, eccentricities and the Nadsat argot. Proper English can be seen as a mark of belonging to the controlled majority, it is the language used by those who submit to the government, the laws and the propaganda. Using Nadsat means rebelling against this system. The question arises whether such a rebellion can ever be successful. The mindless venting of violence and refusal of submission lacks any real goals. Rebellion for its own sake without any cause is not going to create more freedom.

Therefore, Nadsat in its own way also serves as a social label. It ostracises Alex and such like him, keeping them on the fringes of society, wondering through the night without cause and purpose, achieving nothing but alienating the public yet more with each crime they commit.

In his essay *The Voice of Sisera* (1979), Richard Mitchell discusses the power dynamics between the tongue of the conquerors and the vanquished:

Their languages may in time merge and become one, but they will still find a way to speak different languages. ... The powerful can write the laws and the rules in their own language so that the weak come before the courts and the commissions at a double disadvantage. ... The ruling class also becomes the “better” class ...

The subjects, whose language is deemed insufficiently elegant or complex ... [are thus] relegated to tradecraft and handiwork, for which their rudimentary babble is just about good enough. On the other hand ... The language of the subjects serves them as a form of secret talking, so that the servants can mutter, not quite inaudibly, appropriate comments on the lord and his lady” (Richard Mitchell 374).

The same principle can be found in the usage of proper English and Nadsat in *A Clockwork Orange*. One can see how Nadsat is at once perceived as the rudimentary babble by the majority, while, at the same time, it provides the means of expressing discontent with the status quo. It offers its speakers an air of exclusivity and feeling of belonging as any slang will do. Nadsat is a double sided sword, keeping Alex and his friends in opposition to the submissive majority, yet keeping them apart from achieving any real change.

In *1984*, the proles are kept ignorant and uneducated on purpose and Newspeak is enforced on the members of the party. Speaking Nadsat and spending one’s nights committing crimes is a free choice. One can therefore distinguish between the imposed division of society in *1984* and the freely chosen position of an outsider in *A Clockwork Orange*. Alex and his friends are willingly placing themselves into the position of proles. One could perhaps see that as renouncing the system or stating an opinion. However, let us get back to Burgess’s intention of creating Alex as a completely apolitical character. A more plausible explanation would be that it is simply immaturity

that is keeping Alex and his friends on the outskirts of the society, unable of conceiving and achieving any real change. Nadsat with its childish overtones such as in words “eggiweg”, “appy polly loggy” and “skolliwoll” is an example of the immaturity of the characters using it. Underlying the concept of childlike behaviour is also the drinking of milk. That is why it is not a surprise to find Alex’s former friend Pete speaking proper English at the end of the book. As a grown up, responsible man he naturally abandons the language that used to ostracise him.

It could be argued that by accepting the language of majority one is submitting to the regime of oppression. Yet, the example of F. Alexander and the priest clearly shows that real change is not going to be introduced by rebellion for its own sake. Much more effective is to use the system, and work against it in an intelligent and purposeful way, abandoning the haphazard rebellion against everybody and everything. Alex seems to reach the same conclusion:

Youth must go, ah yes. But youth is only being in a way like it might be an animal. No, it is not just being an animal so much as being like one of these malenky toys you viddy being sold in the streets ... you wind it up grrr grrr grrr and off it itties, like walking, O my brothers. But it itties in a straight line and bangs straight into things bang bang and it cannot help what it is doing. Being young is like being like one of these malenky machines. (A Clockwork Orange 177)

That is Alex’s opinion, as he thinks about his youth and the youth of his future son at the end of *A Clockwork Orange*.

Where Nadsat is a freely chosen, lively language of the street, Newspeak is an imposed official language of the elite. Nadsat is vital and shockingly violent at the same time. Newspeak shocks the readers by its impersonal, mechanical qualities. Newspeak is one of the party’s levers with which they are manipulating the public opinion. In their essay *Who’s in Charge of the English Language?* (1990) Casey Miller and Kate Swift speak of the power of naming “[e]very human society has recognized that the act on naming congers power over the thing named. ... Those who have the power to name ... inevitably take themselves as the norm or standard, the measure of all things” (Miller,

Swift 363). This is one of the reasons Newspeak plays such a significant role in the party ideology.

The party is well aware of the importance of naming things. A good example of that would be Syme, one of Winston's comrades. Because as Winston comments: "You did not have friends nowadays, you had comrades" (1984 27). Syme's job is to compile Newspeak dictionaries. Such a job might not seem overly exhilarating at first glance, but not in a world where seemingly innocuous words, such as evaporate, mean torturing and murdering and erasing all the records of an unwanted person.

By twisting the meaning and destroying words, the party has succeeded in creating the mechanism of absolute control over human mind. Syme prides himself in his job, revealing the joy of cutting down the English vocabulary in a conversation about Newspeak he shares with Winston in chapter five:

'It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words. ... Take "good", for instance. If you have a word like "good", what need is there for a word like "bad"? "Ungood" will do just as well — better, because it's an exact opposite, which the other is not. Or again, if you want a stronger version of "good", what sense is there in having a whole string of vague useless words like "excellent" and "splendid" and all the rest of them? "Plusgood" covers the meaning, or "doubleplusgood" if you want something stronger still. ...in the final version of Newspeak there'll be nothing else. In the end the whole notion of goodness and badness will be covered by only six words — in reality, only one word. ... Do you know that Newspeak is the only language in the world whose vocabulary gets smaller every year?' (1984 29)

Unlike the natural way languages of our world grow and change, Newspeak is made with the purpose of withering and ossifying. Syme fittingly describes the process as "cutting the language down to the bone" (1984 28). Just as the books and newspapers constantly being revised at the Ministry of Truth, Newspeak is constantly shrinking with each Newspeak dictionary edition. The danger of this phenomenon lies in the fact that each word that dies out also inevitably and permanently diminishes the range of thought. The party is well aware of this fact. Orwell uses Syme to explain the danger of

limiting the vocabulary, the excited tones of the linguist bringing into full light the intentions of the party:

“Don’t you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make Thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed, will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten. ... Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller. ... The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect.’... By 2050 earlier, probably — all real knowledge of Oldspeak will have disappeared. The whole literature of the past will have been destroyed. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron — they’ll exist only in Newspeak versions, not merely changed into something different, but actually changed into something contradictory of what they used to be. ... Even the slogans will change. How could you have a slogan like “freedom is slavery” when the concept of freedom has been abolished?” (1984 29)

Syme obviously understands the danger of limiting the vocabulary, but as a fully committed party member he welcomes the narrowing of the range of thought with open arms. “Newspeak is Ingsoc and Ingsoc is Newspeak” (1984 29) a party slogan claims. In other words the rigid system the society is held in is reflected and aided by the language it uses. Thoughts and opinions of the public are shaped by the language that is being used. If there was no word for the concept of freedom, one could not speak of freedom, one could not even think of it and miss it. If there was no word for freedom, the slogan “Freedom is slavery” would indeed become obsolete, because without it, slavery would have no opposing concept thus becoming the only option, the norm. If the concept of abolishment, freedom and revolution did not exist, Frederic Douglass could read his entire life without realising his position was unjust. By limiting the number of words to the point where all the potentially dangerous words die out, the fact one can read and write them becomes irrelevant. And because its subjects already know

how to read and write, it is only logical for the party to take the steps of limiting the language, just as Syme explained.

Words hold enormous power over their users. Just as the slaves and proles are unaware of their position, the party members will never conceive of any idea the party did not already think for them. In the end the party is right when it says “Ignorance is strength” (1984 59), because it is precisely the ignorance of the party members that gives strength and power to the privileged few to remain in the position of power.

One can see the same principle applied in *A Clockwork Orange*. Alex, who is allegedly uninterested in politics, actually has an important political role in first helping F. Alexander’s group and then supporting the government in exchange of a comfortable job. If he were not ignorant of the current political situation, he would most likely be helping F. Alexander’s group. Being ignorant as he is, he cannot take an active part in either a pro or anti Government action. Alex is therefore reduced to a mere pawn used by both F. Alexander and the Government to sway public opinion.

The curious fact is that Alex is in his own way aware of this fact. In part three chapter five Alex expresses his objections to F. Alexander’s friends “Stop treating me like a thing that’s like got to be just used. I’m not an idiot you can impose on, you stupid bratchnies” (*A Clockwork Orange* 155). Yet he signs the article F. Alexander is going to publish about him without even thinking about it. The same process repeats during Alex’s interview with the minister after his fall and the following hospital treatment. Alex smiles for the photographs and does as he is told by the Government’s officials. “Only one veck was left, saying: “Sign here, please.” I opened my galzzies up to sign, not knowing what I was signing and not, O my brothers, caring either” (*A Clockwork Orange* 168).

Unlike his other friends, Alex is not a mere criminal. He is insightful, has opinions on the society, refined taste in music and uses Nadsat in a more creative way than his friends. Yet he stays almost wilfully ignorant of what is truly going on around him. All Alex cares for is himself, his ego preventing him from perceiving anybody and anything else as worth fighting for. A counterpart to Alex’s egoistical approach to life is his namesake, F. Alexander. It is not an accident that these two characters share the same name. F. Alexander’s character is an educated, socially and politically aware

counterpart of Alex. He is what Alex could have been with better education and moral awareness. In chapter five of part three F. Alexander makes the difference between Alex and Alexander clear, describing himself as a fighter for liberty, and Alex as a part of the common people willing to sell freedom for comfort. "Some of us have to fight. There are great traditions of liberty to defend. ... The tradition of liberty means all. The common people will let it go, oh yes. They will sell liberty for a quieter life. That is why they must be prodded, prodded -" (A Clockwork Orange 152)

Burgess manages to steer clear of moralising by making sure F. Alexander and his group do not become a shining role model but also have their own share of flaws. In their efforts to expose the growing totalitarianism of the Government, the group shows the same disinterest in Alex as a human being as the Government did. In F. Alexander's hands Alex once again becomes as tool of propaganda, albeit the anti-government one this time around. Clearly, F. Alexander must be forgetting the need for humanism and love he stresses in his book, which shares the name with the title of the whole novel:

... what seemed to come out of it was that all lewdies nowadays were being turned into machines and that they were really – you and me and him and kiss-my-sharries – more like a natural growth like a fruit. F. Alexander seemed to think that we all like grow on what he called the world-tree in the world-orchard that like Bog or God planted, and we were there because Bog or God had need of us to quench his thirsty love, or some such cal. (A Clockwork Orange 150)

The group prise themselves on fighting against the inhuman practises of the Government, yet, just as the Government, it compromises itself by transgressing one of the basic moral imperatives as formed by Kant. "Always recognize that human individuals are ends, and do not use them as means to your end" (Kant, qtd. in thinkexist). F. Alexander's group are willing to sacrifice Alex for the common good, thus discrediting the whole opposition movement, reducing its fight for freedom and humanity to mere hypocrisy. Burgess stresses the irony of the group's fight for liberty and humanism by making one of the group members rejoice at Alex's poor state: "What a superb device he can be, this boy. If anything, of course, he could for preference look even iller and more zombyish than he does. Anything for the cause" (A Clockwork Orange 154).

Stuck between the manipulative Group and totalitarian Government, one can understand Alex's resignation at politics in general. Perhaps he does not even realise how much power he is lending to the Government by helping them ridicule F. Alexander's group. However, by choosing to remain ignorant, Alex is willingly and actively supporting the Government, the part of the system against which he rebelled so vehemently. Of course, one must take into consideration the mitigating circumstances of him being coerced into it, also admittedly after having gone through the Ludovico's technique. Yet, the fact remains that he prefers to stay ignorant, not even giving a thought to how far reaching the act of giving his support to the Government could be.

This willing ignorance also plays a crucial role in Orwell's *1984*. With the help of Newspeak, constant propaganda and brainwashing, people are trained in the laziness of mind. They are brought up in a way which makes them perceive thinking about politics and the way the world works the most tedious mental exercise. The character of Julia is a clear example of this. Unlike Winston, she was brought up in the already well established system of Ingsoc. She is not happy with the limitations imposed on her life and decides to go against the party with the purpose of getting what she wants, be it good food, sex or love. Julia is clearly against the party. Yet, when she listens to a part of *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*, which Winston finds captivating, she is bored and promptly falls asleep. The underlying principles of the world of politics seem to be of no interest to her. The same applies, whenever Winston tries to discuss the party propaganda with her. In Winston's words:

In the ramifications of party doctrine she had not the faintest interest. Whenever he began to talk of the principles of Ingsoc, doublethink, the mutability of the past, and the denial of objective reality, and to use Newspeak words, she became bored and confused and said that she never paid any attention to that kind of thing. ... She knew when to cheer and when to boo, and that was all one needed. If he persisted in talking of such subjects, she had a disconcerting habit of falling asleep. (1984 90)

This apathy is the result of years of Ingsoc education. Julia, just as all other children, has been taught to ignore logics and reason. She is led by her emotions when it comes to disliking the party, but intellectually she remains caged in the Ingsoc world view. It

would be easy to judge her character as superficial. One must consider the fact, though, that she has been brought up with the ideology of the party firmly imposed into every aspect of everyday reality. She is rather like a colour-blind person being told to appreciate the shades of blue, when she has spent her whole life seeing the world just in shades of gray.

That is why Julia and many others like her are uninterested in changing the political situation. In a way, Julia is just as much a rebel without a greater cause as Alex. She is immature and selfish, only interested in making her life better, preferring to stay unaware of the greater political and social questions. Winston is not far from truth when he calls her “only a rebel from the waist downwards” (1984 90). The scariest part of her character is realising how effective the party propaganda is, how far reaching its effect can be even on people who disagree with it. Even if they consider themselves to be apolitical they are actually contributing to the system with their passivity, just like Alex and Julia. This is because they only reject parts of propaganda which apply to their own lives, while accepting the propaganda that seems detached and innocuous from the perspective of their life experience. They act as if it were not their business. People like Julia and Alex might renounce the system as a big lie, but by focusing on improving their own life only, the changes that need to be made to improve the political system will never happen. Therefore, it is precisely the brainwashed crowd of blindly accepting seemingly apolitical people that insure the fact that the party or the Government is going to stay firmly in place.

Even Winston himself is guilty of supporting the Party. His job in the Records Department requires him to take an active part in creating the Party propaganda. Winston is required to write in place of Big Brother. “Winston thought for a moment, then pulled the speakwrite towards him and began dictating in Big Brother’s familiar style” (1984 26). The information in the newspaper articles and other texts he is supposed to correct is usually just numbers or names, in Winston’s words “merely the substitution of one piece of nonsense or another” (1984 23). Winston actually likes to get lost in a complicated piece of forgery, putting on paper lies that will most likely correspond with what the Party would like him to say. Despite that he still feels that his job is “the greatest pleasure in his life” (1984 24).

Winston Smith is therefore his own killer in a way. The irony of his character lies in the fact that he is in part responsible for his own death, because he himself forms a part of the Ingsoc ideology, the party and Big Brother himself. He speaks for the Big Brother, his own words becoming the voice of the party. He rewrites history and deletes people's existences. The same happens to him in the end.

In his book *Brainwashing: the fictions of mind control: a study of novels and films since World War II* (2004) David Seed states that "Orwell originally planned to call his novel *The Last Man in Europe* which was wisely dropped as it suggests an apocalyptic ultimacy to Smith's fate whereas the novel demonstrates that he is an anonymous instance, one case within a repeating process" (Seed David 16). David Seeds stresses Winston's role in the never-ending cycle of rewritten history in the world of *1984*:

... each shift of state policy has to erase former ones so as to promote the impression that things had always been thus. [Winston] Smith himself works in one of the most manipulative ideological state apparatuses in retrospectively reinventing the small details of recent history. O'Brien thus redirects against Smith the very procedures Smith had been exploiting for Public consumption. (David Seed 17)

It is inevitable that another writer at the Record Department will receive a short message telling him to delete all the mentions of Winston, just as Winston deleted hundreds or more records of human existences in the time he spent working there.

Language and Propaganda

In his essay *Politics and the English Language* (1946), Orwell paints a dismal picture of the state of political language:

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. (*Politics and the English Language* 424)

Language in both *1984* and *A Clockwork Orange* is misused in precisely the way Orwell criticizes in his essay. Propaganda is one of the most important tools for gaining political power in *1984* and *A Clockwork Orange*. When one thinks about the word ‘propaganda’ nowadays, it is usually in connection with the communist or fascist regimes of our past. The party slogans “WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH” (1984 14) seem a bit too far-fetched. Yet, we are met with political propaganda of a similar calibre on a daily basis and hardly notice it anymore. It might be subtler that the bold slogans glaring from the tower of Ministry of Truth over the decaying London of *1984*, but it is no less dangerous. Here are some examples of phrases one can hear on nearly every day basis with explanation in brackets: “imposing a no-flight zone” (permitting air strikes), “collateral-damage” (civilian casualties), “financial reform” (state bankruptcy). War is peace will not seem far-fetched any longer when we compare it with phrases such as “humanitarian bombing” or “ethnic cleansing”.

As one can see from the examples above, political language and language of propaganda have an enormous power to manipulate reality. Orwell gives an example in his Notes on Nationalism (1945): “The *Liberal News Chronicle* published, as an example of shocking barbarity, photographs of Russians hanged by the Germans, and then a year or two later published with warm approval almost exactly similar photographs of Germans hanged by the Russians. It is the same with historical events” (Notes on Nationalism 51). It is not just single words and phrases, whole events can be described in such a way to make them suit the current political ideology.

A good example of the different portrayal of the same event can be seen in *A Clockwork Orange*. Alex’s case is publicised three times, each time with a completely different outcome. First, he is used as a part of pro-government propaganda to showcase the great success of Ludovico’s technique and Government’s anti-crime policy. Later on, the media make a complete turn, when the newspaper features F. Alexander’s article with headings such as: “BOY VICTIM OF CRIMINAL REFORM SCHEME and GOVERNMENT AS MURDERER” (*A Clockwork Orange* 162). The third time pictures of Minister of Interior with a smiling Alex by his side are taken to be published,

this time to show how much the Government cares for its citizen; the same one it put through brutal medical treatment mere weeks ago. The Government counts on the fact that the public has a short memory. In a way, they are expected to behave just as the public in *1984*, which does not remember anymore whether they are waged war against Eurasia or Eastasia. The important thing is that hate and fear remain abundant, ready to be used as a fuel to maintain the status quo.

This malleability of public thought is taken to extreme in *1984*. Orwell names this Doublethink, “the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one’s mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them” (1984 124). This eradication of common sense and logic is precisely what the party needs:

The Ministry of Peace concerns itself with war, the Ministry of Truth with lies, the Ministry of Love with torture and the Ministry of Plenty with starvation. These contradictions are not accidental, nor do they result from ordinary hypocrisy; they are deliberate exercises in doublethink. For it is only by reconciling contradictions that power can be retained indefinitely. In no other way could the ancient cycle be broken. If human equality is to be for ever averted — if the High, as we have called them, are to keep their places permanently — then the prevailing mental condition must be controlled insanity. (1984 126)

The core of political language is to train people in not thinking about what is being said, but rather let themselves be carried by the resonant slogans. The image of a politician, his attire, tone of voice and style of speaking become more important than the meaning. In the end, the meaning is removed with a public figure shouting at a crowd of mesmerised people, willing to support anything as long as it is shouted out loud enough. Let us conclude this part with a quote by H. L. Mencken. In his essay, *Gamalielese* (1921), he stresses the emptiness of political language in the following manner: “Let that thunder sound, and they take all the rest on trust. If a sentence begins furiously and then peters out into fatuity, they are still satisfied. If a phrase has a punch in it, they do not ask that it also have a meaning” (*Gamalielese* 369). This can be seen throughout *1984*, where the public is accepting any message, as long as it is given in the imposing voice of Big Brother.

Language - Written Record

The power of a written record is viewed with great respect in both *1984* and *A Clockwork Orange*. Apart from the depressive outlook in *1984* as discussed above, both Orwell and Burgess also give a positive aspect to the role of written word. In *A Clockwork Orange*, the idea of a book being able to change the society in a positive way is illustrated by F. Alexander's *A Clockwork Orange*, a curious case of a book in a book. The character of Alex the storyteller is also noticeable. Let us compare the older, creative Alex with his younger destructive self. In chapter one Alex and his friends tear up some books to provoke an old man:

“I started to rip up the book I'd got, and the others did the same with the ones they had. ... This crystal book I had was very tough-bound and hard to razrez to bits, being real starry and made in days when things were made to last like, but I managed to rip the pages up and chuck them in handfuls” (*A Clockwork Orange* 14).

Writing a book signifies a certain degree of maturity and development, clearly a positive sign. Alex's personal growth is made clear by placing him into the position of the story teller, “your humble narrator” (*A Clockwork Orange* 80). This makes the reader contrast Alex the destructor, as shown in the book, and Alex the creator, the Author.

In *1984*, the positive aspect of writing is much less prominent, but still present. Just like Alex, Winston is driven to express his own perspective of life, even though merely sharing it with a diary. He wishes to convey his thoughts with the possible future readers, even though he realises how futile that hope is: “How could you communicate with the future? ... Either the future would resemble the present, in which case it would not listen to him: or it would be different from it, and his predicament would be meaningless” (*1984* 4). Winston still persists in writing his thoughts down, hoping to make a change. In this aspect, Winston steps in for Orwell himself who chose the career of an author, hoping his books would make a positive impact on society. The positive outlook on a book being able to make a difference is supported in Malcolm Bradbury's commentary on Orwell's influence in his book *The Modern British Novel* (1993):

Orwell renewed the tradition of decent liberalism, and restored the value of commonplace language. ... Orwell became a fundamental influence on the cultural mood, and his novels helped shape not only the spirit of post-war realism but the fiction of moral allegory and dystopian anxiety that was to follow. (The Modern British Novel 284)

Language - Spoken Discourse

David Crystal defines discourse in his book *How Language Works* (2006), stressing:

“... the need to see language as a dynamic, social, interactive phenomenon ... We convey meaning ... by more complex exchanges, in which the participants’ beliefs and expectations, the knowledge they share about each other and about the world, and the situation in which they interact, play a crucial part” (David Crystal 260, 261). However, this definition describes an ideal situation.

The way language is used, or rather misused, in *1984* could not differ more from Crystal’s definition. Instead of it being a dynamic, social and interactive phenomenon, the party does all it can to create an ossified, mechanical and isolating system of communication. Spoken discourse cannot take place in the world of *1984*, at least not in the way we understand it. How can people partake in complex exchanges of knowledge, beliefs and expectations? It is clearly impossible. Everybody shares the same ideas and beliefs and therefore there is nothing more to be shared or added apart from the mindless repetition of party slogans.

The decline can be found in all the functions of language, but foremost the social and phatic function is having a devastating effect on personal relationships and the state of society as a whole. We learn this from Winston’s observations, ranging from observations on single words to the effect the language propaganda is having on children. For example, the forced usage of ‘comrade’: “‘Mrs’ was a word somewhat discountenanced by the Party — you were supposed to call everyone ‘comrade’” (1984 11). The effect of party propaganda can be seen in a conversation of the little boy of Winston’s neighbour, which foreshadows the boy turning in his father at the end of the book:

'Up with your hands!' yelled a savage voice. A handsome, tough-looking boy of nine had popped up from behind the table and was menacing him with a toy automatic pistol ... 'You're a traitor!' yelled the boy. 'You're a thought-criminal! You're a Eurasian spy! I'll shoot you, I'll vaporize you, I'll send you to the salt mines!' (1984 12)

If that is the situation in families, one cannot be surprised that the relations at work are even worse. People do not have friends anymore, just comrades. "People in the Records Department did not readily talk about their jobs. ... there were quite a dozen people whom Winston did not even know by name, though he daily saw them hurrying to and fro in the corridors or gesticulating in the Two Minutes Hate" (1984 23). The constant fear of somebody turning you in for the smallest offence results in a paranoia epidemic.

The Two Minutes hate is actually another good example of the Ingsoc's influence on communication and social behaviour. The moment "the Enemy of the People" Emanuel Goldstein appears on the screen everybody is instantly overflowing with intense hate. The reaction of the 'office people' suddenly screaming and stomping with rage is terrifying. In a way, the Two Minutes Hate acts like a drug, a controlled way to vent the suppressed emotions. Again, one cannot but notice how language and voice are manipulated to evoke hate and fear in the viewers.

The next moment a hideous, grinding speech [of Goldstein], as of some monstrous machine running without oil, burst from the big telescreen at the end of the room. It was a noise that set one's teeth on edge and bristled the hair at the back of one's neck. ... In its second minute the Hate rose to a frenzy. People were leaping up and down in their places and shouting at the tops of their voices ... The dark-haired girl behind Winston had begun crying out 'Swine! Swine! Swine!' and suddenly she picked up a heavy Newspeak dictionary and flung it at the screen. (1984 6)

At first sight the reaction might seem excessive. After all, it is just the face of a man and a few of his arguments that lead the viewers into complete frenzy. Nevertheless, let us imagine our reaction to a Second World War video with Hitler thundering at a mass of sieg heiling soldiers.

The viewers are reduced to “sub-human chanting of 'B-B! ... B-B'” (1984 9)! Winston is filled with horror at the reaction and there is no wonder why. The Two Minutes Hate shows the society falling back through thousands of years to its tribal roots.

As appalling as the public communication is, the situation is even worse in private domain. The basic human bonds are being systematically destroyed. People are not allowed to marry someone they love, or could possibly feel attracted to. “All marriages between Party members had to be approved by a committee ... permission was always refused if the couple concerned gave the impression of being physically attracted to one another” (1984 37). Sex becomes “our duty to the party” (1984 38), a “slightly disgusting minor operation, like having an enema” (1984 37). The population and women especially, are brought up to view any physical closeness as something to be endured and should be over as quickly as possible. That is why something as insignificant as Winston having a relationship with Julia and their enjoyment of sex is seen as an act of rebellion. Families are torn apart, with the kids being manipulated by youth organisations to eavesdrop on their parents and turn them in to the Thought police. Friends, or rather comrades, meet at party meetings which are boring, repetitive and visited only to keep up pretences. In short, people are isolated and lonely the only being remaining dear to them is the godlike character of Big Brother, a parody of family they are left with. O'Brien sumps up the party's politics to Winston as he tortures him in the Ministry of Love.

We have cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman. No one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer. But in the future there will be no wives and no friends. Children will be taken from their mothers at birth, as one takes eggs from a hen. The sex instinct will be eradicated. Procreation will be an annual formality like the renewal of a ration card. We shall abolish the orgasm. Our neurologists are at work upon it

now. There will be no loyalty, except loyalty towards the Party. There will be no love, except the love of Big Brother. (1984 154)

Once again, the party seems to share some of its principles with the means used to control slaves in US colonies. In *1984* Orwell is using the same principles of population control that are to be found in Slave Codes that were used to keep the growing slave population from rebelling against their masters. One can find a correlation in such cases as the disrespect of marriage leading to intentional disrupting of families, the banning of free assembly, the obstruction of access to information, severe punishment and controlling the population by giving out privileges only to a few chosen ones. As shocking and unreal as the state of *1984* appears, Orwell did not need to go far for inspiration.

A Clockwork Orange paints a different picture of spoken discourse. Unlike the mechanical system of Newspeak, Nadsat is as visceral and lively as it can be. Compared to *1984*, the political situation in the world of *A Clockwork Orange* seems to be in initial stages of totalitarianism. One can still see the instances of exercising free will, having independent opinions and feeling compassion. We can see this in the characters of F. Alexander and his book or the Prison Chaplain and his interest in Alex's well being. The society seems to be noticeably less restricted than that in *1984*. Admittedly, one does not get an inside view from Alex as was the case with Winston. The inner workings of the Government and life of its members stay hidden from the readers' eyes.

Where Newspeak hides its true message behind the façade of nice sounding words, Nadsat is clear as it can be with its message. Newspeak is backed up by an unfeeling machinery of a dead society. Nadsat is admittedly full of violence and blood. A good example would be the scene in which Alex is faced with his parents in the hospital where he is being treated after jumping out of the window. ““Owwwww,” went my mum. “Ah, shut it,” I said, “or I’ll give you something proper to yowl and creech about. Kick your zoobies in I will”” (*A Clockwork Orange* 164).

Unlike Newspeak which is based on euphemism, Nadsat is violent and clear in its meaning. Words like “the old in-out, in-out” leave little for imagination. This does not apply to all words. Readers, especially those who do not speak a Slavic language, will need some time to fully understand words like “starry”, “vidying” and “chelloveck”.

Yet, compared to Newspeak, Nadsat has an air of poetic creativity to it. It is a fascinating mixture of English and Russian, a blend of Shakespearean English with a street slang. An example of that is Alex's conversation with a Government worker in the hospital: "“Yarbles,” I said, like snarling like a doggie. “Bolshy great yarblockos to thee and thine”” (A Clockwork Orange 166).

Nadsat is not a political tool. It is rather a symptom of a divided society. It is not misused to brainwash or limit thought. Unlike Newspeak, Nadsat has emotions in it, good and bad. It resonates with the message of the book: it is still better to have free will and commit crimes than be turned into a machine for good deeds. It is better to have a language that flourishes and fascinates than to be reduced to a dead, politically governed form of communication. That is the key difference between Nadsat and Newspeak.

Conclusion

Language plays a pivotal role in shaping thought and reality. One can see the results of reducing a language in *1984*. Newspeak is a way of keeping the intellectual potential of the society suppressed, creating a mechanical system which benefits only the few chosen ones at the top. Nadsat in *A Clockwork Orange* is more important for the artistic impact of the book. Unlike Newspeak, it is the language of the misfits and outsiders. Its violent and creative nature celebrates humanity and free will.

Both books show the importance of language for building functioning relationships, intellectual growth and political awareness. Any limitation of language will ultimately result in ignorance and passivity of its users, leading to easier manipulation of the public opinion. One can see this from the mind numbing effect of propaganda in both books. The public is trained not to think but accept anything that is presented in an alluring way. Meaning becomes of secondary importance.

Both languages mirror the political and social situation of people speaking them. Newspeak's mechanical syntax reflects the machinery of the political system. Its diminishing vocabulary mirrors the decline of logics and reason. Its euphemistic words correspond with the way brutal practises are being hidden by the party. Nadsat is not a tool used to manipulate, but it also gives the reader an insight into the society. It describes in detail the enjoyment of brutal acts, illustrating the egocentrism and violence of the young people living in the streets. When it comes to discussing politics, Nadsat is reduced to swearwords. This mirrors the state of the majority of the society, discontent with the political situation, but too passive to do anything about it.

Propaganda plays a key role in both books. It is the means with which the government brainwashes and controls the public. Party ideology and slogans do not have to be even remotely close to the true state of reality, as long as they are repeated often enough, loud enough and by enough people they will keep the real state of situation hidden from the brainwashed crowds. The manipulation of reality is the biggest danger of propaganda.

The greatest contribution of *1984* and *A Clockwork Orange* is the example of a society in which free will, logics and reason are suppressed. By showing the terrifying

results of public manipulation, *1984* and *A Clockwork Orange* stress the importance of making sure language is not being misused for manipulation, political reasons and suppressing thought.

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