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Zobrazení médií v britské antiutopické literatuře
Depiction of Media in British Dystopic Fiction

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracoval samostatně a výhradně s použitím citovaných pramenů, literatury a dalších odborných zdrojů.

Souhlasím se zapůjčením práce pro studijní účely.

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Abstrakt bakalářské práce

Na příkladu čtyř uznávaných románů se práce zabývá zachycením médií v britských antiutopických románech dvacátého století a vývojem, kterým toto zachycení prošlo. Zaměření na menší počet primárních textů, stejně jako zeměpisné a časové ohraničení, je zčásti dáno omezeným rozsahem práce, zčásti zdůvodněno častým vnímáním Anglie jako „hrdého Albionu", bašty občanských svobod, a dvacátého století jako věku totalitních režimů, umožněných či alespoň podpořených překotným rozvojem dorozumívacích prostředků a masových médií. Interpretovaná díla zahrnují *Báječný nový svět* Aldouse Huxleyho (česky i jako *Konec civilizace*) a *1984* George Orwella, romány které v obecném povědomí definují žánr antiutopie jako takový a které jsou spolu často porovnávány, například v knize Neila Postmana *Ubavit se k smrti*. Tuto dvojici doplňuje kniha H. G. Wellse *Až spáč procitne*, vzniklá na samotném přelomu devatenáctého a dvacátého století a vybraná pro Wellsovu zakladatelskou pozici v moderní utopické i antiutopické tvorbě, a grafický román Alana Moora a Davida Lloyda *V jako vendeta*, postmoderně a sebereflexivně se vyrovnávající jak s tématem, tak se svými předchůdci, se kterými tvůrci vstupují do debaty již zvolenou formou.

Volba čtyř výrazných, velmi odlišných děl si vyžádala, aby k nim bylo v práci i přes zřetel ke společným prvkům přistupováno jednotlivě a se spíše implicitním než explicitním přihlédnutím k zásadní sekundární literatuře. První, nejobsáhlejší kapitola tak rozebírá román *1984* za největšího využití teoretického aparátu a na příkladu tohoto vůbec nejznámějšího antiutopického díla představuje většinu mediálně-teoretických konceptů, s nimiž se dále pracuje v kapitole druhé, zabývající se Orwellovými předchůdci, a třetí, v níž je za zástupce jeho následníků vybrán Moorův a Lloydův román. Především se interpretace opakovaně vrací k myšlenkám Marshala McLuhana, zejména jeho pojetí médií jako rozšíření lidského těla, využívá však i prací dalších mediálních teoretiků a filosofů, od Waltera Benjamina po Johna B. Thompsona. Samozřejmostí je přihlédnutí k předchozím rozborům primárních textů jako

takových a k dobovým a životopisným souvislostem, které u děl s politickou tematikou nelze pominout ani při rozboru zaměřeném prvořadě na text samotný.

Jednotlivým kapitolám je především společné, že z primárních textů vyvozují určitou hierarchii médií a formulují obavy, které se v románech pojí s využitím elektronických přenosových technologií. Orwellovo *1984* vyzdvihuje písmo jako prostředek individuálního vyjádření a k jednotlivým médiím přistupuje s nedůvěrou o to větší, o co větší jsou k jejich vytváření a šíření potřeba technické prostředky; *Báječný nový svět* Aldouse Huxleyho klade obdobný důraz na písemnou tradici, ale elektronických médií se obává především jako nástroje, který umožní spojit dosud oddělené kategorie prožitků a rozvrátí tak přirozený řád lidské mysli; Wellsův stylisticky i obsahově překvapivě moderní román *Až spáč procitne* sleduje možné politické důsledky stavu, ve kterém masmédia ztěžují příjemcům i producentům ustavení vlastní autentické identity; Moorův a Lloydův grafický román *V jako vendeta* staví nová média na roveň literární tradici a obává se především totalitního zásahu, který by občanům znemožnil užívat plné šíře nejen kulturních podnětů. Přestože jde o texty svým vyzněním zřetelně odlišné, využitím stejných či podobných motivů a otázek spolu vedou dialog a vzájemně tak své čtení obohacují.

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Introduction

"No single description [...] fits all utopias, and no definition sufficiently covers all possible perfect worlds",[1] Mary Ellen Snodgrass writes in her *Encyclopedia of Utopian Literature*. Six years later, Darko Suvin attempts to prove her wrong and defines utopia as "the construction of a particular community where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and relationships are organized according to a *radically different principle* than in the author's community".[2] This definition, however, is only made possible by coining an innovatory classification of utopian genres and sub-genres, in which utopia represents an umbrella term for any socio-politically fantastic writing, regardless of its polarity. Suvin's political, rather than text-centred approach, already seen when he adds that utopian fiction is "created by social classes interested in otherness and change",[3] becomes his explicit main point of reference when he goes on to address the issue present implicitly in Snodgrass's assertion: How to distinguish utopia from dystopia? Suvin's understanding of both these modes as differently aimed expressions of social discontent is useful in that it reminds us of close ties of utopian fiction to contemporary political conditions and ideological background, his view, however, mostly shared by the contributors of the *Dark Horizons* anthology, reduces the texts it attempts to define to vehicles of political change, or at least to political pamphlets. Of course, there can be no purely text-based definition of utopia (or, indeed, any other genre), but neither has a comprehensive and widely accepted definition been provided by any other approach; otherwise, we would not be seeing an ongoing critical debate concerning the dystopian or utopian nature of genre keystones. In a paper not primarily concerned with re-shaping wider theoretical framework, therefore, the narrative and motivic aspects of utopian texts and textual, rather than empirical

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1 Mary Ellen Snodgrass, "Utopia", *Encyclopedia of Utopian Literature* (Santa Barbara, California/Denver, Colorado/Oxford, England: ABC-CLIO, 1995) 524.
2 Darko Suvin, "Theses on Dystopia 2001", *Dark Horizons:Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*, ed. Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan (New York and London: Routledge, 2003) 188.
3 Ibid. 188.

connections, should be prominently addressed and complemented by more explicitly context- and politics-based reading.

Narratively, the main protagonist's struggle against society might be listed as a feature that is almost exclusive to dystopia in contrast to utopia. In this struggle, the text focuses on social description; the opposite focus, foregrounding the protagonist's character, is most likely to be found in psychological or detective fiction (where it might still remain a study of society's influence on a more intimate scale). This paper, takes for its starting point one of the traits most (British) descriptions of dystopian societies share: while the citizens of dystopia are as likely to be happy as discontented (the latter case is generally not found in utopia and thus forms one of the distinct characteristics of dystopia), manipulated by power-holding individuals or brain-washed impersonally into obedience, they are never trusted by the apparatus of the state: While utopia might spring both from the idea that free will is compatible with (or even necessary for) a perfect society and the idea that people have to be controlled for their own happiness,[4] the dystopian state never has any confidence in its citizens.[5] This distrust is signified by attempts to mechanize every possible aspect of human life,[6] both by means of social engineering and application of "hard" technology. In the particular case this paper is concerned with, the writers use this recurring topic of distrust and mechanisation to create what might be called the hierarchy of media: some media are depicted, to a varying extent, as being mutilated, or, in the extreme case, destroyed by being

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4 "Many utopias are characterized by extremely intensive social control, though it is striking that community members frequently do not experience it as control at all. Individual happiness coincides with happiness derived from the community or imposed from above." - Hans Boutellier, *The Safety Utopia: Contemporary Discontent and Desire as to Crime and Punishment* (Springer, 2004) 40.

5 To refer back to importance of political context: Since the 20th century, extensive policing becomes a virtually exclusive feature of dystopian text in the major discourse, possibly laying ground for a more ambivalent understanding of texts previously understood as utopian. Apart from obvious reasons cited in the introduction, the shift can also be partially ascribed to the fact that both the practice and theory of utopianism came to be shaped mostly by left-wing thinking, at the core of which Norman Geras sees "a dream or promise of ultimate liberation […] without any need of policing or enforcement." (Norman Geras, "Minimum Utopia: Ten Theses", http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/geras1.htm, 2 May 2010) It is worth noting, however, that for example libertarian utopias of Ayn Rand show the same distrust of social control, albeit in a very different political context.

6 Snodgrass 498.

mechanized, while others flourish when they are mechanised or bound inseparably to technology (to profit from which the average citizen always has to give up something in dystopia, Snodgrass asserts).[7] This distinction is closely bound to Marshal McLuhan's understanding of media as extensions of man's different faculties:[8] classic dystopian fiction is generally biased towards visual thinking, or sequential typographical tradition more particularly, and distrustful of media that have less sequential nature and/or are extensions of another sense or senses.

No discussion of literary utopia, whatever its focus, can avoid discussing Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), two novels that define the very genre of dystopia in public understanding. The fact that this paper focuses on the depiction of media, a phenomenon that developed particularly rapidly in the course of the 20th century, naturally calls for complementing the two novels, only divided by seventeen years, by both later and earlier works. The changing literary reflection of said development can thus be followed along with its close connection to politics: in McLuhans words, "[a]ny understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without the knowledge of the way media work as environments."[9] The limited space of the thesis necessitates that only two more works are dealt with extensively, *When the Sleeper Awakes/The Sleeper Awakes* (1899/1910) by H.G. Wells, marking the beginning of the century and falling into the period that Wells is most remembered for, and *V for Vendetta* by Alan Moore and David Lloyd (1988), a post-modern graphic novel engaged in the debate on media by its very form.

Each of the texts represents a strong, original vision, a fact this paper acknowledges by treating them separately for the most part. Apart from theoretical texts appropriate for the interpretation of individual novels, works by media theoreticians and philosophers provide a

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7 Snodgrass 499.
8 Marshal McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (The MIT Press, 1984).
9 Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium Is the Massage* (Ginko Press Inc., 2001) 26.

more general background, featuring most prominently in the first chapter, where a number of concepts is applied to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as the most well-known example of the dystopian genre. In later chapters (the second, dealing with Orwell's predecessors, and the third, dealing with his successors), these concepts are present rather implicitly and references are made to their more extensive treatment in the first chapter; it is perhaps the wide oeuvre of Marshal McLuhan that re-appears most constantly. The analysis also makes use of historical and biographical sources that no interpretation of overtly political writing can avoid, even if it professes to be primarily text-based.

1. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

It has been postulated in the introduction that dystopian novels depict certain hierarchies of media according to their perceived merit, often connected with the degree of mechanization, and the very first chapter of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* provides a very illustrative case in the point by representing wide variety of media, bringing them into direct confrontation and presenting the impact the mechanisation of society has had on them. The "telescreens" are a medium that pervades the society of the novel the most and are usually understood as Orwell's extrapolation of what the newly emerging TV broadcasting might evolve into. The social machine has made the telescreens ubiquitous to such an extent that when the electrical current is cut off artificially "in preparation for Hate Week", the telescreens remain on,[10] an unquestioned, permanent part of the world of the novel. It is, however, worth noting that the real horror of the telescreen is not the images it transfers, but the sound. The image can be "dimmed",[11] perhaps to give people an illusion of freedom and control over the machine; this can be allowed, as they are all the same required to keep their eyes off screen to do work and as simple looking away would serve the same purpose. The sound, however, can only be "[sunk] somewhat", leaving the words "still distinguishable"[12] and keeping "every citizen […] for twenty four hours a day […] in the sound of official propaganda."[13] With the exception of the "Two Minutes Hate",[14] very little description of the telescreen images is provided throughout the novel – in terms of visual propaganda, much more space is given to various posters, and it is not the images, but the sounds the telescreens produce that serve to characterize them. This characterisation is for the most part found in the first third of the novel, where the dismal nature of future Britain is portrayed and corresponding qualities are

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10 George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Penguin Student Editions, 2000) 5.
11 Orwell 2000, 5.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid. 186.
14 Ibid. 13-19.

ascribed to the telescreens: the sounds they produce are annoying ("hideous, grinding speech",[15] "ear-splitting whistle",[16] "shrewish voice",[17] "piercing whistle",[18] "the telescreens bruised your ears",[19] "brassy female voice" seems to "stick into [Winston's] brain like jagged splinters of glass"),[20] inconsistent and vague ("babbling away",[21] referring to the telescreens' sounds as "stuff",[22] the same word used elsewhere to describe distasteful food),[23] distracting ("with the voice from the telescreen nagging at his ears he could not follow the train of thought further"),[24] impersonal almost to the degree of natural elements (words and music "stream out",[25] "pour out",[26] "trickle"[27] from the telescreens). The resulting distraction does not only concern hearing, but all man's capacities: Intense stimuli of particular senses trigger defensive mechanism of overall numbing, as McLuhan observes.[28] [29]

The last set of items in the list provides another illustration of how integral a part of the world the telescreens have become, and as a whole, the list substantiates the overall spiteful way in which they are portrayed: they have no redeeming quality, no subversive use, and provide an ideal vehicle of propaganda that does not need to be re-written, unlike newspapers, and that exploits recipient's emotional response instead of cognitive faculties. In his *Orwell's Revenge: 1984 Palimpsest*, Peter Huber provides exhaustive evidence that in Orwell's thinking, this negative view extends to all electronic media, telescreen being an obvious

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15 Orwell 2000,. 13.
16 Ibid. 31.
17 Ibid. 35.
18 Ibid. 59.
19 Ibid. 68.
20 Ibid. 93.
21 Ibid. 6.
22 Ibid. 55.
23 e.g. ibid. 104, 111.
24 Ibid. 94.
25 Ibid. 55.
26 Ibid. 55.
27 Ibid. 259.
28 McLuhan 1984, 31.
29 A device picked up later by Kurt Vonnegut in his short story "Harrison Bergeron"; Orwell's variant is more devious in that it does not only disrupt though by bursts of random noise, but by incessant propagandist attack on subconsciousness. Kurt Vonnegut, "Harrison Bergeron", *Welcome to the Monkey House* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1998) 7-15.

embodiment of "the logical end of the machine age", in fact "the phonograph, film camera, and radio transmitter rolled into one".[30] Two years before the publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Mark Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno expressed similar distaste in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* when they described television as "synthesis of radio and film" that betrays "thinly veiled identity of all industrial products" and ideologically homogenized discourse this identity effects.[31] Yet, Huber acknowledges, "[r]adio is the worst of all" for Orwell,[32] which biographical interpretation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* could be further supported by Hitler's own emphasis on the speech being a capable agent of social change as opposed to written media.[33] Mainly, however, Huber's remark brings us back to the notion that the telescreen has more in common with the radio than with television, and that, by extension, Orwell's depiction of modern media, for all its surface futurism, does not portray them in context of post-war media-scape, but rather historically or regressively. This can be further exemplified in the way Orwell's depiction of cinema and "Two Minutes Hate" resembles anecdotal accounts of people over-reacting when first confronted with film projection.[34] The films screened in Oceanian cinemas also resemble "the cinema of sensation" in that they are virtually non-narrative, the little story they retain being told through imagery, the sound only added for effect.[35] While this might be reflected upon as just a part of the overall "dumbing down", the fact would remain that unlike text-based media, the more technologically advanced ones are not ascribed redeeming qualities in the text. In wider context of Orwell's writing, it cannot be said that he never admitted the possibility of positive use to electronic media, but when he did, as in "Poetry and the Microphone", it was usually in passing and

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30 Peter Huber, *Orwell's Revenge: 1984 Palimpsest* (Free Press, 1994) 24.
31 T. W. Adorno, M. Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* trans. J. Cumming (London: Verso Books, 1997), cited in: Paul A. Taylor and Jan Ll. Harris, *Critical Theories of Mass Media: Then and Now* (Open University Press, 2008) 80.
32 Huber 24.
33 Paul Heyer, *Harold Innis*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003. 46
34 Stephen Bottomore, *The Panicking Audience?: early cinema and the `train effect'*, Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1999. 197-216
35 Orwell 2000, 11.

immediately qualified by remarking how entwined with "bureaucracy" the new media are from their very beginning,[36] while journalism is being bureaucratized slowly and from "the lower reaches".[37] He was horrified by the "factory process"[38] through which electronic media come to being and in which individuality is replaced by mechanization, and as a socialist, he was suspicious of the capital needed to produce and disseminate new media[39] (interestingly enough, Orwell mostly feared the capital in the hands of governments, while corporate power is a phenomenon also only mentioned in passing).

It is the printed or text-based media, then, that are most clearly damaged by mechanisation. As already mentioned, daily newspapers differ form telescreen news in that they have to be constantly re-written to comply with the momentary stance of the Party, which begs the question: Why are old newspapers kept, or indeed why do newspapers still exist as a medium? Rather than following his society into utmost conclusions, Orwell's purpose here seems to be poetic, all the more so when we note how little he hesitated to leave out significant or emerging technological and social phenomena of his time, like automobile or telephone (not even present as McLuhan's "status symbol" of Soviet Russia).[40] Their absence is not an oversight, but a crucial measure taken by the Party and provoked by its understanding that consumers of media are not empty vessels, an insight that can be read in the light of John B. Thompson's *Media and Modernity*.[41] Perceiving them as such would represent a stronger form of the oft-repeated[42] idea that every dictator dreams of his subjects being "tabulae rasae" of empirical philosophy, as it would portray them as boundlessly

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36 George Orwell, "Poetry and the Microphone", *Such, Such Were the Joys*, http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/o/orwell/george/o79e/part19.html, 17 August 2010.
37 George Orwell, "The Prevention of Literature", *The Orwell Reader: Fiction, Essays, and Reportage*, ed. Richard H. Rovere, Harcourt, Brace, 1956. 291
38 Ibid.
39 "Poetry and the Microphone"
40 McLuhan 1984, 213.
41 John B. Thompson, *Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* (Polity Press, 1995).
42 e.g. Steven Pinker, "The Blank Slate, the Noble Savage, and the Ghost in the Machine", The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, delivered at Yale University April 20 and 21, 1999. 201 (23 in document pagination) http://www.tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/documents/pinker00.pdf

manipulable by media in every stage of life, not just during the formative years. Against this understanding, Thompson cites studies that explored different reactions to media contents according to recipients' background and concludes that contents' creators cannot control every possible context of reception and therefore the precise impact of their product. Whereas Thompson ends on a cautiously optimistic note, Orwell's totalitarian state seems to follow similar train of thought in an opposite direction: Where simple dissemination of propaganda is not sufficient to create and maintain desired social structure, a cooperation of coercive mechanisms is necessary to narrow down possible contexts of reception.[43] The first condition is the restriction of free movement, hence the absence of cars in Oceania that leaves citizens reliant on state-run bus lines[44] and railways and on "community hikes"[45] under incessant surveillance of others. The society is topographically rigid, maintaining separated quarters for Party Members and Proles and becoming suspicious of anyone who roams out of their usual way.[46] The telephones would not pose a direct danger, as the technology itself would of necessity rest on state-owned, interceptable lines, but as a participatory and dialogic medium, they would represent a hazardous exception in Oceania, where any mediated communication is kept one-way, clearly separating consumers from producers. This separation which, of course, also reflects the division of power, has perfected the control over perception context to such an extent that producers and consumers have interchanged their respective positions as to the gathered amount of information. Media, Thompson alleges, make structures of power visible to heterogeneous viewing public whose exact structure, on the contrary, remains unknown to those depicted in the media.[47] In Oceania, the exact opposite is true, because the combination of rigid, predictable social structure with two-way telescreens has made each

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43 The division of Earth into three blocks is possibly motivated, in part, by the desire for easier control of smaller and more homogeneous populations.
44 Orwell 2000, 75.
45 Ibid. 122.
46 Ibid. 75.
47 Thompson 5.

consumer entirely known to those in control of media without their knowing who is watching and, by extension, who is the producer of received messages. This is not only true of mass-media, but of any vertical transfer of information in the social hierarchy: at work, Winston receives his tasks on anonymous, semi-ciphered slips of paper, delivered via "pneumatic tube".[48]

The described control of context clearly means mutilation of any empowering aspects of new electronic media and relapse into earlier, less democratic forms of communication, as characterized by Walter Benjamin in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". To describe controlled context of perception, Benjamin uses the term "aura", defined as "contextual integration of art in tradition [that finds] its expression in the cult";[49] the cult function of art can acquire new forms, but never disappears entirely as long as some form of aura is maintained (Orwell: "A totalitarian state is in effect a theocracy").[50] Mechanical reproduction destroys aura and thus enables a work to expand beyond its original context and enter new and unpredictable constellations of meaning. For centuries, woodcuts and later printed texts were unique in dispensing with aura and have firmly imprinted themselves as such in the mind of literate and literary public, adequately explaining why, in classic dystopian fiction, their re-instating into the frame of aura is most prominently emphasized as corruption when compared to more recently emergent electronic media. Benjamin himself explicitly describes the renewal of aura as a technique of totalitarian control, drawing distinction between fascism, which renders politics aesthetic, and communism, which "responds by politicizing art".[51] This difference could seemingly be used to distinguish between different dystopian texts on the basis of which system they extrapolate, a debated issue in the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but stable totalitarian society depicted in

48 Orwell 2000, 36-37.
49 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1969) 223
50 Orwell 1956, 371.
51 Benjamin 241.

the novel could in fact be a final stage of either: Both aim for total identification of communication, aesthetics and politics, so that what can be communicated must of necessity be ideologically correct and *therefore* beautiful. Both Orwell[52] and Benjamin[53] conclude that such a stabilized society has to stimulate masses by fighting against an external enemy unless it seeks to endanger its own structure. For Benjamin, this is the reason behind fascist imperialism; in Orwell's world, even the risks of war have become just an illusion maintained for the sake of stability.

Orwell himself was aware how strongly his thinking springs from post-renaissance literary milieu, and when imagining a possible end of "liberal culture", he acknowledged that "a new kind of literature", untruthful and non-individual, may arise, but that its character is not imaginable at the moment.[54] Therefore, dystopian writers can only extrapolate the decline of known forms of media as it takes place during first generations under totalitarian rule, and from Orwell's perspective, this extrapolation is also writers' proper function, considering his strong accent on the social impact of literature.[55] In "The Prevention of Literature", he seems reluctant at first to divide literature into categories, making it synonymous with printed media at large, but later in the essay, he gradually treats prose, poetry and journalism more distinctly, providing a list of different kinds of authorship ordered according to the succession in which they are "crippled" by "the destruction of intellectual liberty": "the journalist, the sociological writer, the historian, the novelist, the critic, and the poet".[56] Let us examine the reflection of this sequence in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and determine at which point the society of Oceania has arrived.

The "crippling" of particular kind of authors does not necessarily translate into

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52 Orwell 2000, 167-180.
53 Benjamin 241.
54 Orwell 1956, 376.
55 "[L]iterature is an attempt to influence the viewpoint of one's contemporaries by recording experience." Orwell 1956, 373.
56 Orwell 1956, 376.

diminishing impact of their medium. Journalists are the first victims, but according to "Prevention of Literature", newspapers themselves, unlike belles-lettres, will only be replaced when "television technique" reaches "a higher level"[57] (therefore, their existence in the world of perfected telescreens is probably anachronistic and poetically motivated, as pointed out before). The medium, however, is mutilated long before its ultimate demise, deprived of its very nature, which lies in the way it constantly adds new information to those previously brought and in the way it constantly shifts its focus to reflect changes in the external world. This flow and juxtaposition is not exclusively diachronic, but also synchronic: According to Marshall McLuhan, the distinguishing quality of newspapers is their variety and inconsistency, the mosaic of life made visible on the page that makes it "inseparable from the democratic process".[58] To Orwell, this synchronic impact of the very form of newspaper is negligible or non-existent, as witnessed by his denunciation of undoubtedly mosaic "rubbishy newspapers containing almost nothing except sport, crime and astrology"[59] and aimed at the Proles. The adjective "rubbishy" is telling, because it creates a rift between the tabloids and The Times, the only Party daily mentioned (and possibly existent), the contents of which thus acquire a more elevated status, despite all unsympathetic portrayal. The Times are not despicable for their subject matter (political caricatures,[60] news,[61] analysis[62] and forecasts or "prophecies",[63] as far as can be gathered) nor for the fact that they invariably express a fixed, non-diversified point of view, but for the fact that this point of view does not reflect writers' true individuality and the reality of the world. This observation is in line with the book's sympathetic depiction of individualist, literary culture, as it is precisely the literary men who, according to McLuhan, demand that newspapers "present a fixed point of view on a single

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57 Orwell 1956, 376.
58 McLuhan 1984, 209.
59 Orwell 2000, 41.
60 Ibid. 70.
61 Ibid. 134.
62 Ibid. 71.
63 e.g. ibid. 39.

plane of perspective".[64] In *Understanding Media*, the origin of this demand is traced back to pre-telegraph journalism of Tatler and Spectator,[65] consistently with Orwell's admitted post-renaissance frame of reference and his admiration of Swift, Tatler's contributor. Returning to their diachronic aspect, newspapers can also be said to serve as a reminder of the changes in society and its contemporary focus and to provide a possible way of tracing these back in the archives. The Party can have no use for such a reminder in an unchanging, and indeed timeless (Winston cannot tell his own age nor what year it is with certainty)[66] world it seeks to create, and neither for journalists who could reveal the real nature and purpose of this changelessness: the press has lost its function of an institution that seeks for the truth regardless of what the current government claims it to be.

The fact that the Party was able to do away with time could be said to represent an end of history in Hegelian terms. In the view of Harold Innis, also picked up and modified by Marshall McLuhan, there are two basic types of media that denote a particular "bias" of a given culture: time-biased and space-biased. The former are "durable",[67] "heavy and unwieldy"[68] media, "such as stone, clay and parchment", which favour "decentralized, hierarchical societies governed by a ruling theocracy", the latter, "such as papyrus and paper", favour "expansionist empires […] maintained through the administrative efficacy of these portable and inexpensive media".[69] A society is stable as long as the two concerns are in balance, Innis alleges, otherwise its collapse is inevitable, a process witnessed earlier or later in any society. As it would seem, however, the Party has achieved the final synthesis and equilibrium: On one level, its use of space-biased media like telescreens and newspapers has led to an absolute abolishment of time and to perfect bureaucratic centralization, but the

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64 McLuhan 1984, 206.
65 Ibid. 204.
66 Orwell 2000, 10.
67 Heyer 46.
68 McLuhan 1984, 17.
69 Heyer 46. Heyer himself connects Innis to Hegel for "trac[ing] a theme […] through successive stages in the realization of its possibilities" (50).

expansionist ambition associated with it is purely illusory. The Party only seeks to hold its existing territory and propagate its power in time instead, a fact not witnessed in its use of mass-media, but of the "unwieldy" materials like "glittering white concrete"[70] of the Ministry of Truth. The time-bias of this building, however, also does not lie in its capacity to preserve information over extended periods of time, but simply in its imposing brutality. The building is an empty signifier, mirroring the "power" that lies at the core of the Party's existence and is not essentially attached to any particular ideology.

In removing instability and fusing the most suitable aspects of two mutually antithetical phenomena, Orwell's Britain seems to echo Karl Popper's contemporary observation about Hegelian roots of totalitarian thinking.[71] The motif of power for its own sake could be reformulated in connection with media if we follow the empty signifier on another level: Light bulbs, "a medium without a message"[72] in McLuhan's words, are used in the cells of the Ministry of Love to eliminate natural difference between day and night. By using them so, the Party again abolishes time and draws attention to its own absolute power without spelling out any ideology. Framed in terms of John Thompson's distinction established in *Media and Modernity*, the Party is not concerned with seizing a monopoly of one kind of power (political, symbolic, economic or coercive)[73] and giving it precedence over the other ones, as, for example, when leftist thinkers like Guy Debord see a foregrounding of economic power under capitalism. Rather, the Party seeks for power without further attributes.

It has been stated above with reference to newspapers that Orwell perceives honesty, individuality and social responsibility as defining qualities of literature. To show how this function has been destroyed in belles-lettres in the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell borrows an image from *Gulliver's Travels*, the "book that has meant more to [him] than any

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70 Orwell 2000, 7.
71 Karl Popper, *Open Society and Its Enemies* (Routledge, 2003) 30-88.
72 McLuhan 1984, 7.
73 Thompson 12-18.

other book ever written".[74] Namely, he recontextualizes Swift's Laputian "thinking machine" that allows anyone to write "books in philosophy, poetry, politicks, laws, mathematics, and theology, without the least assistance from genius or study" by means of mechanically rotating pieces of wood with individual word written on the sides.[75] Orwell's "big kaleidoscopes",[76] however, do not share the grand, if ridiculous aim of Swift's machine and the baroque contraptions they satirize, that is, creating new ideas or at least inspiring them: it only serves the task of producing mind-numbing literature, not allowing in the slightest for creativity and fantasy[77] (only sentimental songs[78] and pornographic literature[79] distributed to the proles is explicitly said to be created this way, but there is no reason to doubt other forms of trivial literature for different audiences are manufactured by similar means). The fact that there only are six distinct plots ironically echoes the saying that "there are only [n] plots in the world", commenting on it as mechanistic and reductionist. In Orwell's vision, this reduction is part of the Party's tactics against individual creative pursuit, as even "the literary"[80] are only allowed to polish the "roughed-in"[81] plots of the novels, just as all Winston's creative input in his job lies in acceptable rendering of new official illusions delivered to him; he is not even allowed his own personal style, but rather is granted his position for being able to write in the "familiar style"[82] of official communication. Again, the lost connection between an individual author and the text is highlighted by the use of a "speak-write", a machine that further de-

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74 George Orwell, "An Imaginary Interview", *Orwell: The Lost Writings* (Arbor House, 1985) 112.
75 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Book Sales, Inc., 2009) 174.
76 Orwell 2000, 97.
77 One of Orwell's debts to Zamyatin's *We*, in which the whole system for destructing human fantasy is minimized into a form of a device called "The Bell", which simply and quickly removes the undesirable quality by means of oxygen deprivation. (Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We* [Eos, 1999] transl. by Mirra Ginsburg, 79.) Orwell, however, opined that "the amputation of the soul *isn't* just a simple surgical job […] The wound has a tendency to go septic." (Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, 3 vols. [New York, 1968] II, 15-16, quoted in: Gordon B. Beadle, "George Orwell and the Victorian Radical Tradition", Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies, Vol. 7, No. 4 [Winter, 1975], 296.)
78 Orwell 2000, 97.
79 Ibid. 119.
80 Ibid. 119.
81 Ibid. 97.
82 Ibid. 44.

problematizes the state's task by lowering the citizen's functional literacy, the likelihood of keeping subversive records and by bringing the spoken language close to the written one, as the very name of the machine suggests. When Julia hand her note to Winston, it is not only its content that renders it subversive, but also the fact that it has been scribbled by hand (an "unformed" hand).[83]

It is interesting to note that Newspeak does not adapt a fully phonetic system of writing, thus still rather unnecessarily preserving two distinct forms of language, the written and the spoken one, but this seeming negligence on the Party's side reveals itself as possibly well thought out if considered in the light of Marshal McLuhan's theory of phonetic writing. To him, adoption of such an alphabet in a society results in "a division between sight and sound"[84] and creates a visually inclined (or "biased") society, and it is precisely this division that allows for an existence of a highly centralized state, not only by allowing efficient bureaucracy, but also by "repressing [...] feelings and emotions when engaged in action"[85] and not least by "sacrific[ing] worlds of meaning",[86] narrowing the possibilities of interpretation and ensuring a particular impact of distributed contents – precisely the quality Newspeak seeks to perfect. Phonetically inclined society, on the other hand, would by nature be far more inclusive, empowering and participatory ("tribalized"). Both Orwell and the Party need to approach the phonetic alphabet cautiously, however, because before it created the "paradox of the mass mind",[87] it was its very emergence that promoted individuality, introspection and demand for privacy, qualities Oceania's regime seeks to eradicate.

What disappears from Oceania's literature along with the concept of authorship[88] is the

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83 Orwell 2000, 99.
84 Ibid. 90.
85 McLuhan 1984, 75.
86 Ibid. 73.
87 McLuhan 1984, 98.
88 Unfortunately, Orwell does not inform the reader whether fictional authors are invented for the novels, as they are in 1954 TV adaptation; either case would provide interesting grounds for further interpretation. (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, prod. Rudolph Cartier, dir. Rudolph Cartier, 1954, 47 min. 30 sec.)

idea of literature as a personal communication device: one side of this communication has been undone and replaced by its ever-repeating, mechanic parody. A text does no longer bridge its author and the reader, but becomes a mere tool of social control, which is also true of texts that appear subversive in their contents. Winston is allowed to project his ideas of what a book should be into the "Goldstein's Book": It has an identifiable, individual author (Big Brother and Goldstein are indeed the only two remaining figures, or rather personas, to whom the official version of reality still ascribes considerable individual vision); it provides its own vision of reality clearly and without resorting to doublethink; among its readers, it constitutes a community of people based on critical reflection of the world; its contents remain unchanged. The disillusion that ensues springs as much from the fact that not all of these points are true as from the realisation that some are, but have been appropriated by the official machine to its own ends; the book is in fact a careful mix of self-evident facts, accurate description of the new world order and false hints at the possibilities for revolution, designed to identify potentially problematic citizens, a circulating image functioning as a bait.

The perversion of the nature of the books goes further: The very history of the world is compared to an eternally vandalized palimpsest,[89] in which metaphor the crucial connection between the destruction of typographical society and civilisation in general is highlighted. Also, if there is a single symbol of the coming world of perfect stability and zero dissent, it is "the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak Dictionary":[90] The world of Big Brother still constitutes a particular kind of what Foucault describes as "modern" episteme in *The Archeology of Knowledge*: "doublethink" provides a specific tool of consolidating two contrasting pieces of knowledge. The Dictionary, however, will provide a single authoritative table of correspondence between concepts and words, thus causing a regress into a

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89 Orwell 2000, 38.
90 Ibid. 46.

particularly rigid and totalitarian form of "classical" episteme.[91]

To come full circle to the initial scene from which this treatment of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has started: It was shown that Orwell expresses distrust of all media, some because of their suitability to broadcasting propagandistic and stultifying material, some because of their degradation by mechanistic production (even "the invention of print" is a corruption of writing and "made it easier to manipulate public opinion").[92] Winston's confirmation of self, his expression of his hate for the Big Brother, therefore comes via the lonely medium of a journal. Winston reflects on the impossibility of reaching anyone through his notes, later to find almost any human communication impossible (he can not obtain any information from the old drunk;[93] he cannot properly share his anti-Party views with Julia); the act of writing a diary is therefore not communicative, but existential. Winston establishes his self and his medium in the struggle against propaganda: his first note in the diary is a mere reduplication of a trivial film in writing and of associated events and feelings he is supposed and pressed by the Party to feel,[94] but he later manages, by contrasting his own slogans and concepts against the official ones, to find his rebellious identity and create an original, non-derivative work. This is a crucial step in a world where the very notion of original is lost, removed not only by prevalence of endlessly copied works that only exist in multiplicity (telescreen broadcasts), but also by the removal of historical dimension that is necessary to establish the relationship between an original and a copy or a derivative (newspapers). Winston demonstrates individual thought in the world where the propaganda of the state seeks to replace it by mere mirroring of the social structure, which replacement is to be finished when Newspeak becomes the only language of Oceania and the social structure is defined in terms of the language its inhabitants use as a tool of thinking of it, which, rather than thinking, will be an eternal reduplication.

91 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language* (Pantheon, 1982).
92 Orwell 2000, 185.
93 Ibid. 81-84.
94 Ibid. 11.

This void in turn mirrors its counterpart at the centre of the social structure: while a figure of the leader and an ideological cause are supposed to represent this centre, there is in fact nothing but the eternally working mechanism of power without higher purpose.

In the end, the portrayal of media in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be condensed to an inventory of how quickly different media succumbed to totalitarian pressure and manipulation. Those with the widest impact were also corrupted from the very start, while those with narrower impact corroded slowly or were progressively marginalized. We encounter Winston in the very last moment before the completion of this process: The only empowerment media can still provide is short-lived individual liberation without prospects of reaching out to anybody. After this moment, the fusion of circulated images and social structure will become complete, seamless and invisible, just as Orwell's own style was probably invisible to himself when he did not realize that the conventional use of past tense in the "Appendix" could be ascribed significance and used to argue for ultimate instability of Oceania's oppressive system.[95]

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95 e.g. Margaret Atwood, "Orwell and Me", The Guardian, Monday 16 June 2003.

2. Before Orwell: Huxley's *Brave New World* and Wells's *The Sleeper Awakes*

With *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell knowingly joined earlier tradition of 20th century political fiction, his most prominent and immediate predecessor being Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, published in 1932. As already mentioned, Orwell himself further traced the line of influence to Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, but Huxley alleged a negative incentive and inspiration for his novel, stating that it "started out as a parody of H.G. Wells's *Men Like Gods*"[1] and thus rooting his work in a context that is at the same time less idiosyncratic and particularly British, as Wells looms as a crucial influence over much of the early SF writing. In order not to stray away from the topic, however, *When the Sleeper Awakes*[2] is chosen in this paper to represent Wells's fiction instead of *Men Like Gods*, as it is an example of author's more pessimistic pieces and can also be more directly connected to *Brave New World*. The two novels, for example, form a clear line with *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the way they introduce the reader into their respective worlds: While Graham, the Sleeper, is a man of his era who finds himself in a radically altered society upon his sudden awakening, Winston Smith is a man who awakens gradually to the realities of his world and is thus also gradually brought closer to the reader. In the *Brave New World* as the "transitional stage", both types of character are present with certain variations, The Savage as "an outsider" and Bernard Marx as "the awakened". Similar lines, however, cannot be drawn between the works in all aspects: The concerns of respective authors are sometimes so diverse as to forbid a trend from being

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1 Raymond Fraser, George Wickes, "The Art of Fiction No. 24: Aldous Huxley," *Paris Review* 23, Spring 1960: www.theparisreview.org/media/4698_HUXLEY.pdf 17 August 2010
2 Wells revised the novel in 1910 as *The Sleeper Awakes*. The theme of media is more overtly handled in the earlier version, but considering that the changes are minimal, or at least not as prominent as Wells himself suggested, and that copies of *When the Sleeper Awakes* are not readily available, the later version of the novel is used as reference. The few cases of significant differences are noted in footnotes with reference to Project Gutenberg e-text of the earlier version.

directly inferred, and sometimes the continuum in which the texts could be placed does not follow their chronology.

In *Brave New World*, the state's distrust of its citizens and its attribution of their bodies does not primarily take the form of imposing a rigid social structure, but of influencing the very development of the body so that it fits its future assigned position. Rather than relying on a situational context for correct reception of state propaganda, as Oceania does, the World State resorts to direct physical conditioning. This different way of context-control consequently allows for less rigid scheduling and control in later life and for citizens' easier access to vehicles and media: absent cars and telephones of Orwell's world are replaced by private air-travel and freely available telephony, a medium of personal communication not intrinsically connected with artistic or intellectual self-realization, but nonetheless participatory. Even in the world of pre-natal conditioning, however, media still play a great role in the education from a very young age, Huxley shows as he moves from "birth" to further stages of man's life. The most crucial element is hypnopaedia, the sleep-teaching realized by pre-recorded voices reading to sleeping babies (another example of controlled context, as the minds of children are more pliant than those of adults and as unconsciousness of the sleeper, as opposed to a wakeful person, can be shaped more directly and without defiance). Bernard Marx is doubly ironic about this method in his repeated remarks "[n1] repetitions with frequency [n2] at the age of [n3]":[3] he does not only remind himself and others of the training mechanism behind their innermost beliefs, but also puts a sarcastic twists to how automatic the reactions of people to conditioned events are – his own reminder comes with the same inevitability and seeks to reveal a twofold distrust of the society towards its citizens. Not only can they not be trusted to shape their own subconsciousness haphazardly and need to have it formed externally as soon as possible, but even those already thus

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3 Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (Bantam, 1968) 31, 62, 67, 153.

processed are not trusted enough to perform the task. Instead, to remove any possibility of error occurring, a record player is used.[4] In exploiting hearing as a channel of receiving language information that sleepers do not shut, it first introduces the reader to the omnipresence of sound that characterizes the World State as much as it later does Oceania.

Only young people are taught through repetition in their sleep, the whole society, however, rests on a minimization of the difference between a child and an adult: the children are encouraged to engage in "rudimentary sexual game"[5] from the youngest age, while the adults are pushed to spend their time in mindless games that serve to increase consumption. Even after hypnopaedic education, this lifelong state of sexually excited childhood is further upheld by auditory stimuli, as seen prominently in chapter five, where Bernard first takes Lenina dancing to a "newly opened Westminster Abbey Cabaret".[6] Here, the pairs dance to the music of "CALVIN SLOPES AND HIS SIXTEEN SEXOPHONISTS",[7] the very name of the band announcing a physical, rather than intellectual or aesthetic experience. The song being played is described in terms of sexual intercourse, saxophones starting like caterwauling cats and reaching "the little death […] a climax". Then, corresponding to post-coital bliss, the physical rapture abates and is replaced by blissful feelings of return to prenatal condition inside an embryo bottle.[8] In a situation fusing sex, infantility and musical elation, we are reminded of the escapist, irrational nature of such entertainment, as no character reflects on the dissociation of sex and reproduction even when the two phenomena are thus prominently juxtaposed. It is also worth noting how markedly the music of World State recalls jazz and its reception in Huxley's time, beginning with the choice of saxophone for the iconic instrument,

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4 Huxley 1968, 18.
5 Ibid. 20.
6 The "electric sky lights" of which outshine the stars, again a symbol of the empty medium of electrical light concealing natural order. (Huxley 1968, 50) In *The Sleeper Awakes*, sudden vistas of night sky are repeatedly used in a similar symbolic manner.
7 Huxley 1968, 50.
8 Ibid. 51.

continuing with apparently non-traditional rhythmic structure and loose tonality of the music,[9] and culminating with its connection to sensuous, spontaneous dancing. Here, the text joins contemporary voices denouncing jazz as "pathological, nerve-irritating, sex-exciting music"[10] and foreshadows Allan Bloom's denouncement of rock music's "one appeal only, barbaric appeal [...] to sexual desire".[11] This treatment is consistent with the general distrust of modern media, as McLuhan finds "hot jazz" a natural occurrence in the age of "hot new media of movie and radio".[12]

In the very following scene, the stupefying effect of music and escalated sexuality is again depicted very similarly, this time framed as a parody of Christian mass in which the effects of "the opiate of the people" are enhanced by an actual drug and which again ends in an orgy taking place in "the crimson twilight of an Embryo Store [...] foetal darkness".[13] This time, the participants are expected to sing along to the music instead of remaining passive recipients (the call and response, ecstasy-inducing songs recalling gospel music this time), but instead of actual creative participation, this fact is an illustration of Huxley's own thesis on music as found in *Brave New World Revisited*. There, he asserts that what "would be shameful for a reasonable being to write, speak or hear spoken", can, if set to music, cause "pleasure [...] and even [...] a kind of intellectual conviction"[14] in the same being (intelligent Alphas, in our case). Just as easily as hypnopaedic education, music also ingrains its message into recipient's mind and forms a Pavlovian "conditioned reflex" that ensures its recollection in particular contexts.[15] Both music and hypnopaedia rely on slogans, but the former has less direct political and organizational function; rather, in connecting itself inseparably to sexual excitement, it seeks to create a closed continuum of entertainment for World State citizens, a

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9   "Five-four rhythms", "a diminuendo sliding gradually, through quarter tones". (Huxley 1968, 51.)
10 Geoffrey C. Ward, Ken Burns, *Jazz: A History of America's Music* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2000) 79.
11 Allan Bloom, *The Closing of American Mind* (Simon and Schuster, 1987) 73.
12 McLuhan 1984, 19.
13 Huxley 1968, 57.
14 Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World Revisited* (RosettaBooks, LLC, 2000) 44.
15 Huxley 1968, 44.

continuum of perpetual enjoyment in which all pleasurable activities, including former "arts", only refer and lead to one another, forming a narrow, closed universe of gratification, in which "[feelies] mean themselves"[16] and lack any referent outside this tautology. In this world of freely available pleasure without boundaries, it is only natural that sexual relationships are analogically based on the idea that "every one belongs to every one else".[17] A condensed image of more direct role media play in maintaining social order comes in the fifteenth chapter, in which the Savage attempts to hold a public speech on freedom. When the police breaks in, they do not only pacify the crowd by drugs, but they utilise a "portable Synthetic Music Box"[18] prominently to drown Savage's words and calm the patients down, which is an interesting twist on the mechanics of power. If the feudal system is based on violence, the armed forces are used to heighten this violence when necessary; if drugs and mind-numbing media are the pillars of society, police primarily ensures order by these means.

World State's media and art are synthetic in two different senses. Firstly, to eliminate human error, their contents are reproduced artificially and mechanically, and although creating them is still a "delicate work",[19] the resulting pieces are rendered and broadcast by different synthesizers. It remains undisclosed whether even "a Voice [...] more musical than any merely human voice, [...] supernatural Voice"[20] is fully electronic, but it is decidedly at least artificially enhanced, and although unconcealed "sound-track rolls" are sometimes used instead of musicians,[21] The Sexophonists may or may not be using playback. At least the majority of their instruments is electronic, however, creating an effect of technological depersonalization, elsewhere connected to Huxley's present by referring to music machines as "Super-Wurlitzers",[22] granting the manufacturer of jukeboxes and player pianos a place in the

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16 Huxley 1968, 150.
17 e.g. ibid. 26.
18 Ibid. 146.
19 Ibid. 44.
20 Ibid. 55.
21 Ibid. 112.
22 e.g. ibid. 141.

eclectic pantheon of the World State. Secondly, the media of *Brave New World* are synthetic (or synaesthetic) in the way they seek to engage more senses at once. In the "feelies", his extrapolation of cinema, Huxley depicts a medium that not only assaults the sight and hearing, but also the sense of touch, and, by means of "scent organ",[23] also of smell. Recipients are so habituated to this sensory overload that even in private, they do not only keep broadcast media on, but commonly switch both television and radio on upon their coming home.[24] Here again the direct, holistic effect upon the body: cultural experience becomes similar to that of other physical activities, like sex and sport, and this blurring of boundaries serves to further debase all these activities by stripping them of their distinct purposes and functions. They are furthermore highly pervaded by technology, sex by "sex-hormone chewing gum" and the "vibro-vacuum massages" (the use of machines for sexual pleasure enhances the egoist dissociation of sex and human contact), sports like "obstacle golf" or "musical bridge"[25] by inventing ever more complicated tools, cinema by having its effect broadened to other senses. Biographically of note is the fact that only two years before finishing *Brave New World*, Huxley negatively reviewed *The Jazz Singer*, the first feature-length sound film. Laura Frost persuasively connects contemporary context and Huxley's biography with the contents of the novel and arrives at very similar interpretation to the one presented here. For example, she helpfully describes the physicality with which early silent films and later sound cinema are connected in contemporary writing, as well as frequent comparisons of their effects to the effects of narcotics.[26]

What Huxley's text explicitly upholds against synthetic media and culture associated with them is the culture of a book, represented by a volume of Shakespeare's collected plays. This symbol embodies several phenomena antithetical to the order of World State: tradition,

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23 Huxley 1968, 113.
24 Ibid. 62.
25 Ibid. 26.
26 Laura Frost, "Huxley's Feelies: The Cinema of Sensation in *Brave New World*", Twentieth Century Literature, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Winter, 2006), pp. 443-473.

emotional variety, markedly intellectual form and, not least, a chance to bring a particular sense (sight) into intensive focus (a book, although a medium secondary to Shakespeare's work, stands in sharper contrast to brave new world's entertainment than theater would). It cannot be said, however, that a coherent Shakespearean world-view is contrasted to the foundations of brave new world. It is indeed often noted that Shakespeare's work does not represent any such coherent opinion, but is rather admirable for the width and variability of its representation.[27] As a narrative element, the Savage is successful in voicing this multiplicity and making it an element of the novel, but as a character, he is finally not able to accommodate the demand that he, a single person, should in his self preserve all emotional variety of mankind; in other words, such emotional synthesis is impossible, as opposed to World State's all-devouring sensual fusion. The situation of the actual world is reversed here: Instead of persons experiencing particular feelings from the variety their discourse offers, a single person embodies this multiplicity against a unified society. Furthermore, the Savage is not only a stranger in cultural and spatial sense, both among the natives and the "civilized people", but also a traveler from typographical past who ironically ends his life precisely in loneliness and non-involvement that is, according to McLuhan, allowed by written media. The civilization he seeks to be a part of is that of varied individuals in Shakespearian interaction, and therefore unified World State offers no sense of belonging.[28]

Both in Orwell's and Huxley's novel, dystopian culture is contrasted to Shakespeare, the uncontested member of traditional British canon, and the texts themselves either depict a metamorphosis of canon in future society (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*) or entire disappearance of the concept (*Brave New World*). Neither state upholds canon for reasons E. Dean Kolbas distils from current defenders of its existence in *Critical Theory and the Literary Canon*: its

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27 e.g. Jerome Meckier, "Shakespeare and Aldous Huxley", Shakespeare Quarterly, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring, 1971), 134.

28 In contrast with this integral treatment of Shakespeare, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* only contains one mention of the dramatist after Winston wakes form a beautiful dream (Orwell 2000, 31); his utterance is hard to account for in the context of the novel.

importance for individual aesthetic experience (Harold Bloom) is undesirable in highly collectivist societies, while its definition by constant critical reassessment (Frank Kermode) challenges timelessness and fixed values. The upholding of social and moral virtues (Bennett, Cheney, Kimball, and Kramer)[29] might appear more desirable for rigid societies, but in *Brave New World*, prominent stress on a narrow selection of works would in fact run counter to the needs of constant distraction and production, and in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it could overly and undesirably emphasize the ability of media to fix information. Also the sense of history inherent in the idea of canon could prove dangerous to both societies, but nevertheless, Oceania seeks to "preserve the memory" of certain writers, namely "Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Byron, Dickens, and some others" for "prestige".[30] The Party's desire to anchor its teaching historically is understandable, as its version of history still retains at least three distinct, if vague eras, the present, the pre-revolutionary and "some dim period called the Middle Ages",[31] but considering the ease with which it can create false idols and erase actual persons, the tedious task of ideologically re-writing classical literature into Newspeak and thus pushing the "final adoption" of new language into 2050[32] appears unnecessary without further justification. Also considering that it is the text, rather than the state of Oceania, that ascribes special prestige to literature, the purpose again seems purely poetic.

In H. G. Wells's proto-dystopian novel *The Sleeper Awakes*, no reference to Shakespeare is found, but society's changing attitude to literature is also demonstrated on texts already available in the author's time. In one of its scenes, the main protagonist examines a machine in his room and thinks that what is described as "peculiar double cylinders" might be "books, or a modern substitute for books".[33] On closer inspection, the machine is revealed to be a kind of personal video-player, the cylinders being recordings labeled in "phonetic spelling", or

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29   E. Dean Kolbas, *Critical Theory and the Literary Canon* (Westview Press, 2001) 26-35.
30   Orwell 2000, 281.
31   Ibid. 89.
32   Orwell 2000, 281.
33   H.G. Wells. *The Sleeper Awakes* (W. Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1921) 60.

"mutilated English", the medium of film is said to have "fix[ed] the language",[34] just as the invention of printing did once (distinct class-accents survive, suggesting different media exposure). This description is reminiscent of Orwell's fears of language simplification and rigidity and suggests early on that the reader is presented with an inferior medium. Although the protagonist is clearly captivated by the machine, it is still referred to as "the latter-day substitution for the novel",[35] and its derivative nature is most clearly to be seen in the fact that the films the texts mentions are all adaptations of literary texts. Interestingly enough, the protagonist knows Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King", one of the adapted works, but observes that two other stories mentioned are "no doubt [...] by post-Victorian authors",[36] and, as such, were only created after his falling into a coma. Those stories, however, are *The Heart of Darkness* and "The Madonna of the Future", the former one first published some three years after the protagonist's falling asleep, still during Victoria's reign, and the latter not a post-Victorian story, but most probably a work of Henry James, published in 1873 and perhaps baffling the protagonist with its title to comic effect. The difference between Kipling and the other texts is further marked by Graham's evaluation of "The Man Who Would Be King" as "one of the greatest stories in the world",[37] while the film Graham plays (it is unclear which one the words "peculiar cylinder" refer to) is emotionally striking, but regarded with reservations, as witnessed in phrases such as "flashes of dubious enlightenment", "the end has been a tragedy that oppressed him" and evasive "its intense realism was undeniable",[38] a

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34 Wells 62.
35 Ibid. 61.
36 Ibid. 60.
37 An instance of the novels self-reflexiveness, as both the story and the novel are concerned with "study [of] what occurs to a man who finds himself moved from private to public life, that is, when such a man, hitherto a private person, is endowed with "powers and functions and rules,"" as Frederick R. Karl describes Wells's literary "plan". (Frederick R. Karl, "Conrad, Wells, and the Two Voices", PMLA, Vol. 88, No. 5 [Oct., 1973], 1054)
86   The connection is also supported by Graham's king-like role discussed below. Surprisingly, self-reflexive intertextuality is more prominent in Wells than in later, more modern texts hitherto analyzed, as further evidenced by the fact that Graham is "a Socialist" and an author of pamphlet including "one or two prophecies[,] some of them already exploded, some of them […] established facts" (Wells 24), a description by which the novel itself limits its prophetic aspirations.
38 Wells 61.

statement that should be read in light of Graham's later "I want reality […] not realism".[39]

The adaptation is also so modern that Graham does not uncover the Victorian origin of the story. Whether this means willful distortion of the original or just overt actualization is unclear, but either way, malleability of James's and Conrad's work is strongly suggested. Here, the text reflects Wells's assessment of the two writers as "powerfully receptive types" of "luminous impressions" who nevertheless "[start] off at a dozen points […] uncoordinated";[40] their presence in the future is a mark of Victorian literature's enduring influence, but, at the same time, betrays a slightly pessimistic view of the new society's taste.[41] Two hundred pages later, the stronger to suggest the power of media and expose Ostrog's licence, even Kipling's public image is distorted to represent him as a bard of Negroes.[42] His songs raise them to a blood thirsty frenzy, demonstrating that the distortion is not only a result of social change, but that, in turn, it also has the power to shape society and human character according to the distorter's agenda, as witnessed further when people are described as mimicking Babble Machines and picking up their slogans[43] or when Graham's glad remark on meeting "that type" of "manly fellow" is met with following ironic explanation: "Photographs and kinematographs[.] […] He has studied from life."[44] This might also be another hint at the novel's self-reflectiveness and distance from the narrator, as it suggests that Graham's knowledge of "that type" might also be only second-hand.

The theme of appropriation and re-interpretation of earlier stories is further seen in "an altered version of the story of Tannhauser",[45] itself a tale that draws attention to discoursive

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39 Wells 191. The fill quote is only present in the older version, the newer reduces it to the first clause, only resulting in a minor de-emphasis in the overall context of the dialogue.
40 Karl 1049.
41 Of "one entire side of the […] room […] set with rows of [cylinders]" (Wells 60), Wells only names the three and thus it cannot be determined by what system they are ordered and whether they all spring from Victorian models, let alone whether such situation would result from Victorian literature's eminence or from attempts to accommodate the Sleeper. The absence of books, newspapers or writing materials in the room indicates a shift in dominant media and places Graham in the role of a passive recipient.
42 Wells 200.
43 Ibid. 202.
44 Ibid. 149.
45 Ibid. 63.

change and that originated from historical distortion. Rather than advocating interpretative relativism, the novel treats art hermeneutically: metamorphoses of known stories provide Graham with clues to understand new society and at the same time, his own Victorian bias is exposed to the reader. In doing so, Wells escapes the danger of presenting his own era as overly ideal in contrast to the dystopian future: Graham feels "archaic indignation" over pornographic version of Tannhäuser's tale, being confronted with "no idealisations, but photographed realities",[46] meaning that new art is not only indecent, but have also resigned from artistic transformation to mere reduplication of actual world (again, an attack on realism). In his indignation, however, Graham "[forgets] the part played by the model in nineteenth century art", a qualification that works on several levels. Firstly, it negatively qualifies the amount of artistic idealization in average Victorian artist's work, secondly, it serves as a reminder of actual, indecent nudity taking part in creation of elevated paintings, and thirdly it draws attention to traditional understanding of artist-model relationships as lascivious and promiscuous. On all counts, it unmasks Graham's outrage as hypocritical, although justified. Nor is he the only character ascribing disproportionate virtues to media of his time: "The old man who knew everything" sets printed books he read as a boy against Babble Machines that are "easy to hear, easy to forget", correctly describing the lack of fixed information that simplifies state control, but wrongly assuming that the "histories"[47] he has read were necessarily accurate and that they have imparted infallible memory and power of reasoning to him. At the same time, unrealistic qualities can also be ascribed to historical eras by those who have no direct experience of them: Helen believes the flattering, chivalric account "old books" give of their times.[48] Under given circumstances, this provides a positive impulse (and Graham stops short of undeceiving her), but also hints at the high value which

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46   Wells 63.
47   Ibid. 110.
48   Ibid. 179.

systems of evaluation assign themselves.

The shifting and treacherous nature of signs also directly concerns the Sleeper and functions as one of the main driving forces in the story. Comatose, Graham enters the future as an unresisting signifier, used by the actual powers that be as a justification of their rule; their control over public perception of him is prominently seen from the imposing mausoleum in which he is exposed to visitors who are only allowed rarely, so that the impression does not become commonplace (again, totalitarian use of Benjamin's concept of aura). When Graham the symbol awakes, the control of meaning and context becomes increasingly difficult. Helpless Council attempts to gain time by isolating him, but in doing so, they only betray a possible discrepancy between their public claims and Graham's repressed self-expression. Freed thus from his previous context, he is quickly appropriated by Ostrog and turned into a symbol of resistance against the Council – repeated scenes in which he finds himself dragged into theater or onto a stage symbolize his passive role that repeatedly provokes him to ask: "Who am I?"[49] As Keith Williams writes in his analysis of the novel, the answer is unimportant to Ostrog, who only "wants the Sleeper as [...] a benign public screen for his repressive new regime" and a "'telegenic' persona […] a ubiquitous simulacrum".[50] Williams then proceeds to Graham's gradual self-assertion, in which he ultimately remains "ironically […] dependent upon mediated image",[51] as he needs to make his announcement by means of media previously exploited by Ostrog. Williams is correct in describing the text's and Graham's insight that "this unprecedented situation demands radical rethinking of the political persona and how it is projected",[52] but strangely traces the convergence of Graham's public and private self no further, despite the Sleeper's apparent uneasiness in face of camera lens being a logical stepping stone to the last two chapters. Graham's nervousness is described and

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49   Wells 85.
50   Keith Williams, *H. G. Wells: Modernity and the Movies* (Liverpool University Press, 2007) 78.
51   Ibid. 79.
52   Ibid.

makes it clear that adaptation to the life-long role of a public person with intense media presence would prove difficult or impossible for him. More importantly, however, it would prove hard to incorporate into the conceptual development of the story.

Throughout, Graham's role is compared to that of a king, not just explicitly by Ostrog, who sees Sleeper's position as that of a constitutional monarch in oligopoly.[53] Implicitly, the parallel is suggested by the novel's resemblance to folk tales of kings who restore their rightful reign or wake from magical slumber to rescue their nation. This similarity is noted by W. M. S. Russell, who infers it mainly from the final scene, comparing Graham's lonely aerial battle and ultimate demise to Saxon king's mythical fight with a dragon,[54] a parallel also accounting for Graham's ultimate demise. To illustrate the Sleeper's acceptance of king's role, Russell quotes his following sentence: "he who takes the greatest danger, he who bears the heaviest burden, that man is King", forgets to note, however, that the speech is qualified by "so the Master was reported to have spoken".[55] The relativization is crucial: In fact, Graham is shown to have given up on "his dream of empire"[56] as ultimately incompatible with his public announcement "All that is mine in the world I give to the people of the world."[57] To really empower the people, the ruler has to disappear, because otherwise a figure remains upon whom the ultimate power might be projected, reducing people's feelings of self-responsibility and enabling misuse of his symbolic power for crowd control. Graham's death, whether he seeks it or not (and if yes, whether consciously or unconsciously), thus becomes a political apex of the story. A call to individual responsibility and empowerment stands as the ultimate message of the novel, but whether this empowerment actually takes place at the end of the story is left ambiguous, as we have seen that people project ideas of kingship upon Graham even after his death.

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53   Wells 123.
54   W.M.S. Russell, "Folktales and Science Fiction", Folklore, Vol. 93, No. 1 (1982) 6.
55   Wells 248.
56   Ibid. 244.
57   Ibid. 240.

The Sleeper Awakes further abounds in motives that occur in later dystopian works and mark it as an eminent early text of the genre. These, however, were mostly analyzed already in regard to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Brave New World* and do not necessitate more than a cursory list with several further remarks. Literature, as already shown, has all but vanished, being reduced to empty tradition (Poet Lauerate who "of course" writes no poetry)[58] or famous names that give legitimacy to empty and emotionally manipulative, but "attractive" education of women, conducted by phonographs that eliminate both error and possibility of discussion.[59] The purposes modern art serves are either trivial (the art of painting has given way to the art of "face-painting"),[60] sedative (simple entertainment for the workers)[61] or distorted by fierce competition for people's attention (religion can only keep people's attention by abandoning its essence and competing for representation in media).[62] All non-private property, including tablecloth, is used to promote products and boost the economy.[63] Ubiquitous advertisement and entertainment serve the purpose of sensory overload and numbing, as evidenced by competing Babbling Machines (that only prominent people can switch off)[64] and by the use of prominent sensual stimuli against insurgents: guns defined by loud cracking, stroboscopic manipulation of light[65] (control over light is again a prominent evidence of rulers' absolute power). The Sleeper himself experiences the numbing effect of undiscriminate sensory stimulation.[66] The decline of art is used to signify passing time and change towards capitalistic dystopia (a painter who encountered Graham at the beginning of the novel later becomes an advertiser and covers the Cliffs of Dover with posters,[67] a

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58   Wells 148.
59   Ibid. 150.
60   Ibid.153.
61   Ibid. 181.
62   Ibid. 195.
63   Ibid. 199.
64   Ibid. 203.
65   Ibid. 92.
66   Ibid. 89-91.
67   Ibid. 19.

simulacrum that overlays reality). Electronic media have eliminated the dichotomy of center and periphery[68] and assembled the population in panoptical "prisons"[69] or "machines"[70] of cities. A distrust of music is suggested when Graham is without intellectual reflection both in turns swept away by a revolutionary song and charmed by music at a the banquet of the rich.[71]

In this chapter, motives common to depiction of media in British dystopian fiction have been traced back to the beginning of 20th century and different contexts into which these motives are integrated have been highlighted: Brave New World expresses concern about synthesis of different media and senses and suggests that each medium has a narrow, entelechial function beyond which it should not expand,[72] while The Sleeper Awakes, although the oldest of discussed works, is centrally concerned with current problems of sign appropriation, discursive change and interpretation frames. The next chapter shall explore these themes as they apply to a considerably more modern text of Alan Moore's V for Vendetta and examine what metamorphoses of earlier dystopian motives accompany their treatment.

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68   Wells 144.
69   Ibid. 178.
70   Ibid. 188.
71   Ibid. 156.
72   Frost 451.

3. After Orwell: Moore's and Lloyd's *V for Vendetta*

According to its writer Alan Moore, *V for Vendetta*, published between 1982 and 1989, was his first work to make him realize the full possibilities of comic book medium to convey "the layering, the levels of meaning"[1] and explore "larger issues" than those he and the book's artist David Lloyd had previously accepted "as par for the course where comics were concerned".[2] At the time of its writing, Moore, among other things an author of free-verse pamphlet denouncing government's homophobia,[3] professed the opinion that comic art should posses "relevance to the rapidly altering word" and be "useful".[4] Although he does not necessarily demand overt politicization from other genre writers, in the very beginning of his list of inspirations behind *V for Vendetta*, he succinctly claims his own allegiance to British tradition of political fiction, naming Orwell and Huxley as most prominent influences.[5] Especially in the light of the theme of this paper, this connection immediately draws attention to the fact that Moore's very choice of medium engages him in polemic with the two writers: even leaving general condescending view of comics at their time aside, Orwell's emphasis on artistic individualism runs counter to writer-artist cooperation common in comics, not to mention shared fictional universes of big companies that constitute the most noticeable part of genre output, while Huxley's stress on media purity would be offended by the coupling of narrative literature and visual art. Understanding Moore's art as a polemic with these positions would suggest that also within his narrative, written word will not be granted privileged position among other media; which, as will be demonstrated, is indeed the case. In *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud points out how our expectations of comics narrative

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1   Barry Kavanagh, "The Alan Moore Interview: V for Vendetta", Blather.net, 17 October 2000. 23 May 2010 <http://www.blather.net/articles/amoore/v1.html>
2   Alan Moore, "Behind the Painted Smile", in: Alan Moore, David Lloyd, *V for Vendetta* (Vertigo, 2008) 267.
3   Annalisa Di Liddo, *Alan Moore: Comics as Performance, Fiction as Scalpel* (University Press of Mississippi, 2009) 111.
4   Alan Moore, *Writing for Comics* (Avatar, 2003) 2.
5   Moore 2008, 270.

are influenced by our experience with other media and how comics can undermine these expectations and so draw attention to them;[6] in *V for Vendetta*, this preoccupation with different media is treated explicitly and is central to the story.

The mask of Guy Fawkes the main protagonist wears raises primarily theatrical connotations, but it also serves as a self-reflexive element in the narrative: McCloud points out how crucial faces are for reader involvement in graphic novels, comparing their depiction to masks in the way they amplify particular features and ascribing reader's sense of identification to the fact that people also perceive their own faces through "a sense of general placement", while highly detailed perception is reserved for faces of others and realistic art thus heightens a sense of detachment.[7] V's mask therefore becomes a metatextual invitation to identify with the character, but the possibility is at the same time thwarted by the immobility of the mask, its refusal to emotionally adapt to different contexts. Readers cannot rely on the internalized forms of identification and are required to integrate the unchanging sign into each scene anew. Their involvement becomes more open and intellectual, a demand bolstered on plot level by the novel's refusal to portray V as a stereotypically immaculate freedom fighter. The novel's strategy mirrors the one used by V himself in the plot: The protagonist also calls for involvement, this time political, and uses the mask to draw attention to qualities of particular medium, specifically theater.

V adopts his role with dedication of a Method actor, not even laying it aside when alone. On the very first page, we see him masking himself in his dressing room and from that moment on, he parts with his mask in one panel only, not before the reader, but before a woman he has injected with lethal poison.[8] By eliminating all records of his past and everyone who might betray his identity, he is able to completely disappear behind his role and force

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6 Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (HarperPerennial, 1994) 106.
7 McCloud 34-37.
8 Moore 2008, 75.

even the police not to act upon "who codename V is", but "*what* he is".[9] This signifies V's success in his professed intention to "remind them about melodrama, about the tupenny rush and the penny dreadful. […] [A]ll the world's a stage. And everything else... is vaudeville."[10] Only further in the novel does it become clear that in this monologue, "them" does not signify the leaders of totalitarian England, but its citizens. It were them that "abandoned their scripts" [11] as the fascist regime wrote its own, establishing a law of pretense (leaders as actors) and fixing citizens in their roles in society's Panopticon (citizens as actors). V seeks to draw attention to this veneer order that managed to establish itself as unquestioned, and therefore his direct attacks on state's representatives do not necessarily target the most powerful ones, but the pillars of regime's image. The kidnapping of Lewis Prothero, "the voice of Fate" (government computer), offers a twist on *Brave New World*: in the World State, seemingly human voices are in fact synthesized, while in V's Britain ostentatiously synthetic voices are in fact human. Once Prothero becomes unable to impersonate Fate, he must be replaced and the supposedly unerring foundation of government's power is revealed to be an act.[12] The following murder of child-molesting bishop Lilliman is another allegorically staged punishment of hypocrisy (he is deceived by V's disguised sidekick Evey and forced to celebrate a mock-mass), but more importantly, this time the manifestation of theatrical order by means of its disruption is not directed at the citizens, but at the authorities: The bored agents (spectators) who witness the scene via hidden microphones can no longer be sure of hearing the same "scripted" lines over and over again.[13] State's voyeurism is most explicitly turned against authority itself in the subplot concerning Conrad Heyer, the head of the Eye (secret service), whose doom is orchestrated by his own means and who is finally unable to

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9   Moore 2008, 79.
10   Ibid. 31.
11   Ibid. 31.
12   Ibid. 36.
13   Ibid. 55.

resist watching his own death on camera.[14]

V's most minutely chronicled theatrical performance is Evey's imprisonment in the middle of the story, in which he convinces her she is being held and tortured by the authorities. The purpose of the lesson (that takes the form of drama with its ultimate catharsis) is to demonstrate to Evey that the seemingly unbreakable oppression of the regime is also in fact only a constellation of dummies and tape-recordings (media in general) directed by a few people and that it can be recognized as such and overturned once a person affirms his or her own principles and individuality. At the time of Evey's imprisonment, V also intensifies his campaign to convey the same message to the whole society: He is able to hijack a TV broadcast and use state-run media subversively, a possibility both Huxley and Orwell (though not Wells) excluded from their worlds, as it would undermine their implicit hierarchies of media. The text of the chapter is solely provided by TV soundtrack, in which three major state channels (propagandist and fear-sowing news, xenophobic and lightly erotic adventure series, overtly erotic comedy) are replaced by V's video. The message of this substitution, it could be argued, lies primarily in the simple fact that it shows state's control to be fallible, secondarily in showing that the state's values and forms of representations are replaceable, and only then comes V's actual message of individual responsibility to challenge oppression. To highlight the impact of V's words, motif of cabaret stage connected with degradation and humiliation begins to feature prominently in the story from this point on, representing heightened sense of public oppression. Later, when V cuts off state's monitoring circuits, "the sets give way",[15] their destruction "creating a canvas of clean rubble where the creators can then build a better world".[16]

The word "canvas" is not randomly chosen, as the creative and artistic quality of

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14   Moore 2008, 256.
15   Ibid. 92.
16   Ibid. 222.

everyday life is crucial to V. As the first token of his successful suspension of government control, we see a young girl spray-painting a crude graffiti of V's symbol (referencing both Zorro and anarchists' circled A)[17] and a misspelled expletive;[18] government's system of signs gives way to viral circulation of symbols and tentative self-expression. Whereas in Huxley's and Orwell's work, the preservation of men's sensitivity is connected with preservation of typographical and literary tradition, in Moore's the protagonist preserves a far more eclectic variety of works and does not give precedence to written language. The same panel that first introduces us to his dressing room also shows us posters for several film comedies and horrors and a fraction of V's library that includes *Utopia*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Capital* and *Mein Kampf*,[19] and for the whole novel, similar mise-en-scène signals that V seeks to guard full variety of human experience against the regime that has "eradicated culture... […] All the books, all the films, all the music."[20] The Wurlitzer jukebox in V's Shadow Gallery[21] is another polemical Huxleian echo, but we also see V playing his own compositions on the piano; further glimpses of his library show Ian Fleming alongside Thomas Pynchon and Shakespeare;[22] V apparently possesses his own private cinema;[23] the incongruously traditional selection of paintings is complemented by film posters, and, on another level, by the very fact they are re-represented within a graphic novel. V's project does not only concern art, however, as witnessed by his patch of roses of a "strain that had died since the war"[24] – the 2005 film adaptation, for all the narrative and ideological liberties it takes with the original, makes this aspect even more apparent by having V cook and excellent food.[25]

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17 Carter Scholz, "In the New Dark Ages", The Comics Journal, September 1990: 59-64. Cited in: Madelyn Boudreaux: An Annotation of Literary, Historic, and Artistic References in Alan Moore's Graphic Novel, <u>V For Vendetta</u>, August 13, 2004. 23 May 2010 <http://www.enjolrasworld.com/Annotations/Alan%20Moore/V%20for%20Vendetta/V%20for%20Vendetta%20Revised%20-%20Complete.html>.
18 Moore 2008, 189.
19 Ibid 9.
20 Ibid. 18.
21 The brand is perhaps easiest to read on page 166.
22 Ibid. 18.
23 Ibid. 85.
24 Ibid. 63.
25 *V for Vendetta*, prod. Warner Bros., dir. James McTeigue, 2005, 31 min. 20 sec.

The totalitarian state does not only hold monopoly on power, but also on fullness of perception, meaning that in his fight for the restoration of human sensitivity, V also directly competes with the regime. The office of Adam Susan, the dictator, where all state surveillance interconnects in the Fate supercomputer, is referred to as "Head". The institutions under Susan's control respond to individual senses: police force is "Nose", secret police "Finger", camera surveillance is "Eye", wire-tapping office "Ear", propaganda is referred to as "Voice". [26] Susan, who is only shown leaving his office at the end of the novel, considers the whole state an extension of his body and all its faculties. This hypertrophy of McLuhan's understanding of media is indeed solipsist, as Susan's own inner monologue confirms shortly before his assassination: "I've known since childhood no one else is real." [27] His love for the Fate computer does not therefore only betray his techno-fetish and inability to establish human connection, bodily or otherwise, but finally reveals itself as self-love. V, on the other hand, who presents his hideaway as a symbol of unified human mind only a few pages earlier, stresses "romance" as a part of human heritage, [28] a part that is impossible to cultivate individually. When he reveals that he has in fact manipulated Susan's received data and his reality of "file cards" [29] for years, [30] V finally unmasks the illusory nature of narcissism and ostensible sovereignty of self that media enable when divorced from human contact.

Thus, V for Vendetta becomes a polemic not only with media hierarchies presented in earlier dystopian fiction, but also with overt individualism that lies at the core of Orwell's preference for written media. In its accent on human contact, Moore joins Huxley and his emphasis of Shakespearean variability of human personality, but instead of presenting modern and synthetic media as preventing individuality and social intercourse, he presents them as their important complement. The accent put on re-contextualization of symbols connects

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26   Moore 2008, 15.
27   Ibid. 232.
28   Ibid. 218.
29   Ibid. 218.
30   Ibid. 201.

Moore to Wells, their similarity further bolstered by the use of meta-textual elements that invite the reader to provide his own interpretations and not rely on those provided intratextually by characters. Seeing this strong connection between the oldest and the newest of analyzed texts, the conclusion must be that despite many shared motifs and concerns, the motifs of media in British dystopian fiction cannot be reduced to a linear sequence.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to trace the depiction of media in British dystopian fiction, or rather some of its most prominent landmarks. In its course, however, a need of eclectic approach became apparent, as each novel invited a different framework of interpretation, at least partly: H. G. Wells's *The Sleeper Awakes* fuses mythological elements with very current exploration of self-definition in the world of freely circulating media images, A. Huxley's *Brave New World* presents electronic media as dangerous to the proper balance of individual faculties of the human mind, G. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* prophesizes the destruction of an individual by ever-escalating state control of media, made possible by technological progress. A. Moore's and D. Lloyd's *V for Vendetta* adopts and re-imagines all these concerns in a post-modern, self-reflexive and metatextual manner. A more extensive selection of primary texts could possibly yield a clearer line of the theme's evolution throughout the 20th century, or at least succeeding or competing trends in its treatment, but the current, narrower choice bespeaks the considerable individuality of vision in the represented authors' works, even as they often address similar issues and engage in a dialogue by means of shared motifs and concerns.

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