

On George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

— Sight, Surveillance and Observation —

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Abstract George Orwell's *Nineteen-Eighty Four* (1949) is still considered one of the masterpieces of the twentieth century, even after the passing of 1984, the fictional year in which the story is set. The work originally gained acceptance as a near-future novel with some dreadful prophecies about the human race, but now it has become a 'near-past' novel. However, it has never lost its main feature: a universal warning to the human race. It is Orwell's warning to us not only in respect to politics, but to the whole of society. In this essay sight and observation are focused upon, among other aspects of the work, because these factors related to eyes are frequently found throughout the story. Furthermore, visual literary devices highlight different features, depending on the character involved, the central characters being Winston Smith and Big Brother: the object to be watched and the watcher. Drawing on thoughts from Michel Foucault, Jeremy Bentham and Jonathan Crary, this study on sight-related issues and observation in Orwell's work leads inevitably to questions surrounding the concept of humanness and the future of our modern societies enveloped by surveillance brought to bear through present visual technologies.

Keywords : George Orwell, *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*, sight, surveillance, observation

1. Big Brother and Room 101 : Surveillance and Panopticon

The protagonist of the story, Winston Smith, is living in the dark city of Airstrip One in the nation Oceania, using the real-life London as the set, in the fictional year 1984. Winston's and all the other Party members' lives are stringently observed and controlled by the Party and Big Brother, with the exception of the proles. Big Brother is an omnipresent figure who deeply permeates every person's consciousness by making each one constantly visually assaulted by posters plastered all around the city: "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU"⁽¹⁾. Above all, the Party's slogans "WAR IS PEACE / FREEDOM IS SLAVERY / IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH"⁽²⁾ strongly control the minds of citizens.

In this work, the world is divided into three, huge nations, Oceania, Eurasia, Eastasia, and they incessantly compete through military conflicts. The real situation in world politics is never revealed to ordinary citizens; only high officials of the Party, the privileged class, are privy. Although not a high official, Winston Smith is working at the Ministry of Truth continually altering official documents and records according to the Party's current objectives. Thought, language and sex are objects to be controlled, and each person's individual life is strictly watched through telescreens, interactive televisions set even in each housing unit.

Under this totalitarianism Winston starts to keep a diary, which is prohibited by the Party. In addition he begins a series of secret rendezvous with Julia, a wild, young Party member, at a small apartment refuge over a second-hand shop. Winston and Julia are arrested because of the shop-owner's betrayal and charged with having an intimate relationship, against Party policy. They are subsequently physically and psychologically tortured by the Party. Finally, each of them ends up succumbing completely to authority.

In Room 101, where Winston endures the harsh torture, he cries out to O'Brien, the one high official Winston believed he could rely on. After O'Brien's torture the story closes with Winston's tearful realization of his love toward Big Brother. Not content to end the book with that, Orwell attaches a carefully worked appendix that explains Newspeak, the official language of Oceania.

Big Brother is the leader of Oceania and his symbolic figure plays many roles in the work. Strangely, however, his origins don't seem to matter to anyone, partly because of the repeated falsification of history by officials, including Winston, so people mainly grasp Big Brother's vague characteristics just by looking at his eyes in the posters: "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own"⁽³⁾. Although the true nature of Big Brother is ambiguous, paradoxically he settles deeply in everyone's unconscious mind because of his ambiguity, and only Big Brother's eyes work to make his existence and control over citizens secure.

In the first place the name Big Brother connotes several meanings. It implies that he is very close to everyone, like a member of the family, without any suspicion attached. In that sense, to "WATCH" seems to give a positive impression, the same as a mother or father "look[ing] at or observ[ing] attentively over a period of time"⁽⁴⁾. On the other hand, another definition, "exercise care, caution, or restraint about"⁽⁵⁾, gives us the impression that it involves looking out for threatening strangers. The second definition of the verb "WATCH" can be transformed into the surveillance of society by authority. From that viewpoint Big Brother embodies authority watching citizens continuously and carefully, and under the totalitarianism of Oceania, such an environment functions to form a natural prison in which all the citizens are confined from the moment of their birth and throughout their lives.

This prison-like situation under totalitarianism deploying a modern surveillance network is in some ways comparable to the

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relationship between prison guards and prisoners. In *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), Michel Foucault argues about modernizing prisons' disciplinary characteristics, reflecting modern rationalism's respect for human nature, against the traditional understanding of punishment in penal tenure. He insists that prison authorities keep watch on inmates and that inmates be forced to obey. His argument emphasizes the power of observation itself and in his theory he refers to a panopticon, a surveillance system devised by Jeremy Bentham in the nineteenth century.

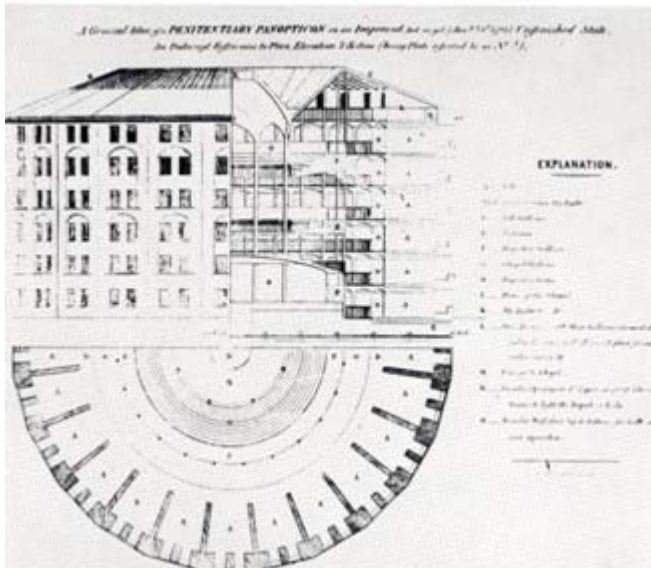


Figure 1: Jeremy Bentham. Plan of the Panopticon (*The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, ed. Bowring, vol.IV. 1843.172-3).

This system is based on an architectural structure in which a watchtower stands in the center and a circular building surrounds it. The prisoners are in the circular building's solitary cells with windows looking toward the watchtower. From the watchtower a beam of light is directed into each cell so that a supervisor in the watchtower can watch everyone. The converse is not the case, however, because inmates can't see the supervisors due to the intensity of the backlight.

This architectural system has been applied to modern schools, hospitals and so on. Bentham's design, when adapted to modern prisons, enables the people running it to keep watchers invisible to those watched and to make all prisoners continually visible to the watchers. As Foucault explains, if we employed this system in society as a whole, it would reverse the traditional pattern of transparency/privacy between state authorities and private individuals.

Traditionally, power was what was seen, that was shown and what was manifested and, paradoxically, found the principle of its force in the movement by which it deployed that force... Disciplinary power, on the other hand, is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen.⁽⁶⁾

In the past authority was visible to every individual, but as in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, now authority often manifests as some kind of vague figure, in a way an invisible one. In contrast to the past, individuals have become objects to be watched and examined

minutely, especially in totalitarian states. These individuals are expected to be as homogeneous as possible for the authorities' convenience and control. By depriving them of much of the power to observe, think and act as they like, authorities aim to build a stable social system. In Orwell *Big Brother* is "absolute power depending on mass powerlessness"⁽⁷⁾, and it is quite conceivable that if the masses were about to realize who the real figure of *Big Brother* is, he would collapse immediately with the entire social system. However, *Big Brother's* power proved beyond any one individual's capacity;

The hypnotic eyes gazed into his own. It was as though some huge force were pressing down upon you – something that penetrated inside your skull, battering against your brain, frightening you out of your beliefs, persuading you, almost, to deny the evidence of your senses.⁽⁸⁾

Although the complete image of *Big Brother* is ambiguous, his eyes are nevertheless always watching the citizens and they have to demur to his 'eyesight' even if their own senses of perception are distorted and damaged. By bending peoples' senses the authorities insidiously manage to manipulate them. Against this scheme Winston Smith begins to gradually differentiate himself from the others, and O'Brien, an informer for the Party, has been watching Winston's change for seven years.

Room 101 is the place inside the Ministry of Love where O'Brien disciplines Winston, trying to instill in him a 'love' for *Big Brother* through violent assault on both mind and body. From the viewpoint of Foucault, Room 101 would be functioning as a modern prison when considered part of a panopticon-like system of surveillance and control. However, to discipline prisoners by torture is what was done in the past; Foucault refers to public executions as a "spectacle". Indeed, O'Brien having observed Winston for the previous seven years plays an important part in making his torture techniques spectacular. Irregardless of which system, either traditional or modern, Room 101 falls into, Winston is forced into the homogeneous mold idealized by authority.

Even at the moment when Winston utterly succumbs, sight, an act of looking, takes on a crucial role:

'You are the last man,' said O'Brien. 'You are the guardian of the human spirit. You shall see yourself as you are. Take off your clothes.' ... He [Winston] had stopped because he was frightened. A bowed, grey-coloured, skelton-like thing was coming towards him. Its actual appearance was frightening, and not merely the fact that he knew it to be himself.⁽⁹⁾

From seeing how miserable he looks now, Winston weeps, but he does not yet abandon Julia to the same fate. The next torture is a primitive method, bringing a cage full of rats closer to his face. The horrifying vignette seen from Winston's point of view conveys to readers the depth of his fear: "Winston could see the whiskers [of the rat] and the yellow teeth. Again the black panic took hold of him. He was blind, helpless, mindless"⁽¹⁰⁾. This depiction ironically juxtaposes Winston being scared almost to death by the sight of the rats at his face with the implication that if he lost his sight, he would lose his mind. References to sight weigh heavy in this work not only by the appearance of *Big Brother* and Room 101, symbols of a panopticon and surveillance, but also by Winston's own sight that allows him develop as an

observer. Here we can see the prison's intermingled features seen in the past and present.

2. Winston Smith: A Lonely Observer

Why would Orwell choose Winston Smith to be the main character? In the first scene he seems to be a dull and weak person in his thirties living an ordinary life, just like other characters in the dark city being watched by Big Brother and the Party. As the story unfolds, he gradually reveals that he harbors a grand, secret ambition to carve out his own world by beginning to keep a diary in the corner of his room. It is impossible for the telescreen to watch what Winston is doing there, so he can enjoy his invisibility from Big Brother at least momentarily. Winston never tells anyone what he is doing against the Party and apparently just keeps living his life as an official and Big Brother's obedient citizen. In his mind, however, there is always some kind of tension brought on by his observation of outer life. This superior ability, above all, in Winston makes him outstanding as the hero of the work.

In this essay the act "to observe" has a certain significance in the overall examination of "sight" in the work. As Cray explains, the Latin "*observare*," the root of "observe", did not originally mean "to look at", but "to confirm one's action to comply with", as in observing rules, codes, regulations, and practices⁽¹¹⁾. As a result of the connotations of this multiplicity of definitions, it is not unreasonable that "observer" could delineate both characteristics at once: an observer of rules, codes, regulations, and practices. Turning to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with these primary definitions in mind, one sees Winston as an individual firmly embedded in a totalitarian society by no volition of his own. Taking this essential point into consideration at the beginning, it is an inherent condition for Winston to be already part of the surveillance society, although he still has a restricted ability to observe. He probably does not notice that he has been conditioned not to be very acute nor vigilant at the act of observation. In spite of the unavoidable fact that he is controlled even in his ability to observe, the facility nevertheless gradually develops, especially after he discovers someone he can trust.

In society in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, there are spies everywhere, so everyone must be alert as to how he behaves and what he says, even in his dreams. This horrible circumstance is shown most directly in an episode where Winston's neighbor Parsons is informed on by his little daughter to the Thought Police because of what Parsons said in his dream: "Down with Big Brother!"⁽¹²⁾ This phrase is exactly the same as what Winston had unconsciously written in his diary.

There are other important reasons why Winston's observation matters in the work. Firstly, in Oceania an individual's actions are severely limited, particularly actions accompanied by some movement of body parts, such as speaking or gesturing. Even an improper expression on the face under certain circumstances can invite the accusation of "*facecrime*", in Newspeak, and the person who commits it will be arrested. Certainly our eyes move when they follow a line of sight as we try to watch something, but this can be disguised more easily than other apparent actions of the body. Moreover, observation as well as thoughts based on it are manifested only in his mind. Big Brother can be vigilant at all time, but if people can indulge this solitary option of observation and introspection without letting any treacherous tendency show, they are safe. However, once people harbor distinctly forbidden thoughts based on their perceptions, it becomes almost

impossible for them to disguise their lives and not be noticed, since they are constantly exposed to other people using their own eyes, that is, their organs of observation.

To begin with, observation can't take place in a vacuum. It is an act based on one's existence embedded in a system⁽¹³⁾, and naturally, an observer who is an agent in observing can't exist isolated from the outer world and others. Observation in itself is different from the simple act of looking or watching. Observation leads to inner action, including objectification, examination, and understanding of the world, which forms the entirety of each individual's perception and thought.

Winston's observations appear throughout the story and they crucially determine his direction. Above all, for Winston observation is a means to seek connection with objects in the outer world. In Oceania, however, connections are strictly regulated in advance to those approved by the Party. Even choices relating to marriage are under the control of the Party. Winston once had a wife named Katherine, who was a strong supporter of the Party, but he doesn't know even where she is now. In his recollection of marriage life, he says to Julia that the relationship was without love.

When people want an individual connection with someone or something out of the Party's control, it easily veers into treachery against the Party. Also, connectedness in the story displays a wide range of types: firstly, it's between humans; secondly, between the present and the past, both personal and general history; and thirdly, between humans and cultural phenomena, such as songs. Winston, as an observer "embedded in a system of conventions and limitations"⁽¹⁴⁾, naturally and unconsciously needs a sense of connection to something.

For example, Winston's love for old things is seen in the episode of the glass paperweight containing coral which he found at Charrington's shop. Keeping those kinds of things can only lead to accusations from the Thought Police, but he cherishes the paperweight in spite of that. Winston bought his diary with beautiful cream-laid pages at Charrington's shop as well, and of course buying and keeping that book is illegal, too. Charrington's appearance is depicted as follows:

He was a man of perhaps sixty, frail and bowed, with a long, benevolent nose, and mild eyes distorted by thick spectacles. ... His spectacles, his gentle, fussy movements and the fact that he was wearing an aged black velvet, gave him a vague air of intellectuality, as though he had been some kind of literary man, or perhaps a musician.⁽¹⁵⁾

What this passage makes clear is a depiction of eyes hidden by the thick lenses of his glasses, becoming therefore distorted, and, along with other qualities, lending him an aura of vagueness, just the same as Big Brother. That vagueness is eventually transformed into invisibility after Winston starts to meet Julia for a love affair at the room Charrington had offered: "[i]nstead he [Charrington] looked into the middle distance and spoke in generalities, with so delicate an air as to give the impression that he had become partly invisible"⁽¹⁶⁾. Charrington's vagueness and invisibility are integral parts of his potential to infiltrate a target's mind. In reality Charrington is the young agent of the Thought Police and he has been disguising his identity by deceiving Winston through making a sympathetic connection with him. Charrington pretends that he also loves small, old things linking his present to the past, placing

ordinary lives inside the flow of history. Winston has no other choice than to rely on his power of observation in such a deceit-ridden society that limits individuals' perceptions, including sight. The authorities cleverly take advantage of his limitation, and get into his mind by inducing him trust Charrington. Observation, in a sense, can be apprehended as his only means to deal with and judge the outer world, so that he totally depends on his own observation, his only weapon with which to fight.

As for his relationship to O'Brien, an incident in a dream is recalled after encountering 'Charrington' and echoes their final encounter.

Years ago – how long was it? Seven years it must be – he had dreamed that he was walking in a pitch-dark room. And someone sitting to one side of him had said as he passed: 'We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness.' ... He could not now remember whether it was before or after having the dream that he had seen O'Brien for the first time; nor could he remember when he had first identified the voice as O'Brien's. But at any rate the identification existed. It was O'Brien who had spoken to him out of the dark. ⁽¹⁷⁾

O'Brien thus vaguely enters Winston's unconsciousness. This description of Winston's dream is eminently worthy of notice. (In this work prophetic incident and psychological descriptions appear frequently, for example, the appearance of his mother and younger sister in a dream suggest Winston's feeling of guilt that he had killed them in childhood.) Of supreme interest in his encounter with O'Brien in that dream is the significant remark, "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness". This clearly prophesies that Winston will ultimately be faced with O'Brien in Room 101. Moreover, Winston's inordinate fear of rats, which later becomes a tool for torture, appears already in the middle of the story at a secret meeting with Julia.

Despite O'Brien character's vague outline at the initiation of their relationship, Winston continues observing O'Brien. Winston had hardly talked with O'Brien, but almost entirely through assessing his appearance, Winston allows himself to conclude that O'Brien shares the same opinions as himself, namely, doubt about and opposition to the authorities.

Momentarily he caught O'Brien's eye. O'Brien had stood up. He had taken off his spectacles and was in the act of re-settling them on his nose with his characteristic gesture. But there was a fraction of a second when their eyes met, and for as long as it took to happen Winston knew – *yes, he knew!* – that O'Brien was thinking the same thing as himself. An unmistakable message had passed. It was as though their two minds had opened and the thoughts were flowing from one into the other through their eyes. ⁽¹⁸⁾

It can be said that his deduction comes mostly from a so-called instinct which is often exhibited in Julia.

He [Winston] told her of the strange intimacy that existed, or seemed to exist, between himself and O'Brien, and of the impulse he sometimes felt, simply to walk into O'Brien's presence, announce that he was the enemy of the Party and demand his help. Curiously enough this did not strike her as an impossibly rash thing to do. She was used to judging people

by their faces, and it seemed natural to her that Winston should believe O'Brien to be trustworthy on the strength of a single flash of the eyes. ⁽¹⁹⁾

Julia, as well as Winston, depends on her instincts, but Julia does not observe what she is watching as profoundly as Winston does. It is partly because she is more prole as regards to her sexual energy determining her action. In Winston's society proles outside the Party are living without the surveillance of a telescreen and their lives are not as limited as those of people inside the Party. Though their lives are not as rich and intellectual, their life force and freedom appear attractive to Winston; "As the Party slogan put it: 'Proles and animals are free'" ⁽²⁰⁾, but at this point, we must not forget another slogan as well: "FREEDOM IS SLAVERY". This aspect of proles might somewhat be the basis of his affection for Julia, although she is a prole within the Party. He adores this power grounded on instinct that he sees in Julia and other proles.

At the beginning of their relationship, Julia is more aggressive than Winston and her strength attracts Winston: "Not merely the love of one person, but the animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that would tear the Party to pieces" ⁽²¹⁾. Their secret relationship is always vulnerable to the danger of denunciation, so in order to keep the relationship safe, they need something strong against the powers-that-be. With its impulse for an unpredictable and present-oriented way of being, Julia's animal instinct seems to provide some measure of security for their relationship. As the story unwinds, however, this assumption turns out to be false, yet they have nothing else to do but to rely on that instinct.

Nevertheless, this instinct invokes a possibility and hope that are not referred to in the story. Proles often appear in the story and Winston frequently states his admiration for them in comments in the secret diary; "If there is hope, ... it lies in the proles" ⁽²²⁾. This passage repeatedly appears in Winston's mind. The main reason he is thinking that is the proles' ability to link with something. Sometimes it's a link with others, and sometimes, with the past. The Party prohibits links with others that are out of their control, so at first Winston tries to link with something through observation itself. He gradually makes the most of this process by establishing relationships with others – Julia and Charrington and O'Brien. Finally in Room 101, O'Brien thoroughly destroys Winston with "the destruction of man's link with 'nature' through the medium of his senses" ⁽²³⁾.

Keeping a diary is to link with others for Winston: "He [Winston] was writing the diary for O'Brien – to O'Brien" ⁽²⁴⁾. In spite of all his intention to write something, sometimes he can't continue writing, or rather, he is at a loss as to what to write. It is easy to think the reason he cannot write is that he strongly needs a reliable link based on his observations, but he is not sure whether he has established the link he wants.

In this way, an observer frequently becomes isolated from others. George Orwell himself had also developed his ability to observe, which is essential for writing works deeply rooted in reality and its significant details. Raymond Williams suggests that even "Shooting an Elephant", a piece depicting Orwell's actual experience, is not total nonfiction, but a work of literature, because the act of writing, even if it is about real events, is by its very nature creating something fictional ⁽²⁵⁾. Orwell is often regarded as a superior writer of reportage writer, but Williams considers Orwell an especially acute observer in his latter period,

when he wrote *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Also, Hopkinson highly evaluates Orwell's objective technique in an essay "A Hanging" because in it "he takes no side"⁽²⁶⁾.

The confabulation of a writer with the protagonist of his work is not a good idea, however the undeniable substance of Observer can be detected in both Winston and Orwell. They attempt to remain neutral when they observe, although they are enmeshed within their respective, intricate social systems. As well, they try to link with others by writing, in Winston's case, a diary, and in Orwell's, literary works.

• 3. Hope for the Future: The Proles

As referred to in the preceding chapter, the proles embody animal instinct outside total control by authority. The proles are unencumbered by telescreens, so they can establish human relationship as they like. In spite of doubts, Julia, who is more prole-like than Winston, innocently thinks that the two of them can lead a free life just as the proles do:

In a way she realised that she herself was doomed, that sooner or later the Thought Police would catch and kill her, but with another part of her mind she believed that it was somehow possible to construct a secret world in which you could live as you choose.⁽²⁷⁾

In addition, she stresses the reality of individual relationships in the moment, for example, when Winston talks about three historical rebels, Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford, she doesn't care about their historical significance. She asks him, "Were they friends of yours?"⁽²⁸⁾, and her words make clear her emphasis on present relationships rather than placing facts within history. This stress on individual relationships as seen in Julia seems to attract Winston.

From the above-mentioned characteristics of Julia, it is reasonable to regard her not as an observer, but almost as an untrained prole woman regarding her inability to observe elements of society's past and then develop her own thoughts concerning its links with history.

For Winston, however, their apartment retreat rented in a prole district is like the paperweight he got at the second-hand shop downstairs. The paperweight embodies his nostalgia and link with the past. Moreover, the room for their secret meetings is a shelter for them literally, and Winston imagines it in this way: "[h]e wondered vaguely whether in the abolished past it had been a normal experience to lie in bed like this"⁽²⁹⁾. The room makes him call this past to mind with yearning. His nostalgia and urge for a link to the past is invested in the glass paperweight, but it also works as an imaginary shelter at the same time.

It was as though the surface of the glass had been the arch of the sky, enclosing a tiny world with its atmosphere complete. He had the feeling that he could get inside it, and that in fact he was inside it, along with the mahogany bed and the gate-leg table, and the clock and the steel engraving and the paperweight itself.⁽³⁰⁾

In his mind, an imaginary ideal world surely exists in the glass paperweight, and as the fantasy enlarges upon itself, a strange nesting structure emerges in which Winston and even the paperweight itself are contained inside. From this scene we can

see Winston's escapism on one side, and on the other side, his longing for a world where human nature exists without any restraint. He believes that there had been an age when people could freely relate with others intimately as Winston and Julia do in their present time. The paperweight is entrusted with his imaginings, and Charrington's pretended attachment for the past easily makes Winston believe that Charrington is also a trustworthy admirer of the past: "[t]he room was a world, a pocket of the past where extinct animals could walk. Mr Charrington, thought Winston, was another extinct animal"⁽³¹⁾. Here, too, Winston refers to Charrington metaphorically as an "animal", seeing as Winston regards him as a prole at this point. The use of "extinct" in "extinct animal" highlights his feeling of ineluctable exclusion from the world of the the past, of being left only with yearning. Needless to say, the notion of "animal" is deeply connected to proles and this is an indispensable element of individual relationships outside the control of the Party. To discipline people totally into homogeneity is the main objective of the Party but the animal instinct is beyond their control. In a sense suppression of the animal instinct hidden in people is key to totalitarianism's stability, but on the other side of the coin, proles can barely remain human because of the predominance of their animal instinct connecting them one to another.

In the matter of linkages, Winston's diary is a means to connect himself with others based on his observations as time goes on. He also intends to keep the diary as a letter for O'Brien, as mentioned in the previous chapter, so it is functions as a greeting to both the past and the future.

To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone – to a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone:

From the age of uniformity, from the age of solitude, from the age of Big Brother, from the age of doublethink - greetings!⁽³²⁾

From this description, Winston's apprehension of the significance of keeping a diary is clearly proclaimed in the announcement to future or past recipients. For him the diary is a letter to those with whom he wants to link. He works as an official altering official documents and histories so obviously he can not be sure of his world, the basis on which he is standing. As a reaction to his work, he strongly needs to link with people in the past and future even though his method is awkward. At the start he is bewildered by the elaborate greeting and subsequent contents of his writing. He starts to write by stream of consciousness and Alan Kennedy skillfully notices that Winston becomes at that point not a simple recorder of the past, but a creator of the past.⁽³³⁾

In order to protect living memory from being forgotten and disappearing, what should he do? He writes in the diary about an episode concerning a nursery song where he gradually completes the song with help from Julia and Charrington. For him the parts of the song are like "the two halves of a countersign"⁽³⁴⁾. This song provokes him to recall an old memory of his mother and younger sister, the memory evoking for him the sympathetic emotion and link between mother and child. For him this song, nearly lost from all living memory, is a key to the human relationships that have almost disappeared. In contrast to this episode, some music used for Hate Week doesn't carry any

emotion for him: “[i]t had a savage, barking rhythm which could not exactly be called music, but resembled the beating of a drum”⁽³⁵⁾.

Even in the contrast of the music, we can feel the decisive difference between Party members and proles. Party members don't sing “alone and spontaneously”⁽³⁶⁾, but there is an impressive scene in which a prole woman sings.

The words of these songs were composed without any human intervention whatever on an instrument known as a versificator. But the woman sang so tunefully as to turn the dreadful rubbish into an almost pleasant sound.⁽³⁷⁾

This song from outside the window of their secret room is one impetus for him start to remembering his mother. He identifies a Jewish mother protecting her child in the news movie as his own mother. He unconsciously remembers his mother's protection and affection. In the prole woman he sees his mother's shadow, that is, the traits of his genetically most closely related person. Also, songs are a part of culture that is inherited from the past, pass through the present and move on to the future, becoming, namely, a link beyond the period. Songs in the story are a symbol of the link with contemporary others as well as other periods.

Winston and even Julia cherish their respective memories while trying to remember the lyrics of the song in the secret room. For Julia history doesn't matter, but the song with the memory of her own relations is meaningful. At a glance they seem to share the same feelings about everything, but there are some significant differences, especially their notion about the present. Winston senses that “spinning out a present that had no future, seemed an unconquerable instinct”⁽³⁸⁾. As for history, a feeling of entrapment is always lingering in his mind: “[h]istory has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right”⁽³⁹⁾. Even with all his acute observations referred to in the previous chapter, since an observer's existence is characteristically embedded in society, he must remain as part of the totalitarian system. He has been trained to grasp the present as a momentary and cut-off period from other periods and he cannot completely escape from that way of thinking. He is always struggling to get away from the accepted concept of the present as existing in isolation. Disregarding his struggle, Julia does not care much about history; she does not want to know who invented the airplane and says, “I'm not interested in the next generation, dear. I'm interested in *us*”⁽⁴⁰⁾. Her emphasis only on the human relationship in front of her reveals that a link with the past cannot be the basis for what she is now. This difference between them in the apprehension of history probably comes from their inherent potentials as an observer. Winston observes other people and the present minutely, but Julia is concerned only with human relationships based on her animal instinct.

The Party allows proles to be moderately free, so the personal memories of the proles remain, although it is not organized properly. When Winston walks unnoticed in the district of the proles, he encounters some proles and is introduced to know their characteristic fragmental memory system as follows: “[t]he old man's memory was nothing but a rubbish-heap of details”⁽⁴¹⁾ and “[t]hey [the proles] remembered a million useless things”⁽⁴²⁾. It is true that the proles keep distracted memories, but in order to organize them, they need to observe things as Winston does. As Beatrix Campbell states, in this work proles (the working class)

are not thinkers or makers of revolution⁽⁴³⁾, but they can link with each other by their instinctive power occasionally shown as an animal instinct. Proles' animal instinct is their vital force and the basis of their culture – something essential for a link with others, as we see in the episode of the song.

Then how do the memory and history that proles are keeping separate in their minds connect to observation and deep thinking? Do proles just appear in the story as a working class without any power and future? At this point an ideal observer such as Winston would work as a bridge between the middle class and the working class. He is inside the Party, but he understands, admires, and appreciates proles from his position. Although the story itself ends with the collapse of Winston as a rebel, his course as a rebel certainly points toward an approaching future when the Party will be left stranded and the people will stand up.

The appendix placed after Winston's story obscurely implies fragility in totalitarian leaders who go to the extreme of mandating this official language to preclude any doubt and criticism by the citizens. The language system of Newspeak is still evaluated highly as such, but that closed system goes a long way toward showing the leaders' loss of resilience in which the even ambiguity of words cannot be tolerated. This inflexibility can be apprehended as the main feature of the system, the one-sided surveillance with no understanding of individual diversity as seen in Winston's observations. In short, observation is the prescient ability to perceive the essence of the society.

• Conclusion

After writing *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell explained as follows:

My recent novel is NOT intended as an attack on Socialism or on the British Labour Party (of which I am a supporter) but as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralised economy is liable and which have already been partly realised in Communism and Fascism. ... The scene of the book is laid in Britain in order to emphasise ... that totalitarianism, if not fought against, could triumph anywhere.⁽⁴⁴⁾

It is reasonable to judge this novel as Orwell's warning that we must be constantly vigilant on behalf of the health of the social system. His prophetic tone appears in the parts where he refers to actual systems, like communism and fascism, but the reason why this novel is still appealing to us is the fact that he sharply points out the perversions of society overriding human beings. There is some criticism that he doesn't understand the reality of the working class, but nevertheless he entreats us, that if it comes to a “fight,” we must struggle jointly against authority regardless of the classes. At that point observers with skilled powers of observation become the key to the joint struggle because they form a link between the people and their leaders, and on the basis of that link, an organic relationship can grow.

In this novel one can see how dangerous it is when modern surveillance techniques accomplish discipline and homogenization under totalitarianism. In that situation an individual's ability to observe would be the essential factor not only to notice the danger, but also to link it to relationships with others, to culture, and to history. This novel allows a wide range of possibilities and viewpoints to be evaluated – those dealing with ideology,

culture, language, history, and so on. In this essay, out of countless elements found in the story, the matter of sight is focused on because this work vividly depicts the multifunctionality of sight in the possible danger of totalitarianism. At the same time this study on sight leads us to the crux that must be addressed regardless of viewpoints, namely, the beginning of change in human beings in modern society and their potential for the future shown in sight.

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