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**Literature and Ideology in George Orwell's *Nineteen  
Eighty -Four* (1949) and Aleksandr  
Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973)**

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## **Dalila**

## **Abstract**

Our research studies two twentieth century literary texts: George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). To our knowledge, many critics view these two texts as condemnations of the authoritarian Soviet communist ideology and its spread. Despite the validity of this view, critics overlooked how each of the works express latently the ideologies of the British author Orwell, and the Soviet Russian author Solzhenitsyn, as well as their aspirations to change the social order in each of Britain and Soviet Russia. On the one hand, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is a fictional work of the dystopian type, in which he portrays a nightmarish future for the civil liberties. On the other hand, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) is rather a non-fiction text. It recounts the personal experience of the author as well as the testimonies of the Gulag victims. Totalitarianism is clearly portrayed in the two works; it refers to a system of government in which individuals are deprived of authority. As a dystopian novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) pictures how the state uses technology to monitor its citizens. We illustrate many similarities between the two texts. For example use of torture, arbitrary arrests and obliteration of the identities of political opponents. The totalitarian authorities in the two texts use all these practices in order to remain in power. Our theoretical part takes its bearing from Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* (1936) and Engels's characterization of literature as discussed by George Steiner in his theoretical book *a Reader* (1984). By applying these two theories, our findings suggest that the two texts are reactions of their authors to remedy the social conditions. Indeed, we also find that within the literary crafting of the two texts, lies the ideological standpoint of the two authors. In the first chapter, we apply the concept of 'Sociology of Knowledge' of Karl Manheim (1939) to explore how the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* reflects the socio-historical conditions of post-second World War Britain. In parallel, we illustrate how life in the Gulag delineates the historical transformation in Russia, after the Bolshevik Revolution, and mainly in Stalin's era. In the second chapter, we rely on Manheim's conceptualization of ideology and utopia, to demonstrate how Orwell generates hope and calls for action even in the gloomy futuristic world. In fact, the ideology that blocks change in Orwell's novel is referred to as 'Ingsoc'. Similarly, by applying Manheim's view on ideology and Utopia, we examine in the third chapter how Solzhenitsyn's depicts Stalinism as a mortifying ideology; and how the author employs his poetic and vivid description to expose the Soviet practices to the world and to the Western Bloc; the opponent of the Soviet regime. Further, Through Engels' characterization of literature, we also discuss in the last two chapters how the two authors view on literature coincide with Engels perspective.

## **Key words:**

**Aestheticism**

**Socialism**

**Democratic socialism**

**Totalitarianism**

**Ideology**

**Utopia and Dystopia**

**Para-Marxism**

**Zhdanovism**

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## I-General Introduction

The relationship between ideology, literature and art is a crucial topic in literary theory and criticism. However, there has been many nuanced definitions of ideology. According to many twentieth century sociologists, ideology is viewed as the system of thought, which a dominant group holds to maintain the stability of the social order. In this respect, sociology of knowledge is a discipline that studies the influence of an individual's position in society in constructing his mental outlook and ideological inclinations. In that context, authors of the second half of the twentieth century foreshadowed the conditions and struggles of the era, including the rise of totalitarianism, fascist nationalism and the subversion of the ideals of equality between social groups, which marked this historical period. On the one hand, authors are artists who seek to evoke the aesthetic sensitivity of their readers; on the other hand, they are social agents who call either for change, or for the stability of the social order of the group or civilization to which they belong. In their endeavor for change, authors often embody a utopian mindset in their depiction of events. Indeed, utopia is recognized in oppressed individuals who seek to change their conditions into more ideal ones. Therefore, this paper examines the ideological function, the aesthetic merit and the utopic quest of literature.

The present paper explores two literary works which are George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). It studies the ideological position of the two authors which can be identified through close analysis of each text. Due to historical affinity between the two writers, the two texts depict similar themes including oppression of totalitarian authorities and state censorship. Hence, we highlight these parallels in order to illustrate how each narrative carries the ideological as well the utopian outlook of each author. Thus, our research takes its bearings from Karl Mannheim's '*Ideology and Utopia*' (1929) in reference to his concept of Sociology of Knowledge as well as Engels' concepts of Marxist and Para-Marxist literature (1933).

## II-Review of the Literature

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) are two influential literary works due to their historical significance. A considerable number of articles and books studied the works differently through various points of view.

Isaac Deutscher, in his article '*Mysticism and Cruelty*' published in 1984 comments on Orwell's novel as lacking originality, claiming that Orwell borrowed his ideas, plot, characters and symbols from the novel *We* (1920-1921) of the Russian writer Evgeniij Zamyatin.<sup>1</sup> It is nevertheless noticeable that each of the two authors were influenced by their experience with war. While Orwell experienced the Spanish Civil War in 1936, Zamyatin experienced the Russian Revolution of 1905. As far as the two novels '*We*' by Zamyatin and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are concerned. We notice that each of them portray similar controlling authorities figures. Zamyatin's state in '*We*' is ruled by a person called 'The Benefactor', which is a prototype of the 'Big Brother' in Orwell's novel.

When the Cold War intensified, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) raised a considerable amount of interpretations and controversy about its underlying message. Critics discuss whether this novel could be considered antisocialist or merely as an attack against Stalinism. On the one hand, for the right wing; *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) disapproves socialism and Marxism altogether. On the other hand, left-wing supporters, mainly democratic socialists prefer to read Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) as a novel which denounces corruption and power abuse instead of an attack towards socialism. During his participation as a volunteer in the Spanish Civil War, Orwell came to the conclusion that all forms of totalitarianism including fascism, Soviet communism and Nazism threaten liberty, individuality, and truth. Krishan Kumar comments in this regard "Conservatives and liberals



on both sides of the Atlantic- but especially in the United States – gratefully seized on it as a stick with which to beat the Soviet Union”.<sup>2</sup>

In the above citation, a ‘conservative’ refers to a supporter of right wing politics, who holds traditional values and supports the hierarchies. A conservative in the modern American politics is also usually pro-capitalism. Whereas ‘liberal’ does not refer to a supporter of free market, but to a left-winger who usually has socialist sympathies and advocates values such as change, social equality, and individual liberty. This comment claims that in the west, and mainly in the United States, the two political sides agree to view Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) as an attack towards Stalin’s practices and ideology during the context of the Cold War. Indeed, it becomes evident from the reviews above that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) offers many interpretations as a controversial work that has been widely misunderstood.

*The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) just like George Orwell’s novel, was commented on in different manners. In his article “*War on two fronts: Solzhenitsyn and the Gulag Archipelago*” (1977) Martin Malia, states that “Aleksandr’s novel cannot be approached just as any literary work nor can it be approached as testimonial to unparalleled human suffering, nor as a bearing witness to “man’s inhumanity to man” . For him, this text contains a new genre and a new tone, not fiction but hard historical truth which was necessary to reveal. This latter must be supplemented by the power of art since it is considered the only free ethical force that existed in Russia.”<sup>3</sup>

In fact, the anti-communist message of *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) has been a center of interest for many intellectuals especially in the West. During the heated stage of the Cold War, it was considered as a work through which to denounce the atrocious practices of the Soviet Union. Further, one of the contemporary scholars who have been widely influenced

by *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) is Jordan Peterson. He wrote the foreword to the last penguin version of *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973), which was published in 2018. Peterson in his forward discusses how Solzhenitsyn's work exposes the moral degradation of the Soviet authorities especially in the labor camps and the role of this text in bringing the collapse of the Soviet Union, and therefore ending the Cold War. Therefore, in this sense, Jordan Peterson writes in his foreword, "It is a matter of pure historical fact that *The Gulag Archipelago* played a primary role in bringing the Soviet Empire to its knees."<sup>4</sup> In this citation, Peterson claims that Solzhenitsyn's text has a significant historical impact in the disintegration of the eastern Communist bloc.

### **III- Issue and Working hypothesis**

Considering the above Review of the Literature, it is obvious that the two works have intrigued many critics who have approached them from different perspectives and have discussed largely the anti-communist message in both narratives. It seems that these critics have devoted their focus and analysis on the different themes such as creativity of the two texts and the western perception of their meaning and impact during the Cold War period. These themes are elaborated in both novels; this common ground reinforces the possibility of studying the two novels together. Especially since there is indeed a historical affinity between the two works. Hence, this paper will study the historical backdrop of the two texts as well as the issues of the ideological, the utopian and the aesthetic function of both texts.

We aim in this dissertation to compare and contrast George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) in reference to their main themes such as totalitarian practice of censorship and subjection of individuality to the dominant ideology of the state. To our best knowledge, these two texts have not been compared. Additionally, most critics focused their attention more on how the two texts denounce adherence to the communist and collectivist ideology. However, these

studies overlooked how both texts can convey the ideologies of the authors and therefore, how the texts are meant to perform a propaganda. Further, the studies overlooked how each narrative conveys a utopian vision for society. In addition, there seem to be no emphasis on the relation between the militant message and the artistic crafting of both texts. We also suggest that within the gloomy dystopian description of the two selected works, both Orwell and Solzhenitsyn aim to convey a utopian vision for their countries and for the world.

In order to fill this gap, we undertake a comparative study by examining the issues of ideology, utopia and aestheticism in their relation to the two narratives. Indeed, while *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) is a dystopian novel; *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) is a non-fiction text. Yet both books portray the crisis of personal liberties and the rise of totalitarian government to power, which prevailed during the eras in which the two writers lived. Hence, we aim in this research to shed light on each of the two writers different outlooks that can be identified from each book. For this purpose, we rely on Karl Mannheim's conceptualization of *Ideology and Utopia* (1949) and Engel's concepts of Marxist and Para-Marxist literature. Our hypothesis is that each of Orwell and Solzhenitsyn aim in their depiction of the dominant communist ideology to convey a better future and therefore remedy the totalitarian conditions, which are portrayed in their works. At the same time, their depiction is not devoid from ideological intention. While Orwell advocates throughout his work a democratic socialist alternative for Britain, Solzhenitsyn investigates and testifies what happened in the Gulag forced labor camps, in order to bring the collapse of the Soviet Union and potentially establish a Federal Russian nation. Additionally, the two works employ aesthetic ability to send a militant message, which is to stand against totalitarianism.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Isaac, Deutscher. '*Mysticism of Cruelty*'. London: Hamish and Hamilton, 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Krishan Kumar, *Utopia & Anti -Utopia in Modern Times* (New York: Blackwell), 289

<sup>3</sup> Martin, M. "*A War on Two Fronts: Solzhenitsyn and the Gulag Archipelago*". YMCA-Press: Wiley, 1977. Accessed on 11 October 2019, Available at <http://www.jstore.org/128769>.

<sup>4</sup> Aleksandr, Solzhenitsyn, *the Gulag Archipelago*: Jordan Peterson (Introducer): Penguin Editions, Vintage Classics.

## **IV-Methods and Materials**

### **1-Materials**

#### ***A-Nineteen Eighty- Four***

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty- Four* (1949) is an influential political dystopian novel published in 1949 in England. It shows a futuristic society under the control of the totalitarian government. This futuristic world is divided into three blocks considered as super states, which are 'Oceania', 'Eurasia' and 'Eastasia'. The novel tells the story of Winston Smith and his attempt to rebel against Big Brother and the Party. Winston works in 'the Ministry of Truth' which is concerned with distorting reality in order to conform to Big Brother's rule. This latter is the leader of "the Party" as well as the face who controls everything under the principles of Ingsoc (English Socialism). Oceania is divided into three classes from which we can distinguish the Outer party, the Inner party and the Proles who occupy 85 percent of the population. Night arrests are the most enjoyable task of the secret police which are known as the 'thought police'. Further, the party distorts language by inventing a new language named 'Newspeak' which seeks to narrow the range of thought. Torture and denying the identities of political opponents are the ways of the Party to induce terror and remain in power.

#### ***B-The Gulag Archipelago***

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* is a non-fictional book written between 1918 and 1956. It was published in 1973. This work mirrors Solzhenitsyn's personal experience in the Gulag forced labor camps, where he spent eight years because of a secret letter written against Stalin's system. He describes this Gulag as a chain of islands across the "Russian Motherland" revealing what life is like in the camps. The Gulag can be traced back to Vladimir Lenin, the founder of the Russian communist Party who takes control of the

Soviet Union after the 'October revolution' of 1917. He gives rise to the prison camps (Gulag) with the slogan 'Secure the soviet Republic against its class enemies, by isolating them in the concentration camps' in 1918.<sup>1</sup>

After the death of Lenin in 1929, Joseph Stalin becomes a leader of the Soviet Union. Thus, the gulag went through a period of rapid expansion, because for him the Gulag is a way to industrialization. The prisoners are used as a tool for economic development, for example, they are forced to cut trees.<sup>2</sup> Solzhenitsyn's book is about the massive arrests of intellectuals, political activists and students. All those people are accused of something they did not commit. The worst thing is that Joseph Stalin offers awards, bonuses and promotions for the officers who collect more criminals as he calls them. However, those who condemn a low number they were fired.<sup>3</sup> In *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973), Solzhenitsyn portrays the ways in which people are arrested, especially during the night, when the organs capture the individuals everywhere and how their identities are erased.

## **2- Methods**

### **a) Sociology of knowledge**

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed an important theoretical development in the history of the sociological thought. It is developed firstly by the sociologist Emile Durkheim at the beginning of the twentieth century and later on by Marcel Mauss who sought, to show how language and logic are influenced by the surrounding environment. However, Neither Durkheim, nor Mauss coined the term 'sociology of knowledge'. It was put into use through sociologists such as Karl Mannheim, who considers that the social position provides the key to the understanding of authors. He gives importance for the social element in human beings and their knowledge which he sees as supreme (social element). That is to say, society is the most reliable source of knowledge and the individual is the

source of error. Mannheim states that “The sociological view point seeks to interpret individual activities and thoughts in all sphere within the context of a group outlook”.<sup>4</sup> So briefly, Mannheim introduced the sociology of knowledge for more understanding of the origin of ideas, which for him are the products of society. Further, we cannot look at the work as having objective truth without considering the context or situations where this truth has been originated. For example, the idea that ‘all people are equal’ was born from the Enlightenment period.

In his book *Ideology and Utopia* (1936) Mannheim focuses on the concept of ideology. Like Marx, Mannheim views ideology as the system of thought held by ruling groups in the society to maintain power. Further, Mannheim develops dichotomic conception of ideology which are the particular and the total. For him, the particular ideology makes its analysis on a purely psychological level and a particular group of people to reject the views of the opponents uses it. For example, each of the liberals and the Marxists regard the other’s assertions as an ideology without recognizing their own beliefs as such (as ideology). In this concern, Mannheim argues that:

[...] the ideas expressed by the subject are thus regarded as functions of his existence. This means that opinions, statements, prepositions and system of ideas are interpreted in the light of life situations of the one who expressed them. It signifies further that the specific character and life situation of the subject influence his opinion, perception and interpretations.<sup>5</sup>

Total conception of ideology refers to the thought system associated with an age or group. This can be exemplified with the proletariat’s beliefs which were conditioned by their relationship to the capitalist means of production. Thus, different epochs have different thought categories. In other words, it is perceiving things as determined by the individual’s historical and social setting. Total ideology is a way of viewing all ideologies including one’s own in a critical manner. In this sense, we tend to acknowledge our beliefs as ideological. Thus, Mannheim argues that:

Whereas the particular conception of ideology designates only a part of the opponent's assertions as ideologies-and this only with a reference to their content, the total conception cause into question the opponent's total Weltanschauung (including his conceptual apparatus), and attempts to understand these concepts as an outgrowth of the collective life of which he partakes.<sup>6</sup>

It follows from the citation above, that the particular and total ideologies cannot be separated; they are dialectically interrelated as both relate a person to a social practice and attempt to explain the relationship between one's ideological views and one's social position in society.

#### **b) From Relativism to Relationism:**

In order to construct a reliable approach, Mannheim in his book *Ideology and Utopia* (1936) distinguishes between Relationism and Relativism. Relativism means that truth is independent of the thinker as there is no concrete world from which we gain knowledge. In order to free thought from relativism, Mannheim introduces the term 'relationism' by which he meant that truth is not absolute but rather depends on the social context. This means that knowledge comes from society as Mannheim says "There are spheres of thought in which it is impossible to conceive of absolute truth existing independently of the values and position of the subject and unrelated to the social context".<sup>7</sup> Mannheim's study of ideas takes its account of relationism, people construct a view of reality through a collective process. One individual does not embody a mode of thought, rather, he is influenced by the mode of thought of his group. In the same way we cannot attribute language to someone who speaks to that individual, because he gains it from both the past and the social context. "We must realize once and for all that the meanings which make up our world are simply historically determined, and continuously developing structure in which man develops, and are in no sense absolute".<sup>8</sup> From this one can guess that we cannot speak of absolute truth without its relation to the social context.



### **c) Utopia**

The two concepts ideology and utopia were brought together as a title to Mannheim's book (1936). He defines utopia as the thought of the oppressed who seeks to improve society. As he stresses the importance of utopia saying that

utopia contains the direction, the point of view, the perspective and a set of questions from which the present and the past become comprehensible at all. Investigating the structure of utopia is therefore the most essential tasks of the sociology of thought.<sup>9</sup>

Ideology for him is associated with the dominant group and it blocks change for sustaining the social order, because the dominant group seeks to protect their status. In his book, Mannheim shows how ideology and utopia oppose each other's in the sense; utopia reveals the outlook of the oppressed groups in society. It suggests that the prevailing social order is inappropriate and therefore, stirs aspiration to change it. As it seeks always to bring change for the existing order. Whereas, ideology is strongly associated with groups that have a dominant position in the same society, this ideology seeks to preserve their social status; so ideology and utopia were built on different attitudes.

### **d) Dystopia**

Utopia is originally a Greek word, which means 'no place', that is to say an imaginary one. Derin Ryan in his article '*Emerging Themes in Dystopian Literature*' (2014) explains that in utopian literature the world is an ideal place in which order, prosperity and harmony between people and with their environment prevail. Also, the characters are able to enjoy their individual freedom and can manifest themselves as autonomous and true individuals.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to utopia, citizens are described in dystopian fiction as facing severe and oppressive authority, which controls their thoughts, feelings and individuality<sup>11</sup>. Dystopian novels emerged in the middle of the twentieth century depicting the anxieties of the authors in regards to the socio-economic and cultural pivotal changes. Some of the most famous

dystopian novels other than *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) include Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and Roy Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)<sup>12</sup>. In fact, George Orwell was largely influenced by H.G Wells, a late Nineteenth century author of dystopian and science fiction.<sup>13</sup> Wells has often described and predicted in his novels a world in which there will be creation of new technological means and employing them in controlling individuals. Similarly, Orwell depicts the use of telescreens and microphones in scrutinizing the citizens of Oceania.<sup>14</sup>

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is considered as one of the most famous dystopian novels. It projects Orwell's anxiety about the future and the outcome of prevalent totalitarianism. The following quote from Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is a vivid example of the nightmarish future of the totalitarianism which is significantly linked to dystopian literature. Orwell writes in his novel that, "if you want a picture of the future imagine a picture of a boot stamping on a human face forever."<sup>15</sup> This situation is a powerful image of the degradation of humanity under a totalitarian system.

## **2- Engel's Categorization of Literature:**

Among the crucial concerns in literary criticism is the relationship between aesthetic function of literature and its ideological inclination. An important approach, which seeks to understand the relationship between aestheticism and historicity, is referred to as Para-Marxism. This approach is originally developed by Frederich Engels. Engels and Karl Marx are two thinkers who have shown enthusiasm towards arts such as music, paintings and literature. Indeed, this becomes clear knowing that they used to write poetry. Hence, they believed that artistic sensitivity and creativity are a way to express the human potential.<sup>16</sup> That is to say authors and poets are mainly motivated by artistic ambition to express their authentic feelings. For them, the author's ideological affiliation and political opinions could be expressed, however not on the expense of the artistic crafting of his work<sup>17</sup>. That is to say

without sacrificing the beautiful, lyrical (musical) and emotional aspect of his creative production. In fact, Marx and Engels' view on literature does not align completely with the movement of aestheticism.

Aestheticism is originally a European literary movement, which appeared in the Nineteenth century during the industrial era. It entails that art is made for "art's sake, (or: 'l'art pour l'art') as coined by the French philosopher Victor Cousin. In this sense, art should not vehicle a utilitarian aim, whether political, moral or religious. Instead, it should only strive to express beauty and appeal to the senses.<sup>18</sup> Engels refuses this approach to literature and art. Like Karl Marx he believes that art should indeed convey authentic and aesthetic meaning, yet it should avoid becoming as a commodity, or a business in the hands of the Bourgeoisies. In this sense, Marx claims that "A writer must of course earn a living to exist and be able to write, but he must in no sense exist and write so as to earn a living".<sup>19</sup> He also proclaimed that the values of the bourgeoisie had a strong influence on art as well as censorship of the press. That is to say that pure aesthetic approach to literature is employed by the bourgeoisie class to cancel the political reality. Because, for him the Bourgeoisie aimed to remain in power by depoliticizing literature and keeping the lower classes alienated from reality.<sup>20</sup>

The interest of "Engelian" or "the para-Marxist" approach is also to study the historical context as well as philosophical trends which prevail in the author's time. Doing so is crucial in order to apprehend the underlying meaning of literary works.<sup>21</sup> Since, literature is influenced by their political circumstances. Literature is considered by Engels as a means of expressing beauty and as means to call for social change, which means to improve or transform the negative conditions into more ideal ones.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Engels suggests that one should not be explicitly militant in his writing. He writes in his letter to a female journalist

I am far from finding fault with you for not having written a point-blank socialist novel, a "Tendezeroman" as we Germans call it, to glorify the social and political views of the author. That is not at all what I mean. The more the opinions of the author remain hidden, the better for the work of art.<sup>23</sup>

To reformulate this, first, the German word 'Tendezeroman'<sup>24</sup> means a tendentious novel that is to say a novel which vehicles a given political and ideological point of view. Engels does not necessarily deny any utility for expressing political opinion in literature; he instead believes that these intentions should remain discrete<sup>25</sup>. In this sense, most writings necessitate deep understanding and reading between the lines in order to note any potential ideological meaning.

During the Cold War developed in the Soviet Union Zhdanovism; an authoritative doctrine which restricts literature. It governs most of what is considered as Soviet Literature. It is inferred by totalitarian practices of censorship and imposing strict ideological adherence from the author as well as severe punishment for deviation from the Party's line.<sup>26</sup> It is essential here to distinguish between Marxist aestheticism (also referred to as para-Marxism) as a theory for literary criticism, and Marxism as a socio-economic analysis of history. While the socialist idea is about class struggle, Marxist literary approach analyses the aesthetic and the socio-historical cues of a literary work regardless of whether its writer is in favor of socialism or against it.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956*”, Conscioused, h1965. Available at [http://www.conscioused .Org](http://www.conscioused.org).
- <sup>2</sup> History.Com Editors, “*Solzhenitsyn’s The Gulag Archipelago Published*”, A&E Television Networks, 2009, last updated February 25, 2019. <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/Solzhenitsyn-the-gula-Archipelago-published>.
- <sup>3</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. “*The Gulag Archipelago*”, Alex and Books, 2018, Available at <http://www.alexanbooks.com>.
- <sup>4</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul ltd, 1949), 27.
- <sup>5</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul ltd, 1949), 50
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., 85.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 245.
- <sup>10</sup> Derin, Ryan, *Emerging Themes in Dystopian Literature: The Development of an Underground Course*’. (Western Michigan: Lee House College, 2014), 2.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid
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- <sup>15</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (London: penguin Random House, 1949), 307
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## Results

After close analysis of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) we found that both works denounce the ideology of Stalinist communism in order to remedy the nightmarish conditions they witnessed in their countries. While Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) conveys the ideology of British democratic socialism in the face of the spread of communism. Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) conveys the ideology of Russian nationalism and conservatism. Solzhenitsyn calls to reveal the truth about the Soviet Union. Further, despite the fact that the two authors have never been in personal contact, there is a historical affinity between them. Therefore, the two selected texts portray parallel themes such as subjection of individuality and erasing the identities of political opponents.

By making appeal to Engels characterization of literature, we deduce that Engels discerns the aesthetic merit of literature from the hidden political message of the author. Engels suggests that literature should be a means of conveying artistic value and calling for social change. Both Orwell and Solzhenitsyn's views on literature, as we have illustrated through their essays, coincide with Engels' view that an author is equally an artist and a social agent, who seeks to improve societal conditions by evoking the crucial issues of his time. In this light, we deduced also through Manheim's conceptualization of utopia that Orwell depicts a dystopia in order to call for action and to aim for a utopian world built on individual freedom and fair share of wealth.

It is undeniable that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), written in 1948, is significantly influenced by the ideological tension which emerged between the Soviet Union and the United States, that is to say the Cold War. Thus, the novel calls to stop what is considered as totalitarian communism. As far as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *the Gulag Archipelago* is concerned we found that like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) it is closer to Para-Marxism than

to Zhdanovism, because it denounces the Stalinist totalitarian censorship from which developed the Zhdanovism.

These two texts are highly influenced by the historical context as well as the experiences of both authors. While Orwell depicts in his novel his fear of rising communist totalitarianism in his country Britain, Solzhenitsyn portrays the corruption and atrocities of Soviet practices since the Bolshevik Revolution. The Russian author sets up language, which manifests his anti-communist feelings. Further, each of the two authors depict the end of the Second World War and the rise of the ideological tension between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In fact George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) and Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) are historically significant as they capture several events of the two World Wars as well as the Cold War. As we have noticed, Mannheim's theory is relevant to our study since it covers an important historical context from which both works were produced. Because for Mannheim any literary work is meaningless without its relation to the surrounding environment in its shape.

Indeed, ideology is depicted in both works. The government in Oceania function under Ingsoc, which maintains to establish the totalitarian system for people's control. As it is also obvious from the *Gulag Archipelago* (1973) that Stalinist communism aims to maintain power through different methods of punishment especially by imprisoning people in the Gulag. Mannheim in his concept of sociology of knowledge gives importance to the historical construction of knowledge. The origin of ideas comes from social confrontation rather than from the individual alone. Thus, it is clear that both *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) and *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) are the result of the social problems existed in the writers



era. The devastated state of England after the Second World War as well as the threat of rising Communist Totalitarianism in Western Europe and Russia.

## **Theoretical Framework**

As it is mentioned in the introduction, the materials selected to study the issue of literature and ideology are George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). For methodology, we have relied on Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* (1936) by referring to his introduction to Sociology of Knowledge and conception of ideology and utopia.

Our work is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, we highlight the historicity of the two texts. Therefore, we start by illustrating how the events of post- Second World War and the outbreak of the Cold War are reflected in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). In the second part of the first chapter, we study Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) in its relation to the events of the Bolshevik era and the rule of Stalin. As for in the second chapter, we deal with the ideological and utopian message of Orwell's novel to reveal from the main themes how the author conveys an ideology and a utopia at the same time. In the same chapter, we reveal the aesthetic merit of the novel. Further, we shed light on the parallels which can be drawn between Orwell's and Solzhenitsyn's texts in order to reveal the similar themes such as disappearance the political opponents of the totalitarian systems as depicted in both narratives, we highlight also the importance of testimony as portrayed in both works.

Lastly, in the third chapter, we analyse the same aspects of the second chapter that is to say ideology, utopia, and aestheticism as they relate to *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973), further we illustrate again in the third chapter more passages, which show the affinities between the two texts. At the end of the chapter, we summarize the parallels between the

two texts. Finally yet importantly, the general conclusion sums up the results reached through this research.

## **I- The Historical Context of the Two Selected Works**

### **Introduction:**

World history witnessed several events which have changed the face of Europe and the world as whole. By the end of the Second World War in 1945, an important ideological struggle developed between the United States and the Soviet Union. Each camp strove to spread its ideology to become dominant. Further, the struggle was also economic and military between the Western liberal block and the Eastern socialist block. Therefore, many authors wrote their works as a reaction to the social problems that existed at that time. In order to warn as well as to inform their readers of the future that lies ahead. In this sense, the authors of this period act as active agents, because they are indeed influenced by this war and react to it accordingly to their social situation and ideological orientation and aspirations. Excellent examples are George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) and Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) due to their importance as a reflection of history.

### **1- *Nineteen Eighty-Four***

#### **a) The Cold War Context**

The Bolshevik Revolution was crucial not only in Russian history, but also in world history and mainly in Europe. Thus, the success of the October Revolution by the leadership of Vladimir Lenin in 1917 incited significant social change. For example many social reforms were urgent to implement. In this context, several politicians and leaders became motivated to discuss and react to this pivotal shift in society especially in the Post-War period. Asa Briggs states that:

Revolution in Russia, culminating in the Bolshevik victory of October 1917, directed attention to fundamental social issues. It was in such circumstances that politicians now began to talk more and more about reconstruction of changing society after war.<sup>1</sup>

After the devastating Second World War with its genocidal outcome, several major world powers were weakened, and many of the liberal and imperial countries had to cease their colonies. Communism was being propagated by the communist leaders throughout Europe. In addition, many of the African colonized countries have endorsed the socialist values against their capitalist colonizers, for example, the case of Algeria, where Marxism influenced the revolutionary intellectuals. After the Second World War, socialism has gained large support not only from Eastern Europeans, but also from intellectuals in the west.<sup>2</sup>

In the same context, the right wing was associated with the defeated axis. Whereas the communist Soviet Union played a significant role in fighting and defeating against Nazism. Hence, communism became an attractive alternative for many people in establishing equality and improving the socio-economic conditions. So, the Soviets became ambitious in dominating and expending their power. As a result, the American leaders were worried by this spreading power of the Soviet Union. Thus, emerged the ideological struggle between the two camps.<sup>3</sup> During this heated stage of the struggle, appeared the threatening arm race. For example, dropping the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.

Such paramount transformation created the disillusionment of the younger generations along with the avant-gardist literature. Also, many writers felt the urge to depict the situation. Thus, appeared the debate among the literary milieu whether to remain neutral or participate in the ideological struggle. In fact, the intellectuals and writers were motivated to remedy the conditions of workers and the subjected peoples, who were suffering from tyranny of their own government. However, the writers feared that the rise of a potential worker's or a communist revolution in the West would lead to totalitarianism or a dictatorship of the proletariat. This fear stems from the witnessed corrupt practices of the extremist Stalinist

regimes. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) mirrors the anxieties and suspicions created by the Cold War era as witnessed by the British author George Orwell.

As far as Britain is concerned, the Labour Party, which was created in 1900, played an important role in standing against radical politics from both of communism and fascism. In fact, the labor Party had a different conception of socialism from the Marxist socialism. Indeed, Karl Marx suggests in his 'Das Kapital' and 'the Manifesto' that history is shaped by class struggle and in that inside the capitalist society the proletariats (the working class) have to sell their physical efforts in order to gain their wage. In this process, their employers referred to as the bourgeoisie, often exploit these workers. Therefore, Marx calls for a Revolution in order to establish equality and create a classless society. Whereas the British Labour Party sought to establish a socialist society not through a revolution, but through encouraging and establishing labor unions without having to abolish the private property. In fact, these were the values of the Fabian Society which is a British socialist organization founded on 4 January 1884 in London, its aim was to spread social principles through social reforms rather than revolutions.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, Pauline Gregg states in her book *A Social and Economic History of Britain* that:

Politically, as the power of the State grew stronger, rival forms of totalitarianism disputed its control in the forms of communism and fascism. In Britain liberalism and individualism grew weaker, but after the Second World War it was the labor Party which found itself at the head of the State, with an enormous concentration of power in its hands, which it attempted to use not in the form of crude dictatorship, but of socialist democracy.<sup>5</sup>

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) mirrors the struggles and social damage of post war era. Readers can live these war conditions without experiencing them. To exemplify from the novel a picture which depicts these conditions we refer to Winston Smith's residence where there is a smell of 'boiled cabbage and old rag mats', the shortage of razor blades, the cheap victory Gin, the unhealthy faces of people as well as the ill-fitting clothes.<sup>6</sup> This characterizes the absurdity of life resulting from the war, Julian Symons states:

In one of its aspects *Nineteen Eighty Four* was about a world familiar to anybody who lived in Britain during the war that began in 1939. “The reductions in rations, the odious food, the sometimes unobtainable and always dubiously authentic drink, these were with us still when the book appeared.”<sup>7</sup>

In the novel, society was built on division and inequality since the emergence of the world conflicts between the opposing three super states ‘Oceania’, ‘Eurasia’ and ‘Eastasia’. The futurist state ‘Oceania’ was divided into three parts: ‘the inner party’, ‘the outer party’ and ‘the proles’. This latter category of the citizens of Oceania was Orwell’s hope for social change to bring about an egalitarian society since trade unions and organizations in Great Britain, historically, represented the working class. If Oceania’s proles agitate, they can change the totalitarian regime built on torture to another system built on freedom. In fact the proles occupy 85 percent of the population. Winston argues: “If there was hope, it must lie in the proles, because only there, in those swarming disregarded masses 85 per cent of the population of Oceania, could the force to destroy the party ever be generated.”<sup>8a</sup>

In sociology of knowledge, Manheim discusses the concept of relationism. He argues that knowledge and expectations are constructed in the concrete world. Hence, we understand that literature depends on the evaluation of the context from which this piece of work emerged. This can shed light on the two important literary works George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Solzhenitsyn’s *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) which reflect the period of the two World Wars as well as the Cold War. In this regard, Manheim states in *Ideology and Utopia* (1936) that:

There are spheres of thought in which it is impossible to conceive of absolute truth existing independently of the values and position of the subject and unrelated to the social context<sup>8b</sup>

To reformulate the above citation, according to Manheim, truth and knowledge are always constructed from the value system of a given society, as well as the historical period in which a person or group of people live. It follows from this that, Orwell’s conception of socialism has derived from the British tradition and practice of socialism, and therefore, he

advocates it and favors it against the spread of the Soviet authoritarian version of socialism. Moreover, relationism is a relevant concept to Orwell's novel, since it explains the relationship between the aftermath of the Second World War and the narrative of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949).

The first half of the twentieth century marked the emergence of the brutal reality of absolute control built on totalitarianism under the world-changing figures, each of Lenin, Hitler and Stalin. Therefore, a tyrannical government was established and directed the world toward corruption and distortion. Understanding literature depends on the evaluation of the context from which this piece of work emerged. This can shed light on the two important literary works George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) which reflect the period of the two World Wars as well as the Cold War. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty - Four* represents a society where people are controlled and scrutinized with 'telescreens'.

In fact, we notice that the totalitarian government of Oceania has developed technological tools to monitor every aspect of the citizens' lives. Further, the party rewrites history and fights all objective truth. The following passage denotes how the totalitarian government of 'the Party' intervenes in every aspects of public life from media, to artistic production, and also how it destroys the opposing ideas which threaten its powerful position. We read in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that:

The original copy destroyed, and the corrected copy placed on the files instead. This process of continuous alteration was applied not only to newspapers, but to books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, sound, tracks, cartoons, photographs. To every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance.<sup>9</sup>

George Orwell was the first intellectual to coin the term 'Cold War'. In 1945 he published an essay entitled "*You and the Atomic Bomb*". This is to make people aware of the existence of nuclear weapons capable of immense destruction. The Cold War was the most

feared period for Orwell since it is a conflict between two opposing countries for ideological reasons. The Soviet Union to spread communism and the United States with a support for capitalism to become the dominant system in the world. By 1948, the Soviet Union had installed left wing government in the countries of Eastern Europe that had been liberated by the Red Army. The United States and Britain feared the permanent Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. This threat could influence the western democracies through the spread of communism throughout the world. The struggle can lead to the society predicted by Orwell in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). The threat of the Cold War evoked the sense of disillusionment in many writers. In this context, Orwell writes in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) that : “social relations had been reduced, because the party owns everything and cuts the relations between child and parent, man and man, and even between man and women. We can notice this in the novel when O’Brien says, “We have cut links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and women”<sup>10</sup> .It follows from these two citations that the future world will be empty and meaningless due to the absence of relationship between people, because there will be no love except the love of Big Brother.

### **b) War propaganda in Orwell’s Novel**

Orwell’s novel pictured how authoritarian regimes employed propaganda to manipulate the emotions of the citizens. Thus, the ‘Two Minutes hate’, is a daily event where people are obliged to watch a film in the Ministry of truth to express their hate for the Party’s enemies, especially Immanuel Goldstein. Using such tool could affect people in a dangerous way. The following passage depicts the event of ‘Two Minutes Hate’. Orwell writes that:

The horrible thing about Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but, on the contrary, that it was impossible to avoid joining in .Within thirty seconds any pretense was always unnecessary. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in which a sledge hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one’s will into grimacing, screaming lunatic and yet the rage that one felt was an abstract, undirected emotion which could switched from one object to another like the flame of a blowlamp.<sup>11</sup>



Goldstein's picture is shown for Party members daily during 'Two Minutes Hate' on telescreen. He evokes then hysterical shouting and hatred from the members. This character, in fact, symbolizes demagoguism of the totalitarian state, that is to say portraying a mysterious figure as a threat to the stability of the territory, for the aim of controlling the masses and guaranteeing their servitude. Throughout the novel, authority manipulates the masses fears, prejudices, and excitement in order to ensure their servitude and obedience.

Propaganda strategies are used by the Party to strengthen its position as well as to make people project their love to the system represented by Big Brother. This resembles the use of propaganda in the Second World War through either films, newspapers or speeches .To persuade people that WWII was worth fighting and make them support it. In this context, one can notice a similarity between two Minutes Hate and the speeches of the Nazi leader Adolf Hitler. Hitler would gather the masses of people and manipulate them by his charismatic speeches, which stir a sort of collective hysteria about their enemies.

In Orwell's novel, the individuals who have opposing thoughts and want to react against the party are referred to as 'thought criminals'. They are arrested by the 'Thought Police', whose role in the party is the surveillance of the Oceania's citizens. Using telescreens, microphones to discover those who oppose Big Brother. This is the case with the main character Winston Smith. He was arrested and brought to Room 101 where there was a conversation between him and O'Brien. An answer was given by O'Brien:

We control life, Winston, at all its levels. You are imagining that there is something called human nature which will be outraged by what we do and will turn against us .But we create human nature. Men are infinitely malleable. Or perhaps you have returned to your old idea that the proletarians or the slaves will arise and overthrow us. Put it out of your mind. They are helpless, like the animals. Humanity is the party, the others are outside –irrelevant.<sup>12</sup>

### c) **“Thought Police” and “N K V D”**

Orwell in his novel uses the term ‘Thought Police’ because it is based on an important historical concept similar to the NKVD. This latter refers to the secret police of the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin during the Second World War. ‘The Thought Police’ has the authority to arrest anyone who just thinks to come against the ideology of the Party. Also they oppress individualism and independent thinking. Hence, ‘the Thought Police’ aims to convert their enemies to the Party’s way of thinking. So they are considered as ‘the ears and eyes in which the government of Oceania can control people.’<sup>13</sup> In the same way, Joseph Stalin determines his absolute power against the enemies of the Russian Communist Party through giving wide reaching authority to the NKVD. Their role is to eliminate any one who poses a threat to the Stalinist Communist Party. Therefore, the secret police of the USSR became involved in special operations, for example, the assassination of Political enemies including the leaders of the Nationalist movements and former Tsarist officials. This can become clear with the execution of Leon Trotsky in Mexico City in 1940.<sup>14</sup>

### d) **“Big Brother” and “Joseph Stalin”:**

In his novel *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) Orwell depicts the Russian leader Joseph Stalin. This is clear through the opening of the novel where there is a description of Big Brother, “The face of a man about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features”.<sup>15</sup> Big Brother and Joseph Stalin share not only physical similarities but also their impact on people as rulers. Just like Stalin, Big Brother was a source of all power as he appears everywhere on telescreens, covers and on posters. The citizens of Oceania are deprived from free thought. It is similar to WWII in which Stalin’s system also is built on fear and oppression; anyone who comes against the soviet policies will be killed because of Stalin’s dictatorship.

In Orwell's novel Goldstein is the leader of 'the Brotherhood', in fact he is a mysterious figure whose true identity is hidden. His goal is to revolt and to bring the collapse of the totalitarian system under 'Big Brother'. This latter persuades people that Goldstein is the major enemy of the territory of Oceania, who threatens their safety, so they have to hate him. The fact that he is a Jew is an interesting and significant fact about history especially during the Second World War. Depicting the image of the revolutionist Leon Trotsky against the soviet leader Joseph Stalin. His unsuccessful revolt brought his death by the NKVD. One of the causes behind his murder is his Jewish origin, because at that time the Jewish people along with others were executed for crimes, which they have not committed.

## **2-The Gulag Archipelago**

Solzhenitsyn started to write his memoirs *The Gulag Archipelago* in 1918, a year after the Bolshevik Revolution. This Revolution is considered as one of the most crucial explosive political events of the twentieth century. It was a violent Revolution which marked the end of the Romanov dynasty (the last Tsars) and therefore the centuries of Russian Imperial rule came to an end. The main leader of this revolution was the socialist revolutionary Vladimir Lenin, who destroyed the traditions of the Tsarist rule. Therefore, Vladimir Lenin abolished Catholic churches and the tsar's rule was abandoned. From this, we notice that Lenin succeeded to overthrow the Russian traditional system. Then he gave rise to communism and this is obvious in Solzhenitsyn's novel when he argues that:

In 1918, in order to speed up the cultural victory of the revolution as well, they began to ransack the churches and throw out the relics of saints, and to carry off church plate. Popular disorders broke out in defense of the plundered churches and monasteries. Here and there the alarm bell rang out, and the true orthodox believers rushes forth, some had to be expanded right on the spot and others arrested.<sup>16</sup>

The Bolsheviks later established 'the Communist Party of the Soviet Union'. This shift in fact created social unrest in Russia for the decades which followed.<sup>17</sup> In this era Lenin created the forced labor camps called the Gulags under the following slogan which was created in 1918,

‘Secure the Soviet Republic against its class enemies, by isolating them in concentration camps’.<sup>18</sup> These soviet labor camps reached their peak during Stalin’s rule. In *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) Solzhenitsyn interpreted the circumstances of this revolution as:

Knowing the sense and spirit of the revolution, it is easy to guess that during these months such central prisons as Kresty in Petrograd and Butyrki in Moskow, and many provincial prisons like them, were filled with wealthy men, prominent public figures, generals and officials, as well as officials of ministries and of the state apparatus who refused to carry out the orders of the new authority.<sup>19</sup>

Stalin declared that the Soviet agriculture and industry needed to be modernized, so he supported various industrialization programs mainly after having defeated the opposition known as left opposition and the United Opposition.<sup>20</sup> Hence, in this process, the state decreed the collectivization of agriculture, in which millions of peasants known as the “kulaks” (the rich peasants producing for Russian market) were dispossessed and transported. Also, many of them died and others became slave laborers in the Gulags. The Kulaks are used as a tool for economic development as well as for mass production from which the state built its power. Nail Faulkner states in his article ‘*A People’s History of the Russian Revolution*’ (2001) that:

The Russian aim was mass production to build state power. Russian Rulers thus became personifications of state-capitalist accumulation. But they also used their power to reward themselves richly, even as they plundered the peasantry, cut wages, increased work pressure, and filled the Gulags with slave- laborers.<sup>21</sup>

Through Stalin’s program of collectivization many of the kulaks were forced to give up their lands in favor of the state’s economy. For Stalin, this was a part of a ‘revolution from the above’ in which over half of farms had been collectivized and therefore abolished the private ownership of the land. This resulted in harming the Russian agriculture, because these programs were met with hostility and refusal from the peasants who destroyed many of the equipments of agriculture as well killing their farm animals. Such reaction was faced by Stalin through punishing these land owners and sending millions of them to the Gulag Camps were a

lot of them have died. In this context, Allan Todd states in his book *'The Modern World'* (2001) that:

However, once the 1930s harvest was in, Stalin renewed the forced collectivization programme. By 1931, over 50% of farms had been collectivized; and by 1937, the official figure was given as 90%. Although Stalin had carried out a 'Revolution from above', which effectively ended private ownership of the land, his methods did much damage to Russian agriculture. This was because many kulaks slaughtered their animals, and destroyed equipments rather than hand them over to the collective farms.<sup>22</sup>

The 'Great purge' or known as the 'Great terror' during Stalin's era is characterized by the killing and imprisoning of millions of people.<sup>23</sup> Besides the peasant's imprisonment the purge expand to include artist, intellectuals, and writers, a clear example is Solzhenitsyn's imprisonment. He was put in prison because of a letter written to a friend. As wishing for a socialist society rather than a communist society. This is very clear when he argues "I am sent to a special prison which is made only for political prisoners."<sup>24</sup> He was accused of 'Anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda'. This is evident through the novel when Solzhenitsyn described his moments inside the 'Engine Room', where a paper was given to him in order to sign, it includes the cause for his arrest, which is designated for anti-Soviet propaganda as well as an attempt to create anti-Soviet Organization. The following quote illustrates this idea:

Unwillingly, he let the paper out of his hand. I turned it over and began to look through it with deliberate slowness, not just word by word but letter by letter. It had been typed, but what I had in front of me was not the original but a carbon.<sup>25</sup>

Further, Solzhenitsyn believes that people's arm to face the challenges is truth. But it is hard to understand history especially the history of totalitarian societies exemplified by Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany. The Gulag slogan 'correction through labor' found in 1930 interpret Stalin's use of slaves. In the preface of the book Solzhenitsyn warned the Russian people that reading his book would be very dangerous. Moreover, he described 1945 as "Stalin's cruel joke with the politicians".<sup>26</sup>

By applying Mannheim's Sociology of knowledge to Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) and Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) we notice that the sociology of knowledge is appropriate as an approach, because it is essential to interpret both George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty - Four* (1949) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). It focuses on the relation between a literary work and the social environment in which it is created. In this sense, both authors reflect the thinking of the first half of the twentieth century, this helps to understand the point of view of the writer. Since literature is influenced by time and space and the cultural traditions inspires the authors and their world view. Besides, man and society are the materials out of which literature is constructed, so a literary work is a result of social forces. In this sense we can argue that literature is a social phenomenon.

### **Conclusion:**

To conclude, we should notice that both George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* are of a great historical importance. The two texts are an interpretation of a time when individuality was stolen by the government. This latter manipulates people through using different methods of punishment which includes arrests, torture, and interrogations with scientific and technological means. The two authors are influenced by the circumstances and the social context from which these works are produced. On the one hand, George Orwell in his dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) portrayed the society, which people may arrive to in the future. Thus the ideological struggle which existed between the United States and the Soviet Union is characterized with the use of nuclear weapons. The fact that both countries cannot be defeated could cause a third World War, which will destroy the world. On the other hand, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn produces his work *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) to interpret the way the Russian leaders, Lenin and Stalin imprisoned millions of people in the Soviet labor camps. The Gulag includes

artists, intellectuals, writers and peasants along with others. Furthermore, the two texts had the inspiration to prevent a future nightmarish society.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Asa Briggs, *A Social History of England* (England: Penguin Books, 1999), 287

<sup>2</sup> Melvyn, P. Leffler, and David, S. Painter, *Origins of the Cold War*. (Psychology Press, 2005), 32

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 326

<sup>4</sup> Alexandr Farlkex, Free Dictionary. Available at <https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Fabian+society> </a>.

<sup>5</sup> Pauline Gregg, *A Social and Economic History of Britain 1760-1980* (Oxford: Holywell Manor, 1949), 545

<sup>6</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (London: penguin Random House, 1949), 5

<sup>7</sup> Krishan Kumar, *Utopia & Anti -Utopia in Modern Times* (New York: Blackwell, 1987), 296.

<sup>8a</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (London: penguin Books, 1949), 80

<sup>8b</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1949)

<sup>9</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (London: penguin Books, 1949), 51

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 336

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 19

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 308

<sup>13</sup> Brian, Mather, *Oceania VS Soviet Union*, accessed on 22, November 2019 available at <http://www.Scholar.valpo.edu/Cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=11702&context=core+reader>.

<sup>14</sup> Saint, Michael, *The NKVD: Stalinist Secret Police Force*, 2012 accessed on 22, November 2019 available at <http://www.unitedarmedforcesofnovorossiia2014.blogspot.com/2016/04/the-nkvd-stalin-secret-police-force.html>.) .

<sup>15</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (London: Penguin Random House, 1949), 4

<sup>16</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An experiment in literary Investigation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 29

<sup>17</sup> History.com Editors, *Russian Revolution* updated in June, 6, 2019. Accessed on 1.12.2019 Available at: <https://www.history.com/topics/russia/russian-revolution>.

<sup>18</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956*”, Conscioused, h1965, available at <http://www.conscioused.Org>

<sup>19</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An experiment in literary Investigation* (New York: Harper& Row, 1976), 26.

<sup>20</sup> Alan Todd, *The Modern World* (England: Oxford University Press, 2001), 92.



## **Chapter Two:**

### **Ideological and Utopic Outlooks in Orwell's Novel**

It becomes evident from the first chapter that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is significantly influenced by the historical context which Orwell witnessed. While it also carries various projections into the future, especially as its title suggests, what would happen in the year of 1984 if totalitarianism prevails. In this chapter, we study what makes Orwell's novel a dystopia. Then, we illustrate how utopian thinking is presented in the novel. We deduce that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is a novel which employs aesthetic value to convey a latent political message against totalitarian trends. Further, we read the novel through Manheim's conception of ideology. Through this chapter we also try to extract the parallels between *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973).

#### **1) Orwell's Dystopian World**

Dystopian narratives recount a futuristic world, where government achieves absolute power and often uses technology to monitor everyone. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is indeed one of the most influential novels of the dystopian type. Orwell feared that government would employ mass-surveillance, torture and propaganda to guarantee total submission of people. His novel sets in the dystopian territory called Oceania in which the 'Party' governs every aspect of the lives of the citizens.

In the midst of this totalitarian atmosphere appears throughout 'Air-Strip One', the capital city of Oceania, a gigantic poster of a man with a moustache and a caption, which runs: "Big Brother is watching you".<sup>1</sup> This man who induces reverence is in fact often considered to portray Stalin. Orwell sets in the beginning of the novel an atmosphere of mass-surveillance. Similar to the atmosphere of *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). Various individuals are in constant fear of being caught by the authorities. While in *The Gulag Archipelago*

(1949) the body of the captors is called NKVD; in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) they are referred to as ‘the Thought Police’. The following expression used by Orwell “the eyes follow you about when you move” is a strong metaphor on how the poster of Big Brother seems omniscient, even though it is merely an object. So, we can already notice the aesthetic merit of the novel. Orwell writes in *Nineteen Eighteen-Four* (1949) the following:

On each landing, opposite the lift shaft, the poster with enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so convicted that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.<sup>2</sup>

This quotation illustrates what is said above. It portrays the mysterious surveillance apparatuses of the ‘Party’ as omniscient and omnipresent. It also suggests that the individual becomes a subject to the dominant ideology instead of a free agent. However, In the face of mass surveillance, totalitarian censorship and history falsification testimony becomes the means for Winton to communicate the truth to the future generations. His aim is to generate hope in a free society and bring the collapse of totalitarianism which created a crisis for the individual liberties. Thus, we notice that testimony is crucial in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) in making one’s voice heard. In this sense, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) calls for action, so it can be described in Engels’ terms as a ‘tendentious’ novel, because it is explicitly militant in favor of democracy and individualism in face of the collectivist communist totalitarianism. Orwell writes in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) that

The diary would be reduced to ashes and himself to vapor. Only the Thought police would read what he had written, before they wiped it out of existence and out of memory. How you make appeal to the future when not a trace of you not even an anonymous word scribbled on a piece of paper, could physically survive? .<sup>3</sup>

The citation above emphasizes the importance of testimony in Orwell’s novel. In this passage, the author asks how it would be possible to record the truth for the future generations, if no piece there is no written witness. It is evident that ‘the Party’ suppresses the memories of individuals and constantly distorts their perception and awareness of the facts.

Therefore, it fears that the truth will be recorded and bring the collapse of this authoritative system. However, the factual past becomes intriguing and fascinating to Winston.<sup>4</sup> He becomes interested in revealing the truth to the future generations in order to bring the collapse of the totalitarian regime under Big Brother's rule. In this light, the situation portrays the role of the author as a social agent for change. Hence, the approach of Engels referred to as 'Para-Marxism' is appropriate and relevant in studying the text, because it shows us that Orwell uses his artistic ability to emphasize the importance of stating the truth and fighting for liberty, especially under totalitarianism.

The importance of testimony as portrayed in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) matches *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). Solzhenitsyn has faced dangers of totalitarianism as well as censorship of the Soviet regime against his memoirs, when he sought to publish them later after Stalin's death. Further, what saved him several times from execution was his participation as a former soldier who fought in the Russian upfront against Nazi Germany during the First World War. In this regard, Solzhenitsyn refers in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) to one of the most crucial events in Russian history which is the 'Civil War'. It was an armed revolution between the Red army of the communists and the White army. And it resulted at the end, of the creation of the Soviet Union. However, considering that most Russians were peasants they also were mostly illiterate even during Stalin's era<sup>5</sup>, most of them narrated history only orally. Thus, it was crucial for Solzhenitsyn to write down the Gulag experience.

In Orwell's novel, Winston's job at the 'Records Department' of 'The Ministry of Truth' deals with revising historical records, in order to make the past conform to the contradictory Party's narrative. He is required in his job to falsify facts and make them conform to Big Brother's speeches and predictions. Moreover, he erases information about individuals who have not only been killed by authority, but denied even existence in history or memory: they

are referred to as “unpersons”; they have been “vaporized”<sup>6</sup>. Concerning the disappearance of individuals who become ‘unpersons’, we notice another similarity with the night arrests described in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). We illustrate from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) with the following quote

In the vast majority of cases there was no trial no report of the arrest. People simply disappeared, always during the night. Your name was removed from the register, every record of everything you had ever done was wiped out your one time existence was wiped out and then forgotten you were abolished annihilated: *vaporized* was the usual word.<sup>7</sup>

The passage above depicts the unjust nature of ‘the Party’ in suppressing opposition. Individuals have no right for a fair trial to decide whether they are guilty or not. Which is similar to the arbitrary nature of the arrests in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). In this regard, these similarities between our two selected texts is due to historical affinity between the two writers. To reformulate, they lived and produced their literary texts approximately in the same historical period, which are the two World War and the Cold War.

Another strategy used by the Party to distort reality is by reshaping history. Thus, the government of Oceania claims having improved the living conditions of its citizens through distorting the “capitalist” past and claiming that the capitalist class had exploited people and impoverished them, until the victory of the “Revolution” which according to them reformed these living conditions.<sup>8</sup> Revolution means political process of changing the existing order. Hence, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) the concept of “the Revolution” according to the Party refers to the overthrow of the old capitalist system. So in fact, it is rather a depiction of the communist Bolshevik Revolution (1917). In this regard, we note another similarity between *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973), in terms of how the “Revolution” changes the old values while oppressing all of the former aspects of the old system to the degree of falsifying history and punishing individuals who may reveal the Truth. In this light, Orwell writes in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) that :

“people who had grown up in the world of the Revolution knowing nothing else accepting the Party as something unalterable, like the sky, not rebelling against its authority but simply evading it, as a rabbit dodges a dog”.<sup>9</sup>

This citation signifies that ignorance of the past due to people’s passivity and state censorship led to a sort of obedience and conformity. It is also obvious that Orwell mistrusts any legitimacy of beliefs especially when they are employed to silence free speech and oppress individuality. However, if we analyze this quotation critically we understand that it vehicles the ideology of the author, which is western conception of individualism. In this light, through the particular conception of ideology of Karl Manheim (1949) we understand that Orwell manifests particular conception of ideology towards Stalinist communism. Manheim conceptualizes particular ideology ‘as a conscious disguise of the real nature of a situation’<sup>10</sup>. Hence, ideology is a conscious distortion of truth. Since, truth is relative. In the case of Orwell’s novel, the word choice of the author in the above passage such as ‘Revolution’ is understood as a satire of the perversion of the socialist views. This reflects Orwell’s view as a western writer towards the political events he witnessed especially in the year 1948 in which he wrote his novel.

To stress the statement made above, George Orwell in one of press releases in 1949 declares in regards of his novel that it is not intended necessarily to be a prophecy of what the Western world might arrive to in about forty years, as some reviewers believe. Instead, for him it is more of a warning. It warns for example against the ‘socialist’ and ‘capitalist’ danger which lies in the atomic threat. What he finds alarming is how many intellectuals tended to justify different trends of totalitarianism, especially national fascism and Stalinism.<sup>11</sup> In this concern, he declares that his literary works function as a call for action against such dangerous political and social upheavals. So he states that: “The moral to be drawn from this dangerous nightmare situation is a simple one: don’t let it happen. It depends on you.”<sup>12</sup>

Despite the Party's distortion and manipulation, the past is still perceived through the senses. In fact we notice the manifestation of the 'pre-revolutionary' objects which were made during the 'capitalist' past of Oceania, era. For the first time Winston walks through the avenues of the proles (proletariats, or the working class) in order to investigate the truth of the conditions before 'The Revolution'. He wants to reveal whether in fact the Party has improved the socio-economic conditions of Oceania as it claims. Nevertheless, what he discovers is that the places of the proles are not at all scrutinized by the telescreens. When he enters the shop of an old man, he was attracted by several objects such as an old-fashioned glass, and a fireplace.<sup>13</sup>

As we note, these objects which are absent from the life of the 'Party', symbolize authenticity, and they are of an aesthetic and historical value. As if they stood as a witness for a past which was more vivid and full of life than that of the gloomy and oppressive atmosphere of the totalitarian world of the year of '1984'.

## **2) Utopian Outlook in Orwell's Novel**

According to Mannheim's conception of utopia in his book *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (1949) utopia is considered as "a state of mind" which "transcends reality and which at the same time breaks the bonds of the existing order."<sup>14</sup> As a matter of fact, what distinguishes utopia from ideology is that while ideology is the dominant system of thought which seeks to sustain the old order, utopia is rather a fresh mental outlook which motivates a person or a social group to change this order into a more ideal one. Further, utopia according to Mannheim arises as a response to one given historical order<sup>15</sup>. It follows from this conception of utopia that Orwell writes a dystopia to convey a utopia, since as discussed above, he writes in order to call for action and positive change. Indeed, this becomes obvious through his main character Winston who is a revolutionary and

aims at overthrowing the order of Big Brother, which is built on oppression in order to establish a new world built on freedom and prosperity.

Despite the Party's strategies of terror and mass-surveillance, Winston revolts through recording the facts and through his relationship with Julia with whom he expresses his intimate and individual feelings, which were not only forbidden, but also dangerous if discovered by the thought police. However, unlike Winston who is interested in making the Party collapse, Julia and despite her awareness about the Party's propaganda is more concerned about living pleurably and expressing her desires freely. But she is indifferent towards the idea of a revolution against the Inner Party, also she manifests no ambition to overthrow the Party or overcome its dominant ideology called 'Ingsoc'.<sup>16</sup> In this regard, it is perceivable that Orwell depicts two different types of characters; the revolutionary, catalyst and utopianist Winston Smith and the hedonist, yet clever Julia. While Winston aspires and acts to bring change and utopia, Julia is more immersed in her own desires while staying safe from the Party's persecution and torture.<sup>17</sup>

Concerning the proles, they are the simple working class members which consist of eighty per cent of Oceania population, unlike Party members, they are not mass-surveyed or controlled, since they are considered as sub-human in the eyes of the authorities. They are thought incapable of carrying any revolution which might threaten the authority of the Party. They are depoliticized and kept distracted in sensual entertainment such as sport, astrology and novelettes which depict sexually exaggerated stories.<sup>18</sup> Thus, we perceive Orwell's urge to advocate the rights of these alienated 'proles' and therefore we sense his attempt in bringing awareness among the simple people who were impoverished and marginalized. In this light, another utopian outlook to look for in the novel is presented in the way Winston Smith views the proles, he writes on his secret diary that hope resides in unity

and solidarity of these proletariats. The following citation from the novel is an illustration of what has been said

[...] If there is hope it must lie in the proles, because only there, in those swarming disregarded masses, 85 per cent of the population of Oceania, could the force to destroy the Party ever be generated if there is hope it lies in them.<sup>19</sup>

This quotation reflects the utopian vision of Orwell towards the future of society. It also manifests the socialist tendency of the author in estimating the proletariats to bring the collapse of the oligarchical totalitarian state of Oceania. Thus, the passage depicts Orwell's faith in the simple working class to remedy their conditions. Indeed, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) the proles compared to the Party members, are depicted as relatively free. In the details of their simple daily life, there is still delight, because the struggle of remaining alive under such conditions of poverty adds to life more meaning. Despite the fact that their human integrity is denied by the Party, they find the value of life and sense of connection to each other, unlike the Party members, who live under constant surveillance, total control and fear of expressing one's individuality. In fact, this situation depicts disillusionment and alienation, which stems from industrialization on the one hand and the two world Wars on the other. To exemplify another utopian act in the novel, we illustrate the following words said by Winston to Julia. They picture poetically the importance of singing as a reaction against oppression

The birds sang, the proles sang, the Party did not sing. All round the world, in London and New York, in Africa and Brazil and in the mysterious forbidden lands beyond the frontiers, in the streets of Paris and Berlin, in the villages of the endless Russian plain, in the bazars of China and Japan everywhere stood the same solid unconquerable figure, made after being monstrous by work and child bearing, toiling from birth to death and still singing.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, to examine this quote, first we notice that the message here is that singing is a rebellious act against the constraint of the rigid ideology of the 'Party'. The proles are compared to birds; this link is an aesthetic one. It suggests that what birds and the proles have



in common is their freedom and ability to sing which is a simple act, yet a way of enjoying life. Orwell in this passage addresses different nations in the globe by referring to how people sang in different corners of the world. Hence, the proles revolution as well as struggle is for the author universal instead of local. Further, the enemy is a common one; it is 'the Party', which oppresses and forbids simple acts of enjoying life.

Considering the above passages from the novel, Manheim describes the utopian mindset as the ambitious outlook of the oppressed class to change the stable order and improve their conditions. In this regard, Winston carries throughout the novel this utopian outlook, which is even manifested in his dreams, to exemplify, he constantly dreams of 'the Golden Country' in which prosperity and comfort prevails. Further, he repeatedly writes in his diary the phrase 'Down with Big Brother'<sup>21</sup>. Hence, he thinks about the collapse of the ideology of the Party and to overthrow its leader Big Brother, who symbolizes oppression. Thus, we can think of Winston as utopianist thinker, because he challenges the established order. The following quote from Manheim's *Ideology and Utopia* (1949) illustrates his conception of utopia

The concept of *utopian* thinking reflects the opposite discovery of the political struggle, namely that certain oppressed groups are intellectually so strongly interested in the destruction and transformation of a given condition of society that they unwittingly see only those elements in the situation which tend to negate it.<sup>22</sup>

The quote above demonstrates that the utopian mindset is recognized when an oppressed group is interested not in the here and now, that is to say the status quo, but in the potential future, which could be better than the present order, which they refuse and act in order to change. In fact, Winston in Orwell's novel carries the same utopian thinking, which manifests in his ambition to overthrow Big Brother.

### 3) Para-Marxism in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

To put *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) in the lights of aesthetic Para-Marxist approach we may say that the passages we have illustrated from the novel are also some of the best examples which put the text in a place closer to the Para-Marxist approach than to Zhdanovism, because Orwell employs his aesthetic ability to express a latent message against totalitarian communism. In fact, it is crucial to understand that Orwell's novels in general and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) in particular are to be discerned from other artistic literary works, because as he declares in his essay *why I write* that

What I have most wanted to do throughout the past ten years is to make political writing into an art. My starting point is always a feeling of partisanship, a sense of injustice. When I sit down to write a book, I do not say to myself, 'I am going to produce a work of art'. I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing. But I could not do the work of writing a book, or even a long magazine article, if it were not also an aesthetic experience [...] <sup>23</sup>

To reformulate the citation above, Orwell claims that the aim of his writing is at once to express an aesthetic experience and to convey a deeper moral underlying message. Hence, he does not sacrifice his art for the sake of expressing a political world view. However, when he writes he is urged to expose deceptions, and therefore call for action. Further, he suggests that he could not produce a text if it is deployed from its aesthetic dimension. Indeed, for a literary work to be convincing and influential it has to be delivered artistically. Moreover, Orwell is known as an author for his tendency to shift political sides. In fact, he criticizes the tendency of some intellectuals to impose one strict line of thought. In this context, George Orwell writes in his essay *Writers and Leviathan* (1946) that

If we find ourselves in ten years' time cringing before somebody like Zhdanov, it will probably be because that is what we have deserved. Obviously there are strong tendencies towards totalitarianism at work within the English literary

intelligentsia already. But here I am not concerned with any organised and conscious movement such as Communism, but merely with the effect, on people of good will, of political thinking and the need to take sides politically.<sup>24</sup>

It follows from the citation above that Orwell as an essayist was aware of the emergence of Zhdanovism, which as we have explained previously, it is a Soviet doctrine which suggests that literature and art should be a means to express the social reality of the 'proletariat' class, as well as the class struggle between the proletariats and the 'bourgeoisie'. It was encouraged by Stalin who forced authors, poets and painters to depict only the communist propaganda, but also to glorify 'the greatness and achievements' of Josef Stalin himself. Further, through this citation Zhdanovism is viewed by Orwell as a sort of danger which should be avoided. Thus, he associates Zhdanovism with totalitarianism and argues that it has influenced negatively creativity of English literature. Hence, he calls such movement 'English literary intelligentsia'.

Another example of the militant message of Orwell's novel is when he denounces language distortion. One of the urgent concerns in the post War era which *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) portrays is corruption and manipulation of language for dishonest aims. In his essay *Politics and the English Language* (1949), Orwell declares that: "All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia. When the general atmosphere is bad, language must suffer"<sup>25</sup>. Orwell in this quotation links corruption of language to political corruption, in this respect, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) portrays language distortion as a means to remain in power.

Considering what has been said above, the Party creates a new distorted version of English called 'Newspeak', which is supposed to become the official Language of Oceania. The Party has limited English in order to render certain concepts literally unthinkable through

gradual reduction of vocabulary and grammar for instance “Ungood” instead of bad. The aim is obviously to restrict free thought, so that the individual conforms exclusively to the doctrine of the State; which is Ingsoc.<sup>26</sup> The term that is used to depict the orthodoxy thought is “goodthink”: it means thinking exclusively in accordance to the beliefs of the Party’s ideology. Syme who is a philologist tells Winston that:

We’re getting the language into its final shape- the shape it’s going to have when nobody speaks anything else. When we’ve finished with it people like you will have to learn it all over again. You think, I dare say, that our chief job is inventing new words. But not a bit of it! We’re destroying words- scores of them, hundreds of them, every day we’re cutting the language down to the bone.<sup>27</sup>

This quote underscores the dystopian vision of Orwell towards language. Indeed, if the Party succeeds in destroying language, it will be able to control and subjugate all humanity. Orwell stresses on the issue of miss-use of language in modern politics. He believes that intellectuals, politicians and people who adhere to various ideologies, all tend to use vague language, and employ cliché words with no authentic meaning, but what is even more dangerous according to him is “euphemism”, which means replacing offensive and cruel words with ones that are more acceptable in order to mask evil intentions. Considering this, Orwell’s work has been warning against dishonesty of intellectuals especially during the rise of totalitarian regimes and adoration of the cult leaders such as Hitler, Stalin and Mao. He denounced the intellectual dishonesty of that period, especially the justification of atrocities and deception. He writes in his essay *Politics and the English Language* (1949) that

Political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire within cindery bullets: this is called Pacification. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called Transfer of Population or Rectification of Frontiers.”<sup>28</sup>

The above citation is an example of the tendency to justify atrocities through language manipulation. Another example of reality distortion in the novel is portrayed through the

practice of “doublethink”. It is to assume two contradictory claims such as “War is peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength”<sup>29</sup>. As we have already illustrated, such practice aims to falsify facts without leaving impression of the violation of reality. As for memory, it is denied and forced into oblivion in “memory whole”. Thus, the Party shapes its own world: Who controls the Past controls the future, who controls the present controls the past.<sup>30</sup> The following quotation from the novel illustrates how conformity leads the ‘orthodoxy’ citizens of Oceania to believe the absurdities of the Party’s narrative

They could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity of what was demanded of them, and were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening. By lack of understanding they remained sane.<sup>31</sup>

In the light of the above quotation, we denote that under the totalitarian state of Oceania, the individual becomes a subject of the Ingsoc ideology, instead of a free agent and all aspects of his life and actions are dictated by the authority and mass-surveyed by the Telescreens. Thus, In order to suppress any potential Revolution, the Party arrests people who may dare to think outside the conventions of its Ingsoc ideology. Totalitarianism as portrayed in the novel is extended to suggest that reality outside what ‘the Party’ holds to be true is inexistent. ‘The Party’ views the individual as incapable of free thought; hence it legitimizes its mass control and manipulation.

#### **4) Ideological Outlook in *Nineteen Eighty-Four***

The values of the Party are akin the commands of an omniscient and omnipotent god. In this sense, when O’Brian was torturing Winston in Room 101 for his ‘thought crime’ he tells him that only the Party can decide truth from falseness. The following quote signifies that the Party denies reality and perception of all the citizens as well as all beliefs and values of the opposing idea.

Reality exists in the mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind which can make mistake, and in any case soon perishes: only in the mind of the Party, which is

collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be the truth is the truth. It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party.<sup>32</sup>

The above citation is the best example of the ideological outlook in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). O'Brien and 'the Party' embody the dogmatic aspect of ideology which rejects all adversary thinking and regards its world view as the only accurate one to interpret the world. In fact it depicts Orwell's rejection of all trends of totalitarianism including fascism, Nazism, and communism as well as all forms of nationalism. In the lights of this citation, Manheim conceptualizes ideology as follows

The concept of 'ideology' reflects the one discovery which emerged from political conflict, namely, that ruling groups can in their thinking become so intensively interest-bound to situation that they are simply no longer able to see certain facts which would undermine their sense of domination.<sup>33</sup>

This statement illustrates how the dominant ideology in the hands of the class becomes a narrow and centric way to interpret the political events. The holder of ideology which is often the ruling class will rely on their ideas are shaped by their interest and their interests and their dominant social position while all adversary thinking is excluded. Hence, this is where ideology as portrayed in Orwell's novel and conceptualized by Manheim coincide.

O'Brien is a mysterious and charismatic figure; he appeared later as a member of the thought police. He hands Winston a book supposedly written by Goldstein entitled *Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*.<sup>34</sup> It reveals the aspects and aims of the Party, mainly regarding economy and the motives of the waged War between the three superpowers Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia. Winston reads in Goldstein's book that society under 'oligarchical collectivism' is divided into three classes: The high, the middle and the low, this order has been stable throughout ages. The elites of the middle class constantly attempt to overthrow the high in order to establish its rule. While exploiting the impoverished low class by attracting them and pretending to be on their side; promising to improve their

conditions and establish equality. However once they reach power, they discard the low class and exploit them again.<sup>35</sup> To interpret this through Manheim's conception of ideology and utopia, one may see the Middle class throughout different ages as depicted in '*Oligarchical Collectivism*' as holders of a utopian thought, yet when they achieve authority, this utopia is subverted in their hands and it turns again into an ideology which blocks change.

According to Goldstein's theory of *Oligarchical Collectivism* the bourgeoisie, also known as the Elites, which include professors, doctors and intellectuals, had been the middle class force behind the famous revolutions such as the French Revolutions against the monarchs. They advocated principles such as "Brotherhood, Liberty, and Equality, which are indeed the same ideals of the French Revolution"<sup>36</sup>. As a matter of fact, subversion of revolutions is also the central theme of Orwell's allegorical novella *Animal Farm* (1945) in which the animals rebel against their human farmer. However, after overthrowing him the leaders of their rebellion; the pigs establish a new tyranny and proclaim that "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."<sup>37</sup> To put this quotation in its historical context, it is rather a satire about the rulers hypocrisy, which pretended to care about equality, while it empowered the ruling elite and impoverished the lower class.

Further, Orwell's depiction of the subversion of revolutions demonstrates what Orwell thinks about the Soviet Russian form of communism. He favored instead the British conception of socialism, which calls for a peaceful revolution and gradual reforms of the conditions of the workers.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, his literary works are to be regarded as a call to stop the spread of radical communism in his country Britain and follow instead British democratic socialism to remedy the conditions of the workers and establish equality.

We have illustrated so far in this chapter the utopian function of Orwell's novel as well as the aesthetic and political dimension of it. Further, the novel conveys not only a utopia, but also the ideology of democratic socialism. The experiences Orwell witnessed in either the

Spanish Civil War or imperial India made him by the year he wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) to become a democratic Socialist. According to Orwell the common working people perceive socialism in a complete different manner. Since it is, in fact, derived from their concrete and genuine experience, in their work and life in general. Intellectuals on the other hand, are rather corrupted and often justify for the tyrants their power abuse.<sup>39</sup>

In his essay '*Why I Joined the Labor Party*' (1938) Orwell declares that he decided to join the Independent Labour Party, right after his participation in the Spanish Civil War. According to him, it was not simple to stay apolitical in the face of rising fascism and censorship especially with the negative influence of money on media. He trusted the intentions of the British Labour Party, believing that it is genuine in its endeavor.<sup>40</sup> Orwell states that: "The I.L.P was the only British Party I felt like joining and also the only Party I could join with at least the certainty that I would never be led up the garden path in the name of capitalist democracy".<sup>41</sup>

Orwell advocates for democratic socialism. He declares: "Every line of serious work I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism".<sup>42</sup>

However, he distinguishes between the practices of the Soviet Union and what he believes to be true socialism. He thought that if institutions and rules such as checks and balances regulated it, socialism would be efficient in bringing the positive change in society.<sup>43</sup> In this light, Orwell's novel vehicles at the same time an ideology and a utopia. It is on the one hand ideological because it advocates democratic socialism which stems from his country Britain, and it rejects the ideology of collectivism which is the Soviet Russian version of socialism. Therefore, we deduce that Orwell seeks through his writing to stabilize the traditions and individualistic values of his country in the face of what he perceives as a foreign threat, which is Stalinist communism. On the other hand, the novel is to be viewed as



a utopia since it expects to remedy the nightmarish destiny it projects and therefor; to establish a more prosper future. In other words, Orwell writes a dystopia to convey a utopia.

## **Conclusion of the second chapter**

We discussed in this chapter the dystopian aspects of Orwell's novel. The world of Oceania is divided into three classes; the Inner Party; which consist of the "oligarchy" embodied in Big Brother and the antagonist character O'Brien. Second, the 'Outer Party', which are the Party members; the middle class who are under the subjugation and mass-surveillance of the Oligarchy. The lowest rank are "the proles" (the proletariats). They are impoverished and kept distracted, even though relatively free from the constraint of the Ingsoc ideology. In this light, the novel portrays the despair of the post-Second World War period, and the alarming nuclear threat of the Cold War.

We have also illustrated how Orwell writes a dystopia in order to convey a utopia. According to Manheim, utopian thinking is recognized in oppressed individuals, who seek to change and improve their conditions. Hence, utopian mindset is observed with the protagonist Winston Smith, who challenges the dangerous 'Party'. This brings us to the aesthetic value of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949); we have demonstrated throughout this chapter that Orwell did not sacrifice his artistic expression in the name of the ideology he advocates. As he declared in his essay *Writers and Leviathan*; he makes political writing into an art. In order to convey any message political or moral message, it is necessary to do it in a creatively so that it becomes convincing. Therefore, Orwell's novel is an excellent example of Para-Marxist literature.

Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) advocates the ideology of democratic socialism; his novel is an attack against what he terms in the novel 'oligarchical collectivism', which denotes his anti-collectivism tendencies. Democratic socialism in principle is based on

equal and fair share of wealth and goods among people as well as having civil liberties such the right for assembly and creating trade unions. In this context, it is different from the ‘oligarchical’ communism of Stalin (portrayed as Big Brother) and the authoritative practices of repressing individual liberties.

Finally, ideology and utopia are blurry concepts to define; they are in fact two faces of the same coin. While ideology is the world view of the ruling class which ensures stability, utopia is the fresh outlook and aspiration of the oppressed group to change this order. Orwell’s novel depicts a dystopia in which technology is abused for control and ideology constraints human potential.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> George Orwell, “*Nineteen Eighty Four*” London: Penguin Random House, 1949), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 4-5

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 32

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 39

<sup>5</sup> Alan Todd, “*The Modern World*” (England: Oxford University Press, 2001), 78.

<sup>6</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949), 39.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>10</sup> Karl Manheim, *Ideology and Utopia, an Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1949), 49.

<sup>11</sup> Krishan, Kumar. *Utopia & Anti -Utopia in Modern Times* (New York: Blackwell, 1987), 301.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four*, 39.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Manheim, *Ideology and Utopia, an Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, 173.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>16</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (London: Penguin Random House, 1949, 151.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 252.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 252.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 24

<sup>22</sup> Manheim, *Ideology and Utopia: an Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, 36.

- <sup>23</sup> George Orwell, *Why I write*. (London: Secker and Warburg, 1946), 5.
- <sup>24</sup> George Orwell, *Writers and Leviathan*, 413 incomplete
- <sup>25</sup> George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*. (The United Kingdom: Horizon Magazine, 1949), 355. Accessed on 02 November, 2019. Pdf Available at: <http://www.limpidsoft.com/a5/orwellessays.pdf>.
- <sup>26</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (London: Penguin Random House, 1949), 343.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., 59
- <sup>28</sup> George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*.
- <sup>29</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four*, 6.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., 68.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., 180.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 190
- <sup>33</sup> Karl Manheim, *Ideology and Utopia: an Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* 36.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., 233
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid., 213,214.
- <sup>37</sup> George, Orwell, *Animal Farm* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1945), 44
- <sup>38</sup> Hacene, Benmechiche, *The Quest for Utopia: from Samuel Bulter to Bertrand Russell* (Tizi-Ouzou: University of Mouloud Mammeri, 2016),181.
- <sup>39</sup> Krishan, Kumar. *Utopia& Anti -Utopia in Modern Times* (New York: Blackwell, 1987), 301.
- <sup>40</sup> George, Orwell, *Why I Joined the Labor Party* ( London: New Leader Magazine, 24 June 1938). Accessed on 14 October, 2019. Available at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/orwell/1938/why-ilp.htm>
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> George, Orwell, *Why I write* (London: Horizon Magazine, 1946), 4
- <sup>43</sup> Michael, Makovi, *George Orwell as a Public Choice Economist* (2015), 188. Accessed on 12 September 2019. Available on <https://www-jstor-org.www.snd11.arn.dz>

## **Ideology and Utopia in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973)**

### **Introduction**

In the second chapter we have studied *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) in the lights of Engel's approach to literature, also through Manheim's conception of ideology and utopia. The aim of the third chapter of our discussion is to analyze Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973), through the same theoretical approaches in order to reveal the aesthetic dimension as well as the ideological and utopian function of Solzhenitsyn's text. We also illustrate totalitarian patterns so described in this text as well as the instrumentalization of ideology by the Stalinist authorities. We have also illustrated more parallels between the two selected literary works.

#### **1) Ideology in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973)**

Manheim's conceptualization of 'Particular ideology' interests us in interpreting Solzhenitsyn's outlook towards the communist ideology during the decades of Stalin's rule. To elaborate, Manheim considers that 'particular ideology' is manifested when someone questions the validity of his opponents and considers them as a distortion of reality or half lies<sup>1</sup>. In this light, Solzhenitsyn considers the mental outlook on which the Soviet Union was built on, that is to say communism, as a mortal ideology and as a root of the atrocities which were committed. In *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) Solzhenitsyn views ideology as an inauthentic way of expressing one's self, moreover it is employed to justify crimes and one's lust to power.<sup>2</sup> It is however noticeable that the author denounces ideology in its negative sense. We induce that several twentieth century thinkers tend to view ideology as a means of justification atrocities and avoiding responsibility for one's actions or incompetence. Concerning this issue, we read the following passage from *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973)

Ideology...that is what gives evildoing its long-sought justification and gives the evildoer the necessary steadfastness and determination. That is the social theory which helps to make his acts seem good instead of bad in his own and others' eyes. So that he won't hear reproaches and curses but will receive praise and honors.<sup>3</sup>

It follows from this citation that according to the author ideology is employed in power abuse while pretending to defend a just and noble cause. In fact, the conception of ideology as the opponent's distorted point of view is for Manheim originated from Napoleon Bonaparte's era, when Napoleon labeled as 'ideologues' all the philosophers who opposed his imperial ambitions.<sup>4</sup> It is necessary to note that the author here describes several types of ideologies throughout history as a means of expanding power. However, to put this passage in its context, we may deduce that Solzhenitsyn attacks directly communism which he associates with the crimes committed by the Soviet authorities during Stalin's era. Therefore, he manifests a particular understanding of communism since he considers it as the deceptive mental outlook which distorted the culture and values of Russia.

After the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution overthrew the Tsarist monarchies, the Soviets established the communist state; therefore, Russia witnessed major shifts in its culture. In this light, Solzhenitsyn captures vividly this transformation. Within its negative image, the Soviet system is presented as rotten and corrupt. Thus, we deduce that his work attacks communism and questions the legitimacy of the Bolshevik Revolution. In fact, unlike many intellectuals who link the atrocities committed in the Soviet system camps to Stalin's abuse of power and distortion of the Marxist values, Solzhenitsyn, portrays through *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) that this terror is rather the ultimate outcome of implementing communism. In this context, Ronald Vroon writes in his essay "*Literature and Litigation: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's the Gulag Archipelago*" (1980) that

Solzhenitsyn endeavors to prove that the violation of legality was not a deviation from the norms of a socialist society, but proceeded from the very nature of socialism. It makes sense that the publication of his slanderous works directed against socialism as a social system, against everything that is created and affirmed by the creative labor of the Soviet people, and is not permitted in the Soviet.<sup>5</sup>

The statement above suggests that there is a violation of legality, which means a transgression against laws that protect the rights, and dignity of individuals. Further, as we have already stated, the essayist claims that for Solzhenitsyn there is no subversion of the socialist values to begin with. Instead, the ultimate goal of socialism was dominance and deceiving people into believing in establishing equality. We may understand such view in Solzhenitsyn's portrayal of how land owners were disposed in the process of 'dekulakization', which is a program developed by Stalin to take away lands from the kulak farmers in order to include them as state property.

We notice that in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) Solzhenitsyn questions the Bolshevik and communist values, since for him the communists, especially the Stalinists, distorted the old laws and norms which governed society during the Tsarist dynasties. The Bolsheviks overthrew the provisional government and transferred the capital of Russia from St. Petersburg to Moscow. Further, for the author the Soviet authorities abused power to their favor in order to remain in power. The following citation is also a satirizes how the Soviet authorities legitimized its actions while pretending to defend the values of the Bolshevik Revolution, which in principle called for equality and the prosperity of the oppressed working class. In this regard, we read in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) that:

When the court was "at one and the same time both the creator of the law [...] and a political weapon. They had thrown out the Tsarist codes, and they had not composed their own. "Don't tell me our criminal courts ought to act exclusively on the basis of existing written norms. We live in the process of the Revolution."<sup>6</sup>

This citation proves what has been said above. It also refers to the injustice of the Soviet system as depicted by the author. Moreover, it sheds light on the lack of separation of authorities in the Soviet union and how that led to the abuse of law for silencing political opposition. In this light, the author offers an insight to how the Stalinist system for three

decades was built on authoritative practices and arbitrary arrests. Further, we notice that the theme of the Revolution is recurrent in the work.

Moreover, there are several cases of individuals who disappear, especially those who are executed. Their identities are denied by authorities as if they have never existed. In the following passage, we learn that when a person visits some of his arrested family members, the guards of the prison deny the presence or existence of that person in that prison. As an illustration we read the following passage in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973):

For those left behind after the arrest there is no long tail and of a wrecked devastated life. And the attempts to go and deliver food parcels. But from all the windows the answer comes in barking voice: ‘Nobody here by that name!’ ‘Never heard of him!’ [...] And that means once and for all. “No right to correspondence” – and that almost for certain means: “He has been shot”.<sup>7</sup>

This passage portrays how the Soviet authorities deprive political prisoners from their right to correspond with a close one. It suggests that the individual becomes merely a subject to the dominant ideology. In fact this passage is similar to the portrayal of ‘unpersons’ in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), where people who question the assertions of the ‘Party’ are executed. Like in *The Gulag archipelago* (1973) many of the arrests take place at night in a similar hopeless frightening situation. While many of the cases in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) were fabricated under torture, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) these executed individuals had no right to a trial in the first place. The expression found in Orwell’s novel ‘vaporized’ refers to the disappearance of the individuals who were executed by the authorities of the ‘Party’ for having expressed unorthodox thoughts.<sup>8</sup>

Among the arrested people the religious figures and reformers, since one of the features that characterized the ideology of the Soviet system is its antipathy towards religion and mainly Christianity. In this regard Solzhenitsyn writes in his work that “You can pray freely, but just so God alone can hear”<sup>9</sup> through this citation, Solzhenitsyn as a Christian



himself denounces the oppression against religious freedom. The lens of *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) shows perfectly the antipathy of the Soviet authorities towards religion and mainly Christianity. The GPU-NKVD is the two Soviet regular Police forces which included Soviet secret police.<sup>10</sup> We can argue that this Soviet anti-religious sentiments is a more perverted form of the materialistic and modernist wave which developed in Russia and Europe, which is portrayed since late Eighteenth Century in literary works such Dostoevsky's novels. Thus, Manheim's notion of 'Relationism' is relevant to understand that Solzhenitsyn's portrayal of the ideology of the Soviet Union concerning religion, censorship are reflective of the period he portrays.

Another similar theme to draw between *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is the hostility of the state towards religion. Because in Orwell's novel too, we notice that expressing the word 'God' is considered a thought crime deserving of punishment. For example, when Ampelforth meets Winston Smith in the prison cell of the 'Ministry of Truth', he informs him that he was arrested for mentioning the word 'God' in his poem. To illustrate, Ampelforth tells Winston that "We were introducing a definitive edition of the poems of Kipling. I allowed the word 'God' to remain at the end of a line. I could not help it".<sup>11</sup>

Interrogations in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973), involve psychological and physical humiliation, despite the fact that in principle it is prohibited to employ force while interrogating the accused. Solzhenitsyn becomes interested in revealing the facts of these codes and laws which were violated. Hence, the full title of this set of memoirs is ' *The Gulag Archipelago: a Literary investigation* ', which means that the endeavor is to reveal the hidden truth. Thus, he searches and reads in the soviet laws. Therefore, we notice the responsibility of authors in unraveling the truth and recording it for future generations, in order to stand up against tyranny. So if we are to consider Engels' view on literature, *The*

*Gulag Archipelago* (1973) can be considered as a “tendentious” and a militant literary text since it is directed against totalitarianism and the terror, which degraded human integrity. In this context Lullen comments in his essay *Solzhenitsyn’s Rhetorical Revolution* (1977) that

As in his fiction, Solzhenitsyn is intent on "tearing off the masks" of propaganda and "official" explanations to record the "true" Soviet reality which he has personally experienced. In the twenties before socialist realism was installed as "official" literary doctrine, "tear off the masks" was a literary slogan espoused by many writers concerned with exposing all aspects of Soviet life, both good and bad. This slogan and the attitude which fostered it were repudiated by the Party in 1932.<sup>12</sup>

This statement claims that the aim of Solzhenitsyn throughout his literary works aimed to expose the lies and what the Soviet authorities have canceled in relation to their inhumane practices, because the authorities imposed authoritarian rules on what should be published. The aim of this is that literature and art adhere predominantly to the Soviet communist ideology. Moreover, we understand that what makes Solzhenitsyn’s testimony worthy of consideration is his involvement in the events he narrates. Like many Soviet writers, Solzhenitsyn’s motive was to “tear off the masks”, that is to say to unravel the truth. This ambition came as a reaction to the Soviet censorship of literature. Indeed, according to the statement above, Solzhenitsyn was not alone in his endeavor in depicting the true life in the Soviet Union. Thus, we can notice how Manheim’s Relationism is relevant to the text we are studying. It suggests that his literary work is a product of two important elements; his personal experience and the participation of other Russian Soviet authors in denouncing the ideology of the Soviet system.

One of the atrocious practices, which are taboo to reveal in the Soviet Union, is torture. The Soviet guards use various practices such as sleep deprivation, placing the arrested in a bed bug-infested box, squeezing testicles slowly, crashing heads with iron champs, burning with cigarettes and acid as well as giving the arrested salted water and leaving them thrust for

long hours. Moreover the interrogators often abuse their power, for instance they dispose the accused and sexually harass the women.<sup>13</sup>

During the exhausting interrogation, the accused is often terrorized and forced to drag along other people from his closed ones.<sup>14</sup> Also, he is pushed to accuse himself, which allows the interrogators to fabricate many of the cases: as Solzhenitsyn describes in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) “Although others might not be aware of it, it was clear to the interrogators at least that the cases were fabricated”<sup>15</sup>. In this regard, we recognize another similar pattern between *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). In Orwell’s novel O’Brian tortures Winston in ‘Room 101’ to accuse himself and admit absurd claims such “two plus two equals five”<sup>16</sup> and at the end Winston is forced to accuse Julia and reveal all the secrets about her. Indeed, the aim of the authorities in each text is the same: it is to rule through terror and brainwashing.

The main motive of arrests for Stalin as described in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) is to prevent change and stay in power. Thus, Solzhenitsyn states that the authorities often imprisoned people not for transgressing law but to scare them and prevent them from acting against the government.<sup>17</sup> This denotes the tyrannical aspects of the U.S.S.R in punishing and imposing terror among potential competence or opposing the status quo. In this respect, Karl Mannheim’s conceptualization of ideology is reflected in his *Ideology and Utopia* (1936), where he argues that ideology is the system of thought which seeks stability and order in society, whereas Utopia is the paradigm which aims to provoke change in the social order. In this respect, *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) challenges the “ideology” of communism and portrays it as a barrier in the face of political transformation. Hence, the political opponents including Solzhenitsyn represent the utopian aspect in their ambition for change.

## 2) Utopian Outlook in *The Gulag Archipelago*

Manheim in his book *Ideology and Utopia* (1949) conceptualizes utopia as the state of mind, which transcends the established order and seeks change.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Solzhenitsyn's work aims to call for change and therefore, realize a better future built on liberty, justice and truth instead of falsification and torture, which prevailed in the Gulag forced labor camps. An example of Karl Manheim's Utopian outlook In *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) is presented in Solzhenitsyn's endurance in the midst of the described totalitarian atmosphere, where manipulation and lies are spread. Solzhenitsyn manifests courage when for instance he was interrogated by the organs. He takes pride in standing against Stalin's oppression as he believes in the moral obligation to face tyranny with honesty and warns the younger generations against submission to totalitarianism.<sup>19</sup>

Another example of the utopian mindset in the text is shown in Solzhenitsyn's idealization and admiration for the endurance of people in the prisons as well as in the fields of the forced labor. In this regard, when Solzhenitsyn enters his cell in the Gulag camp, he refers to it as 'first cell, first love'. In the prison cell he encounters other prisoners and gets relief because he felt he was not alone. Despite the terrifying and wretched state of the prison cell, he feels some love for his fellow humans, who were there. The sense of connection to fellow humans in the midst of shared suffering is strong in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973), because the prisoner share a common fate and are relieved by the presence of their fellows

but those fellow prisoners with whom you about-faced at command, and that something which beats between your heart and theirs, and their sometimes astonishing words, and then, too, the birth within you, on that very spot, of free-floating thoughts you had so recently been unable to leap up or rise to.<sup>20</sup>

This passage depicts the impression of Solzhenitsyn when he enters the prison cell. He develops a strong sympathetic bound with the other prisoners and shares with them his

experience. He also records the experience of these prisoners which he finds inspiring and astonishing. In this situation, even though we might consider the prison as an impossible situation to escape, it is a place which inspires the author to write intriguing experiences of resilience.

Another example of utopia in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) is when Solzhenitsyn describes briefly the land in which he spent the late days of his prison sentence. It is rather a place which resembles paradise, because it offers comfort, food of quality and it lacks the physical and emotional suffering which was inflicted in the usual gulag prisons. The following quotation is an illustration

Somewhere in this Archipelago were tiny paradise islands. No one had seen them. No one had been there. Whoever had, kept silent about them and never let on. On those islands, they said, flowed rivers of milk and honey, and eggs and sour cream were the least of what they fed you; things were neat and clean, they said, and it was always warm, and the only work was mental work—and all of it super-supersecret. <sup>21</sup>

The above quotation describes a utopian and unique small island and its existence was uncertain until Solzhenitsyn went there where he spent a considerable period of his prison sentence <sup>22</sup>. Indeed, the depiction of such place even though brief, it creates the opposite image of the nightmarish gulag labor camps. As we notice, every aspect from food to lack of suffering induces hope and positivity in the midst of suffering which was described throughout this literary work. Further, we notice that this place as described by Solzhenitsyn resembles Eden as well the Promised Land as portrayed in the bible. Therefore it is rather legendary and utopic.

### **3) Para-Marxism in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973)**

To classify *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) in terms of Engels approach we notice that it is evidently a 'tendentious' text that is to say it carries a militant message, which is to stand up against the Soviet Union authorities and the Stalinist approach to the communist ideology

in order to help bring its collapse. Further, it does not fall in the strict Zhdanovist Party literature category, because the author opposes the Zhdanovist strict line of literature which demands from the author to commit to the socialist ideology. As far as aestheticism is concerned, we may say that though the text lacks the characteristics of a novel, the author employs his artistic abilities in order to convey a moralist and political view. Solzhenitsyn believes that literature should be a depiction of the relevant concerns of the era in which the author lives. It should serve as moralist guidance. In fact, *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) is rich of examples which depict this concern. In the context of the function of literature and its contribution Solzhenitsyn declares in an open letter that Literature that is not the breath of contemporary society, that dares not transmit the pains and fears of the society, that does not warn in time against the threatening moral and social dangers. Such literature does not deserve the name of literature; it is only a façade. Such literature loses the confidence of its own people, and its published works are used as wastepaper instead of being read.<sup>23</sup>

The citation above tackles the utilitarian message of literature according to Solzhenitsyn. He views it as a means to depict the moral dilemmas as well as the struggles which society faces. Readers of *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) may perceive this text as the best example which sheds light on the secrecy and dark nature of the bureaucratic Soviet Union. In other words, the text offers insightful facts about a system which used deception and censorship in order to remain in power and cancel the truth.

As Solzhenitsyn depicts, the Soviet authorities often used misleading strategies to silence or get rid of their enemies from inside and outside Russia. Among the common accusation which faced the political prisoners is conspiring with foreigners. So Solzhenitsyn was accused by the secrete agency called “the SMERSH” of conspiring with a Ukrainian friend with whom he was corresponding. So he was sentenced to eight years in the labor

camps in the cold and isolated Gulags. As an eyewitness, he recounts not only his horrific experience, but also the journeys made by prisoners in the red cattle tracks, in which entire nations were forced to exile, in the ships and barges crossing the White Sea to the famous Solovetsky Island camps in the prison variously camouflaged from the rest of the population under the brightly-painted labels; “Meat”, “Bread” or “Drink”. Thus, the Soviet authorities masked these arbitrary arrests so that the general public would not recognize such practices, which is another sign of the censorship and dishonesty of the totalitarian state. The following citation from Solzhenitsyn’s work is an illustration of what has been said

For many years the Black Marias were steel-gray and had, so to speak, prison written all over them. But in the biggest cities after the war they had second thoughts and decided to paint them bright colors and to write on the outside, "Bread" (the prisoners were the bread of construction), or "Meat" (it would have been more accurate to write "bones"), or even, simply, "Drink Soviet Champagne!"<sup>24</sup>

The citation above demonstrates the secrecy and deceptive practices of the Soviet authorities in dealing with the prisoners. Indeed, ‘the Black Marias’ are very crowded prison cells in the Archipelago, in which all of political prisoners and criminals, men and women were put together.<sup>25</sup> Solzhenitsyn in this passage satirizes this strategy of camouflage by suggesting that the authorities should have written ‘bones’ instead of ‘Meat’, which might be a reference to the devastated physical and emotional state of the Gulag prisoners.

The prisoners include women, old men and shockingly orphans who lost their parents in the First World War. They were all forced to work during the whole day, for example in breaking up rocks, and digging for coal in a mine. They were subjugated to inhumane treatment from the guards. In addition, they had to endure the extremely freezing temperatures in the Gulags. After such long journey of suffering the person is left to wait for his execution. This is similar to the fate of people who question the “Party” in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In fact, *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) is highly artistic and captures vividly the suffering of these

individuals. Therefore we notice that Solzhenitsyn did not sacrifice his artistic touch while conveying his political and militant message. As an illustration of the harsh reality of the Gulag Camps we refer to the following passage

Prisoners awaiting execution suffered from the cold. They had to sleep on the cement floor under the windows, where it was 28 degrees Fahrenheit. (Strakhovich.) You could freeze to death while you were waiting to be shot.<sup>26</sup>

Further, the arrested people, especially those who were given a death sentence, had to deal with the cruel starvation. Indeed, hunger was more devastating to them than waiting for their sad execution. Again, here Solzhenitsyn sets up for an aesthetic language which portrays creatively the harshness of a helpless situation, where the only escape which is offered is to accept and wait, hope in this sense, lies in not expecting any better future, but expecting the final destiny, which is death. As a matter of fact, we notice a similar tone of pessimism at the end of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) when Winston is confronted with the dominance of the Party (represented in his torturer O'Brian). He loses and surrenders, but also he finally feels that "he loved Big Brother."<sup>27</sup> Whereas in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) the victims of the Gulags learn to accept their sad fate. The following passage from Solzhenitsyn's work illustrates what has been said

Prisoners sentenced to death also suffered from hunger. They waited such a long time after the death sentence had been imposed that their principal sensation was no longer the fear of being shot but the pangs of hunger: where could they get something to eat? In 1941 Aleksandr Babich spent seventy-five days in a death cell in the Krasnoyarsk Prison. He had already reconciled himself to death and awaited execution as the only possible end to his unsuccessful life.<sup>28</sup>

This passage depicts the absurd and helpless situation in which the prisoners who were given death penalty were stuck. During the time they await for execution, they face the torture of hunger and realize that only death will save them from pain and terror. This passage is in fact similar to the absurdist scenes in the theater of the absurd in which characters are offered no escape from their cruel destiny. Indeed, the passage from *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) reflects the disillusionment and absurdity of the age of the first half of the Twentieth Century.



Therefore, in the lights of Manheim's conception of 'Relationism' the text is not produced from vacuum, but it reflects the personal experience and testimony of the author, as well as a collective experiences of people throughout several decades of Stalin's rule.

In fact, the prisoners who are in majority political prisoners and other innocent people face discrimination. In *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) the criminals, especially the thieves are imprisoned along with the political and innocent prisoners. Moreover, these thieves are allowed privileges, such as using the stove during the harsh cold of the long winters. Furthermore, they not only have access to better food than the other category of prisoners, but also they are allowed to divide bread among prisoners. All this suggest that the thieves have authority over other prisoners. Solzhenitsyn states that "The thieves took the best for themselves but gave the others permission to divide up the bread and the herring; and that meant they weren't hungry."<sup>29</sup>

In the context of discriminating between political prisoners and criminals, a similar scene is portrayed by Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). The main character Winston Smith is imprisoned in 'the ministry of love' after his thought crime, which signifies that he thought against the conventions of 'the Party'. So, he is a political prisoner. The 'political' or 'Party prisoners' are put in the same cells with dangerous and delinquent criminals. While the 'Party' prisoners (also known as political) are pictured as oppressed and weak in the face of the guards who intimidate them, the criminals are audacious and assertive. For example they go along well with the guards and are allowed to continue in their delinquent activities inside the prison cells of the 'Ministry of Love'. As an illustration George Orwell writes in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949)

There was bribery, favoritism and racketeering of every kind, there was homosexuality and prostitution, there was an illicit alcohol distilled from potatoes. The positions of trust were given only to the common criminals, especially the gangsters and the murderers, who formed a sort of aristocracy. All the dirty jobs were done by the politicals.<sup>30</sup>

This quotation portrays prisoners who were arrested for crime as having more rights than the political prisoners. They committed immoral actions inside the prison which was supposed to be an institution for rehabilitation. The ‘politicals’ were persecuted inside the prison and the guards favored the criminals. This shows the hatred and fear of the totalitarian ‘Party’ towards political opposition and the fact that they are not as bothered by moral decay as they are by challenging their power.

After Stalin’s death in 1953, the Gulag camps system weakened, and as a result, millions of prisoners were released, however it was until 1987 that the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev began the process of completely abolishing the camps. For long decades, the inhumane conditions of the Gulag were considered a taboo and due to the Soviet censorship, there were no significant recordings which tackle this issue. As for *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) it was forbidden from publication and its author Solzhenitsyn was arrested again in 1974, after being stripped from his Soviet nationality and exiled. He then, settled in to the United States, where his *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) received considerable interest.<sup>31</sup>

One of the major literary figures who influenced Solzhenitsyn is Fyodor Dostoevsky. He shares with him the belief that “art will save the world”. Hence he considers all literary work as a means to convey a deep message; often a moral and spiritual one. The following quote from one of Solzhenitsyn’s article shows the aesthetic and political role of literature. Indeed he views art in general and literature in particular as a means to experience the emotional and non- scientific part of life. As he declares: “Art inflames even a frozen, darkened soul to a high spiritual experience. Through art we are sometimes visited- dimly, briefly by revelations such as cannot be produced by rational thinking.”<sup>32</sup> Hence, his *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) is evidently written often in a vivid language. Indeed, Solzhenitsyn believes in the universality of literature and sharing human experience. According to him,

reading about fine works which depict other nations struggles can help us avoid the mistakes, which were made in that nation.<sup>33</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In the light of Para-Marxist approach, *The Gulag Archipelago* (1949) is significantly influenced by its socio-historical backdrop. As we have illustrated it reflects the lived experience of its author Solzhenitsyn in the Soviet concentration camps called the Gulags. It also narrates the testimony of the various camp prisoners. In addition, it depicts the crucial transformation in the Russian which was due to the implementation of the values of the Bolshevik 'October' Revolution. We note that *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) is a direct manifestation of Solzhenitsyn's firm opposition to Lenin's and then Stalin's regimes. We have illustrated that his description and word choice is an example of his attitude against communism mainly Stalinist implementation of Socialism which he associates with the committed cruelties.

Thus, the text is to be regarded as a 'tendentious' novel carrying a utilitarian message, which is to stand against totalitarian Leninism and Stalinism. The text also reveals that the utopian belief in equality has been corrupted and turned into an oppressive and mortal doctrine, creating a new oligarchy which is that of the bureaucrats. Therefore he calls into preventing such a worldview with authenticity, courage, responsibility and honesty. Finally, we may say that the text fits the Para-Marxist description of literature instead of Zdanovist literature. Insofar as the author employs his artistic abilities to call for change. Further, the text is to be read as utopic as it depicts the brutal reality of communist abuse of power in order to establish a new equal and free society. This is on the one hand, on the other it is to be regarded as ideological since it favors the ideology of Russian nationalism and conservatism over the Bolshevik communist values.

## Comparison Between The Two Works

While Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is a novel, that is to say a fictional work, Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) is rather a non-fictional set of documents, it narrates the author's experience in the Gulags and the testimonies of the Gulag prisoners. Nevertheless, they portray many similar themes, as we have demonstrated throughout the first and second chapter. In fact, what shapes these parallels between the two authors despite the two different nationalities of their authors is historical affinity. That is to say the two authors wrote their two texts approximately in the same historical period, which is between the two World Wars and the outbreak of the Cold War.

Each of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) portray the concern of their authors about rising totalitarianism, mainly Stalinist Communism. Like the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) the Soviet system in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) (which is similarly referred to as 'the Party') rules through terror, censorship and arrests of individuals who question authority. The two texts portray a ruling group, which is the holder of a rigid ideology on the one hand, and revolutionary characters, which aim to establish a utopia on the other.

Further, in each of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) we denote a similar state of terror and helplessness into which the characters are thrown when they are under arrest. In both texts many of the arrests occur at night. We notice that the victims of the Gulag arrests react similarly to Julia and Winston in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In the two texts the victims feel as if their end is near and can imagine their horrifying fate.

The fate of the state enemies in both books is similar. In *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) they are imprisoned and their identities are denied. Similarly, In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) they become "unpersons" and "vaporized" as if they have never existed, also

considered as taboo persons. This similarity entails that in both books the individual is seen as a subject for the dominant ideology.

Moreover, both authors portray the importance of testimony and recording facts for future generations in the face of totalitarian falsification and propaganda. Also, the Soviet authorities in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) employs history and justifies its actions through the legitimacy of the “Bolshevik Revolution. It deems its opponents as the enemies of the Proletariats. This is relevant to the “Revolution” in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), through which ‘the Party’ claims to have improved the socio-economic conditions. Furthermore both works depict Stalin. Even though in Orwell’s novel, it is rather a caricature; in which Stalin is portrayed as ‘Big Brother.’

It is evident that despite these similarities the two texts are different. Orwell has never visited Russia, nor has he been in a concentration camp. However, his depiction of totalitarianism and Stalinist communism is a reflection of what he sensed from the communist, the fascist, and Nazi practices. Whereas Solzhenitsyn’s depiction of the arrests in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) are based on factual experience of the people who lived in Lenin’s and Stalin’s regime including the author himself. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is rather a fictional projection to the future influenced by Orwell’s experience with different trends of totalitarianism.

Another dissimilarity to be noted in two texts is that *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) is a non-fiction account that demonstrates antagonism towards communism altogether, Solzhenitsyn portrays this doctrine as originally corrupt and that the atrocities committed under Lenin’s and Stalin’s regime are in fact the direct outcome of communism. Hence, he sends a moral message to the reader which is to avoid adhering to the communist dogma. Whereas *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) by Orwell is a dystopian novel that denounces various

trends of totalitarianism drawing from his experience as journalist and projecting to the future what society might arrive to under a totalitarian regime.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Karl Manheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ilted, 1949), 49.

<sup>2</sup> Alexandr, Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An experiment in literary Investigation* (New York: Harper& Row, 1976), 174

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Karl Manheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, p 66

<sup>5</sup> Ronald Vroon, “*Literature and Litigation: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s the Gulag Archipelago*”, Brill. 1980, 214 available on Jstor. Accessed on 19 November, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An experiment in literary Investigation* (New York: Harper& Row, 1976), 308

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.,6

<sup>8</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (London: Penguin Random House, 1949), 22

<sup>9</sup> Aleksandr, Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An experiment in literary Investigation* (New York: Harper& Row, 1976), 37

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (London: Penguin Random House, 1949), 265

<sup>12</sup> Lullen, Lucid, *Solzhenitsyn’s Rhetorical Revolution*. (Duke University, 1977), 510. Available on Jstor.org. Accessed on 14 December, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Aleksandr, Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An experiment in literary Investigation* (New York: Harper& Row, 1976), 120

<sup>18 14</sup> Aleksandr, Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An experiment in literary Investigation* (New York: Harper& Row, 1976), 240

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.,129

<sup>16</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (London: Penguin Random House, 1949),334

<sup>17</sup> Aleksandr, Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An experiment in literary Investigation* (New York: Harper& Row, 1976), 240

<sup>18</sup> Karl Manheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ilted, 1949), 173

<sup>19</sup> Aleksandr, Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An experiment in literary Investigation*, 243

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 188

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 590

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Nobel Literature*, (Banquet speech). Sweden: city Hall, December, 1974 10. Accessed on 01 September, 2019. URL: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes>.

<sup>24</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An experiment in literary Investigation* 528

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 529

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 105

<sup>27</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (London: Penguin Random House, 1949), 342

<sup>28</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An experiment in literary Investigation* 444

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 536

<sup>30</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four*, 261

<sup>31</sup> History.com editors, *Gulag*. Available on history.com. URL:: <http://www.history.com/topics/russia/gulag> Accessed on 02 November, 2019

<sup>32</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Struggle Intensified: an Open Letter to the Forth Soviet Writers congress*, (1970). Accessed on 23 September, 2019. Available at: [http://wist.info/solzhenitsyn - aleksandr/6855](http://wist.info/solzhenitsyn-aleksandr/6855).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

## V-General Conclusion

This paper has discussed the issue of literature and ideology in both George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). We have illustrated that the two texts are to be regarded as creative literary expressions of their authors on the one hand, and as assertions of their ideological position, on the other. Orwell writes his dystopian novel to advocate democracy and individualism. Whereas Solzhenitsyn writes the *Gulag Archipelago* (1973) in a poetic, vivid and often satirical language to call for transparency and exposure of the practices of the Soviet authorities, and therefore he calls through his work for a reaction against communism. Indeed, each author draws from his personal experience to depict the practices of the totalitarian regimes in each of the selected works. The world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1984) is run by the authoritative elite under the rigid ideology of 'the Party'. We have demonstrated in this research that Orwell projects to the future, namely the year 1984, what he has witnessed from the various trends of radical nationalism, fascism and communism. As for Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973), it is rather a non-fiction set of memoirs, which recounts the personal experience of its author as well as the testimonies of several individuals whom he encountered in the Gulag forced labor camps.

We have focused in the first chapter on the historical backdrop of each of the two selected texts. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is written during the outbreak of the Cold War. In fact, Orwell is the first to coin this expression of 'Cold War'. It refers to the ideological, economic and military struggle which emerged between the United States as the leader of the western liberal camp and the Soviet Union as the leader of the eastern communist camp. Hence, Orwell's depiction of the perpetual war is a reflection of the events of the cold war. Also, 'Big Brother' is rather a portrayal of Stalin. Nevertheless, we may view some of the narrative as a reflection of not only the Cold War, but also of the Second World



War. To exemplify, the depiction of the party's practice of two minutes hate resembles the speeches of Hitler which evoked hysteria in his listeners. Further, the state of the impoverished citizens of Oceania represent poverty in post- Second World War Britain.

We have also explored in the first chapter the historical context of *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) and revealed the historicity of the text. Indeed, the gulag concentration camps are traced back to Lenin's era who sought to punish his enemies whom he considered as the enemies of the working class. Moreover, we examined the background of Stalin's program of 'dekulakization', which refers to the disposition of farmers and revealed that Solzhenitsyn's text is to be viewed as a work with historical relevance.

In the second chapter, we revealed that Orwell's aim in depicting the horror of the totalitarian regime is to advocate a given ideological outlook, which is individualism and the British form of socialism. Indeed, the author's depiction of Oceania as remarkably collectivist in economy and ideology is a very interesting and significant fact; it reflects the author's perception and impression as a westerner individualist thinker against the collectivist aspect of the communist ideology. In this sense; we regard literature as a form of latent propaganda. We revealed also that the novel is a dystopia which depicts a nightmarish destiny under total control of the government, however there is a glimpse of hope which shows in the midst of the frightening situation, it lies in the force of the solidarity of the working class and also in the courage to record one's testimony for the future generations to remedy the human conditions. Hence, even the title of the novel which is '*Nineteen Eighty-Four*' (written in 1948) is a worthy of attention, since it refers to a year which is close to the year of 1989 which marked the fall of the Berlin Wall and thus the collapse of the Soviet Union which ended the Cold War. In this sense Orwell's novel is considered prophetic.

In the third and last chapter, we examined through the word choice of Solzhenitsyn that he is a firm opponent of the Stalinist system, but also of communism all together. His

depiction has been considered authentic, since he was imprisoned in the Gulag, where he witnessed and recorded the testimonies of other people. We have also highlighted throughout the second and the third chapter the parallels between the two selected texts; we deduced that each text depict night arrest, terror, censorship and torture as means of the totalitarian system to remain in power and silence all opposition. In fact, the two examined literary production are not devoid of aesthetic value. Both authors succeeded to persuade their readers to adopt the anti-authoritative communist doctrine through setting up language which depict how totalitarian system is built under corruption, censorship and truth falsification.

Overall, our analysis of the two texts concludes that literature is used in the two texts as a tool to call for social change. In fact, the two authors depict through their writings the adversary ideology as an evil which is held responsible for the crisis of personal liberties and the committed atrocities. Each text depicts ideology as a danger against individuality and authenticity. Orwell's view coincides with Solzhenitsyn's view regarding the subversion of the aspiration for equality and the revolution. Hence, each of the two texts portrays the failure of the government to establish equality and prosperity. Further, from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, as studied by Manheim, we deduce that each of the two writer's outlook are rather a reflection of their opposition and cultural expectations rather than an objective depiction of the events. Their ideas did not come from vacuum, but from their position and the ideas and aspirations which existed in their time.

Finally yet importantly, we would like to mention that further analysis and research might be carried out on these literary productions in relation to different themes. Our suggestion is that Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) could be contrasted by relying on Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (1975) in order to examine the theme of punishment and the relationship between authority and the individual in the same selected texts.

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