

## Orwell and the “many-headed monster”: Images of the Crowd in *1984*

Mohamed Kheir Eddine Merah  
Blida2 University (Algeria)

**Abstract:** In his dystopian novel, George Orwell depicts a totalitarian regime governing the minor details in the life of its citizens. However, the dictatorial impression created in *1984* is not exclusively nurtured by the leading forces. In fact, the authoritarian atmosphere exposes the dynamics of power between the leading and the led (crowd). This paper focuses on the stylistic rendering of the crowd in Orwell’s novel. It postulates that the author defamiliarizes the crowd to draw attention to its pivotal participation in power dynamics. For this reason, this paper departs from the early critical receptions of Russian Formalism that nullify the political dimension of this school. Drawing on recent reassessments of Defamiliarization, the paper essays to trace the stylistic patterns in the portrayal of the crowd and the political implications they advance.

**Keywords:** Defamiliarization, Crowd, Poetics/Politics, Orwell, Shklovsky.

### Introduction

The image of the crowd as a “many-headed monster” is deeply engraved in Western thought. This image is traced back to the Platonic disdain of crowds (McClelland, 2010; Wiegandt, 2012). This reception of crowds, pervasive in Western thought, has been replicated in many literary works. For instance, Christopher Hill (1975) opens his chapter on the “Many-Headed Monster” with a reference to Samuel Butler. Similarly, Wiegandt devotes her study of this image in Shakespeare’s works. Indeed, the idea of the crowd depicted as a “many-headed monster” is a relevant example of a defamiliarized concept; however, it also bears political significance. The metaphorical expression does not only refresh our perception of the crowd for pure aesthetic purposes. It succinctly outlines the history of the crowd in Western thought, refers to entangled webs of political immersion and negotiation of power, and posits questions that are principally political. To circle back to the authors mentioned previously, much of Hill’s study is devoted to the analysis of class struggle. As for Wiegandt, the focus is on the links between rumours, crowds, and politics. Thus, despite the inherent artistic vision that the image offers, it is equally political. This view becomes more acceptable if one goes back to its origins. The fear of crowds and their negative reception, stemming from Platonic views, have always engendered discussions about their political participation: between elitists and anarchists for instance. Thus, regardless of its position, the image of the crowd is relevant to politics, at least as a necessary evil in the creation of power structures.

Orwell’s *1984* dramatises the issue of crowds and their ties with power. In fact, a major idea treated in the work is the critique advanced against Oligarchy. The very existence of this system relies on the oppression and the manipulation of the crowds. The power that the party benefits from becomes inexistent if crowds are eliminated. However, despite the centrality of

collectivity in the work and the constant rendering of crowds/masses as crucial to the crafting of events and thematic concerns of the novel, readings of Orwell’s work stand indifferent to these points. Therefore, this research attempts to focus on the rendering of crowds in the work. In order to achieve this, Shklovsky’s concept of Defamiliarization is selected to trace the way in which crowds are portrayed. However, the choice of the approach, deprived of any political dimension becomes incompatible. Orwell, whose works are often mentioned as topical examples of literary defamiliarization, cannot be separated from the politically charged themes they advance. Even the present work, *1984*, takes an extreme rendering of a dystopian society that can aptly be referred to as defamiliarization. For this reason, the approach of this paper transcends the view that confines Defamiliarization to mere aesthetic values and couples this latter with insights from Crowd Psychology.

In his “Art, as Device”, originally published in 1925, Shklovsky postulates that the object rendered in literature is not as important as the way in which the object is offered to the reader. Unlike those who consider literary and poetic language to be primarily imagistic, Shklovsky argues that the primal aim of literature is to curb the habitual perception of objects by estranging them. Shklovsky’s response to his rivals locates his essay within an exclusive aesthetic realm. His view, many would argue, is about the literariness of literature. Plus, what supports such a view is his affiliation to Russian Formalism, a school that calls for “an autonomous art divorced from life, history, and politics” (Vatulescu, 2006, p. 37). However, facts that remain suppressed include his revision of defamiliarization in later works, his sympathy to the Revolution, or the reconsideration of Marxist thought and the serious attention he paid to it (Gunn, 1984; Vatulescu, 2006). By examining the authors and the examples mentioned in Shklovsky’s essay, one suspects that a political dimension to defamiliarization is impossible. On this point, Vatulescu states that “while [Shklovsky’s] estrangement is an artistic device, its objects appear to be invariably political” (p. 39). Thus, Shklovsky, by using Tolstoy’s horse, for instance, comments on the renewed perception mediated through the narrative defamiliarization; however, he remains silent about the political dimension of his example: privatisation. In this way, Shklovsky’s approach gives more liberty than restriction to this paper to advance questions about the purposes of particular artistic choices. This paper is divided into three sections. The first part examines the context in which Orwell situates his crowds. The second part indicates Orwell’s familiarity with Crowd Psychology. The last section focuses on the inclusion of metafiction in Orwell’s work.

## I. Where the Monster is Domesticated

The treatment of crowds in Orwell’s work relies on preparatory stages that initiate the crowd (and even readers) into the dystopian sphere of the novel. Orwell’s estranging approach in *1984* situates his crowds within an extreme dystopian context. The introductory chapters of the novel invest in minute details to frame the space of agency of the crowds. For example, the narrative space of Orwell’s work nullifies the presence of private and intimate life:

In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was the police patrol, snooping into people’s windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered (Orwell, 2003, p. 2)

The amplification that characterises such an extreme case of surveillance is countered by an oversimplification. The passage, despite the radical practice it describes, is introduced with an authorial reticence that defamiliarizes and increases the perception of dystopian poetics. Similarly, and to intensify the absence of intimacy/privacy, Orwell relies on repetitive patterns describing the surveilling function of the telescreen:

It was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander when you were in any public place or within range of a telescreen. The smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself—anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide. In any case, to wear an improper expression on your face (to look incredulous when a victory was announced, for example) was itself a punishable offence. There was even a word for it in Newspeak: FACECRIME, it was called. (p. 64)

The telescreen that captures every sound “above the level of a very low whisper” generates the “habit that became instinct [...] that every sound [...] made was overheard, and [...] every movement scrutinized” (p. 3). This conditioning of receptive subjects who abandon their privacy positions them within a space of domestication. The voluntary desertion of private life is further explained in the novel. Party members obey the principle that prohibits “OWNLIFE”; they have no respite and are constantly involved in collective activities that handicap possibilities of “solitude”, “individualism”, or “eccentricity” (p. 84). The ultimate function of surveillance is eradicating privacy which might favour the eruption of the psychological mechanisms of individuality and idiosyncrasy.

Furthermore, the creation of a dystopian atmosphere depends on other spatial defamiliarization. Orwell relies on ambiguous and prolonged descriptions that dominate the space of the novel before attributing nomenclatures (mainly in the opening chapters.). The telescreen is first introduced in a strange manner: “The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall” (p. 2). The absence of the “telescreen” tag in the first contact prolongs the effect of perception and estranges the novelistic space. In addition, for readers, a straightforward denomination might activate an undesired acquaintance with the object despite its inherent strangeness. Therefore, the telescreen, being an object related to other essential matters in the novel, is first introduced with a defamiliarizing technique.

Similarly, Orwell executes his estranging plan by obscuring the familiar. For instance, the pen is described as an “old-fashioned” (p. 29), “archaic instrument, seldom used even for signatures” (p. 7). Instead, it is replaced with speakwrites or “kaleidoscopes on which the plots of novels were ‘roughed in’” (p. 107). While the familiar, the pen, is defamiliarized, the unfamiliar is familiarized. The mechanisation of the act of writing distances intellectual activity from the arid space of the novel. The image suggests and foreshadows the estate of the crowd that is almost an antonym of intellectualism. Besides, it suspends any belief in intellectual activity for “[b]ooks were just a commodity that had to be produced, like jam or bootlaces” (p. 132). A comparable approach is adopted when describing the wine offered during the visit of O’Brien’s house: “Seen from the top the stuff looked almost black, but in the decanter it gleamed like a ruby. It had a sour-sweet smell. He saw Julia pick up her glass and sniff at it with frank curiosity” (p. 174). Wine

is only “read and dreamed about. Like the glasspaperweight or Mr Charrington’s half-remembered rhymes, it belonged to the vanished, romantic past, the olden time” (p. 175). Orwell invests in such descriptions to lay bare the detachment of the characters from history. With the continuous alternation of history, the past becomes a possession easily manipulated by the party.

The context in which crowds exist is further defamiliarized through a legal paradox. The rule of law is a slogan preached by dictatorial systems. However, Orwell’s novel relates many instances of an inconsistent legal system. Winston’s possession of a diary is commented by the narrator as follows: “The thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. This was not illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least by twenty five years in a forced-labour camp” (p. 6-7). Similarly, “there was no definite rule against talking to proles and frequenting their pubs, but it was far too unusual an action to pass unnoticed” (p.89). This paradox evinces the arbitrary links between crime and penalty. Although it is not illegal, the punishment is implausibly severe. This situates the crowd in legal uncertainty and breaks one of the cherished emblems of dictatorial regimes: while the rule of law is often chanted, one might be penalized, even severely, without a necessary intervention of law.

A final comment on the spatial/contextual initiation of crowds is linked to Big Brother. The futurist setting of police surveillance revolves around the image of Big Brother. Everywhere, “[o]n coins, on stamps, on the covers of books, on banners, on posters, and on the wrappings of a cigarette packet [...] the eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, working or eating, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or in bed—no escape” (p. 27). The figure of Big Brother is omnipresent, that of a transcendental being in the work. This omnipresence is defamiliarized in the novel through an integration of a painting technique to the world of the novel:

[The Picture] depicted simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran. [...] there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The blackmoustachio’d face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston’s own. (p. 1-2)

The portrait is described with a linear perspective borrowed from painting. The eyes of Big Brother, certainly more frightening and less appealing than Da Vinci’s Mona Lisa, fulfil the promise/warning of the novel’s leitmotif: “BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU”. They retain the crowd under perpetual inspection.

## II. Orwell as a Crowd Theorist: The Novelisation of Crowd Psychology

Many stances in the field of Crowd Psychology are fictionally reproduced in the work, giving a rather solid frame in the novel. In his work, Orwell mimics the psychological formation and life of the crowds to assemble the events of his story and establish political ties between power and the masses. In the novel, *The Two Minutes Hate*, *Hate Week*, and *Public Trials* are frequently mentioned. During such events, the descriptions offer vivid insights into the functioning of the crowd. *The Two Minutes Hate/Hate week* involve the crowds in a ritualistic atmosphere that lays bare their construction:

In its second minute the Hate rose to a frenzy. People were leaping up and down in their places and shouting at the tops of their voices in an effort to drown the maddening bleating voice that came from the screen. [...] In a lucid moment Winston found that he was shouting with the others and kicking his heel violently against the rung of his chair. The horrible thing about the 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 pretence was always unnecessary. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic. And yet the rage that one felt was an abstract, undirected emotion which could be switched from one object to another like the flame of a blowlamp (p. 14-15)

The rituals mimic Le Bonian claims about crowds. For him, once immersed in the crowd, the individual ceases to experience individuality:

[When taking part in collective action, one notices] the disappearance of the conscious personality, the predominance of the unconscious personality, the turning of feelings and ideas in an identical direction by means of suggestion and contagion, the tendency to immediately transform the suggested ideas into acts; these, we see, are the principal characteristics of the individual forming part of a crowd. He is no longer himself, but has become an automaton who has ceased to be guided by his will. (Le Bon, 2002, p. 8).

This is given in the novel with the point of view of an outsider. The narrative choice of Orwell offers a perspective detached from the crowd, and therefore, gives a fresh view of a process automatised by unconsciousness. This is intensified by the immersion of Winston, a non-conformist figure in the novel. In addition, the laying bare of unconsciousness verifies the image of the violent, monstrous crowd deeply engraved in the collective memory of Western thought.

This image is more explicit in another event: The public lynching that people attend. The idea of public trials is normalised through authorial reticence excluding any civilisational or humanitarian dimension. Indeed, these rituals do communicate the notion of violence and unconsciousness among crowds; however, they perform another function. Their presence conditions younger generations who frequent them and establish a coercive warning against transgression. It is worth noting that these rituals are framed on the materialization of objects. They visualise abstract notions of punishment, treachery instead of leaving them in the abstract realm. This is one point which the Brotherhood, whose real existence is debatable among critics, fails to achieve. The party relies on images that appeal to crowds while the Brotherhood is exclusively tied to the realm of intellectualism that is incompatible with crowds.

The ritualistic dimension of the events advances another facet that Orwell seems to be aware of. In the crafting of the Two Minutes Hate, Orwell relies on the reactionary emotions of the crowd and the manipulative succession of events during the Two Minutes Hate. The face of Goldstein is an essential component in the rituals of hate:

The programmes of the Two Minutes Hate varied from day to day, but there was none in which Goldstein was not the principal figure. He was the primal traitor, the earliest defiler of the Party's purity. All subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations, sprang directly out of his teaching. Somewhere or other he was still alive and hatching his conspiracies: perhaps somewhere beyond the sea, under the protection of his foreign paymasters, perhaps even—so it was occasionally rumoured—in some hidingplace in Oceania itself. (p. 12)

Goldstein's presence serves a psychological function. The Party is conscious of the libidinal energy of the crowds. Therefore, Goldstein materialises condensed emotional energy. His presence consumes the hatred of the crowd and channels it in one direction. Following the exhibition of Goldstein's face, the Party structures the sequence of event in direct opposition:

But the face of Big Brother seemed to persist for several seconds on the screen, as though the impact that it had made on everyone's eyeballs was too vivid to wear off immediately. The little sandy-haired woman had flung herself forward over the back of the chair in front of her. With a tremulous murmur that sounded like 'My Saviour!' she extended her arms towards the screen. Then she buried her face in her hands. It was apparent that she was uttering a prayer. At this moment the entire group of people broke into a deep, slow, rhythmical chant of 'B-B!...B-B!'—over and over again, very slowly, with a long pause between the first 'B' and the second—a heavy, murmurous sound, somehow curiously savage, in the background of which one seemed to hear the stamp of naked feet and the throbbing of tomtoms. For perhaps as much as thirty seconds they kept it up. It was a refrain that was often heard in moments of overwhelming emotion. Partly it was a sort of hymn to the wisdom and majesty of Big Brother, but still more it was an act of self-hypnosis, a deliberate drowning of consciousness by means of rhythmic noise. (p. 16-17)

If Goldstein symbolises hatred, Big Brother acts as “a focusing point for love, fear, and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt towards an individual than towards an organization.” (p.213). He devours the libidinal energy emanating from love. This reversal of figures develops a binary mechanism for libidinal energy. The Party members are destined to either hate or love. However, these two emotional reserves should take one final direction that sustains the party. Their love is only for Big Brother. As a leader, he fulfils Le Bon's condition of prestige (Le Bon, p.81). Big Brother derives his prestige from his past/history as one of the original leaders of the Revolution. His position, and the stability of the party, should never be contested. For this reason, party members who display traits of charisma and popularity are vaporised.

To control the aforementioned libidinal energy, the party promotes chastity and purity among party members. For instance, women of the party never wear make-up or use perfumes. However, it is by prohibiting affairs among party members that the idea is explicitly treated. The “aim of the Party was not merely to prevent men and women from forming loyalties [...] [but] to remove all pleasure from the sexual act [...] [and] kill the sex instinct” (p. 67-68). Put differently, the ultimate attempt of the party is to suppress the libidinal energy and to channel it

into one figure: Big Brother. The party establishes a totemic sphere of comradeship to increase the sense of belongingness and promote the longevity of the group by inhibiting its sexual aims. For Freud, “sexual tendencies are unfavourable to the formation of groups (p. 120), he argues that:

[the] sexual instincts which are inhibited in their aims have a great functional advantage over those which are uninhibited. Since they are not capable of really complete satisfaction, they are especially adapted to create permanent ties; while those instincts which are directly sexual incur a loss of energy each time they are satisfied, and must wait to be renewed by afresh accumulation of sexual libido. (p. 118-119)

Thus, when the sexual aim is inhibited, it is transformed into a form that does not end with the fulfilment of pleasure. Accordingly, in the inner workings of the group, the party transforms and tries to consume all this libidinal energy to ensure its continuity. By censoring sex, “sexual privation induce[s] hysteria, which [is] desirable because it could be transformed into war-fever and leader-worship” (p. 135). Thus, Winston perceives the sexual act in an unfamiliar way. In a world where “Desire was thoughtcrime”, Winston perceives the act as a “rebellion” (p. 70). Within the same vein, the conjugal ties are defamiliarized. The party does not only abolish desire outside marriage bonds. Marriage is a mechanised process culminating in a mere “duty to the party” (p. 69). The totemic sphere extends to the family as well:

The sex impulse was dangerous to the Party, and the Party had turned it to account. They had played a similar trick with the instinct of parenthood. The family could not actually be abolished, and, indeed, people were encouraged to be fond of their children, in almost the old-fashioned way. The children, on the other hand, were systematically turned against their parents and taught to spy on them and report their deviations. The family had become in effect an extension of the Thought Police. It was a device by means of which everyone could be surrounded night and day by informers who knew him intimately. (p. 136)

The relevance of family to the libidinal realm is well explained by Freud. In Freudian psychology, the first contact and development of the libido originate in the family. Therefore, the party, by mechanising/institutionalising marriage, and by indoctrinating children, it perfectly neutralises the genesis of libidinal energy.

Winston’s (unfulfilled/false) belief/hope in the proles exposes the final facets of crowd psychology being dramatised/novelised. Despite being a majority, the condition of revolt is beyond fulfilment. Both Le Bon and Freud agree that a group/crowd is sustained through its unconscious character. Thus, Winston’s hope is never fulfilled since the essential quality of revolt is consciousness. The revolt of the proles necessitates a work of deconstruction and reconstruction: “Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious” (p. 73). A conscious deconstruction of the unconsciousness imposed by the party, then a reconstruction of a newly acquired unconsciousness modelled on the aims of breaking the party. The problem of the proles is further highlighted through the incongruity between the force displayed through their constant agglomeration and the motives that unite them (Lottery or Rations of Food). Proles, like Party members, are kept at a lower level of Maslow’s pyramid. Thus, “even when they became discontented, [...] their discontent led nowhere, because being without general ideas, they could

only focus it on petty specific grievances. The larger evils invariably escaped their notice” (p. 74). To use Žižek’s concept of “objective” and “subjective” violence (2008), the unconscious estate of the proles, comparable to party members, hinders them from identifying the “objective violence” that dominates their lives. They are limited to the “subjective violence” that is intentionally left noticeable and identifiable, and whose intricate web, eclipses far more critical issues.

### III. Deviating from Novelistic Norms: Goldstein’s Book and Metafiction

A final comment on Orwell’s use of defamiliarization in *1984* would not be appropriate if one dismisses Goldstein’s book. Near the end of part II, Orwell relies on a metafictional device to further lay bare the construction of the crowd. The book written by Goldstein adopts a philosophical air and departs from literary and novelistic norms to explain and guide the reader in the sphere of the totalitarian regime. However, this technique is not exclusively aesthetic; it is charged with political commentaries since the book itself takes the form of a manifesto. The metafictional dimension acts within the work as a defamiliarizing technique. In “Art, as Device”, Shklovsky sums up defamiliarization in two directions: “the device of art is the “estrangement” of things and *the complication of the form* [emphasis added]” (p. 162). Similarly, in his commentary of *Tristram Shandy*, Shklovsky introduces the possibility of defamiliarization via the text itself. Instead of focusing on the objects rendered in the text, this latter becomes the object. Thus, for Shklovsky, Sterne achieves his defamiliarization by violating the structure of text/novel (1921, as cited in Gunn, 1984).

With a comparable description in the first section, Goldstein’s book is introduced as “[a] heavy black volume, amateurishly bound, with no name or title on the cover. The print also looked slightly irregular. The pages were worn at the edges, and fell apart, easily, as though the book had passed through many hands” (p. 188). This defamiliarization precedes the textual violation of conventional novel writing. What follows this passage is a radical shift in the narrative process. Orwell, metafictionally, shifts from a novelist to a sociologist.

In THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF OLIGARCHAL COLLECTIVISM, Orwell/Goldstein extends the process of laying bare the formation of the crowd, the manipulative schemes of the party, and the relevance of the collective body to power dynamics. The textual strangeness offered through this metafictional element refreshes the perception of these issues. Unlike the implicit/indirect ideas infused within the text and requiring a critical reading to be extracted, the aspects newly mentioned or restated are explicitly offered with a shift in the narrative tone. While ideas previously mentioned in this paper are enveloped within the fictional narrative process, part of the defamiliarized perception of ideas mentioned within the book is derived from the philosophical/quasi-scientific/militant tone that shapes Goldstein’s book.

Orwell/Goldstein opens his book by exposing the unalterable social hierarchy of the High, the Middle, and the Low classes. Social stratification is kept to ensure the continuity of rule; without social distinctions, the process of power-making is never achievable. On this idea, the book states the detrimental effects of scientific development, symbolically embodied in the machine, on social classification. Science has often generated hope in a better future marking the



end of “human drudgery” and “inequality”, and therefore, improving the living conditions of the average man (p.194). However, this improvement threatens to abolish hierarchical society:

For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves; and when once they had done this, they would sooner or later realize that the privileged minority had no function, and they would sweep it away. In the long run, a hierarchical society was only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance. (p. 194)

Thus, to guarantee its continuity, the Party keeps its citizens tamed by escalating the levels of poverty and ignorance. This idea is further explained with the renewed version of war. In the book, war is made unfamiliar by its direct opposition to the classical sense of war. It is no longer a war that aims to conquer lands and impose territorial dominion over sites rich in natural resources; it is in fact a continuous war with “a direct economic purpose, it is a war for labour power” (p. 191). The Oligarchic systems of the three super-states are looking for a rule of the minority over “a bottomless reserve of cheap labour” (p. 192). Added to that, war is a never-ending process that destructs the “materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent” (p. 195). Thus, it is a plan to counter the threatening effects of science on social distinction. The system tries to keep the masses at a lower stage of Maslow’s pyramid, hindering them from accessing advanced stages of self-realization and individuation. In addition, war serves a psychological function; it has an “emotional basis for a hierarchical society” (p. 197). The world-view of the party requires its adherent to be “a credulous and ignorant fanatic whose prevailing moods are fear, hatred, adulation, and orgiastic triumph” which is “the mentality appropriate to a state of war” (p. 197). Thus, to use Benjamin’s words, the violence emanating from war is but violence with a character of “law-preserving” that sustains the system (1996).

In addition, the book throws light on strategies of abating any possible revolt. The inhabitants of the three super states are held in total isolation: “Cut off from contact with the outer world, and with the past, the citizen of Oceania is like a man in interstellar space, who has no way of knowing which direction is up and which is down” (p. 203). The isolation of the citizens and the prohibition of contact with foreigners nurture the dichotomy of othering and belonging. In addition, this strategy prevents them from the comparison that would engender revolt. Left without contact, they never suspect the absolute views imposed by the party.

The book also explains the status of the majority, the Low classes, in power. While sovereignty is negotiated between the High and the Middle, the Low classes “are too much crushed by drudgery to be more than intermittently conscious of anything outside their daily lives” (p. 207). However, they are an essential part of the game. In the overthrowing of the High by the Middle, they “enlist the Low on their side by pretending to them that they are fighting for liberty and justice [and fraternity]” (p. 207). These slogans are perfectly appealing to crowds as Le Bon suggests (p.08). While the seizure power is a conflict exclusive to the two upper groups, the Low, which fulfil the characteristics of crowds, are held in a historical stagnation for no improvement in their life has been included and “no historic change has ever meant much more than a change in the name of their masters” (p. 207). The relevance of a crowd/the Low to power dynamics materializes itself with regards to Oligarchy: “the only secure basis for oligarchy

is collectivism” (p. 211). This is apparent in the socialist tendency of the party, which is incarnated in a group of people offering themselves as legitimate representatives of the masses. Following the oligarchic/socialist view of the party, collectivism becomes a flagrant imposture. While the ruling minority/state/party possesses the wealth, the lower class, the majority, is left with the slogans that initially appealed to them.

The last aspect to be highlighted is the treatment of History in Goldstein’s book. It is worth noting that History is continuously rewritten in the work. The ultimate function of historical falsifications is made explicit in Goldstein’s book. History is altered for “subsidiary and [...] precautionary” purposes (p. 218). The past is altered to promote acceptance among party members and proles of “present-day conditions [...] because [they have] no standards of comparison” (p. 218). They are historically uprooted which increases the chances that their conditions follow a sequence of development and that they are better than those who preceded them. In addition, and more importantly, the falsified history preserves the party for it is required “to safeguard the infallibility of the Party” (p. 218). The party is sensitive to the idea of being suspected, “[for] to change one’s mind, or even one’s policy, is a confession of weakness” (p. 218). Thus, the rescripting of history that takes place in the novel makes the party the holder of absolute truth. The flagrant acts of forgery introduced in different passages evoke questions about the reliability of official history and awaken readers’ doubts about the institutionalisation of history.

## Conclusion

The different points highlighted in the sections of the paper demonstrate the possibility of coupling the aesthetic with the political. Orwell combines his literary craftsmanship with politically charged themes. Many elements linked to the image of the crowd are aesthetically rendered to refresh the perceptions of crowds and their immersion in power. The novel employs formal and artistic techniques to advance political queries. The literariness of the text is exploited beyond mere ornamental and literary excellence. Therefore, the reading performed in this paper suggests that the distinctions between literary form and content, the linguistic and thematic, surface and symptomatic readings, are but artificial differences. The novel combines the aforementioned binaries harmoniously.

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