NATURE VS. REASON – HETEROTOPIAS AND THE DICHOTOMY OF MASCULINE AND FEMININE SYMBOLIC GEOGRAPHY IN NEGATIVE UTOPIAS

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Abstract: *Much has been discussed about the issue of symbolic geography in negative utopias. I aim to prove within this paper that in the case of many authors, we are dealing with a symbolic dichotomy between nature and reason connected with a gendering of space that splits the texts' geography into feminine and masculine areas. On the one hand, we thus have central urban environments that always seem to be associated with reason and ruled by a patriarchal father figure (Big Brother, The World Controller, the Benefactor, etc.) These are spaces gendered as masculine and are subject to the direct critique of the authors. On the other hand, we can also observe in a multitude of negative utopias, too many to ignore from the perspective of a critical analysis of the genre, peripheral geographic spaces associated with nature, and the feminine characters that inhabit/make use of them). These alternative geographic locations can be viewed as heterotopian in a Foucauldian sense, having in mind the philosopher's definition in his essay "Des espaces autres". The aim of this paper is thus to highlight these peripheral spaces and then comment on the source of this type of spatial construction, which in the case of negative utopias I believe to be 19th Century literary spatiality. The gendering of space often employed by the Romantics, the direct association between nature and a feminine symbolic principle seems to have also influenced the construction of the marginal geographic locations present in negative utopias. These locations seem to allude to a type of symbolic geography gendered as feminine that directly opposes the way the dystopian city is constructed. To achieve my goal, I have made use of theoretical arguments such as*

those presented in works such as Lowy and Sayre's "Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity", Nicole Pohl and Brenda Tooley's "Gender and Utopia in the Eighteenth Century" as well as Philip E. Wagner's "Utopia, the Nation and the Spatial Histories of Modernit"y.

Keywords: symbolic geography, gender, spatiality, reason, nature, dystopia, negative utopias

The Foucauldian Heterotopia

In his essay, *Des Espaces Autres* Foucault mentioned different types of marginal topographies present in the real world he qualified as being heterotopias. The philosopher split these into different categories such as crisis heterotopias, heterotopias of deviance, heterochrony or heterotopic compensation spaces. For example, people who manifest a behavior considered deviant, a departure from the norms of what society deems acceptable, are placed within heterotopias of deviance (people in retirement houses, psychiatric wards, prisons, etc.) (Foucault 1984:5) Another point made by the philosopher is that heterotopias can be valued differently throughout society's evolution. Foucault gives the example of graveyards placed in central urban areas, in the backyard of churches between the 17th and 18th centuries to prove his point. These were, however, moved on the periphery of the city starting with the 19th Century. This movement was due to the changing ways people viewed death and their perception of it as an illness. The living felt threatened by eventual contamination and therefore desired a marginalization of this type of symbolic geography.) Thus, graveyards stopped being built in sacred locations, becoming cities in themselves, necropolises within which everybody was to look for and find their eternal resting place. (Foucault, 1954:6)

Foucault also observes that heterotopias are frequently linked to different temporal segments, thus becoming what the philosopher calls heterochrony. Museums and libraries have become such heterotopias in which time itself is accumulated, kept, and condensed continuously. The idea of constructing spaces that function to preserve memory, immune to the

passage of time, is particular to 19th-century western culture. The philosopher gives in this sense the example of tourist destinations that seek to create imitations of Polynesian villages. These promise the tourist a return in time to the origins of humankind, a few weeks of relaxation through the abandonment of modern lifestyle and taboos about nudity. Such places are in the endways of evoking history and fulfill functions similar to libraries and museums. (Foucault 1987:7) A final important observation is that heterotopias are developed in relation to the central space from which they are delimitated. This characteristic is designed around two radically opposite poles. Thus, the heterotopia creates an alternative topos in symbolic opposition to the central one, which is so perfectly, meticulously constructed, and arranged that the other is anarchic, disorderly, and imperfect (or vice versa). This last type is considered by Foucault a heterotopic compensation space. (Foucault 1987:8)

Heterotopias are spaces belonging to alterity. This alterity can be temporal, geographical, symbolical, historical, cultural, ideological, or related to gender, the borders being defined precisely by the differentiation from the central symbolic geography. In *The Badlands of Modernity Heterotopia and Social Ordering*, Kevin Hetherington mentions the radically different ways in which heterotopias organize the social world. This specificity marks them as belonging to alterity and constructs them as a specific way of doing things. (Hetherington 2003:viii)

Foucauldian Heterotopias and the Symbolic Geography of Negative Utopias

There isn't any particular reason for which we cannot discuss the symbolic geography of a literary text through the lens of Foucault's theory of heterotopias. Authors, particularly those that place importance on issues of spatiality, tend to include in their texts different types of symbolic geography, some of which are central and some marginal. Of course, the two types of geography need to be present in the same literary work. In other words, for us to be talking about heterotopias, a particular symbolic space needs to be heterotopic in relation to another one. Heterotopias cannot exist by themselves; they are always

perceived, contrasted, and analyzed in relation to other spatiality types that are coded differently from a symbolic perspective.

The literary genre to which I will be referring is that of 20th Century negative utopias. I aim to highlight from the start that within the symbolic geography characteristic of these works, we also have to deal with heterotopias, alternative spaces that are coded radically different from a symbolic point of view than the type of geography that occupies the center of the negative utopia. A discussion is thus in order about the nature and origin of these marginal symbolic locations. Firstly, we will have to analyze the exact geographic positioning of these locations. Much has been discussed about the symbolic geography of the dystopian city, how it reflects a modern manner of organizing space, and the author's anxieties about the evolution of totalitarian political systems or the effects of modernity on the environment. We can undoubtedly claim that this type of spatiality dominates the symbolic geography of negative utopias. This urbanized space is associated with a modern ethos, an ethos subject to excessive rationalization, fixed geometrization, the mechanization of the individual and society etc.

On the other hand, and this is what I aim to discuss, we also deal with a type of symbolic geography situated on the periphery of the primary urban geography. These are spaces mainly associated with nature, with symbolic associations set in contrast to those of the primary type of symbolic geography. It is these symbolic locations that I believe qualify as being heterotopias. If we analyze the texts carefully, we will encounter all the heterotopias defined by Foucault, whether we talk about heterotopias of deviation, compensation, or heterochrony. It is fascinating that these spaces repeatedly appear in a wide range of negative utopias. We are thus not talking about an isolated case but rather about a phenomenon that can be observed within the whole literary genre, certainly within the canon of English negative utopias. For example, we can mention the forest on the outskirts of the city where Winston Smith and Julia meet in Orwell's *1984*, the savage reservation from the novel *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, or the forest in which

the protagonist of Ray Bradbury's novel, *Fahrenheit 451* chooses to retreat. We can also mention the forbidden forest, a place of refuge for the main character of the novel *Anthem* by Ayn Rand. The number of examples abound.

The main question is thus, where does this inclination, if not obsession with constructing symbolic spaces on the periphery of the modern dystopian city, come from? What lies behind the aesthetic choice of so many authors feeling the need to sketch this type of geographic typology? Why choose it as a retreat for their main characters again and again and again? Are they gendered in any particular way?

These locations are small in size compared to the central urban geography but radically different from a symbolic perspective. The fact that their appearance is recurring within 20th Century negative utopias is again highly relevant because they serve a clear purpose. Their appearance is not haphazard within the texts. We cannot say that their role is unimportant or that they don't have a specific aesthetic or ideological aim. But if they do have a purpose, we might then rightly ask what that purpose is?

I think we can answer this question starting from the premise that negative utopias are critiques of modernity in its different manifestations. Among the negative aspects of modernity that have often been highlighted in connection with negative utopias are: the critique of totalitarian systems, excessive urbanization to the detriment of natural environments, the critique of instrumental reason, of the uniformization of urban social life, bureaucratic dominance, the mechanic state, the dissolution of relationships between humans, the decline of qualitative, social or religious values or the diminishment in the importance of imagination. All of these features of modernity have been discussed by critics such as Max Weber or Charles Cooley. (Lowy and Sayre 2001:19) It is interesting to note that, by examining how the peripheral heterotopian geographies are coded symbolically, we can state that they are not associated with the negative aspects of modernity mentioned earlier. In fact, on many occasions, they do not even belong to the same historical epoch, remaining faithful to a premodern paradigm that seems to signal the

author's nostalgia for the premodern symbolic organization of space, thus becoming heterochrony from a Foucauldian perspective. Therefore, we are dealing with an urban modernity which we shall see is gendered masculine that is being contrasted with an extra-urban heterotopic environment, reduced in size but which maintains its presence as inevitable. However, this latter type of topos is gendered feminine. This feature makes us ask many questions about the esthetic or ideological source by which such premodern constructs end up being tangled in the critique of modernity made by authors of negative utopias.

If we think about historical modernity, rather than just literary modernism, authors of negative utopias undoubtedly were not the only critics of modernity. They were not the only ones who placed pre-modernity and modernity at opposite poles. In fact, this happened again during the 19th Century, in the Romantic era. Michael Lowy and Robert Sayre have already made a very good argument about the Romantic critique of modernity in their book *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity*.

In my opinion, there are sufficient reasons to take into consideration the similarities between the critiques of modernity brought forward by the Romantics, particularly against enlightenment values, and a few fundamental aspects of the critique of modernity made by authors of negative utopias. For example, one of the central features of modernity that the Romantics rebelled against was the idea of a mechanized and rationalized environment. They preferred the dynamic, the natural, and the organic to the mechanical. They reacted against the mechanizing tendencies of the age as famously described by authors such as Thomas Carlyle in works like *The Signs of the Times.* Carlyle notes that: "*Were we required to characterize this age of ours by any single epithet, we should be tempted to call it, not a Heroical, Devotional, Philosophical, or Moral Age, but, above all others, the Mechanical Age. It is the Age of Machinery, in every outward and inward sense of that word.*" (Carlyle 1888:235)

In politics, the Romantics saw the modern state as a mechanical system that was artificial, inorganic, geometrical,

lifeless, and soulless. Schelling, for example, complained in *Das älteste Sustem des Deutschen Idealismus* (The Oldest System of German Idealism), arguing that *"We must go beyond the State! For every State necessarily treats free human beings like a mechanical system of gears [mechanisches Räderwerk."* Novalis similarly noted that *"in no State has the administration so perfectly resembled a factory as in Prussia since the death of Friedrich Wilhelm I."* (Lowy and Sayre 2001:39) Twentieth century authors of negative utopias are themselves skeptical of the idea of mechanism and in favor of dynamism instead. For example, Owen Gregory's negative utopia *Meccania,* written in the first half of the 20th Century, alludes precisely to Germany's implementation of Enlightenment policies and the dystopian results achieved. All prominent authors of dystopias are weary of the idea of mechanism, clockwork universes, and prefer dynamism instead. Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, one of the novels that had a significant impact on prominent English authors of negative utopias such as George Orwell (but not only him), delimitates between the two concepts quite clearly at the level of symbolic space. For Zamyatin, the natural world of the MEPHI that lies beyond the Green Wall surrounding the city is associated with 'Energy.' In contrast, everything within the city itself is associated with 'mechanism'. This 'Energy' resembles the Romantics' emphasis on dynamism and organicism very much. In fact, Zamyatin points out that one of the authors censored by the World State in his dystopia is the Romantic poet Alexander Pushkin. Authors make other similar 'subtle' allusions of negative utopias to works belonging to Romanticism.

The Dichotomy of Nature vs. Reason

It is a well-known fact that within Romanticism, we are dealing with a gendering of space. Nature, impulse, and irrationality were associated with a feminine symbolic principle. As Anne K. Mellor notes in her book *Romanticism and Gender*, nature is gendered as feminine within the Romantic canon. It is necessary to note that a very similar type of topographic gendering can be observed in many negative utopias; therefore, parallels might be drawn in this particular theoretic segment as

well. We should ask ourselves if any geographical environments act as counterpoints to the dominating rationalized modern city gendered as masculine. If this hypothesis would check, it follows that the counterpoint repressed alternative spaces would be feminine. And indeed it seems they are, for if feminine identity has been culturally constructed in relation to the idea of nature and irrationality, opposed to male rationality, as Susan Griffin points out in her book *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* we can't help but notice that all the repressed, peripheral spaces beyond the boundaries of the dystopian city, the wilderness beyond Zamyatin's Green Wall, the forest beyond Orwell's London, etc., are natural environments symbolically and traditionally associable with a feminine symbolic principle. The city is in almost all cases gendered as masculine; it is rationally organized, associated with stasis, and often dominated by a patriarchal figure (World Controller, Big Brother, Benefactor, etc.). On the other hand, the peripheral topographical reminiscences associated with the natural world seem to be gendered as feminine. They are associated with nature, irrationality, and impulse. Also, there are many negative utopias where we can directly connect these peripheral locations and important feminine characters present in the novels. Dystopian authors started from the 'island' model, a space cut off from the outside world by clear boundaries. Geographical and ideological otherness was thus constructed as uncanny and potentially subversive dark continents.

A powerful wave of outrage and criticism can be felt when the question of gender construction is tackled within the context of some dystopian fictional spaces. The reason has a lot to do with the assumption that feminine characters have been imagined and constructed according to certain gender stereotypes deeply embedded in our culture. While some of this criticism is well-founded in the case of some dystopian fictional spaces, some would probably need a reassessment.

Throughout the ages feminine identity has been socially constructed in relation to nature, chaos, and irrationality, while male identity has been built around concepts like reason, order, and organization. Within such a symbolic narrative, a hierarchy is incorporated, placing male and rationality above the female,

irrationality, and nature. The hierarchy enforces the narrative because masculinity symbolically fulfills the role of organizer, taming the wild nature of the irrational feminine dimension and, of course, geographical space. In tackling negative utopias however, some analysts are more fortunate than others because sometimes, the failure to correctly consider the intersection between gender and space can make a considerable difference. For example, the case of George Orwell is associated by some critics with this narrative that modern feminism has put into question.

For the record, I do not claim that critics did not correctly underline the symbolic connection between masculinity, reason, and order on one hand and femininity, irrationality, and nature on the other at the level of character construction within the two texts in question. However, I do claim that there is *no reason to assume the presence of a hierarchy* between the two gender constructs confirming the narrative and delimitating rational masculinity as superior to the feminine and irrational (within the novels). There are many reasons why this particular gender narrative is being tampered with in the two dystopias, if not reversed altogether. Furthermore, I claim that this can be proven only by analyzing the novels at the intersection between gender construction and the nature of the symbolic geography it inhabits. Therefore, it is insufficient to assume character construction as the sole ground on which conclusions are to be drawn without an appropriate discussion of symbolic textual geography and its association with issues of gender.

The two initial starting points in proving such a theory would have to be, firstly, the essential elements regarded as fundamental to the construction of a utopian/dystopian space. Secondly, we have to consider the reasonable assumption that in the case of the two novels mentioned;/, we are dealing with gendered spaces, that is, spaces symbolically linked to either masculine or feminine constructs of gender. Most importantly, one should pay extreme attention to how these gendered spaces relate to their construction and symbolic function within the two fictional worlds. Furthermore, I believe that one should leave aside the baggage of gendered spatial hierarchies that are at work in our daily lives when analyzing these texts because

they may get in the way of noticing that the gender dynamic may be coded differently at a spatial level within many novels. It may just be that we are not dealing with exact reiterations of traditional hierarchies to which we are used, such assumptions ultimately leading us to faulty conclusions. It makes all the difference because in the process, what can be read as a subtle critique of traditional masculinity's pretense at superiority by the symbolic association with reason, as I aim to show, often is, misread as a complete subscription of the authors to a discriminative narrative.

One of the main characteristics of utopian space that the dystopian authors considered when constructing their anti-utopias was that they started from the 'island' model, an area cut off from the outside world by clear boundaries in which a different kind of social order could be constructed. Thomas Morus' *Utopia* was a land where the emphasis was placed on order, rationality, and discipline rather than freedom. This 'superior', self-sufficient, transparent space needed to be the mirror image of its inhabitants. Michel Foucault in *The Eye of Power*, notes: *"What in fact, was the Rousseauist dream that motivated many of the revolutionaries? It was the dream of a transparent society, visible and legible in each of its parts, the dream of no longer existing zones of darkness."* (Foucault 1980:107).

Nicole Pohl and Brenda Tooley argue in *Gender and Utopia in the Eighteenth Century* that this 'superior', transparent space needed to be the mirror image of its inhabitants but most importantly that *"this concept of transparency derives directly from the Cartesian division between a rational mind and an irrational body."* (Pohl and Tooley 2007:108). More specifically, this implies that if gender was coded by associating masculinity with reason and femininity with irrationality, it would also mean that masculinity was associated with the mind while femininity with the body, placing the masculine mind above the irrational feminine body incapable of order. Some utopias are sexist because the 'darkness' Foucault refers to as being the factor that utopians wanted to eliminate, is automatically associated with the body, irrationality, and femininity.

The need to isolate this type of space from other geographical locations was a natural consequence because any outside element that would not submit to the utopian plan threatened to destabilize the fragile social order. Geographical and ideological otherness was thus constructed as uncanny (dark continents in the Freudian sense), monstrous in nature, and potentially subversive because of irrationality and, following the classic gender coding, femininity.

While utopian authors may have believed that geographic isolation was for the better, modern dystopian authors outlined the problems this social and geographic spatial ordering may pose. Thus, while utopian authors envisioned the island as a 'good place' – (gr. eu-topos) and portrayed alternative spaces as monstrous geography, it follows as a simple deduction that writers of anti-utopias would reverse this geographical construction, drawing the island itself as a monstrous 'bad place' and that they would endow potential alternative symbolic geographical space with a powerfully positive meaning, its former monstrous, uncanny and subversive potential and otherness becoming an alternative in the fictional universe.

Philip E. Wagner notes in *Utopia, The Nation and The Spatial Histories of Modernity* something extremely important. He mentions the fact that in novels such as Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, a work which inspired the geographical setting of many famous Anglophone negative utopias, including *1984,* the One State is the result of a two hundred years war 'between city and the village,' (Wegner 2002:151) between modernity and pre-modernity, from which the state and modernity emerged – temporarily - victorious. About Zamyatin's novel, he argues that:

> "The valences between the terms of the modern city and premodern countryside have been reversed: the latter is now the positive pole, as the world of the MEPHI seems to promise the possibility of individual self-realization unavailable within the enclosure of the One State." (Wegner 2002:151).

The issue of gendered spaces becomes fundamental when analyzing the symbolic contrasts and dialectic between alternative space and the monstrous geography of the dystopian city. Firstly, we should consider that many dystopian universes, not only the two in question, are constructed as clockwork universes gone bad. They are critiques of the enlightenment idea that having only reason and rationality as guiding light, man may, in the end, construct a better society. One of the main reasons for underlying the dystopian city as a monstrous geographical space is the portrayal of the failure of such an attempt at reorganizing the environment. Secondly, we must be aware that reason and rationality have been socially constructed as strictly masculine attributes for centuries in our culture. The over-rationalization of the dystopian city becomes thus a direct product of male rationality and the dystopian city itself a monstrous space, gendered as masculine. The city would thus not only be associated with excessive rationalization but also with masculine identity and not in a small extent with the repression of the feminine dimension from within its walls. As one of Zamyatin's characters indirectly points out, the world inside the confines of the wall is constructed as rational and enlightened while the one outside is primitive:

> Personally I see nothing beautiful in flowers, or in anything belonging to the primitive world long exiled beyond the Green Wall. Only the rational and useful is beautiful: machines, boots, formulas, food, and so on. (Zamyatin 1993:30).

If the hypothesis that the space within the dystopian city is gendered as masculine, then it follows that the counterpoint repressed alternative geographical spaces represented from those living in the dystopian city as dark primitive continents would be feminine ones. And indeed it seems they are, for if feminine identity has been culturally constructed in relation to the idea of nature and irrationality as feminist critics pointed out, we can't help but notice that all the repressed spaces beyond the boundaries of the dystopian city, the forest beyond Orwell's city and many other examples from Anglophone

literature that can be taken into account, are environments symbolically and traditionally associable with a feminine symbolic principle. Such a gendered spatial dynamic can hardly be accused of placing male rationality in a position of symbolic superiority above irrational femininity in the two texts. Quite the opposite, it is precisely male rationality that is being put into question and on trial for the direct consequences of the attempt at spatial hegemony and rationalizing the natural environment, and isolating/eliminating the otherness associated with alternative geographical locations constructed as feminine spaces. These spaces manage to evade the totalitarian dystopian discourse. The simple existence of such geographical topoi poses a massive problem to characters like Orwell's Big Brother or Huxley's World Controller because they threaten the social fabric and organization. The topographies mentioned fracture the city's carefully guarded spatial cohesion, geometricity and threaten the power positions of characters such as Big Brother. Such alternative geographical spaces are why dystopias isolate themselves in the first place from outside geographic influence. The fact that these alternative spaces are gendered as feminine signals gender and feminine identity as a potential point of fracture in the cohesion and organization of the dystopian city associated with masculinity, order, and reason.

Of course, one would be right in claiming that the feminine is associated with nature and irrationality within the two texts. However, one must also observe that, because these gender constructs are situated in a fictional geographic space used by the authors to underline the utterly disastrous consequences of the failure of enlightenment reason and rationality in constructing a better world, the association with nature does not signal a position of ontological inferiority but rather quite the opposite. The traditional gender hierarchy collapses within the dystopias, and the gender dynamic underlined by Susan Griffin is reversed. This can also be seen at the level of character construction but most poignantly in a discussion of gendered spaces.

Having discussed the theoretical argument, the split between two types of gendered locations in the two dystopias

that is - a feminine topos associated with irrationality, nature, otherness, impulse, chaos, freedom, Energy that is threatening to a masculine one associated with extreme rationalization, order, control, entropy, unfreedom – we should go forward to specific examples from the texts as well as trying to observe how feminine identity is constructed in relation to these spaces in the two novels. Authors of dystopias place a powerful emphasis on the image of certain female characters. However, we should note that we are not dealing with the idea of the quiet, passive muse in natural surroundings, but rather another type of identity, also explored by the Romantics, particularly P.B Shelley, the woman as Energy, as nature in revolt. There is an active principle involved within the construction of this particular type of female character's identity. Therefore yes, their image is associated with nature, but this is a nature that is untamed, powerful, wild, irrational, and therefore utterly subversive, uncanny and threatening to the rational clockwork dystopian space. Some female characters even seem to have the capability to cancel the pressure and influence exercised by the monstrous geography of the dystopian city. They seem to be capable of altering the connection between mental and geographic space in the case of certain characters who are otherwise under the control of the negative urban environment and replace it with a different connection, a connection with the alternative symbolic geographical locations. Their role is thus potentially liberating, Promethean in nature by challenging the rule of entities such as Big Brother over the fictional space and having the potential to be stronger in this respect.

Furthermore, if we perceive characters like Big Brother, the Benefactor and so on as the fictional Godheads of these reverse-gardens of Eden (to be noted that, similarly to Christian myth, in dystopias, thoughts by themselves can be sinful) then it follows that female characters such as Orwell's Julia, to continue the analogy, become 'satanic challengers,' as they trespass and encourage the trespassing of the Godhead's commandments. However, the dystopian authors overturned the classic mythical structure and portrayed these 'satanic trespassers' in a positive light. In the case of characters such as

Julia or I-330, we deal with personifications of wild nature in revolt to reorganize the environment. Many authors such as Orwell used the symbolic dimension of natural, irrational, feminine alternative gendered space as a counterpoint to the excessively rationalized dystopian city. Of course, in the end, it is a matter of perspective at the level of discourse, for one person's dark, uncanny female figure is another person's freedom fighter. When we see the secret organization MEPHI lead by the female character I-330, managing to create a breach in the Green Wall, what happens at the level of spatial cohesion is that the dominating discourse associated with the monstrous space of the dystopian city is being challenged and undermined, all the repressed concepts making themselves felt in the space of the city.

> *Is it possible that the sheltering, age-old walls of the One State have toppled? Is it possible that we are once again without house or roof, in the wild state of freedom, like our distant ancestors? Is there indeed no Benefactor? People were against on Unanimity Day? But then who are they? And who am I? "They" "We", do I know? [...] No one knows what tomorrow will be. Do you understand? I do not know, no one knows tomorrow is the unknown! Do you understand that everything known is finished? Now all things will be new, unprecedented, and unconceivable.* (Zamyatin 1993:60).

In George Orwell's *1984,* Winston Smith imagines 'the place where there is no darkness', dreaming about a place in nature where he can escape the influence of Big Brother. The one who facilitates all this is his imagined girl with dark hair:

> *The girl with dark hair was coming across the field. With its grace and carelessness, it seemed to annihilate a whole culture, a whole system of thought, as though Big Brother and the Thought Police could all be swept into nothingness by a single splendid movement of the arm. (*Orwell 1987:80).

However, as the story progresses, we see that this inner vision of a location without telescreens will materialize with the appearance of Julia and their coupling at Julia's meeting place near a forest outside London and later in the old room or the church tower.

The room itself where Julia utters the phrase '*In this room I am going to be a woman not a Party comrade*' is first and foremost a robust manifest at the level of space and gender. A manifest comparable in meaning with the one made by Virginia Woolf, one that clearly puts into opposition feminine identity with the gender role and conduct assigned arbitrarily. The words themselves signal a breach in the symbolic cohesion of the monstrous dystopian space caused by the subversive potentiality of gender.

Therefore, rather than simply calling the gender constructs present in many Anglophone negative utopias as symptomatic to the traditional narrative described by Susan Griffin, we have seen that the issue is more complex and changes significantly when discussing the issue of spatiality. This issue points towards gender as a subversive element towards a collapse in the hierarchy at work in the narrative and a reversal of its poles. This happens more often than not in negative utopias, particularly in the Anglophone one but definitely not limited to them as we have seen in Russian literature as well the case of Yevgeny Zamyatin.

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