

The Confines of Subjectivity: Spaces of Resistance in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

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Abstract

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, despite the vast political changes during the last half-century since its publication and its various aesthetic shortcomings, remains one of the most important and relevant books of this century. With the proliferation of modern post-apocalyptic and dystopian fantasies in both literature and film, it would be worthwhile to address the modernist visions of the future as they were formulated in architectural terms. The dystopian world described in the novel is brought into existence not only through the political and ideological relations to its cultural context but also by means of the spatial dimensions in which the dystopia is played out. The aim of this essay is, therefore, to identify the spatial framework along with the ideological context on the basis of which this project is defined in relation to the socio-political environment of Oceania in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It will be the underlying assumption of this article, drawing on Martin Heidegger's notion of "dwelling" and modernist architectural theory, that the construction of space directly affects subjectivity and the creation of a sense of self, especially insofar as memory and history are concerned. This assumption will be developed with regards to Mr. Charrington's antique shop representing here a space of resistance against the manifestations of modernist ideology.

Keywords: dystopia; Orwell; architecture; Heidegger; dwelling

Harold Bloom in the "Introduction" to *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations* dedicated to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is self-admittedly ambiguous about what he considers a "momentous" book, despite there being nothing "intrinsic to the book that will determine its future" (Bloom 2007: 2). Later, he considers whether this momentous book might be compared to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as an example of a work whose historical significance overshadows its literary merits. Indeed, among the aesthetic shortcomings attributable to dystopian fiction in general—and to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* specifically—one might list the genre's failure to endow its characters with the level of psychological verisimilitude associated with the novel tradition; however, with so little attention paid to character development, the reader's attention is captured by the spatial and architectural

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representations of outer and inner spaces, which come to serve as a means of displaying an ideologically founded utopian practice. Though Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has been approached during this half century from a variety of perspectives, very little has been written about the spatial aspect of this novel stressing the architecture of the built environment. What is proposed here, therefore, is a consideration of how the ideological constitution of modernist architecture not only bears upon utopian or, in this case, anti-utopian discourse, but is also instrumental in diminishing the inhabitants' sense of rootedness in history and place. To this end, I will be drawing on the work of one of the most famous Modernist architects, the Swiss born Le Corbusier, and also on Heidegger's notion of dwelling, developed most succinctly in his post-war lectures, in reference to Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Mr. Charrington's antique shop will be the focal point of this argument, as it will be defined as a space of resistance to the ahistorical and authoritarian ideology imposed by hegemonic class of Oceania.

In the interest of precision and generic classification, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is here considered as an anti-utopia in line with Lyman Tower Sargent's description of "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a criticism of utopianism or of some particular eutopia" (1994: 9). This classification is all the more appropriate for this essay, since one of the intertextual references to utopian discourse against which Orwell is inveighing is utopian architecture in its modernist guise.

Much like fictions, buildings do not exist in isolation—and are certainly not created in isolation—instead, they are infused with ideological reference points providing a structure imbued with coherent significance in relation to the viewer. For example, the ideological basis for modernist architecture was progressive and thoroughly utopian in that its aim was to create an environment predicated on hygiene, rationality and order, a stark departure from the squalid state of nineteenth century cities. Modernist architecture in general, though in different ways, advocated for minimalism and the use of innovative technology for the design of not only buildings but also urban planning. It attempted to distance itself from nineteenth century aesthetics and it is in relation to Victorian architecture that the import of Le Corbusier's ideas best comes to light; the rejection of historicism and ornamentation in favour of

aesthetics fundamentally based on notions of rationalism would usher in an architecture that would be more fitting for the “machine age”. This is perhaps why Le Corbusier, one of the most important and influential architects of his time, is essential for this discussion. Even though many of his projects were never implemented, his influence was far-reaching, especially because of the ideological assumptions which shaped architecture and urban design for over a half of a century. Sadler provides a succinct description of this modernist architectural program, stressing its intentions as directed towards mass housing, its universality and transparency. Speaking of this modernist program, he states:

Its program can be summarized as one of breaking down barriers between aesthetics, technology, and society so that appropriate design of the highest visual and practical quality would be produced for the mass of the population. Its vision was of the universal—universal design solutions, universal standards of living, and universal aesthetic principles (prioritizing volume and transparency over mass and ornament, the regularity of the grid over symmetry, and an aura of technical refinement).

(Sadler 2004: 34)

Much like their forebears, the members of the CIAM (International Congress of Modern Architecture) fostered the belief that architecture bears the responsibility for providing the conditions for a moral social order, but it is an architecture that embodies the values of technological advancement, machine and mass production, with an unsentimental approach to the future that best provides the conditions allowing for the development of the said moral order. Though Le Corbusier’s vision of urban development found in *The Radiant City* (1935) was a departure from his urban planning projects from the early to mid-1920s, “at its core remained demands to clean up, re-order, purify; themes that had famously run through its earlier schemes and sense of the ‘modern’” (Pinder 2004: 181).

This utopian promise of improving the lives of residents and elevating the conditions of the masses that informed urban renewal policies has found its physical manifestation in the kind of architecture which has since become a derided symbol of dehumanized social engineering and authoritarian arrogance. It is understandable that utopian modernist architecture, especially the post-war variety that still lingers with us, evokes only the worst aesthetic and ethical associations, despite the egalitarian and social ideas informing post-war urban planning. “Most writing on architecture and utopia, especially that to which

architecture students are exposed, treats utopia as a negative signifier, attached to failed modernism” (Levitas 2013: 214). It has also been noticed that modernist architecture contains within itself a particularly authoritarian impulse: “A movement that started off with utopian visions of serving the masses, introducing standardization so as to set higher standards of living for all—not just the already privileged—seems to end up dictating to those same masses” (Morgan 1999: 80). The authoritarianism implicit in treating the masses as the passive beneficiaries of an ideology that surpasses the needs of the individual seems to provide justification for the fears expressed by Popper in regards to the potentially pernicious consequences of materializing utopian ideology in general. This inherent authoritarianism of the utopian project contributed to the architecture being utilized for the purposes of social engineering. Remarking on modern architecture, Nathaniel Coleman states that:

The main criticism of modern architecture identifies the tendency of its adherents to engage in a species of naïve and ham-fisted social determinism in the belief that form not only could influence behavior but could actually shape it by transforming the individual and social life that came in contact with it. (2014: 5)

Coleman emphasizes the modernist belief in ‘transforming’ and ‘shaping’ instead of merely ‘influencing’ social life, thereby signaling the hierarchical relationship between the architect and a society that is deemed passively pliable to the ideological workings of social engineering. In a similar fashion, the constructed political and social reality that we see in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is also inseparable from its ideological determinants, which in Orwell’s hands are extrapolated to their dystopian extremes.

In discussing this parallel between architecture and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, I will focus on two related elements of Le Corbusier’s aesthetics, both of which play an essential role in the construction of personal identity: these are the rejection of history and the appeal to universal authority. There is a contention that progressive utopian projects involve a kind of disaggregation of history, though there are differences in opinion as to the extent of this tenet: Siegfried Giedion believed that a new architectural style must be built upon a completely fresh canvas, claiming that a “rejection of yesterday was understandable at the beginning of contemporary architecture, in order to regain self-

awareness” (1967: 669). It is particularly interesting to note that according to Giedion self-awareness is something to be regained only in the absence of historical references, a tenet which constitutes an extreme, but telling, ideological assumption concerning self-identity. History is here treated as an obstruction to self-awareness, a nostalgic indulgence that distracts society from looking to the future with all its promise of advancement and progress.

And although Le Corbusier pressed for a historically informed thematic continuity in architectural style, what was usually agreed upon was that the sentimental styles of Victorian bourgeois aesthetics must be replaced by a new and efficient architecture, one which would embrace technological development rather than copying past styles in an effort to perpetuate a sense of cultural continuity and portraying the individual as a victim of industrialization. In order for this new style to have any permanence, however, it would have had to appeal to universal authority. Architecture, as described by Louis Kahn, should strive towards monumentality that is in essence eternal. There is, therefore, an implication of transcendental universality at the heart of utopian architectural design, which was expected to conform to a transcendental and signified form. The laws of order, symmetry, pure shapes, golden ratios, were selected as the bedrock of this overriding authority. A revealing example of this universal principle can be found in Le Corbusier’s concept of the Modulor, the standardized human form that served to establish the spatial dimensions for habitation. The Modulor, as a universal aesthetic framework, characterized by mathematical precision and symmetry, would assist in creating the plans for his *Cité Radieuse* in Marseille in 1924, his famous unrealized utopian city based on linearity and rationalism, which would override the nostalgic sentimentality he saw prevalent in architecture.

As a term, or *topos*, Utopia is a remarkably empty vessel which can be filled with a staggering variety of often conflicting narratives. What destroys the critical power of utopia is the attempt to move it from abstraction to reality, which is precisely what Le Corbusier attempted. For him utopia was not a dream or intellectual project but a plan that demands immediate implementation *in toto*. All that was required for Le Corbusier’s dream to become reality was a perceptual shift regarding his architecture. His radicalism had to be normalized, though this was something that would remain an insurmountable obstruction—as Le

Corbusier stated in *Towards a New Architecture*: “The right state of mind does not exist” for the realization of such an “immense programme” (1986: 229). It would be worth considering what were the mental obstacles standing in the way of this project coming to fruition. This is something that Le Corbusier leaves without further explanation. We can only assume what he means by this “state of mind” as a set of associations fossilized by habit and unreflective, nostalgic identification with one’s surroundings.

The same key architectural notions discussed earlier, that is, the wholesale rejection of history and the appeal to universal authority, find their correlative in the ideological construction of Orwell’s Oceania in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The metaphorical significance of this environment is noted by Gerald Bernstein, who goes on to explain that “in Orwell’s dehumanized world it is not only the psychic environment that oppresses the individual but the physical environment as well” (1985: 26). We have, for example, the vast and virtually indestructible pyramidal government buildings, looming over the subjects, where the government employees labor in underground, windowless cubicles. “It was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, three hundred metres into the air” (Orwell 5–6). These intimidating structures “contained three thousand rooms above ground level, and corresponding ramifications below,” reflecting the impenetrable and immutable nature of the established political system (Orwell 6). These vertical structures project a sense of dominance over the rest of the dilapidated Victorian buildings, bringing attention to the hierarchical difference between structures of authority and the subjugated surroundings, which have benefited little from the utopian ideals upon which that society was seemingly founded. This imposed egalitarianism and equality conceals within itself a double standard, revealed by the luxurious modern interiors belonging to the Inner Party members who are conspicuously presented as enjoying the advantages power and status affords them as opposed to the squalid Victorian-style houses of the Proles, the lowest class. When Winston visits O’Brien in the residential area reserved for Inner Party members, he is struck at how intimidating this area was for someone outside of the Inner Party, fearing that at any moment security officers would take him away. Upon entering, “Winston could not remember ever to have seen a passageway whose walls were not grimy from the contact of human bodies” (Orwell 175). The

juxtaposition of O'Brien's clean and wealthy home and Winston's ironically named Victory Mansion is all the more striking, considering the privileges that are afforded to Inner Party members, such as turning off the telescreens.

Oceania is certainly not a realization of Le Corbusier's Radiant City; it is neither futuristic nor streamlined, neither rational nor particularly hygienic. By presenting Oceania as dilapidated and grimy, Orwell is emphasizing the failure of the project itself, indicating the Party's inability to bring its project to fruition, partially because of the corruption inherent in power structures based on authoritarian dominance. Most of the resources have most likely been allocated to the construction of government buildings and ensuring comfortable living spaces for Inner Party officials, and most of the advanced technology has been utilized for surveillance purposes, leaving the majority of its denizens to live in subpar conditions. Likewise, Corbuserian architectural projects, most notably the Unité d'Habitation in Marseille, have not been met with much success as well, often falling into disrepair. Architects after World War II were quick to imitate Corbuserian aesthetics, especially as the egalitarianism it promised coincided with the political climate of the time. This was certainly the case in Britain, where the housing crisis led the government to develop council houses based on Le Corbusier's concepts, though without the attention to detail, as implementing Corbusier's ideas *in toto* would have entailed much more money than debt-ridden post-war Britain would have been willing to invest. Such a rapid government urban project would have not gone unnoticed by Orwell. In fact, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published in the same year as the Housing Act of 1949 was passed. This piece of legislature repealed pre-war restrictions which had previously limited access to public housing only to the working classes. The architectural aesthetics as well as the principles utilized in the building of these new council estates were inspired by Le Corbusier's egalitarian model of urban architecture, which eventually fell into disrepute due to poor construction, cheap prefabricated materials and poor conditions. The ideological narratives informing such housing projects were echoed in Oceania and both were marred by failure. However, even though the modernist architectural project failed to come to fruition in Oceania, its presence can be seen in the form of the repressive laws and principles defining its dystopian

character. It is precisely in these ideological principles that we see the parallel between utopian modernist architecture and Orwell's anti-utopia.

The significance of history is already established by Winston Smith's occupation. His job at the ironically named Ministry of Truth is to redact historical events in accordance with the party ideology. The rejection of the past, presented as a fundamental element of both utopian architecture and Oceania, is essential in rewriting history and thus constructing a standardized version of the present. As Jameson poignantly notices in his *Archaeologies of the Future*, "the most haunting feature of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the elegiac sense of the loss of the past and the uncertainty of memory" (Jameson 2005: 200). This loss would deprive the individual of any symbolic reference points which would ground him in a determinate subjective universe, thus leaving him in a state of homelessness.

Of course, the subjectivity that such an erasure would entail is in line with the repressive nature of authoritarian governments Orwell was attempting to caution us against. It is, therefore, only fitting that Orwell avoids character development. Criticism that the characters are superficially rendered fail to account for the fact that individuality and any form of personal development is in Oceania considered a crime (Howe 1971: 43). Howe further argues that:

The whole idea of the self as something precious and inviolable is a cultural idea, and as we understand it, a product of the liberal era; but Orwell has imagined a world in which the self, whatever subterranean existence it manages to eke out, is no longer a significant value, not even a value to be violated. (Howe 1971: 43)

Without clear vantage points in history, distinct subjectivity is erased and rendered susceptible to various redefinitions in accordance with imposed ideological lines. In other words, deprived of memory the subject is confined only to the ideological parameters (in this case the Party doctrine) without the possibility of being able to mount any resistance, as there is nothing resembling stable subjectivity from which to secure a foothold in the struggle for self-actualization. Winston's awareness of this ahistoricity is signalled at the beginning of the novel, where he is desperately attempting to remember his childhood: "He tried to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been quite like this. ... But it was no use, he could not remember: nothing remained of his childhood except a series of bright-lit tableaux,

occurring against no background and mostly unintelligible” (Orwell 5). This is why Winston is drawn to older inhabitants, asking them questions about pre-revolutionary England; he is in effect attempting to reconnect with a past he no longer remembers as a way of rooting himself in his environment.

This search for a sense of rootedness takes Winston on many frequent strolls, which, harking back to decadent *flâneurs*, are in themselves out of place in a technocratic and rational society, constituting a kind of rebellion in themselves, while also pointing metaphorically to his state of homelessness (a state of alienation that is a running theme in many Modernist texts). Winston’s search for his past and for a neutral place reaches an end when he stumbles upon an antique shop owned by Mr. Charrington. Being a place of memory and memorabilia, Mr. Charrington’s shop already represents an antithesis to the ahistorical social reality of Oceania devoid of any art or useless ornamentation. This temporal and historical dissociation is further emphasized inside, where Winston comes upon a painting depicting an old, “forgotten” church:

Winston wondered vaguely to what century the church belonged. It was always difficult to determine the age of a London building. Anything large and impressive, if it was reasonably new in appearance, was automatically claimed as having been built since the Revolution, while anything that was obviously of earlier date was ascribed to some dim period called the Middle Ages. The centuries of capitalism were held to have produced nothing of value. One could not learn history from architecture any more than one could not learn history from books. Statues, inscriptions, memorial stones, the names of streets—anything that might throw light upon the past had been systematically altered. (Orwell 102)

With buildings and urban space stripped of their historical references, thereby severing them from symbolic continuity, the question of identity, which also depends on a network of symbolic space, is also raised. The search for history is a search for a narrative that would lend substance to neutral perception, a task that Marcel Proust brought to the pages of *Remembrance of Things Past*, but it is a task which emphasizes the convergence of identity with history. In a city where there are no historicizing symbols, the inhabitants have no organic connection with their environment.

Winston’s stroll leads him to Mr. Charrington’s antique shop, which, especially its room upstairs, functions in the story as Winston’s and

Julia's sanctuary and haven from the oppressive social space where they are constantly subject to supervision. This space also functions as a memorial of a past that they only faintly remember, or, in the case of Julia, does not remember at all. Referring to Mannheim's "conservative utopias", Philip Wegner claims that

In works such as Orwell's, it is these nostalgically longed for past utopias that are likewise located on the textual horizons—think of Winston Smith's childhood, his golden country, the sanctuary above Mr. Charrington's shop, and the glass paperweight containing the Indian Ocean coral—while the naturalist vision remains the dominant note in the text. (2003: 173)

In other words, these past utopias are located on the margins of the text, which in itself is evocative of a subversive, private and sexualized space that resists the authoritarian ideology of Oceania as well as the aforementioned tenets of utopian architecture. This resistance is made clear with Winston's reaction to the antique shop. When he enters this shop for the first time, he notices that:

The tiny interior of the shop was in fact uncomfortably full, but there was almost nothing in it of the slightest value. The floor-space was very restricted, because all round the walls were stacked with innumerable dusty picture-frames. (Orwell 98)

Small, cramped, at first "uncomfortably" full, though later Winston remarks that when illuminated by a dim light, "the place looked curiously inviting" (Orwell 100). There is a seductive allure held by this space, as it brings Winston closer to his repressed memories of childhood and with it an emergent sense of selfhood. This antique shop becomes a kind of museum, preserving the memory of the pre-revolutionary past, almost fetishizing the sentimentalized paraphernalia of pre-revolutionary England. Owen Hatherley in *Militant Modernism* very aptly notices this tension between erasure and hoarding in a reference to Walter Benjamin's response to modernist architecture:

It's the master criminal, after all, who excels at erasing the traces, and this conception of an outlaw aesthetics of modernism coexists alongside an obsession with collecting the traces, the waste-products and detritus, of exactly the oppressive thing-world that the 'new glass-culture wants to wipe out—in order, as in his excavation of the Paris Arcades, to blow open the historical continuum, to reveal the latent utopian in the covered glass walkways of the recent past. (Hatherley 2008: 20)

This new glass-culture would be a more fitting description of Zamyatin's *We* rather than Orwell's Oceania; it is in the One State where we have glass houses representing the modern architectural practice of transparency. Though we do not have this in Oceania, unless we view the telescreens as a panopticon taking the place of the glass walls, there is, however, a similar anti-modernist aspect to these anti-utopias. What remains evocative in this observation is the coexistence of the will to erase all traces of the past and the will to preserve the past by collecting any traces left behind by the force of ideological modernization. In all the other spaces, private and public alike, Winston's reactions tend to be affectless; however in the case of the antique shop, where he is confronted with these useless waste-products and traces of the past, emotions begin to play a role in how he responds to this environment:

...but the room had awakened in him a sort of nostalgia, a sort of ancestral memory. It seemed to him that he knows exactly what it felt like to sit in a room like this, in an armchair beside an open fire with your feet in the fender and a kettle on the hob: utterly alone, utterly secure, with nobody watching you, no voice pursuing you, no sound except the singing of the kettle and the friendly ticking of the clock.

(Orwell 100)

Seclusion and the possibility of solitude allow Winston to integrate himself with this space and, at the same time, indulge in recollecting memories of an alternate "ancestral" world. It is important to emphasize that it is in this space of memory where both Winston and Julia are able to re-establish a fleeting link with their past and, therefore, at least for a moment come to life as actors in their lives. These interiors received the most attention from Orwell; O'Brien's house, representing the dwelling of the inner Party members, filled with opulence, comes close in descriptive detail, but it is the antique shop that represents an enlightening avenue towards the space of resistance.

Dystopias frequently allow for such spaces of resistance as a means of establishing dialogue with the ideology under scrutiny. Ludmiła Gurszewska-Blaim, referring to Yuri Lotman's concept of semiospheres, states that "by opening up unexpected channels of communication that require a renewal of codes and by turning a monologic discourse into a dialogue (if only for the time being, with is often the case), rebel dystopias endanger not only an ideological but also spatio-temporal dimension of their world" (2012: 169). She further mentions Winston

Smith's micro-space as "deconstructing the hegemonic, monologically oriented dystopian semiosphere from the inside" and allowing for communication to take place outside the prescribed norms of the controlling ideology (2012: 169). The question that accompanies this recognition of microspaces and their function in the narrative involves identifying the ideologically determined contours of these spaces.

It is at this point that a reading of Heidegger's notion of "dwelling" is particularly enlightening. Heidegger's "Building Dwelling Thinking" (1951), devoted entirely to the question of dwelling in post-war architecture, was first delivered as a lecture to architects in 1951 during the *Darmstadter Gespräch*. This is an essay that provides a further link to Orwell's dystopian Modernist architecture with the question of identity as identification with place. Heidegger wrote two more articles, delivered as lectures, "The Thing" (1950), and "... poetically, Man dwells ..." (1951), all written during a housing crisis plaguing Germany after WWII. The widespread destruction and homelessness led to what was known as the *Wohnungsfrage* (dwelling question), which was addressed by the leading architects of the time.

"Building Dwelling Thinking" centers around two questions: "what is it to dwell? How does building belong to dwelling?" (2001: 143). In order to excavate the significance of this term, Heidegger takes us on an etymological journey of the word "dwelling", thus resurrecting also the connections between building and dwelling. He starts with the word "bauen" (Old English and High German word for building) and "baun", means to dwell, to remain, to stay in place. However, one of the roots of "bauen" comes from the Gothic "wunian", which distinctly tells us that dwelling consists in being at peace, to be brought to peace, to remain in peace. Therefore, we see here that this rather conflicting semantics of dwelling can be read as building a place of rest, which for Heidegger represents the aim of building, not so much of architecture, as it is quite noticeable that Heidegger regards the term architecture pejoratively. Architecture, and especially modernist architecture, here stands in opposition to the expectations of the individual and his dwelling; it is at odds with human needs. This is so because architecture presupposes an artistic adherence to the rules of aesthetics, whether they be Vitruvius's classical tenets of proportion and symmetry or Le Corbusier's Modulor, which for Heidegger neglects to take into account the nurturing aspect of a building which fulfills the needs of human inhabitation. Dwelling was a

state of mind, wherein one feels at home in one's surroundings with which there exists a relationship, one that Heidegger believes was being undermined by modern urban living. It should also be emphasized that, as Jeff Malpas in his interpretation of Heidegger points out, the way in which people are able to engage in the world around them is through building: "Building is the activity that produces, that brings things forth, either through cultivation or through construction. . . . Building is that mode of productive activity that articulates the world in a way that allows for human dwelling" (Malpas 2006: 271). What this means for large utopian urban projects is that inhabitants who are placed in their space have no opportunity to affect change, to build and thereby to properly dwell.

The word "dwelling" allowed Heidegger to emphasize the relation one has to a building whose significance stretches beyond the intellectualized aesthetic notions of architectural design. As Heidegger emphasizes "not every building is a dwelling" (2001: 146), as dwelling is to be a peaceful accommodation between individuals and the world, which he found lacking in large urban structures promoted by Le Corbusier. Of course, there are buildings, like hangers, factories and stadiums which were not meant to be dwellings; we are not meant to reside there, but the issue becomes more problematic in relation to residential buildings, where people were meant to reside. Heidegger asks: "today's houses may even be well planned, easy to keep, attractively cheap, open to air, light, and sun, but—do the houses themselves hold any guarantee that dwelling occurs in them? (2001: 144). This question could just as well be referring to Le Corbusier's *Unité d'Habitation*, where aesthetic rationalism superseded the emotional needs of inhabitants. The separation of architecture and dwelling also encroaches on a sense of being, as "Heidegger found the activity of building and dwelling, as combined together, to be central to language: it was present in 'I am', 'ich bin', which suggested to him that building and dwelling were once at the core of any affirmation of being" (Sharr 2007: 40). If one's environment is brought to bear in such a fashion on the ontological status of the subject, then modernist architectural projects, as well as the spaces inhabited by the denizens of Oceania, take on a most important significance.

Heidegger's "dwelling" recalls the predominantly historicizing (nostalgic) Victorian architectural visions of John Ruskin and Walter

Pater, forsaken by Le Corbusier's modernist projects. Indeed, one of the principle "lamps" of architecture was for Ruskin the "lamp of memory", according to which architecture was also meant to preserve memory, as in the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe. This preservation was essential for the sake of cultural identity, which by definition involves continuity for its existence. David Spurr, in his *Architecture and Modern Literature*, argues that modernist architecture put an end to dwelling in the Heideggerian sense.

If we see modernist architecture as an expression of contemporary human existence, we begin to understand why one of its great projects is the demystification of dwelling, that idealized conception of space that promises rootedness, permanence, and a womblike removal from the experience of modernity. (2012: 52–53)

This is perhaps why much of the work of the leading modernists, Joyce and Beckett, is characterized by a state of homelessness and wandering, which of course can figure here as the spatial metaphor for cultural and spiritual alienation akin to the Baudelairian *flâneur* who aimlessly wanders the urban streets more as a spectator of his environment than its inhabitant. A similar notion of dwelling was raised by Walter Benjamin in his epic unfinished *Arcades Project*, where he discusses the departure from dwelling towards a modern sensibility of interior spaces, a shift which is very much in line with Corbuserian aesthetics:

The nineteenth century, like no other century, was addicted to dwelling. It conceived the residence as a receptacle for the person, and it encased him with all his appurtenances so deeply in the dwelling's interior that one might be reminded of the inside of a compass case, where the instrument with all its accessories lies embedded in deep, usually violet folds of velvet.... The twentieth century, with its porosity and transparency, its tendency towards the well-lit and airy, has put an end to dwelling in the old sense. (1999: 220-21)

The room above the antique shop, therefore, represents for Julia and Winston a space of "dwelling" as put forth by Heidegger and Benjamin. This is a space which reintegrates the inhabitants with their memories and seemingly allows them to be at peace, removed from the experience of Oceania's failed modernity. This room is equivalent to Heidegger's description of the farmhouse in the Black Forest (Heidegger 2001: 157), which served as an illustration of his concept of dwelling, far removed from the alienating effects of urban life. This simple farmhouse is rooted

in the history of the people who occupy it and is in complete harmony with its surroundings much like the sanctuary above the antique shop provides Winston and Julia with an opportunity to root themselves in an historical/biographical awareness, even if this is accomplished by means of relics and artifacts. The presence of relics in the antique shop is reflected in Heidegger's farmhouse by the *Totenbaum*, a "tree of the dead", which "designed for the different generations under one roof the character of their journey through time" (Heidegger 2001: 158). In each case, integration with time and with an awareness of place is instrumental in the constitution of the self, of being.

Dystopian spaces (usually cities) deprive its inhabitants of a place of dwelling understood as a place free of architectural appropriation. According to this perspective, architecture itself is a violent imposition on space, almost literally cutting it up into parcels, disintegrating the onetime sense of wholeness, characterizing the pastoral nostalgia of nineteenth century utopists such as William Morris, who opted for a more rural environment, which was later to be embodied in Ebenezer Howard's garden city movement. What is more, urban planning of this sort is infused with ideological narratives that attempt to engineer society according to their dictates. The opposition between the towering modernity of the Inner Party and the shabbiness and dilapidated housing of the majority of the population only work to show how inefficient and ultimately futile egalitarian social engineering is. The efficient and focused life presented by Orwell in Oceania is the stark opposition to that vision and can be seen to represent only a parody of Le Corbusier's architectural vision of utopian rationality and efficiency but also, and perhaps most importantly, a statement of the necessity of dwelling as an antidote to the dehumanization this vision entails. It is precisely in this space of dwelling where Orwell locates life, sex, humanity; in that desert of concrete and mechanical efficiency he left an oasis in the form of the antique shop, where memory and personal connections are able to thrive. However, this resistance and utopian hope is not allowed to continue, and the abrupt termination of such hope accounts for the utter pessimism of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Moylan points out that "a structural counter-narrative suggests itself in the story of Winston and Julia. But the dominant narrative of their utter defeat—especially in the Room 101 torture scene—is so total that no possibility of resistance exists by the end of the plot" (161). Yet another pessimistic point in an already

pessimistic book is that this haven, along with the semblance of freedom and self-recognition that was afforded to Winston by virtue of his nostalgia is ultimately not allowed to come to fruition, as Mr Charrington's antique shop and the room above it are complicit in the oppressive regime from which they only seemingly provided an escape. The room upstairs is fitted with covert surveillance devices which ultimately compromise Winston and Julia. Therefore, this haven that at first held the promise of existing outside Oceania's power structure turned out to be securely embedded within the state apparatus and that is how this shop, which initially represented an antithesis to Oceania, in fact co-exists within its rules.

Oceania offers Winston little more than a false promise not only of security but also of identity. Identity is intentional, always focused at something outside itself. There is therefore no fundamental difference whether this identity is constructed in relation to a community based on a logocentric Big Brother or to a nostalgic version of a nonexistent past that nonetheless holds sway over the imagination of the subject. Orwell's dystopia is predicated in part on the omnipresence of authority oppressively and constantly looming over every inhabitant. This relation to absolute authority along with an emphasis on the erasure of history constitutes the intersection where architectural utopianism and dystopian literature meet. These two impulses are connected, as the impulse towards universals entails a rejection of history, which in effect uproots its inhabitants, thus obliterating in its wake the possibility of "dwelling".

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