

The Appendix Theory:

Paratextual Perspectives in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Gerry Canavan was rereading *The Handmaid's Tale* on his Kindle app, when Amazon made the editorial decision to skip the 'Historical Notes' and move straight to 'rate this book'. The postface was simply ignored, as it is in both television adaptations, 'as if the "Historical Notes" were mere appendix, or perhaps not even properly part of the book at all.'¹ Canavan is fascinated by the 'Historical Notes', which he claims are 'Atwood's riff on "The Principles of Newspeak" appendix in George Orwell's 1984.' In the 'Historical Notes', the reader does not discover Offred's fate, except that she escaped long enough to record her story on audiotape. '*The Handmaid's Tale* has been, all along, a novel-within-a-novel; what we have been reading all along is Offred's testimony as later published by Pieixoto and his collaborator in this post-Gilead future.'²

The 'mere appendix' in *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* becomes a central feature in the 2013 stage adaptation of the novel by Robert Icke and Duncan MacMillan, the first dramatized version to include the 'Appendix'. In the Foreword to the published play, they ask, 'if this Appendix has been written by someone who has read the novel from the future and appended these historical comments on the language, what is the novel in their world?'³ Similar to Canavan's thoughts on the 'Historical Notes', it has been suggested by Dorian Lynskey that Winston's story is 'a text within the world of the novel'⁴ and that the narrator of the story is the unidentified author of the footnote in the first chapter, which directs the reader to the 'Appendix' at the end:

¹ Gerry Canavan, 'For The Purposes Of Education As Well As Recreation: Historical Notes On "The Handmaid's Tale (Special Edition)"', *Los Angeles Review Of Books* (2018) <<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/purposes-education-well-recreation-historical-notes-handmaids-tale-special-edition/>> [accessed 16 December 2021]>

² Ibid.

³ Robert Icke and Duncan Macmillan, 'Foreword: Appendix', in George Orwell, *1984*, adapted by Robert Icke and Duncan Macmillan (London: Oberon Books, 2013).

⁴ Dorian Lynskey, *The Ministry Of Truth: A Biography Of George Orwell's 1984*, Kindle Edition (London: Pan Macmillan, 2021), p. 107.

‘*Newspeak was the official language of Oceania. For an account of its structure and etymology see Appendix.’⁵ The significance of the ‘Appendix’, according to Lynskey, is that it shows that Ingsoc did not endure for ever, and Winston’s story and his diary survived to document the period. Lynskey’s ‘Appendix Theory’ transforms the text into a historical document or cultural artifact, as is the case with the ‘Historical Notes’ in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, and ‘raises some pressing questions: Who wrote it, when, and for whom?’⁶

Margaret Atwood’s ‘Historical Notes’ and George Orwell’s ‘Appendix’ can be considered as paratexts, which are (as described in the paratext, the publisher’s jacket copy, to Gérard Genette’s book on the subject) ‘liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and reader.’⁷ The paratext can either stand outside the text, but within the physical body of a bound book (or digital limits of the electronic printed or audio edition), such as a preface, or extend outside these spatial limits to include interviews with the author, book reviews, and stretch as far as the social media chatter which attaches itself to literary culture in our day and age.

The rhematic intertitles ‘Historical Notes’ and ‘Appendix’ are terms generally used in works of non-fiction and fall into line with other generic headings such as ‘chapter’ or ‘preface’. Both seem out of place in the literary context; both are fiction masquerading as fact⁸, and both serve to place the stories of Winston and Offred in a historical context outside the dystopian societies they describe. By using the format of an essay to describe Newspeak and the conference

⁵ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 6.

⁶ Lynskey, *The Ministry Of Truth: A Biography Of George Orwell’s 1984*, p. 107-8.

⁷ Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds Of Interpretation*, translated by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Some examples of paratexts include titles, prefaces, chapter headings, acknowledgments, epigraphs, and indexes.

⁸ According to Genette’s system, these would be classed as *fictional actorial* paratexts as they are being presented by a fictional character rather than a ‘real’ person such as an editor or the author. In the case of the ‘Appendix’, however, it could be argued that the paratext is *fictional allographic* as it gives the impression that it is written by an editor or historian. As the status and identity of the author-narrator is unknown, this labelling is open to discussion.

proceedings as the 'Historical Notes', and placing them in the form of appendices, the postface is afforded a more documentary value. These imply that the societies depicted did not last, which, according to Atwood, means that the novels end on an optimistic note. The framing of the narrative in this way, says Atwood, is common in the dystopian novel, 'like once upon a time all these horrible things happened, but now we're looking back at them from the future. And in fact, *The Handmaid's Tale* ends that way as well.' She continues, 'sometimes people like closure, but optimism is relative. What I mean is that we have not killed off absolutely everybody - that's an optimistic ending. Glimmers are good. Happily-ever-after we don't believe anymore, but we can live with glimmers.'⁹

Gérard Genette's theory concerning paratexts deals in the main with the printed text, but since his work was published in translation in 1980, paratextual studies have been extended to other media such as film, television, and digital media such as the audiobook. This approach has also been adopted for manuscripts. Giovanni Ciotti and Lin Hang class paratexts concerned with a manuscript as texts in their own right that 'mirror the activities of everyone involved in the production, transmission, dissemination and reception of the manuscript and its content: authors, editors, scribes, artisans, commentators, readers, sellers, owners and so on.' The paratexts 'give voice to the history of every single manuscript',¹⁰ as is the case with the 'Historical Notes'. The conference proceedings documented in these notes are a paratext of the 'soi-disant manuscript',¹¹ and record the reconstruction work of the two professors Wade and Pieixoto. The paratext serves therefore not only as a commentary on the manuscript but shows

⁹ Jesse Kinos-Goodin, 'We're all reading 1984 wrong, according to Margaret Atwood', *CBC Radio*, 9 May 2017 < <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/q/blog/we-re-all-reading-1984-wrong-according-to-margaret-atwood-1.4105314> > [accessed 16 December 2021].

¹⁰ Giovanni Ciotti and Lin Hang, 'Preface' in *Tracing Manuscripts in Time and Space through Paratexts* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), pp. vii – viii.

¹¹ Margaret Atwood, 'Historical Notes' in *The Handmaid's Tale* (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 308. 'I say *soi-disant* because what we have before us is not the item in its original form.' The manuscript is constructed from the audio cassette recordings according to the opinion of the two professors Wade and Pieixoto.

the historical and cultural conditions in which this work was carried out, exposing attitudes current at that time, such as the sexism of the male professors as well as the post-Gilead restoration of women in the higher echelons of academia. This paratextual item can itself be subject to scrutiny in future studies, with the paratext itself becoming the historical artifact.

In addition to their obvious purpose in marketing a text, Genette puts forward the argument that paratextual elements, such as the title of a book, perform a literary function.¹² The phrase ‘*The Handmaid’s Tale*’ has the intention of acting as a title to the text, but this intention is pushed into the background by its denotation and connotation. In its first order or literal sense, ‘*The Handmaid’s Tale*’ denotes a story about a handmaid. The reader, calling on their subjective knowledge of the world, adds a layer of connotation (or value¹³) to the title. It is within the layer of connotation, and where these feelings lead, that the initial reader response to the text is conceived. In the words of John Sturrock, ‘literary bananas contain meanings not carbohydrates.’¹⁴ The word ‘tale’ denotes ‘a fictitious or true narrative or story, especially one that is imaginatively recounted.’¹⁵ The word ‘handmaid’ denotes a female servant, and the word

¹² The title of a text is directed at the reader - that is, the type of reader the author or publisher intends to target or persuade to read or purchase the book - and assists to ‘*present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to make present, to ensure the text’s presence in the world, its “reception” and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book.’ (Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 1.) The title, therefore, can carry cultural weight and create conversation before the book is even opened or purchased.

¹³ Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 93.

¹⁴ John Sturrock, ‘Roland Barthes: A Profile’, *The New Review*, 1.2 (1974), pp. 13-21(p. 16).

‘Connotation, as Barthes himself exploits it, is a second system of meaning superimposed on a first.’

¹⁵ Definition from: <<https://www.lexico.com/definition/tale>>.

The connotations associated to words and phrases change with time. The use of ‘tale’ for utopian adventures harks back to the traveller’s tale or the philosophical tale and signifies a fabulous (invented) story. Its second meaning, according to Samuel Johnson’s dictionary of 1755, is the telling of a secret, which fits rather well with the utopian literature of faraway lands and mysterious peoples, places no one could ever find again. However, Samuel Johnson chose the word ‘history’ over ‘tale’ for *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia*, which removed the connotation of the invented, ‘petty’ account (tale), to a story that is a narration of ‘facts and events delivered with dignity’ (history).

Definitions according to: Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary Of The English Language*, (1755) <<https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/1755/>> [Accessed 6 December 2021].

‘maid’ suggests a young, unmarried woman, as well as being rather antiquated. So, if the reader had to hazard a guess, they could predict that the main character is probably a young, female servant and this is her ‘story’ (what happens in her life), a story probably set in the past.¹⁶ But, in effect, as the narrative develops so does the interpretation of the title. We quickly learn that the story is not set in the past, but in a near future within reaching distance of a past familiar to the reader:

We slept in what had once been the gymnasium. The floor was of varnished wood, with stripes and circles painted on it, for the games that were formally played there; the hoops for the basketball nets were still in place, though the nets were gone.¹⁷

The title therefore becomes disturbing, its meaning shifts into something altogether less innocent.

Most readers would immediately establish a mental association with the fairy tale.¹⁸ Such folk tales stem from the oral tradition of storytelling, and we have, amongst others, the Brothers Grimm to thank for their preservation of them. Even such a simple thought as this reveals another layer of connotation, especially if we reconsider the title after reading the ‘Historical Notes’ which feature at the end of the book. Firstly, Offred’s story, like the fairy tale, is being passed on orally, recorded onto audio tape at some point after the event. Secondly, the oral account has been edited into the version we discover in the text preceding the ‘Historical Notes’. Jack Zipes describes the motivation of the Brothers Grimm as ‘a pronounced romantic

Much the same could be said of Thomas More’s *Utopia*. With the Latin and Greek wordplay involved (utopia meaning both *good place* and *no place*) his intended audience were educated men. Subsequently, however, the word has entered the English language and has even founded a genre. *Utopia* has become a paratextual element which adds value to utopian literature. Similar to this, in my view, is the repackaging of texts following television or film adaptations. These adaptations become part of the paratextual landscape of a text and influence, for better or worse, the reader’s response to the original text.

¹⁶ Jack Zipes, ‘Introduction: Rediscovering The Original Tales Of The Brothers Grimm’, in *The Original Folk And Fairy Tales Of The Brothers Grimm: The Complete First Edition*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. xxv.

¹⁷ Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale* (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 9.

¹⁸ The fairy tale acts as a ‘cultural code’, acting as a shorthand to invoke certain meanings. These mental leaps were investigated by Roland Barthes in his *S/Z* (1973) and *Mythologies* (1983).

urge to excavate and preserve German cultural contributions made by the common people before the stories became extinct.' Much like Pieixoto and the stories of Gilead, if we are being generous. Like Pieixoto, the Grimm Brothers had to make editorial decisions. Zipes writes that, although 'fidelity to the words and features of the tales was a guiding principle', the Brothers Grimm 'were compelled to make changes because many of the narratives were rough and incomplete.'¹⁹ Zipes also reminds us that the original tales were edited seven times, and the 1857 edition differed greatly in style to the first edition of the tales. As well as the 'difficulties posed by accent, obscure referents, and archaisms,'²⁰ Pieixoto has had to make decisions whilst transcribing Offred's accounts. The audio cassettes did not come with any instructions about how they should be reconstituted into a finished text. Any editorial decisions made by a third party may not be separable from bias:

Thus it was up to Professor Wade and myself to arrange the blocks of speech in the order in which they appeared to go; but, as I have said elsewhere, all such arrangements are based on some guesswork and are to be regarded as approximate, pending further research.²¹

Of course, there is no explicit link between the works of the Brothers Grimm and Atwood's tale; but an awareness of what we consider to be a fairy tale raises the following questions: How true is Offred's account? How embellished is it? How much has she invented? How has the transcription and editing of the account changed its authenticity? Although he seems to agree that the tapes are genuine, Pieixoto implies that Offred's recollections are tainted by the passing of time. He also suggests that the account is grounded in emotional responses - 'it has a whiff of emotion recollected'²² - which casts doubt on Offred's reliability as a narrator. The

¹⁹ Zipes, *The Complete First Edition, The Original Folk And Fairy Tales Of The Brothers Grimm*, p. xxviii.

²⁰ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.310.

²¹ Ibid. p. 310.

I would argue that Pieixoto very clearly demonstrates a sexist bias in his comments towards his female colleagues in comments such as: 'She appears to have been an educated woman, insofar as a graduate of any North American college of the time may be said to have been educated.' (p. 311) and 'However, we must be grateful for any crumbs the Goddess of History has designed to vouchsafe us.' (p. 319)

²² Ibid. p. 311.

‘Historical Notes’ cause the reader to evaluate the title retrospectively, and so the word ‘tale’ takes on a new connotation, that of the tale being a lie, as in ‘telling tales’ or an exaggeration, as in ‘spinning a yarn.’

The reader’s game of discovery can be curtailed by paratexts. Allographical paratexts by critics offer interpretations with which one can agree or disagree, but authorial commentary can seem quite definitive. The preface to the 2017 audio book edition contains Atwood’s reasons for choosing the title *The Handmaid’s Tale*:

At some time during the writing, the novel’s name changed to *The Handmaid’s Tale*, partly in honour of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, but partly also in reference to fairy tales and folk tales. The story told by the central character partakes, for later or remote listeners, of the unbelievable, the fantastic, as do the stories told by those who have survived earth-shattering events.²³

Readers have always sought to discover the authorial intentions behind novels through paratexts²⁴ ever since reading gained popularity as a leisure pastime in the eighteenth century. John Brewer records how the new professional status of authors allowed a writer to explain how his works should be interpreted. As in the case of Samuel Johnson, ‘the creative author was inclined to become the historical critic, concerned to reveal literary tradition in order to establish his own place in literary history.’²⁵ According to Roland Barthes, print culture was (at the time of publishing in 1977, and, I would argue, even today) ‘tyrannically centred on the

²³Margaret Atwood, ‘Afterword’ in *The Handmaid’s Tale: Exclusive Bonus Content*, (Audible Studios, 2019), 5m 45s.

According to Genette (*Paratexts*, pp. 116 -293), a preface can be placed before or after the text and need not necessarily be published at the same time as the novel. In this case, the preface is titled ‘Afterword’. This is an example of a preface which has been added to show the current state of thinking, in the light of the popular television adaptation of the book. The question of what is to be gained, and equally, what is to be lost by such additions fall within the complex remit of the editor, as do choices as to the inclusion and location of the prefaces.

²⁴ ‘The *author* still reigns in histories of literature, biographies of writers, interviews, magazines, as in the very consciousness of men of letters anxious to unite their person and their work through diaries and memoirs.’ Roland Barthes, ‘The Death Of The Author’ in *Image Music Text, Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath* (New York: The Noonday Press 1977), p. 143.

²⁵ John Brewer, *The Pleasures Of The Imagination, English Culture In The Eighteenth Century* (London: Harper Collins 1997), p. 151.

author'.²⁶ Atwood answers this demand for authorial input, but upholds that any story implies a reader, and she makes it clear which kind of reader she prefers.²⁷ One type is the academic reader, as demonstrated by Pieixoto in the 'Historical Notes', and the other is the 'real reader', who hears the voice of Offred and sees it as the voice of hope. It seems that Atwood places great faith in the 'real reader' rather than the academic, who she depicts, through Pieixoto, as lacking in empathy. In the preface, Atwood grants the reader the right to give Offred a name, the name of June, which appears at the beginning of the novel, although it was not her authorial intention. Perhaps she agrees with Barthes, that 'the reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination.'²⁸

The footnote which signals the existence of the 'Appendix' in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is another example of authorial commentary, but in this case the footnote *intrudes* upon the reading of the text. According to Paul Dawson, authorial intrusion 'is a loose umbrella term encompassing any type of narratorial statement that foregrounds the storyteller and appears supplementary to the report of the story.'²⁹ A footnote seems out of place in this context, as this kind of authorial comment is more commonly found in a work of non-fiction, and so acts to legitimise the 'Appendix.' Dawson's theory is working inversely in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, drawing the reader's attention to the possibility that this world existed in history, rather than drawing attention to the 'fictionality' of the work.'³⁰

The addressee of the footnote is undoubtedly the reader. Shari Benstock has explored the role of footnotes in fiction, referring, as does Genette, to *Tristram Shandy* and *Tom Jones* as rare

²⁶ Barthes, 'The Death Of The Author', p. 143.

²⁷ Margaret Atwood, 'Afterword' in *The Handmaid's Tale: Exclusive Bonus Content*.

²⁸ Barthes, 'The Death Of The Author', p. 148.

²⁹ Paul Dawson, 'From Digressions to Intrusions: Authorial Commentary in the Novel', *Studies in the Novel*, 48.2 (2016), 145-167 (p. 150) <doi:10.1353/sdn.2016.0025>.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 150.

examples of the practice.³¹ It is possible to apply her thinking to our solitary footnote in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in particular the way in which the text ‘calls attention to itself as text, to its existence as printed matter, to its writerly quality, and to its scripted authority; after all, its narrator is in the process of writing a novel that is, presumably, the novel we are reading.’³²

The first question is, what kind of text is this I am reading? What started out as a novel has shifted into something else, but the reader is left puzzled as to how it should be classified. A novel does not usually contain appended historical notes, and if it does, they are usually factual not fictional. The same pairing of story and appendix occurs in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, of course, although the omission of a footnote makes for a less troublesome transition between the two. There is also no doubt as to the relationship between the first text and the ‘Historical Notes.’³³ Footnotes are, as Genette points out, ‘optional’ and may be ignored.³⁴ Without the footnote, it could be argued that the ‘Appendix’ and Winston’s story are two separate entities.³⁵ But to do so, argues Richard K. Sanderson, would be to overlook the fact that the author-narrator of the ‘Appendix’ ‘not only knows who Winston Smith is but he also makes no effort to identify the name further for us: that is, he presupposes our familiarity with Winston.’³⁶ In order to make sense of the ‘Appendix’ we need to have read Winston’s story, or at least arrived at page six,³⁷ as the footnote appears with the first Newspeak word ‘Minitrue.’ Considering the

³¹ Shari Benstock, ‘At the Margin of Discourse: Footnotes in the Fictional Text’, *PMLA*, 98 (1983), 204-25 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/462046>>.

³² Benstock, ‘At the Margin of Discourse: Footnotes in the Fictional Text’, p. 208.

³³ Genette proposes that this type of authorial footnote appears in fictional texts ‘whose fictionality is very “impure,” very conspicuous for its historical references or sometimes for its philosophical reflections: novels or poems whose notes for the most part bear precisely on the nonfictional aspect of the narrative.’ (p. 332.)

³⁴ Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 324.

³⁵ The footnote is omitted in the audio book version: George Orwell, *Orwell Collection: Animal Farm & 1984* (Audible Studios, 2021). The footnote should appear in chapter one at 6m 39s to be faithful to the written text.

³⁶ Richard K. Sanderson, ‘The Two Narrators And Happy Ending Of “Nineteen Eighty-Four”’, *Modern Fiction Studies*, 34.4 (1988), 587–95 (p. 589) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/26283509>> [accessed 1 January 2022].

³⁷ In the cited edition.

implications of assigning the footnote to this segment of the text may be the key to understanding its significance, as the reach of a footnote is localized to the text to which it is appended. Orwell has attached the footnote to the 'Ministry of Truth', and in doing so disturbed the flow of the text at this point. Orwell is pointing a big arrow at the word 'truth', highlighting that the Ministry is the very opposite of what its name suggests. Winston's job at Minitrue was to rewrite, or 'unwrite' historical newspaper reports to reflect the current position of the Party. As the Ministry, so we are told on the same page, also 'concerned itself with news, entertainment, education and fine arts,'³⁸ it seems that Orwell places the same doubts upon the authenticity of Literature, and in doing so he makes us doubt the authority of the very text we are reading.

Much of the theorizing around the 'Appendix' centres on the use of the past tense to evidence the fall of Big Brother and the failure of the Newspeak project. 'The answer may lie in simple grammar,' claims Thomas Pynchon.³⁹ The 'Principles of Newspeak' is written 'consistently in the past tense, as if to suggest some later piece of history.' Pynchon claims that this, along with the fact that 'our own pre-Newspeak language' is used to write the essay, is some kind of proof that the 'ancient humanistic ways of thinking inherent in standard English have persisted, survived and ultimately prevailed,' which implies that the old 'social and moral order it speaks for' has been restored.⁴⁰ The 'Appendix' signals the presence of a second author-narrator, one which sees fit to intrude upon Winston's story with the footnote. The inclusion of the pseudo-editorial note joining the two adds another layer and complicates the structure of the text, as the (fictional) author of the 'Appendix' takes on 'a highly unsettling type of authority - the authority not of the author but of his subject, who is himself often an author.'⁴¹ Sanderson is

³⁸ Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p. 6.

³⁹ Thomas Pynchon, Afterword to Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p. 369.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 339. In terms of categorizing the footnote within Genette's proposed system, pseudo-editorial seems to be the best fit, as it is not written by an 'authentic' editor or the 'authentic'

unable to establish a cut and dried answer to the narrator problem, but admits that the ‘paradoxical identity of this "second" narrator makes it impossible to establish the authority of the ‘Appendix’ and therefore renders untrustworthy the essay’s clues to the future downfall of Big Brother,’⁴² despite the hopeful stance taken up by Atwood, Lynskey and Pynchon.

Lorraine Saunders disagrees with Icke and MacMillan that the ‘Appendix’ ‘has been written by someone who has read the novel from the future and appended these historical comments on the language.’⁴³ She sees no future society that has reverted to the *old ways* and the *old language*, only a society linguistically grounded in Orwell’s England. ‘If one examines the syntax of the Appendix more thoroughly, it becomes clear that it could only have been written by someone situated firmly in 1948, a person who has been able merely to glimpse into the future of 1984, like a Wellsian time-traveller.’⁴⁴ Saunders puts forward that the author of the ‘Appendix’ ‘is surely Orwell and his readers of 1949,’ as the narrator of the ‘Appendix’ uses the adverbial phrase ‘already possess’, which would not have been used in a post 1984 future’. As this is written in the present tense, it suggests that Newspeak is being compared to the standard English of Orwell’s present.⁴⁵ Saunders concludes that neither the reader or writer of

author. But as Genette concludes, a note can belong to one category or lie between two, which ‘perfectly illustrates this indefiniteness and this slipperiness.’ (p. 343.) Pseudo-editorial notes will doubtless be added to Offred’s tale by Pieixoto and Wade, once published.

⁴² Sanderson, ‘The Two Narrators And Happy Ending Of “Nineteen Eighty-Four”’, p. 588.

⁴³ Icke and Macmillan, ‘Foreword: Appendix’, in George Orwell, *1984*.

⁴⁴ Lorraine Saunders, *The Unsung Artistry Of George Orwell: The Novels From Burmese Days To Nineteen Eighty-Four*, (Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), p. 137.

<<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bham/detail.action?docID=4426127>> [accessed 29 December 2021].

⁴⁵ The Oldspeak of the future would not resemble the Standard English of post-war Britain. Newspeak was partially introduced and ‘it gained ground steadily, all Party members tending to use Newspeak words and grammatical constructions more and more in their everyday speech’ (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p. 337). Even if the new, imposed language didn’t make it past the post, there would be linguistic evidence of its presence and influence, just as in English we have linguistic evidence of the languages of the Roman, Anglo-Saxon or Norman invaders, and absorb words from American English (and other languages) through the invasion of mass-media culture. An author from a post Ingsoc future would be unable to write in ‘forties Oldspeak unless, like Winston using the Newspeak dictionary to translate reports *into* Newspeak, they used an edition of a dictionary from the time.

the 'Appendix' are in a position to determine the outcome, but believes that Orwell lays the future in the hands of the reader.⁴⁶

I agree with Saunders that the author of the 'Appendix' is drawing their intended audience into the discussion by using 'we', and through their direct, present tense comparison of 'their English' and 'Newspeak'. I do not agree, however, that Orwell places himself directly in this text as narrator, mainly because, stylistically, he breaks so many of his own rules. Even a cursory analysis of the discourse picks up on the repeated use of the passive tense.⁴⁷ Taking Orwell's strength of feeling on the matter,⁴⁸ this must be deliberate game play. My 'Appendix Theory' is that the author-narrator of both texts is the same person and that both texts were written at the same time. By presenting the 'Appendix' in a documentary style, Orwell is providing a piece of pseudo-historical evidence that authenticates Winston's story. The essay seems official and plausible as it has cognitive links with non-fiction texts, particularly as it

⁴⁶ Saunders, 'The Unsung Artistry Of George Orwell', p. 137.

⁴⁷ The use the passive voice combined with the past perfect tense and modal verbs (such as could) in the 'Appendix' create deliberate abstraction and ambiguity. 'It was expected that Newspeak would have finally superseded Oldspeak (or Standard English, as we should call it) by about the year 2050.' (p. 337.) 'It was chiefly in order to allow time for the preliminary work of translation that the final adoption of newspeak had been fixed for so late a date of 2050.' (p. 350.) I agree with Saunders that the language complicates the temporal placing of this text and an in-depth linguistic analysis of the twists and turns created by Orwell's grammatical choices could give rise to some playful alternative readings of the 'Appendix'. For example, 'had been' suggests that the end-date for Newspeak was set for 2050, but this could refer to the **event** of 'setting the date', not to the end of the project. The planning and policy around its completion happened in the past, but the project is still ongoing. Furthermore, rather than implying that the Newspeak project was abandoned because the 'Appendix' was written in Oldspeak, I put forward that the intended audience of the 'Appendix', and indeed Winston's story, is the 'Proles', as they are the only people who used Oldspeak exclusively. This suggests that the regime is strengthening and is intending to extend the Newspeak project to the whole of society rather than just for Party members and those working for the Party. Otherwise, why concentrate solely on Newspeak and not comment on any other aspect of the regime? In this reading the 'Appendix' becomes a clever piece of Ingsoc propaganda. However, this is for another essay.

⁴⁸ See George Orwell, 'Politics And The English Language', *The Orwell Foundation*, (2022).

<<https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/politics-and-the-english-language/>> [accessed 9 December 2021]. First published 1946.

'Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step toward political regeneration'.

In the 'Appendix', Orwell deliberately writes in a style which is against his own advice. In particular the rule to 'never use the passive where you can use the active'.

carries a scientific title, 'The Principles of Newspeak'.⁴⁹ On the other hand, it is written in a style which Orwell has loudly and publicly denounced and there is no author, so its subjectivity, objectivity or scholarly value cannot be determined.⁵⁰

Orwell was interested in awakening public engagement in politics. 'Orwell was clear-eyed enough to know that one can't always get to the objective truth but that if one doesn't at least accept that such a thing exists, then all bets are off,'⁵¹ Lynskey points out. Julia, he continues, 'represents a third way to live under Ingsoc. O'Brien claims there is no such thing as objective truth, Winston insists there is; Julia maintains that *it doesn't matter*.' ⁵² Julia has said things she doesn't believe so many times she now doesn't really believe anything or care anymore, even falling asleep when Winston reads to her from Goldstein's book. ⁵³ Reading or ignoring the footnote, therefore, can be seen as synonymous with actively seeking to engage with what is happening in your society or remaining passive and indifferent.

Reading Orwell's 1944 essay 'Propaganda and Demotic Speech', I don't believe that Orwell is laying the blame entirely on the public for their passivity. Several of Orwell's essays explicitly write about language and how it can be exploited for political means, and, in

⁴⁹ Liza Zunshine, 'Eighteenth-Century Print Culture And The "Truth" Of Fictional Narrative', *Philosophy and Literature*, 25.2, (2001), 215-232 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/phl.2001.0038>>.

Liza Sunshine is interested in how we decide if a narrative is 'true', that is to say whether it is to be labelled as 'fact' or 'fiction'. 'In many respects, this preoccupation is counterproductive: the most "fantastic" story contains a number of contingently useful "truths" about the world, whereas the most "factual" narrative manipulates facts by virtue of being a narrative or a subjective arrangement of information. Still, we persevere in wanting to put the label "fiction" or "nonfiction" onto any story that comes our way.' (p. 216.). Zunshine notes that this problem comes to the fore when 'a new medium is entering a culture and the cues needed to evaluate (however subconsciously and subjectively) the "truth" of narratives transmitted through this medium appear to be in flux, the proliferation of those hard-to-classify narratives leaves people deeply anxious, grasping for "labels" and uncertain about the new rules of "labelling."' Examples of this would be the development of the novel in the eighteenth century, the invention of the internet at the end of the twentieth and the rise in social media in the twenty-first. The propaganda media of wartime Britain would also provoke, in my opinion, a similar anxiety.

⁵⁰ 'The author's scholarly credentials will be prominently displayed.' Zunshine, 'Eighteenth-Century Print Culture And The "Truth" of Fictional Narrative', p. 222. This extratextual cue is missing so casts doubt on the 'truth value' of the text.

⁵¹ Lynskey, *The Ministry Of Truth: A Biography Of George Orwell's 1984*, p. 30.

⁵² Ibid. p. 186.

⁵³ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p. 244.

particular, how the poor language choices (as he demonstrates in the ‘Appendix’) cause the intended audience to ‘zone out’. In ‘Propaganda and Demotic Speech’, Orwell wrote: ‘And it is a nightly experience in any pub to see broadcast speeches and news bulletins make no impression on the average listener, because they are uttered in stilted bookish language and, incidentally, in an upper-class accent.’⁵⁴ In the same essay, he tells of observing this very behaviour amongst working class men in a pub, who seemingly ignored the news bulletins until the announcer dropped into spoken English. ‘Promptly you could see ears being pricked up: it was ordinary language, so it got across.’⁵⁵ Orwell claims that ‘the main weakness of propagandists and popularisers is their failure to notice that spoken and written English are two different things.’⁵⁶ The public would be more in tune with events if it was conveyed in clearer language.

Orwell’s comments in ‘Propaganda and Demotic Speech’ go some way to explain why *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is made up of two stylistically opposing texts which essentially carry the same message. In Winston’s story we have a subjective account, which, although written in the third person, is entirely presented from Winston’s point of view. The second text is documentary and scholarly in style. The use of narrative as a vehicle for societal change reaches back to the origins of utopian writing; both Plato and More imagined alternative societies and both chose to present these ideas in the form of fiction.⁵⁷ Orwell’s message is present in both texts but is spelled out more clearly in Winston’s story, in a format more likely to be accessed by a wider range of people. ‘English literature, like other literatures, is full of battle-poems, but it is worth noticing that the ones that have won for themselves a kind of popularity are always

⁵⁴ George Orwell, ‘Propaganda And Demotic Speech’, in *All Art Is Propaganda*, ed. by George Packer (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008), p.223-231.

⁵⁵ Orwell, ‘Propaganda And Demotic Speech’.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Fátima Vieira, ‘The Concept Of Utopia’ in *The Cambridge Companion To Utopian Literature*, ed. by Gregory Claeys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 5.

a tale of disasters and retreats.’⁵⁸ Orwell recognised that the British people prefer to back the underdog - and created Winston Smith.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is at once a cautionary tale and doublethink in action. By portraying something that has happened to an ordinary person like Winston, Orwell warns against a potential future where mindless belief in everything the State publishes or decrees leads to propaganda becoming the norm over and above ‘objective truth.’ The Party, as we are reminded by O’Brien, controls all records and therefore controls the past:

“Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes, and in any case soon perishes: only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal. Whatever the party holds to be truth, is truth. It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party.”⁵⁹

What is clear to Sanderson is that the footnote’s ‘implied promise of verification’ and the ‘Appendix’ bewilder, confuse, and ultimately disappoint the reader. However, Sanderson concludes, what the reader does take away from the text is an important insight into Winston’s world (and I would argue a warning about their own), namely ‘what it might be like to inhabit a world in which the authenticity (never mind the accuracy or objectivity) of all documents is in doubt, in which documents are almost dreamlike, unfixed in time, infused with self-contradiction, at once recognizable and cryptic.’⁶⁰

⁵⁸ George Orwell, ‘The Lion And The Unicorn: Socialism And The English Genius’, *The Orwell Foundation*, (2022).

<<https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/the-lion-and-the-unicorn-socialism-and-the-english-genius/>>[accessed 9 December 2021].

First published in 1941.

⁵⁹George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, pp. 280-1. O’Brien says: ‘You are here because you have failed in humility, self-discipline’ and ‘You preferred to be a ‘lunatic, a minority of one.’

It is worth comparing these pages to Orwell’s words in the essay ‘The Prevention of Literature,’ (1946) in which he writes: ‘The enemies of intellectual liberty always try to present their case as a plea for discipline versus individualism. The issue truth-versus-untruth is as far as possible kept in the background. Although the point of emphasis may vary, the writer who refuses to sell his opinions is always branded as a mere *egoist*.’

George Orwell, ‘The Prevention of Literature’, *The Orwell Foundation*, (2022).

<<https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/the-prevention-of-literature/>> [accessed 16 December 2021].

⁶⁰ Sanderson, ‘The Two Narrators And Happy Ending Of “Nineteen Eighty-Four”’, p. 594.