

## THE MAN WHO ATE A GOOSE AND 1984: A CRITICAL STUDY OF TWO PLAYS ON TOTALITARIAN PRACTICES

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper considers the investigation of totalitarian practices dealt with in two contemporary plays, The Man Who Ate a Goose (1985) and 1984 (2013). Written and staged in two different cultures, both plays present ongoing strategies and commands imposed on people depriving them of privacy and free will. Whatever the span of time between the two plays, characters depicted seem to share common features. This study seeks to explore how real and good are those characters in their strife to conform to the despotic tyranny. Bewildered by the question of the right action, both Saad and Winston learn to accommodate with the obligatory illogical commands. If not acquitted by the law, the individual is led into inconsistency of moral conduct. Restrictions on dream and thought are rendered through detention and torture. George Orwell's 1984 seems to open new paths for dramatists and theatre practitioners in the world then and now.*

**KEYWORDS:** Totalitarianism, Morality, Privacy, Free Will, Torture

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### INTRODUCTION

It was George Orwell who revealed to a global audience how easy it is to manipulate people, how fragile our individuality can be, and how complete control of media and other technology can give rise to totalitarianism. Since *1984*, the novel, tyrannical control over people's life has been a field of research to those occupied with human welfare. It has been argued recently in the interview-based documentary "Terms and

Conditions May Apply" depicting how "recording everything we do"

violates the individual's privacy world-wide. ([www.netflix.com/title/70279201](http://www.netflix.com/title/70279201))

The increasing erosion of privacy has been demonstrated by playwrights despairingly. Among those plays are *The Man Who Ate a Goose*

(1985) by Gamal Abdel Maksoud and *1984* (2013) by co-authors, Robert Icke and Duncan Macmillan. *Goose* has been staged at Taliaa Theatre in

Egypt while *1984* has been performed at Almeida Theatre in London and Broadway theatre in New York. The social and cultural context differ in plays dealing with similar human claim for free will in dream and thought.

Gamal Abdel maksoud is a playwright who is argued to have been living the period of totalitarian rule in Egypt since "the 1952 revolution". He declares that it is his duty as "one of the sons of the nation" to defy through his plays "any deviation he sees in his nation," especially when suppression rules, life turns into a joke and unfair agony. (Salman: p.15)

After several previews in London, the staged adaptation of George Orwell's *1984* is among those plays performed in Almeida Theatre where the target is "to investigate the world" through "bold new work that asks big questions: of plays, of theatre and how we live" in order to "interrogate the present, dig up the past and imagine the future." (Kindle Locations, 1649)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Lajos Egri in *The Art of Dramatic Writing: Its Basis in the Creative Interpretation of Human Motives*. (2008) observes that in the play "there must be something to generate tension, something to create complication" and the most significant dramatic element is the "human character in all its infinite ramifications and dialectical contradictions." Egri quotes several examples in renown plays where the human character is the premise rendering the three dimensions of "physiology, sociology and psychology." (2008: 16, 53)

The concern with the character continues with John Turby, the scriptwriter, in his argument of the theme. He considers the theme in the moral vision built through what the "characters do in the plot" in order to reach a goal. The hero proceeds through "a moral predicament exploring the question of right action, and making a moral argument about how best to live." (Turby: 121) Moral argument in the theme is conveyed by showing not only the hero's pursuit of "his goal while competing with one or more opponents" but also what the hero "learns or fails to learn over the course of his struggle." (Turby: 123)

Clem Martini's *The Blunt Playwright: An Introduction to Playwriting* (2006) cherishes the variable and the unexpected in the field of playwriting so that the play makes its own way to the mainstream. Martini explains "blunt" as "plainspoken and abrupt" in a play which "presents a vision of life and draws from life." He observes the audience as "active participants" in a section entitled "But Something Else is Going On In The Theatre." (2006:4-16)

Syd Field focuses on dialogue to unveil "thoughts, feelings and events" entangled to develop the "dramatic action." (2003: 323-324) In totalitarian societies, dialogue may take different turns to maintain the dramatic depiction and reveal the implausible in the character's life.

In "HOW TO MAKE THE DUMB SPEAK? *Comic Strategies in "The Man who ate a Goose"* by Gamal Abdel Maksoud," Manneveld compares *Goose* to George Orwell's novel, *1984*, and highlights the influence of the "Stalin-era in the Soviet Union" on "the young Egyptian Socialist Republic" then. Manneveld believes that both the play and the novel build "this new society with absurdistic characteristics, foregrounding the on-logical and irrational aspects of life while showing the aimlessness of it all." In her article, Manneveld quotes the tragic comic undertones in *Goose*. (Manneveld: 2006: 3)

The concern with black comedy in *Goose* is carried out in "Black Comedy in Heller's *Catch-22* and Gamal Abdel Maksoud's *The Man Who Ate a Goose*" (2014). Salman Abdul Hamid argues that black comedy is adopted by writers "in reaction to their repressive systems' practices" showing how the individual has become trivial and insignificant in modern life with "feelings of disillusionment and hopelessness." (2014:16-25)

## Aim of the Study

This paper contends to investigate how totalitarian oppression is depicted in one Arabic and another Western play. I tend to explore those practices prevailing in two different regimes and their outcomes in the life of civilians. The study aims to highlight how tension and complication are generated proposing the moral argument which involve characters and audiences. Techniques of dialogue and narration integrated to dramatize tyrannical oppression will be underlined.

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, I tend to the comparative method in terms of characters' actions, narratives and reactions in the oppressive regimes. I opt to trace the regulating strategies and commands in despotic offices and parties. The discussion of affinities and discrepancies in the totalitarian practices brings to light the moral predicament imposed on individuals and on their attempts to live peacefully.

### Totalitarian Practices:

Both *Goose* and *1984* unfold totalitarian strategies practiced upon individuals leading them into perplexity and humiliation. In politics, totalitarianism is first thought of as to subject "the total nation" to the "same political goal." It sought to dominate organizations, establishments, unions and the media to establish party control. Consequently, the regimes resulted were extensively suppressing "individual liberty and ideological deviation from the official line." (*Encyclopedia of Politics*)

Totalitarianism in the social framework is argued to refer to supreme power coupled with the talent to "mobilize entire populations" to serve "an "ideology," through the ruling of "public and private behavior" by the means of "terror and acts of mass murder" employing refined techniques of "propaganda and surveillance." (*Encyclopedia of Social Problems*)

The totalitarian control over people's lives persists throughout the two plays where neither the ideology nor the political intent is conspicuous to people under constant inspection. Aspects of totalitarian behavior has been structured through "the selection of episodes and speeches" incorporated to govern the "spectator's attention, not as assertion of motto, but as self-evident truth and inevitable deduction" in the dramatic version. (Cole: 1982: 115)

Those incidents and narratives feature dynamic characters who pass through conflicts inciting "the audience's sympathies" and, yet, amend "its values." *Goose* and *1984* seek to present the individual's struggle within the confining and intimidating totalitarianism. (Styan: 1982: 226)

### Characterization:

According to Aristotle, characters should not only be conforming to reality, but should also be "good, appropriate" and "consistent." (Martini, 2006: 115) If characters are so real, can they be good and consistent living in societies ruled by ever-watching systems depriving privacy and free will? What type of characters will they be? How will they react to the dictates of the regime?

Invited by co-workers, in “a government office,” to join them in eating sandwiches, Saad, in *Goose*, responds spontaneously. He tells them in an apologetic tone the reason although he is the one who “wouldn’t open his heart to any” but “keep it all to himself. Never tries to bother a friend or a neighbor.” Those co-workers set the alert tone in the play when they warn

Muh’d who refers to the weather as “humid and nearly stifling.” Khamies and Ali, immediately reply “Shshsh . . . lower your voice . . . For God’s sake, stop it.” Their argument ends only when Muh’d submits and changes his words “All right. I was mistaken in my meteorological views. It’s in fact quite nice day today.” (*Goose*: 20)

Kamel and Shazli gain further significance by looking for “any fresh anti-government tales” straining their “ears hard enough” to “catch some.” Shazli is a skilful speaker who never misses “a political meeting” but he always boasts the “talent for addressing the masses,” holding “their attention even though” having “nothing to say”. (*Goose*: 23-4)

They mobilize Saad’s dream to serve their doubts when they misinterpret his words assuming that he means to say “that eating geese’s only possible in dreams” which is “an oblique way of protesting and galvanizing the hardpressed masses, who are deprived of goose meat, into action.” They involve themselves in giving further interpretations of the dream claiming that he might be “casting doubts on our ‘goose national product’ causing damage to the national front.” (*Goose*: 35)

Their alliance with the political forces under the name of secret service grants them power and authority. Ummu Hassan is the washerwoman who is hired by the regime to tell ill-reputed incidents against Saad. She excels in falsifying his actions. Accordingly she has been appointed “Head of the Culture Orientation Division in the Arab Socialist Union of Egypt.” (*Goose*: 99)

Stage directions give the physiological dimension in Saad who is introduced as a “(young man . . . looks troubled, turning round with an extreme sense of caution.)” The sociological side in Saad is declared when he apologizes to his workmates telling them that he feels full after seeing a dream of eating a whole “roast goose.” Yet, he shows great skill in changing the subject with the sudden arrival of Kamel who asks for a

private talk:

Saad: What about?

Kamel: Well, nothing serious. Just a little informal problem I wanted to ask your opinion about.

Saad: My . . . opinion? You may have my prior consent to any suggestions.  
(*Goose*: 25- 29)

From then on, all Saad’s words are misinterpreted to confirm the official distrust. His consent to the secret service’s idea of arranging summer-vacation in “chilly January” never spares him but it is recounted a sneering refusal to collaborate with them. (*Goose*: 30-2)

Condemned to surveillance, Saad is forced to answer the police officer’s questions about minute incidents taking place five years ago. Saad naively replies “How did you come to know all this? I was all on my own then?” His attempts to evade the officer’s demand to tell his opinions of the government marks the beginning of tyrannical subjugation. Detectives start “ringing him to coerce him into confession” and repetition of officer’s words that “the

government is unjust . . . and oppressive” Saad was beaten, stricken and slapped on the face to answer the officer’s questions in a way which asserts his culpability. (*Goose*: 45-50)

Saad is never given a chance to explore the right action. His aim is merely to please his oppressors. He chooses to submit and swear in order to prove his truthfulness, especially when he is inquired on his collaboration with Muslim Brotherhood. Saad’s psychology is molded by the playwright to pinpoint individual’s crushed attempts to adapt to complexities imposed by the regime:

This Egyptian play was, according to the original comic tradition, a song celebrating the new harvest, yet this was not in the fate of the protagonist but in the fate of his consciousness which would enlighten the consciousness of many people like him. The defeat of the protagonist, despite his acquittal, becomes a victory for our consciousness of the suffocating forces that defeat us as they defeated him. (Manneveld: 2006: 6)

In *1984* Winston’s actions are watched and reported. His physiological existence is recounted through his diary which is constantly read and projected to the public. The Host takes the responsibility of exposing in “a gentle, benevolent presence” Winston’s actions marking it as “Doublethink.” It is a word used to reflect on Winston’s psychology when defined later by the Host to indicate the simultaneous claiming and acceptance of two opposing beliefs along with defiance of objective reality. Winston’s writing of the imaginary future is considered an endeavor to change the world. His projected words are subject to the public view which observes it as “nothing’s changed” but “Oppression. Torture. /

Uprisings. Revolution, Corruption. Deceit. Infringements on our liberty.”

(Kindle Locations, 144-147, 181, 201-216, 1110)

Like secret agents in *Goose*, the Host, in *1984*, begins to adopt authoritative role under the name of Charrington immediately after the announcement of the presence of Big Brother. Charrington not only insinuates Winston for future terrifying actions to serve the political ideology but he also negotiates with him selling him his own diary and renting him the room in the back. (Kindle Locations, 338, 729).

Like Saad, Winston looks “troubled”. Source of Winston’s trouble is “a memory.” Winston hardly speaks in the beginning of the play, however, his writing is perceived by an agent in the Party as “a warning. It’s a call to arms. He wants us to rebel. To switch off the screens and take to the streets.

To look at the world and say this isn’t good enough.” Misinterpretation of the individual’s actions seem to be among the techniques adopted in the totalitarian regime to suppress the subjects, Saad and Winston. (Kindle Locations 182-183).

If the washerwoman is employed to report on Saad in *Goose*, it is the Children in *1984* who are made to report their elders’ transgressions. When

the child sees Winston, he walks to him and says: “THOUGHT CRIMINAL! REMAIN STILL! You’re a traitor! Aren’t you? You know you are. I know you are. She knows.” Winston is informed by the Mother character that “Big Brother is watching” him. In astonishment,



Winston sees the statement “DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER” in his diary exhibited also on the screen above his head. (Kindle Locations, 195, 295-331).

Dazzled with the charges against him and the writing before his eyes, Winston seems to tread in a new stage in his life where he finds himself in a new place overwhelmed by intense illumination after temporary darkness.

Upon receiving irrelevant information and instructions from Charrington, Winston goes towards the room in the back and once he opens the door, he is electrocuted.

Winston seems to be led into a state of alternating between two phases. After pain and electrocution, he supports the Big Brother Party but he resumes his passion for moralistic writing whenever he can. In favor of Big Brother, Winston’s familial relations is sustained, for the first time, when he tells how his daughter works to “set fire to that old woman’s skirt because” she “saw her leaning against a poster of Big Brother.” (Kindle Locations, 463-464).

However, Winston shortly changes his attitude after listening to GOLDSTEIN’s talk about fighting for freedom of speech, of language, of press, of assembly and of thought. Provided with the moral support in GOLDSTEIN’s statements, Winston is determined to resist Brotherhood

“Whatever the consequences.” Seeing “Down with the Party! Down with Big Brother!” in his diary, Winston speaks those words, expecting to be shot “in the back of the head.” (Kindle Locations, 575-577).

In his struggle to live best, Winston never hesitates from changing his attitude, from an opponent to an advocate of Big Brother’s regime. He returns to appreciate their surveillance and recounts the “first-rate training they give them in the Spies nowadays” offering them whistles and “Devices for listening through keyholes” to enable them to “hear twice as much as with” the “ear to the hole.” Yet, he is happy to observe his daughter

“Thought Police in the making.” (Kindle Locations, 465-468)

Subsequent to this change in Winston from being a subject to an advocate of a regime monitored by Big Brother, Winston is welcomed, granted the title of “Comrade” holding number “6079.” (Kindle Locations, 514-515).

Overwhelmed by contradictory circumstances around him, Winston appears real but inconsistent. Sociological dimension in his character is emphasized by Julia’s love to him. After she hands him a slip of paper telling him that she loves him, his attitude towards her changes completely and he confesses to her his hatred of the Party and his hope of toppling the regime. Constant warnings against Brotherhood are broadcasted on TV. The same female voice informs Winston that he is watched by Big Brother and goes on to give him instructions “6079 Smith W.! Yes, YOU! With your head on the table! Stand when I’m speaking to you! (Kindle Locations, 400404).

### **Dialogue:**

Dialogue is defined by David Edgar in *how plays work* (2009) as the “spoken exchange” which constitutes “the basic building block of most plays.” (2009:154) While *Goose* renders this significant role of dialogue, *1984* maintains less verbal exchanges between characters.

The tension in *Goose* broods in the first scene in the dialogue taking place between Saad's co-workers:

Khamies: [*Calmly and rather patronizingly*] Muhammad, I've always regarded you as a son. So mark my words: don't ever get mixed up in politics or political arguments. It's a deep sea. A sea with no end to it.

Muh'd: But who said anything about politics? All I said was about the weather and how terribly hot it is.

Khamies: [*even more earnestly than before*] That's the point. It always starts like this. Now you're moaning about the weather. Next time you'll be moaning about God knows what.

Ali: Look out of the window. Can't you see how men twice your size and strength are walking about in utter silence, minding their own business?

Khamies : You'd better be modest. Modesty's a kind of virtue. Why argue when the official weather forecast said it'd be nice today? When a thing's official, dear boy, you can't lift a finger to it. Or you'd be bringing disaster on your family's head.

(*Goose*: 18-9)

Their talk about the weather unveils the restrictions imposed on people in the government department where the totalitarian system is meant to “domesticate other human beings” yet “control, subjugate, and oppress” them. (2014: 15)

Upon arrival in the office, Saad narrates his dream which brought him demise. Manneveld comments on misinterpreting the dream altering it into “a nightmare by shifting the metaphorical space” into “the “absurdistic space, creating the imaginary of a society of no-time and no-place, of double meaning” in a world where people are not allowed to “have their own voices due to political oppression.” (Manneveld: 2006: 2)

Further absurdities in the media, which is governed by the political authority, are unveiled in the TV interviews. The national security officer of the year explains the “popular maxim” which means that “two goods are better than one”:

Broadcaster: Sir, your application of our popular maxim is proof enough of the cohesion between the state and the masses, which is built into the day-to-day practices, and not just a mere political slogan.

Guest: It's a basic fact well known to all our security personnel that the most callous criminal and hardest to detect could be the one who appears in a poor, humble light, as appearances are deceptive. So by arresting the innocent too we guarantee nobody escapes detection. (*Goose*: 38-9)

All people seem liable to inspection since "the ratio of engineers to the rest of the population is 1:1000, doctors 1: 2000 . . . security officers a clean 1: 1," yet "the target ratio however is three security officers for each citizen." In this regard, the welfare of a citizen, like Saad, chased by security officers proves failure. (*Goose*: 39)

The ideas delivered by the officer in the TV interview inspires Shazli with further totalitarian practices:

What a vigorous and profound interview ... very useful! . . . Now I fully understand Saad's manipulations, and with a clear conscience I can now write a watertight report on his case to the upper levels of leadership. (*Goose*: 41)

The recurrent references by the Police officer to the goose in the inquest scene forces the intentional conviction on the innocent Saad:

Officer: It seems you have eaten lots of Egyptian geese to enrich your experience so.

Saad: This one in the dream was the first and last goose I ever ate. Believe me, sir.

Officer: Can't you imagine what the American goose look like?

Saad: May be it has blond hair and green eyes and goes bullying the neighbouring poultry.

Officer: How do you account for this anti-American attitude of yours?

Saad: (*Dumbfounded*) This anti-what?

Officer: Your anti-American feelings, why?

Saad: I bear America nothing but the best feelings, if this is what you're hinting at, sir. As a matter of fact, come whatever may .. any goose will do ... American, Egyptian, even Russian.

Officer: Now that you've mentioned it, what do you think of Russian geese?

Saad: Russian geese? Let me have a bite first before I tell you what I think about them.

Officer: (*Impatiently*) Imagine, you stupid.



Saad: Well, Russian geese must be obese, full of fat, and

bald-headed. (*Goose*: 52-3)

The ‘popular maxim’ and intentional conviction seem prevalent practices in those societies where the individual’s words and actions are misinterpreted. *Goose* and *1984* depict despairingly those societies where individuals are restricted by ruling policies. Less verbal interaction recurs in *1984* with more reliance on voice-over, direct information and narration.

The opening narrative is recited by “An amplified voice” of an unseen speaker telling “In that moment, it became real: the thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. If detected it would be punished by death.” This voice plays the role of both reading the content in the diary at the moment of writing along with giving direct information on the writer’s action within the state’s perspective. (Kindle Locations, 110-111)

Apprehension mounts with the articulated claim that “There was no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment” because ‘Thought Police watched any particular individual.’ (Kindle Locations, 116)

The telescreen broadcasts another voice announcing a conspiracy hatched by the traitor Emmanuel Goldstein. In his narration, Syme condemns the verbal communication when he defines what is called ‘Newspeak.’ It is the language proposed by Big Brother to destroy words relevant to “thoughtcrime” assuming that eradicating words will make the word “literally impossible.” It is “the only language in the world whose vocabulary gets smaller every year.” (Kindle Locations, 422-428) Winston declares that his search for truth is the moral purpose in writing. He tells O’Brien “a diary. An account. Evidence- that in all this insanity there was one person who held tight to the truth.” (Kindle Locations, 492)

Repentance, in the despotic regime, never spares the life of thoughtcriminal who confesses “I am guilty of conspiracy to destroy, to inflict violence, to create chaos, to bring about the deaths of countless innocent people.” He also declares his rejection of Brotherhood and Goldstein who call to “stop dreaming,” to “wake up,” to “act,” to “know the truth,” and to “fight for freedom” of “speech” and “thought.” (Kindle Locations, 560-561, 576)

In their second love meeting, Winston is assured by Julia that their love will demolish the Party which believes that “No love except love of Big Brother. No loyalty except to the Party.” Julia notes “They keep everyone too miserable to notice what’s going on.” Julia, a member of the party, informs Winston that they can kill Big Brother and destroy the Party with tiny, secret acts of disobedience. Secret pleasures,” contained in their love surely annihilate the tyranny of hate. (Kindle Locations, 688-699, 850) With Julia, Winston expresses his wish to have words “For moments like this” to describe his feelings for her because “Words matter. Facts matter. The truth matters.” He reflects on his actions and asserts that he is never happy to delete “things from records. Photographs. People.” The material evidence rendered in records and history usually establishes the human identity. The eradication of such evidence is among totalitarian practices imposed on individuals (Kindle Locations, 575)

The short conversation between Winston and O’Brien widens the scope of psychological dimension in Winston. Such a talk on the construction of language triggers Winston’s childhood memories. Julia assumes the role of his mother and helps him visualize the past through his present. Winston’s dwelling in the past to visualize the future articulates Augusto

Boal's argument that studying the past whilst being in the present will "invent the future" and "change ourselves, and change the world." (Boal: 2008:IX)

Reading Emmanuel Goldstein's book entitles Winston to prosecution at the hands of O'Brien, who brought him the book. Under utmost terror, Winston asks O'Brien to transfer the unbearable torture towards Julia. He informs her that his betrayal is due to threatening pain.

The Big Brother noted in *Goose* is vital and vibrant in 1984.

Whatever mask the totalitarian regime wears in the national security or in Big Brother, it never stands in the forefront to address the public or deliver the commands. Authoritative rules are usually conveyed to individuals under surveillance through different strategies.

### **Moral Argument:**

Being watched is not only a violation of individual's privacy but also a menace to their life. A documentary on "Terms and Conditions may Apply" voices individuals' appeal:

Can you please not record us, monitor us, and  
share information unless we ask first. We need  
terms and conditions that are reasonable and we  
need privacy policies to promote the most basic  
principles of democracy."

([www.netflix.com/title/70279201](http://www.netflix.com/title/70279201))

*Goose* and 1984 stage detailed outcomes of the violation of privacy.

Individuals' words and actions grow liable to misinterpretation in *Goose*.

Secret services have been argued by Manneveld "You could say that

Maksoud created a world where "Big Brother is watching you." (Manneveld :2006 )

If watching individuals in *Goose* is intended for national security, Saad's sole right action is submission whenever he tends to "fight the feeling of hopelessness and disillusionment that inevitably came with political conflict?" (Salman)

Saad and those alike may need to acknowledge ironies embedded in their situations and relations in order to evade them. Naïve and simpleminded citizens need to be acquainted with characteristics, manners and attitudes of those secret political forces who are scattered everywhere, "in unexpected, concealed positions" (*Goose*: 40)

Security officers adopt presupposed assumptions in their dealings with innocent individuals. Shazli asks "(Lowering his voice) Why did you call in this 'element'?" Kamel replies confidently "I am sort of placing him under the microscope. For there is something dubious about him. His talk's been full of disdain and cynicism, lately." (*Goose*:31)

The use of big incomprehensible words seems a common convention with those in the security service in *Goose*. Kamel declares that the next step is to "be a resolute, free-handed action, first grasping and then transcending the implications of this situation in order to form a positive, firm stance in response." In an attempt to decipher those perplexing utterances, Shazli asks "what exactly do you mean by this?" Kamel simply replies "Well, I am not sure, actually." It

never matters what they know or mean to say, but what matters to them is to enforce control upon their attentive audiences. (*Goose*: 35)

Citizens' perplexity intensifies by the TV interview when the "national security officer of the year" boasts to "function in an unconventional way" unrivaled in "Europe and America." Asked for more clarification, he explains that their unconventional method lies in spotting three accomplices in any "dubious situation" aiming to collect more data and to guarantee success. Those three are "the bully, the weakling, and the passer-by who'll get caught looking on." (*Goose*: 38-39)

The despotic behavior is ironically related to hobbies by the national security officer:

Guest: My hobbies are quite varied: for example,  
kicking ... soccer balls, smashing ... tennis  
balls, striking ... er ...er... the lute, blowing  
... the brass instruments, besides reading romantic  
poetry.

Broadcaster: But excuse me, can there be any connection  
between your official status as a state security officer  
and your hobby of romantic poetry? (*Goose*: 40)

The officer highlights the strong bond in him between the official and the intellectual by "never letting an intellectual's meeting pass without painstakingly participating in it." He also repeats the word "vigilance" three times demanding "the general public" to treat any "remotely suspicious word or phrase" in "the most skeptical way." (*Goose*: 40-1)

The long-extended detention of Saad is expected when the government hires the lawyer, who is always absent-minded and shortsighted misplacing the files of his clients. In prison, Saad declares "when I first saw you, a vague sense of loss came over me." Saad's doubts are affirmed by the lawyer's remarks "even if my client was found guilty and got a tough sentence I wouldn't mind. Well, I always say, "It's not the end of the world," is it? . . . I never won a case in this rotten climate. I only won self-respect." Recalling his records of failures, the lawyer acknowledges policies in the regime where "everything is pre-ordained." (*Goose*:55-61)

Illogical argument is given, in the court scene, by the representative of Prosecution responding to the judge's request for a concrete evidence Prosecution: The so-called material evidence is a

convention that's been imported to our pure,  
chaste land from the materialistic West. Now,  
it's about time we dispensed with this hateful,  
outlandish, wasteful legacy once and for all.  
It's about time we cultivated our own judicial  
customs and traditions, unimpressed by any  
foreign powers. Your honour, why don't we  
cultivate the spiritual evidence, instead?"

(*Goose*: 81)

Failing to give the material evidence, he tends to the emotional provocation and points accusing fingers to the foreign powers as the main source for troubles in the nation.

The question of evidence and truth persists in *1984* when the coauthors, R.I. and D.M., render Orwell's focal questions which ends his novel, *1984*, "Can you trust evidence? How do you ever know what's really true? And when and where are you, the reader, right now?" (Kindle Locations, 99,102-103)

Questioning truth occupies Winston's writing. To him, the future is the dream and the past is the truth. The Voice is heard to address Winston "Every record of everything you had ever done was wiped out, your previous existence was denied and then forgotten. You were deleted, annihilated: 'unpersoned'." His aspiration to communicate with the future is rejected early in the play when Host comments that the connection with the future is either impossible if it resembles the present or meaningless if it is different. Writing for the future seems to be the action that is going to

"change the world" since it takes a "unique place" in the "collective subconscious." (Kindle Locations, 127, 154-157, 1084)

To the public who read Winston's projected diary, the dream of a better future seems to defeat "the whole notion of objective truth, of there being one set true reality." The question "How do you know anything in this world is real?" seems baffling. Winston's concern with the future is considered a rebel against "The way things are." He never denies, but he acknowledges the power of writing in spotting the inadequacies and suggesting alternatives in a world "Full of fevered dreams and paranoid / hallucinations." Winston is warned twice that Big Brother is watching him since writing may provoke protest in people. (Kindle Locations, 175, 184, 216-219).

TV voice announces that Big Brother raises the alert with Brotherhood's plot for "a major attack" operating undercover anywhere possible. This means everybody is a suspect. Under command, people will be unpersoned and their birth records are unwritten in "Ministry of Truth."

(Kindle Locations, 395, 511)

Therefore, death awaits those who confess their conspiracy with the enemy, Goldstein. Thoughtcriminal is shot to death even though he has already expressed his regret. After his death, the screen shows the three slogans of Oceania "WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY,

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH." It is a strategy to justify those actions in Big Brother Party. (Kindle Locations, 589)

Finding himself alone with O'Brien in "the apartments of the Inner Party," Winston assumes the need to switch and expresses his willingness to join the "secret organization working against the Party . . . enemies of the Party" where the leader is Emmanuel Goldstein who is alive and a real person. (Kindle Locations, 947, 972).

Winston's consent to work with the opposing organization paves the way for the drastic change in his moralistic attitude. He is ready to "commit murder . . . acts which may cause thousands of innocent deaths? . . . to lie, to forge, to blackmail, to recruit even the youngest children, to

distribute drugs, to disseminate disease – to do anything which might weaken the power of the Party? To betray . . . country? to throw sulphuric acid in a child's face, to commit suicide, to lose identity . . . or to live in hiding?" (Kindle Locations, 1003-1017)

If Winston survives all that, he is assured that he will be given "a new identity" with different face, age, movements, colour of eyes, shapes of hands. (Kindle Locations, 1018)

Martin arrives to enlighten Winston that Brotherhood believes in the value of writing and reading and Goldstein's book, *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*, is remarkable. Martin promises to send

Winston the book to read in order to be a competent member in the Brotherhood and "understand the true reality of things". (Kindle Locations, 1030)

Inspired by the book, Winston may be led into either rebellion or revival of the past. Past to him is truth and identity. Winston is immersed in reverie where Julia is his mother. Occasionally she resumes her role as his beloved living the present and foreseeing the time when they have to confess. Julia believes "They'll torture us until we do." Their words "We are the dead" resonate with the Voice that orders them "REMAIN EXACTLY WHERE YOU ARE. MAKE NO MOVEMENT UNTIL YOU

ARE ORDERED." Winston and Julia immediately submit to the orders dictated by the Voice whose speaker is unseen. The Voice also terminates (Kindle Locations, 1147, 1199)

Onstage infliction of torture on Winston serves to oblige him to recognize that "The price of sanity is submission." This explains why the Party wishes to delete Winston from history. They condemn him to unpersoning and deletion from records due to his moral thought of change. (Kindle Locations, 1424,1455)

Torture in *Goose* and *1984* aims to subdue people to confess their offense to authorities. Torture never stops Winston from raising further questions regarding the real existence of Big Brother. Winston asks if Big Brother, like him, was born and will die. O'Brien confirms the immortality of the Party which "will always win" while the individual dies. (Kindle Locations, 1493-1516)

Both political regimes in the two plays censure, to various degrees, the intellect's views of a better future. In *Goose*, the intellect is always attended by secret agents. Inscripting hopes for a better future is severely restricted by the party of Big Brother and their official thought police in *1984*. The target in the two plays seems to terminate the possible change insinuated by writers and intellectuals. If understatement is the way of *The Man*

*Who Ate a Goose*, overstatement is the way of *1984*. For example, the police, in the former, keeps a low profile but proclaims a high profile, in the latter.

A good deal of repetition of words and scenes in *1984* gives significance to the absurdity and the futility of individuals' efforts to live peacefully. Some examples are narratives including these words "the perpetual war" (Kindle locations, 170,215), "Man Oppression", "Torture.

Uprisings. Revolution." Another example is enclosed in Martin's words "You're seeing yourself in it because it's opaque. It's a mirror. Every age sees itself reflected." (Kindle locations, 209, 277) The double reference to Shakespeare, Milton, Swift and Dickens signifies



the struggle of writers. (Kindle locations, 87, 211) Oppressive commands to Winston are also repeated by Speakwrite "Assent unwrite?" (Kindle locations, 522, 532, 543)

### **Audience:**

Anke Manneveld argues that *Goose* incorporates "humour, and irony" as tools "against political censorship" to underscore "the irrational and alogic aspects of power-politics." (Manneveld: 2006: 1)

The plot is usually structured where incidents take a certain design to engage theatre audience. David Edgar classifies types of response in the audience as "disappointment, relief, horror or delight" according to "the fulfillment or denial" of their "expectations." Edgar quotes J. L. Stayan's words noting "The audience is continuously busy, whether consciously or not, making personal comparisons with what it sees and hears on the stage." (Edgar: 2009: 8)

*Goose* incites the audiences' empathy through "tragic laughter" using "a small incident or imaginary idea or caricature nearer to a dramatic and verbal anecdote to severely criticize one of the negative aspects of our political regime." (el Gumhouria Newspaper)

The TV interviewer introduces Ummu Hassan, the washerwoman, as "the lady who epitomizes Egypt's hardpressed classes". Her caricature image has been magnified when she is summoned as a witness against Saad in the TV interview. Ummu Hassan is featured as a "symbol of simplicity and purity. As simple and pure as the waters of the Nile. She's as proud and timeless as the great Pyramid of Cheops. As mysterious and dignified as the

Sphinx of Giza." Listening to her words generates a sense of wonder and desire to test Edgar's concept of "factual plausibility." (Edgar: 2009: 8) She is the maid who reports her "non-stop struggles" through six marriages "one after the other" in order "to have as many babies as possible, who'd grow up and become able-bodied, valiant soldiers and fight" the "holy war against foreign powers." (*Goose*: 62-5)

Reliability of her words against Saad faded away when she appeared "as if reciting a memorized text" before giving her illogical evidence in the TV interview. Being a local washerwoman, in the last decades in the twentieth century, her reply sounds humorous. She prefers to have "a piece of a news-bulletin" or "at least some brief news-headlines" instead of the favorite song. She gives her last remark saying "I wonder why can't we catch up with the civilized world and raise prices of commodities? Are we always to remain, lagging behind in everything? How disgraceful?" In this regard, the interview is a technique to help the 'hardpressed' bridge the gap between their reality and their aspiration for a luxurious life in spite of all the constraints. (*Goose*: 66-7)

The defense scene in the court is ample with sardonic laughter with incompetent lawyers for defense and prosecution who call for the "long live" nation ignoring "individuals." (*Goose*: 78-80)

Unlike *Goose*, 1984 calls for long life of Big Brother and his Party in ways far from laughter or humor. 1984, which is not recommended for children below 13 or the common theatre audience, is classified by The



Huffington Post as one for “high-voltage theatre.” (thehudsonbroadway) 1984 is a play which “allows you to empathize in a visceral way, and that means making the audience physically and emotionally uncomfortable.” (hollywoodreporter)

The torture scene is staged in view of the audience who reacted in objection not merely as viewers, but as true, active listeners to the appeals in

Winston’s claims:

I CAN SEE YOU - DON'T JUST SIT  
THERE - HELP ME - HELP ME - YOU  
HAVE TO STOP THEM - YOU HAVE TO  
DO SOMETHING - STOP STOP - GET UP  
- YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING(1567)

The scene has been described by Adam Feldman as “harrowing climatic torture scene” which has never been there on Broadway. (timeout)

The attitude of the audience is of great significance especially to those who observe that the play is “a laboratory . . . a testing ground” where the “audience is a polygraph test.” The two co-dramatists justify their approach in Hollywood Reporter on 7/1/2018, in the article entitled “Why Broadway's 1984 Audiences Are Fainting, Vomiting and Getting Arrested.”

Icke and Macmillan explain “We're not trying to be willfully assaultive or exploitatively shock people, but there's nothing here or in the disturbing novel that isn't happening right now, somewhere around the world: people are being detained without trial, tortured, and executed.” (why-broadways)

The intentional structuring of “extreme torture scenes” which made audience uncomfortable emotionally and physically has been justified by Icke who tells that people can either sit and watch or they can leave “that’s a perfectly fine reaction to watching someone be tortured.” Icke believes that “the news headlines” shows similar upsetting incidents. (why-broadways)

## CONCLUSION

*Goose* and *1984* promote the value of speech and writing where the word and idea may change the world. However, both Saad and Winston are deprived of privacy and free will to make their own choices in life. Accordingly, they are detained without trial. Saad is saved by the law when the Senior judges, in the court, acquits him and declares him not guilty. But Winston never meets the same end living among two opposing parties. Forced by the ever-watching ruthless regime to leave behind freedom of thought which is cherished by the opponents.

Individuals’ verbal and rational freedom are the targets in the political suppressive regimes in both *Goose* and *1984*. The two plays present ongoing despotic systems intimidating individuals and abducting their inclination to dream and invent their own future. In their encounters with illogical practices, Saad and Winston cease to speak and write their visions. Their attempts to accommodate with incomprehensible flow of commands fail. They submit in

resilience. Saad is acquitted by the law after long imprisonment and torture. Under threat of utmost pain, Winston transfers dread and ordeal unto Julia, his beloved.

The two plays, *Goose* and *1984* stage civilians' struggle in totalitarian societies hoping to help audiences eliminate watchful despotism.

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