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Ecopsychological Perspectives on George Orwell's 1984: Exploring Nature's Deprivation and Restoration*

1984'e Ekopsikolojik Perspektifler: Doğanın Yoksurluğu ve Onarımı Üzerine Bir Araştırma

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Abstract: In this study, George Orwell's 1984 will be analyzed from an ecopsychological perspective to reveal the interconnectedness of human psychology with nature and the outside world. The ecopsychological analysis of the novel is extremely important because it reveals the undeniable influence of the outside world and nature on human psychology. In this dystopian novel, it is quite striking that human beings get completely detached from nature, drawing sharp boundaries between nature and culture, and removing nature from cultural life. The detrimental effects of nature deprivation on the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual states of the characters are tragically reflected in the novel. Based on the idea that there must be harmony, unity, and connection between the inner and outer worlds in order for human beings to lead physically, socially, and psychologically healthy lives, this study will discuss the dire impacts of the absence of nature in an apocalyptic and catastrophic world and dystopian social order, especially on human psychology, mindset and behavioral patterns.

Öz: Bu çalışmada, George Orwell'in 1984 adlı distopik romanı ekopsikolojik açıdan incelenerek insan psikolojisinin doğa ve dış dünya ile bağlantılılığı ortaya konulmaya çalışılacaktır. Bu romanın ekopsikolojik açıdan irdelenmesi dış dünya ile doğanın insan psikolojisi üzerindeki yadsınamaz etkisini ortaya çıkarması bakımından son derece önemlidir. Bu çalışmada incelenen distopik dünyada insanoğlunun, doğadan tamamen koparak doğa ve kültür arasında keskin sınırlar çizmesi ve doğanın kültürel yaşamdan tamamen çıkarılması oldukça dikkat çekicidir. Doğanın artık yaşamlarının bir parçası olmayışının karakterlerin gerek zihinsel, gerek duygusal ve bedensel gerekse de ruhsal durumlarında yaratmış olduğu olumsuzluklar ile doğa yoksurluğunun yol açtığı vahim sonuçlar eserde dramatik bir şekilde yansıtılmaktadır. İnsanın fiziksel, sosyal ve psikolojik açıdan sağlıklı bir yaşam sürdürebilmesi için iç ve dış dünyası arasında uyum, birliktelik ve bağlantı olması gerektiği fikrinden yola çıkarak, muhtemel bir gelecekte apokaliptik ve katastrofik bir dünya ve distopik toplum düzeninde doğanın tamamen tahrip edilmesinin, insan psikolojisi, zihin yapısı ve davranış biçimleri üzerindeki vahim etkileri bu çalışmada ele alınacaktır.

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Introduction

Since interconnectedness, interdependence and interrelatedness in the web of life designate the basic principle of ecosystems, a study of ecology cannot be complete without a reference to human culture, civilization and human activity: "A study of ecology without consideration of the roles played by man can give only a partial view of communities and ecosystems"; likewise, "a study of man without due consideration of his biotic and abiotic co-members of the ecosystem can be misleading as to his opportunities and his limitations."³ We live in the age of Anthropocene which is marked by the adverse impact of calamitous human actions and practices that drastically and irreversibly transform the whole system of Earth, leading to massive ecological degradation. The ecological crises we have brought about as the most destructive species on Earth disturb not only the physical and biological systems of the planet on which we and all other entities depend but also the mental health of all living beings. Thus, it is essential to utilize an interdisciplinary and multifaceted perspective to deal with the environmental problems by taking into consideration psychological, affective, philosophical and spiritual aspects. In this sense, the fusion of ecology and psychology offers a very promising and useful approach.

Theodore Roszak points out how the mainstream psychology fails to address the mental health issues effectively since nature is not regarded as a relevant category that should be taken into account in dealing with human wellness. Thus, modern psychology should be redefined by expanding its boundaries to place nature in the framework: "Funny how psychiatrists are absolutely inspired when it comes to mapping sexual dysfunction [along with all kinds of social, and interpersonal ones], but fail to chart the strong emotional bond we have with the natural habitat. It's time for an environmentally based definition of mental health. So the next time you're feeling down, take yourself off to the woods for a few days"⁴. Ecopsychology takes on an important mission to relocate psychology and mental health in an ecological context to highlight the interplay between societal and ecological wellbeing, and human and planetary health. Roszak argues that while other therapies aim to "heal the alienation between person and person, person and family, person and society", ecopsychology tries to restore the alienation between the human and nature.⁵ It strives for the development of new ways of living, understanding and perceiving ourselves, others and the universe to render the healing of both human beings and the Earth possible. Theodore Roszak in his work "The Making of a Counter Culture" maintains that the drastic change can come along with a change in man: "Change the prevailing mode of consciousness and you change the world" because "[t]he building of a good society is not primarily a social, but a psychic task"⁶. Thus, the wellbeing of our minds, bodies, and society as a whole relies on reestablishing a harmonious connection with the Earth.

Since the 1970s, literature has been systematically and more consciously undertaking the task of raising awareness about the detrimental impact of human beings on the web of ecological life which human beings are inherently part of. Dystopian literature plays a crucial role in addressing the ecological issues by drawing attention to possible serious consequences and warnings. This study sets out to examine *1984* by George Orwell which depicts catastrophic futures with apocalyptic imagination where human beings have lost touch with nature and thus with the self. *1984* is ecologically informed and convey strong environmental messages in the form of warnings as to how we will probably end up if we do not change what and how we are doing the things. The novel provides a forecast of the possible consequences of our destructive environmental behaviors and attitudes. Dystopian literature gives an artistic and aesthetic response by constructing a language for the articulation of ecological concerns. Apocalyptic "visions of eco-disaster through a dystopian prism" can offer a sense of urgency⁷. They not only give a warning but call for a new mode of thinking, consciousness and eco-political action which is not motivated by self-interested, "individualistic, market-based, and calculative" human practices.⁸ The characters in *1984* acutely suffer from the loss of sense of belonging to their physical home and nature, which causes them to feel detached, fragmented, and displaced and consequently, they delve into depression, despair and misery. The alienation from the self and disconnection from the natural environment numb and dull their senses, feelings and emotions. The mental, emotional and physical problems the characters go through greatly result from the forgotten or neglected fact that human beings are spiritually and emotionally embedded in nature and thus, we undeniably need nature for our overall health.

The dystopian novels not only offer insight into the approaching bleak future but also point out various reasons and

³ Stanley A. Cain, "Some Principles of General Ecology and Human Society," *The American Biology Teacher* 22, no. 3 (1960), 160.

⁴ Theodore Roszak, "The Nature of Sanity," *Psychology Today* 2 (1996): 22, Access Date 19 Jan 2024, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/articles/199601/the-nature-sanity>.

⁵ Theodore Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology* (New York: Touchstone Simon & Schuster, 1992), 320.

⁶ Theodore Roszak, *The Making of A Counter Culture* (New York: Anchor, 1969), 49.

⁷ Rowland Hughes, Pat Wheeler, "Introduction Eco-dystopias: Nature and the Dystopian Imagination," *Critical Survey* 25, no. 2 (2013): 1-6 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42751030>.

⁸ John Szerszynski and John Urry, "Changing Climates: Introduction," *Theory, Culture & Society* 27, (2010): 2-3.



conditions that have brought about massive degradation and deterioration both in the human community and the ecosystem. Industrial developments, the transhumanist project of perfecting human skills and capacities through science and technology, the exploitative and instrumentalist mindset of capitalism, the misuse of science and technology, nuclear wars and the unsatisfiable human desire for the possession of more power and control are among the main factors that lead to mental disturbances, physical ailments and ecological catastrophes. As can be observed in the novel, the socio-economic and political systems do not support the environmental reciprocity or fulfill physical, emotional and psychological needs of different forms of beings. On the contrary, the natural human instincts, needs and desires are strictly suppressed and inhibited. Thus, negative and artificially tailored feelings, emotions and thoughts develop due to unnatural demands of the system that keeps nature away from human society. Ecopsychology strongly maintains that cultural, societal and ecological healing go hand in hand in the same way the oppression and suffering of human and nature occur together. In this sense, an ecopsychological study of *1984* can go beyond the existing discussions and analyses that focus on the political and social ills of the society by integrating nature as a relevant category to explore in relation to dystopian fiction.

Ecopsychology

Ecocriticism studies the relationship between literature and ecology from an interdisciplinary perspective where a variety of disciplines and fields of study, including philosophy, sociology, and psychology, come together to address environmental problems, to raise awareness about environmental degradation and to find out effective solutions for the ecological crises. Ecocriticism argues that many nature-related issues and problems in the Anthropocene have resulted from humanity's disconnection from the natural world because of the prevailing ideological mindsets such as speciesism, anthropocentrism, technocracy, transhumanism, etc., all of which are based on the assumption that human beings are more superior, more important and more necessary when compared to other forms of beings. This way of thinking leads to the dualistic views that promote hierarchies and categorical distinctions and eventually a failure to understand the interconnectedness of all things on Earth. Along with the scientific revolution that leads to the emergence of the scientific culture, mind and body, civilized culture and wild nature, matter and spirit got separated. Ecocriticism posits that the harm we inflict on both ourselves and the natural world stems from a deep psychological and spiritual disconnection from nature. Paul Shepard argues that the disconnection from diverse and wild nature leads to the diseased individuals and diseased Earth.⁹ It is because at the very center of our psyche lies our ecological unconsciousness, as Rozsak argues. He suggests that the Earth speaks to us through ecological unconsciousness, which expands our interrelationships to the Earth itself: "let 'the' you become the Earth and all our fellow creatures upon it".¹⁰ Although we have turned into a scientific and technological species, "the old way of being" can never be forgotten.¹¹ "Its patterns and needs are with us still, although noticeable now in often disjointed aspects of our lives"¹². Thus, though divided and split, our disrupted kinship with the other and the totemic self need to be restored.¹³ In order to render this possible, a new framework, a new language and attitude are required. In this sense, ecologizing psychology and bringing psychological insight into the ecology movement gain importance in order to realize the psychological dimension of the environmental and existential crises and to help us enhance our capacities to care for the Earth and one another.

Ecopsychology is a term that refers to a fertile combination of ecology and psychology. Ecopsychology can be viewed as an attempt to expand the borders of the traditional psychology that limits its relevance and considerations by disregarding and excluding ecology and ecological concerns from its scope. A psychoanalyst Harold F. Searles (1960), whom Fisher accepts as a proto-ecopsychologist, argues that in the mainstream psychology, the non-human world has been ignored and regarded as irrelevant to human personality development, which he regards as a mistake since we are not alone in this universe.¹⁴ Later, David V. Kidner attacks traditional psychological approaches that fail to address ecological issues since they not only normalize "the behaviorial life-style, and personality configurations associated with environmental destruction" but also support the "technological-economic system".¹⁵ Andy Fisher (1996) points out the same problem and puts the emphasis on taking a critical stance to uncover the ideological aspects of psychology through ecopsychology.

Ecopsychology emerged out of the environmental movement which took place in the 1960s as a result of the

⁹ Paul Shepard, *Nature and Madness: An Investigation of Ecology and Psychohistory*, (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1982).

¹⁰ Theodore Rozsak, "Where Psyche Meets Gaia," in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, ed. Theodore Rozsak, Mary E. Gomes, and Allen D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995), 1–17.

¹¹ Peter H. Kahn, Jr. and Patricia H. Hasbach, *Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological Species*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, (2012), 2.

¹² Kahn and Hasbach, *Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological Species*, 2.

¹³ Kahn and Hasbach, 2.

¹⁴ Andy Fisher, "What is Ecopsychology?," *Alternatives Journal* 22, No. 3, (1996): 22.

¹⁵ Fisher, "What is Ecopsychology," 22.



environmental crisis caused by modern industrial civilization.¹⁶ For many scholars, human-nature relationship has been a significant issue to explore for decades but psychology has not been included in the theoretical framework of ecocriticism till the recent years. In the 1960s, Robert Greenway coined the term psychoecology.¹⁷ A few decades later, Theodore Roszak came up with the term ecopsychology and used it in his essay titled “The Voice of the Earth”. Roszak asserts that psychology and ecology need each other to develop a meaningful relationship with the Earth. He contends that the modern world has driven us away from the ecological consciousness which informs us that our inner world is closely related with the nonhuman world and all aspects of the cosmos and thus the inner and the outer lives are inseparable: “It is peculiarly the psychiatry of modern [...] society that has split the ‘inner’ life from the ‘outer’ world—as if what was inside of us was not also inside the universe, something real, consequential, and inseparable from our study of the natural world.”¹⁸ Therefore, Barry Commoner’s first law of ecology, “Everything is connected to everything else”¹⁹ is considered to be very crucial for ecopsychology. Ecopsychology is also closely connected with the Deep Ecology Movement established by Arne Naess who views ecology as a dynamic process with its enlarging, widening and developing system. Deep ecology mainly highlights that we are an integrated part and ordinary members of the web of life and thus we should understand reciprocity among all living beings on this planet.

Ecopsychology advocates the idea that reconnecting with the wildness both within ourselves and in the natural environment is essential for appreciating the intrinsic value of more-than-human existence and understanding the true, natural state of being with its full potential for development. “Ecology, furthermore, advances the view that humanity must show a conscious respect for the spontaneity of the natural world, a world that is much too complex and variegated to be reduced to simple Galilean physico-mechanical properties”.²⁰ Rickett explains that ecopsychology is rooted in the biophilia hypothesis, proposed by Harvard zoologist E. O. Wilson in 1984. This hypothesis suggests that humans have an innate emotional affinity for the natural world, including nonhuman life forms.²¹ Similarly, Yi-Fu Tuan came up with the term “topophilia” to refer to the innate affective bonds humans develop with their local environment, which shows that human beings are mentally, physically, and emotionally tied to a place.²² Biophilia and topophilia align with what Fisher describes as a naturalistic approach to ecopsychology which “aims to link claims and limits of human nature to the claims and limits of the natural world” and an experiential approach, which uses “bodily-felt-lived experience” “as its touchstone”.²³ However, as Rickett argues, our today’s late capitalist, transhumanist, industrialized, techno-scientific societies do not celebrate or nurture our innate biophilia or topophilia. Techno-addiction, capitalist-driven consumerism and globalization eventually and inescapably lead to a nature deficiency and hence mental illnesses and ontological crises.²⁴

Human beings have become increasingly alienated from the natural world as they have lost their direct connection to nature, which is no longer a part of their everyday experiences, which Robert M. Pyle describes as “the extinction of experience”. It “is not just about losing the personal benefits of the natural high. It also implies a cycle of disaffection that can have disastrous consequences”.²⁵ Soga and Gaston also argue that the lack of connection and interaction with nature not only diminishes the health and wellbeing benefits for individuals and society but also erodes positive feelings, attitudes, and behaviors toward the environment, thereby creating a cycle of increasing disconnection from nature.²⁶ They explain that there are basically two reasons for the loss of interactions with nature: loss of opportunity and loss of orientation. Firstly, the current cultural and social environment we are living in offer almost no opportunities that can provide direct experience of nature. Secondly, we lose our emotional affinity and positive orientation toward nature. A lot of studies demonstrate that there is a meaningful correlation between the amount of exposure to nature and physical and mental wellness. The loss of contact with nature at a dramatic level causes “nature deficit disorder” (Richard Louv, 2005).²⁷ Louv explains that alienation from constructive, meaningful, healing, and respectful relationship with nature

¹⁶ See, Whit Hibbard, “Ecopsychology: A Review”, *Trumpeter*, 19/ 2, (2003): 24. <http://trumpeter.athabasca.ca/index.php/trumpet/article/viewFile/93/96>.

¹⁷ See, Mark A. Schroll, “Wrestling with Arne Naess: A Chronicle of Ecopsychology’s Origins,” *Trumpeter* 3/1 (2007):35. <http://trumpeter.athabasca.ca/index.php/trumpet/article/view>

¹⁸ Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology*, 14.

¹⁹ Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man, and Technology* (New York: Courier Dover Publications, 2020), 19.

²⁰ Murray Bookchin, *Toward an Ecological Society*, (Québec: Black Rose Books, 1980), 59.

²¹ Allison L. Rickett, “Teaching Land as an Extension of Self: The Role of Ecopsychology in Disrupting Capitalist Narratives of Land and Resource Exploitation”, in *The Radical Teacher*, no. 119, (Spring 2021): 14-20.

²² Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, And Values*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974).

²³ Andy Fisher, *Radical Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), xv-xvi.

²⁴ Allison L. Rickett, “Teaching Land as an Extension of Self,” 14-20.

²⁵ Robert Michael Pyle, *The Thunder Tree: Lessons from an Urban Wildland* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993).

²⁶ Masashi Soga, Kevin J Gaston, “Extinction of experience: the loss of human — nature interactions”, *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 14, No. 2 (March 2016): 94-101.

²⁷ The term “Nature-Deficit Disorder” was introduced in 2005 with the publication of “Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder.” *Radical Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life* by Andy Fisher Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002 ISBN: 0-7914-5304-9.

leads to the “diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, conditions of obesity, and higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses”.²⁸

Andy Fisher, in his book *Radical Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life*, aimed to expand the borders of ecopsychology to make it “more comprehensive and critical”²⁹. Fisher maintains that “ecopsychology is a psychological undertaking” that suggests “we too are nature” and basically argues that “if we accept the ecological view that we are members of the biotic community, rather than its mere exploiters, then we may learn to recognize the natural world as a social and psychological field, just as we do the human community”³⁰. He highlights that due to our embeddedness in the natural environment, the insanity of human beings is grounded in nature. Thus, the fundamental task of ecopsychology is “to describe the human psyche in a way that makes it internal to the natural world or that makes it a phenomenon of nature. [...] the task is to build a psychology that expands the field of significant relationships to include other-than-human beings; a psychology that views psychological and spiritual matters in the light of our participation within the larger natural order”³¹. According to Fisher, ecopsychology should also undertake the “philosophical” task that requires the rejection of the “presumed dichotomies that underlie the modern enterprise, especially the human/nature and inner/outer splits”³². The “practical” task, on the other hand, should aim to develop relational, participatory, “therapeutic and recollective practices toward an ecological society”³³ in order to relearn and recall “how our human psyches are embedded in and nurtured by the larger psyche of nature” and “the essentially human art of revering, giving back to, and maintain reciprocal relations with an animate natural world”³⁴. In this sense, ecopsychology is more interested in exploring the psychological consequences of repressing the ecological dimension of our existence and suggests that for the “nonrepressed flourishing of the senses”, it is essential to get in touch with “an abundant natural world”³⁵. Howard Frumkin examines a lot of research and studies that provide the evidence that “nature contact, in many ways” including the non-human entities, the experience of wilderness, and reunion with nature through landscapes “offers human health benefits”.³⁶ Forming a connection with the diverse landscape brings joy, a sense of fulfillment, and overall wellbeing.

In today’s postmodern world which has been dominated by simulation and simulacra as discussed by Baudrillard, the natural world has been completely replaced by the technological nature. This refers to various technologies that “simulate”, “mediate” and “augment” our experience of and relationship with nature.³⁷ We are exposed to the digitalized and virtual nature which are peopled by robotic animals. Kahn maintains that although technological nature is much better than no nature, the technological nature as the substitute for the natural nature has negative impact on the wellbeing of the human. This causes generational amnesia of nature. Kahn argues that there is certainly a need for actual nature back in our life.³⁸ Andy Fisher likewise contends that ecopsychology can help us move beyond the amnesia of our earth-alienated minds and reconnect with our rooted, earth-bound nature, offering a path toward healing a deep psychological wound.³⁹ As Norton states, “Ecopsychology’s fundamental belief in a synergistic relationship between person and environment helps explain the relationship between environmental destruction and humanity’s disconnection with nature.”⁴⁰ The psychological disturbance may not only result from our social interactions in the realm of family, marriage, or friendship but from our detachment from the natural world and the repression of nature in our mind and heart.

As can be clearly seen, different ideas have been put forward concerning the aim and scope of ecopsychology. The environmental movement along with Ecofeminism, Ecophilosophy, and Deep Ecology provides a multi-faceted basis and multidimensional structure for ecopsychology. It is mainly concerned with how human thinking, psyche and feeling are influenced by the environmental problems. The desire to dominate, control and possess nature is one of the fundamental reasons that bring about the catastrophic consequences for both human and nature. We should acknowledge the fact that “Nature is not owned—animals, rivers, oceans, and mountains are not an endless resource to be pillaged for

²⁸ Richard Louv, “What Is Nature-Deficit Disorder?,” *Richard Louv’s Blog*, <https://richardlouv.com/blog/what-is-nature-deficit-disorder>.

²⁹ Fisher, *Radical Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life*, xiii.

³⁰ Fisher, 5.

³¹ Fisher, 7.

³² Fisher, 9.

³³ Fisher, 12.

³⁴ Fisher, 13.

³⁵ Kahn and Hasbach, 7.

³⁶ Howard Frumkin, “Building the Science Base: Ecopsychology Meets Clinical Epidemiology,” in *Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological Species*, ed. Peter H. Kahn Jr. and Patricia H. Hasbach (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 141-172.

³⁷ Peter H. Kahn Jr., *Technological Nature: Adaptation and the Future of Human Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).

³⁸ Kahn, *Technological Nature*, 3.

³⁹ Fisher, *Radical Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life*, xiii.

⁴⁰ Christine Lynn Norton, “Ecopsychology and Social Work: Creating an Interdisciplinary Framework for Redefining Person-in-Environment,” *Ecopsychology* 1, no. 3 (2009): 140.

personal gain. Instead, the Earth is seen as alive, and an entity to be in relationship with that does not exist outside the self.”⁴¹ Ecopsychology approaches this vital problem from a very sensible point and tries to make human beings understand that the universe is a whole and all living and non-living beings have equal rights to live and flourish on this planet. In other words, human beings are neither superior nor God-like, so they should learn to co-exist and live in harmony with the outer world instead of dominating and destroying it. As Roszak identifies, the aim of ecopsychology is to develop wisdom to grasp the rhythm and language of the universe: “Understanding the universe was a matter of listening, having ears to music of the spheres, the voice of the Earth. Wisdom meant connecting.”⁴²

George Orwell’s *1984* can be analyzed from an ecopsychological perspective with the focus on the connection between the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of both human and nature. The devastated outer world and the absence of natural environment have adverse effect on human mind, soul and life in dystopic worlds, leading to psychopathologies as depicted in *1984* and this study intends to discuss how healing is very much related to the restoration of the Earth and how detrimental environmental habits and ecocidal activities abstain us from leading a healthy and fulfilling life and forming meaningful connections and relations.

An Ecopsychological Insight into *1984*

George Orwell’s prominent novel *1984*, published in 1949, is among the most read and studied world classics. It contains a great many topics to be explored, analyzed and studied. As a dystopian novel, it stands out with its characters, settings and the themes. The oppression of the totalitarian regime, the use of technology for the subjugation of the society, the strict surveillance system and controlling mechanisms along with social and economic inequalities denote the most prominent dystopian features in this work. *1984* can also be characterized by the absence of nature that deeply and adversely affects the psychology and the lifestyles of the characters.

In the novel, Orwell rarely refers to nature and nature seemingly does not occupy a central place in the characters’ lives. The story takes place in a modern dystopian natureless society where all the ties with nature have been strained. Orwell’s intentional removal of nature promotes critical thinking and a new understanding concerning the place of human in the universe and the necessity of nature for human wellness. For David Ehrenfeld, “[...] Orwell had a profound understanding both of nature and of humanity’s place in it. He knew nature from encounter not from intellect. Awareness of the natural world was with him constantly. Nature was his independent standard, the open secret of his prophetic vision.”⁴³ *1984* effectively demonstrates that alienation from nature inevitably leads to self-alienation which eventually results in the loss of the capacity for self-autonomy and self-sufficiency. The enslavement of the citizens by the totalitarian regime has been enabled thanks to their disconnection from nature. As Piers H.G. Stephens contends, there exist “[...] vital but neglected connections between nature and human liberty found in George Orwell’s [...] *1984*”⁴⁴

The gloomy atmosphere of the petrifying and bleak physical environment which is marked by massive decay, ruin and destruction does not only negatively impact the psychological, mental and emotional states of the characters but also prevents them from attending to and perceiving nature: “Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no color in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere.”⁴⁵ Oceania, under the domination of Big Brother’s totalitarian regime, has been turned into a desolate and barren country. Even the designs of ministry buildings are deliberately arranged to keep nature out: “The sun had shifted round, and the myriad windows of the Ministry of Truth, with the light no longer shining on them, looked grim as the loopholes of a fortress.”⁴⁶ Depriving the citizens of nature is a political and ideological action of the party to create soulless and mechanical creatures incapable of resistance. The absence of nature has caused the characters to lose their human qualities including memory, creativity, compassion, empathy, confidence and integrity. Moreover, their capacity to love and trust other people and their desire to form a family or to belong to community for meaningful relations, and their need to lead a purposeful life have been systematically and strategically destroyed along with the destruction of the natural environment.

From the very first pages of the novel, Winston’s dream of “Golden Country” recurs many times and he is not sure

⁴¹ Alexis Lassman, “Healing Ourselves and the Earth with Ecopsychology” *The Pachamama Alliance* July 2016, <https://blog.pachamama.org/blog/healing-ourselves-and-the-earth-with-ecopsychology>.

⁴² Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology*, 16.

⁴³ David Ehrenfeld, “The Roots of Prophecy: Orwell and Nature,” *The Hudson Review* 38, no. 2 (1985): 196. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3851009>.

⁴⁴ Piers HG Stephens, “Nature and Human Liberty: The Golden Country in George Orwell’s *1984* and An Alternative Conception of Human Freedom,” *Organization & Environment* 17, no.1 (2004): 77. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.379.842&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

⁴⁵ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, ed. Ronald Carter and Valerie Durow, (London: Penguin Student Editions, 2000), 6.

⁴⁶ Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 27.



whether he has ever seen this place before in his real life. His dream country functions as wish-fulfillment by bringing him away from the secluded buildings where party has locked the citizens up into close contact with nature. A “Golden Country” image also represents a sense of freedom, solace and relief for Winston. Orwell attaches ideological and psychological significance and several functions to nature. Ehrenfeld claims that nature has at least three qualities in Orwell’s life: “The first of these qualities or properties of nature is honesty; the second I have to describe with four different but related words, reliability/continuity/durability/resilience; the third property of nature that was important to Orwell is its beauty and serenity.”⁴⁷ In 1984, nature is closely associated with the idealized version of human existence, admirable human attitudes and qualities and satisfactory life. Orwell suggests that only natural surroundings can proffer optimum conditions for the flourishing of human beings. Therefore, human beings’ overall health depends on their reciprocal relations with nature.

Orwell employs nature-related symbols very effectively and arouses certain feelings and emotions through their connotations. Chestnut Tree Café is one of the symbols which serves more than what it seems to be. It is a place where rebels meet. The symbolism associated with the chestnut tree is both profound and layered. For the Celts, the chestnut tree, with its long lifespan and enduring strength and beauty, was regarded as a protective figure for both humans and animals at the close of each year.⁴⁸ Its exposed, twisted roots symbolized a renewal of vital life energy. The tree also symbolizes liberty, justice, honesty, endurance and reliability. In the novel, those who fail to show conformity and compliance and are oppressed by the system end up in the shade of this tree which provides guardianship and protection.⁴⁹ In this sense, this image suggests the association of nature with constancy, solidity and a sense of security: “The solid world exists, its laws do not change. Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall towards the earth’s centre.”⁵⁰

Another important symbol closely tied to nature is the thrush’s song in the countryside, which was so striking that it drew Winston and Julia together, leaving them captivated.

The music went on and on, minute after minute, with astonishing variations, never once repeating itself, almost as though the bird were deliberately showing off its virtuosity... But by degrees the flood of music drove all speculations out of his mind. It was as though it were a kind of liquid stuff that poured all over him and got mixed up with the sunlight that filtered through the leaves. He stopped thinking and merely felt.

Deja Perkins, an urban ecologist, asserts that the wood thrush embodies inner peace and tranquility of mind more effectively than any other bird.⁵¹ Moreover, it represents freedom and emotion. The melodic singing of the thrush bird has the power to transform the ordinary place into a magical place. The thrush comes in sight when Winston is fascinated with the beauty of nature like his Golden Country and its song mesmerizes him and Julia, improving their mental and physical wellbeing. The thrush’s song makes Winston and Julia remember the forgotten fact that they are not the mechanical machines, but real human beings, which makes them genuinely feel love, compassion and trust for each other: “Winston and Julia clung together, fascinated. The music went on and on, minute after minute, with astonishing variations, never once repeating itself, almost as though the bird were deliberately showing off its virtuosity.”⁵² The song of the thrush brings Winston and Julia back to their senses which have become dysfunctional by awakening their numbed and dumber feelings and emotions. Thus, the thrush serves as a comforting companion in moments of despair and loneliness with its ability to absorb sorrow, promote healing and offer assistance and guidance.⁵³ Like the chestnut tree, the thrush bird is associated with liberty in the novel by stimulating the thinking capacity of human beings so that they can recognize that they are free individuals. Moreover, the thrush possesses subtle power that nourishes the creative imagination, leading to the emergence of new thoughts, fresh ideas, and a renewed vitality. Orwell suggests that the natural entities invigorate human beings with “their capacity to surprise, to break through the stereotypical patterns of our existing instrumental orientations to the world”.⁵⁴ Thanks to his mental and emotional renewal through his direct experience and appreciation of nature, Winston gathers courage and determination to transform from an oppressed man into a rebellious one. This transformation is initiated and triggered by the thrush’s song he hears in nature, so it represents inspiring, empowering and regenerative power. This is another clear evidence as to how nature can provide mental and

⁴⁷ Ehrenfeld, “The Roots of Prophecy: Orwell and Nature”, 196.

⁴⁸ EcoTree, “Sweet Chestnut,” *EcoTree*, accessed May 2025, <https://ecotree.green/en/offers/species/chestnut>.

⁴⁹ EcoTree, “Sweet Chestnut,” *EcoTree*, accessed May 2025, <https://ecotree.green/en/offers/species/chestnut>.

⁵⁰ Orwell, 74.

⁵¹ BirdNote (program), “The Wood Thrush as a Symbol for Inner Peace,” *BirdNote Daily*, accessed May 2025, podcast audio, <https://www.birdnote.org/podcasts/birdnote-daily/wood-thrush-symbol-inner-peace>.

⁵² Orwell, 113.

⁵³ Arin Murphy-Hiscock, *The Hidden Meaning of Birds: A Spiritual Field Guide to the Symbolology and Significance of These Divine Winged Messengers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019).

⁵⁴ Stephens, “Nature and Human Liberty: The Golden Country in George Orwell’s 1984 and An Alternative Conception of Human Freedom,” 93.



emotional wellbeing.

The absence of nature in the modern era affects people's mental health negatively, as explained by Roszak: "Ecopsychology [...] deeply questions the essential sanity of our gargantuan urban-industrial culture, whether capitalistic or collectivistic in its organization".⁵⁵ In 1984, the modern life is not only characterized by "its cruelty and insecurity" but also by "its bareness, its dinginess, its listlessness".⁵⁶ In the technologically developed industrial world of 1984, technology that has completely replaced the natural environment is not utilized for the optimal development of Oceania; on the contrary; it is used to ensure the enslavement of the citizens by the party through telescreens, hidden cameras or microphones which create a panoptic society where people are watched and heard everywhere all at once. Under these tyrannical and apprehensive circumstances, Oceanian people are systematically and deliberately disconnected from the natural world: "The ideal set up by the Party was something huge, terrible, and glittering — a world of steel and concrete, of monstrous machines and terrifying weapons".⁵⁷ The primary aim in depriving people of nature is to suppress their ability to feel, think, and act with wisdom and effectiveness, ultimately crushing their spirit to ensure they pose no threat to the system's existence and control. This requires the destruction of free will and the erosion of any sense of ethical responsibility for the self and the other. Such deliberately imposed deprivations and deficiencies inevitably harm the health of the human body, mind, psyche, and cognitive functions, as can be clearly seen in 1984.

In the novel, the Party's decisions, policies, and practices lead to severe consequences that ultimately result in the degradation and decline of the human mind, body, and soul. The totalitarian regime makes great efforts to manipulate and destroy history, past memories and the free expression of thoughts and emotions along with the experience of pleasures by continuously creating the atmosphere of fear, desperation and hopelessness. This is a psychological warfare the Party engages in against its citizens. Disconnecting human beings from nature goes hand in hand with the project of dehumanization. They are all turned into machine-like creatures and thus completely estranged from their true selves as a result of the repression of their natural instincts, feelings, emotions and desires. At this point, an ecopsychological perspective is invaluable for understanding the crisis individuals face in a society devoid of nature and natural connections. Without physical immersion in nature and emotional attachment for the other members of the ecosystem we equally share, it is not possible to rediscover and regain our natural authentic selves. Return to nature enables us to redirect our attention to our true selves. In addition to fostering self-discovery and personal growth, active engagement with nature offers significant psychological benefits, helping to reduce negative emotions such as depression, fear, anxiety, and frustration, while also enhancing creativity. This is precisely what Winston experiences in the natural environment, which exists beyond the confines of the social realm.

The constant deleting and reconstructing the past should be discussed in terms of its influence on human psychology and our deteriorating relation with nature. The Party maintains that controlling the past is necessary in order to control the future and thus the present: "'Who controls the past,' 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.'"⁵⁸ Memory is considered to be one of the most dangerous things in Oceania because the knowledge of the past can certainly expose the falsity of the party-generated truths and realities: "[...] Very well, then. We, the Party, control all records, and we control all memories. Then we control the past, do we not?"⁵⁹ Amnesia is one of the biggest problems the postmodern man struggles with. Due to this widespread forgetfulness inflicted by the Party, the characters do not remember their original ties with nature, which constitutes their essence. According to Maslow, when the essential core of the self is "denied or suppressed", sickness inevitably emerges.⁶⁰ As many psychoanalysts such as Freud and Jung argue, repression of aspects of the self — memories, desires, fears — can lead to neurosis or even psychosis.

The fact that the Party destroys the past through the reconstruction of a language has a direct impact on the relation between human and nature. Language is one of the most crucial instruments to hand down the history, culture, traditions, religion, and literature of one nation to the next generations. There is also a strong bond between language and human psychology. Language is the product of nature as it is based on the imitation of the sounds in nature. Since human psychology and thinking capacity is deeply connected with the language, the Party focuses on creating a new language, Newspeak, to manipulate what and how to know, think, feel and respond: "The whole literature of the past will have been destroyed. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron — they'll exist only in Newspeak versions, not merely changed

⁵⁵ Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology*, 320-321.

⁵⁶ Orwell, 68.

⁵⁷ Orwell, 68.

⁵⁸ Orwell, 34.

⁵⁹ Orwell, 225.

⁶⁰ See, G. C. Heller, "Towards a Psychology of Being," by Abraham H. Maslow, D. van Nostrand Company, *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 117, no. 537 (1970), 228.

into something different, but actually changed into something contradictory of what they used to be”.⁶¹ By doing that, the Party not only kills the potential for critical thinking and creative imagination but also removes the possibility of comparing and contrasting the past and present conditions of Oceania so that the citizens feel no doubt that the present time is the best time of their life. This also makes them believe that the natureless life is natural and refers to the original state of existence and it is what they have always had. With the logic of “doublethink”, the main thinking principle of Newspeak, the Inner party aims at breaking down all logical links and causality to hinder suspicion, hesitation and questioning. In this sense, *1984* demonstrates how the alienation from nature contributes to and underpins the inhibition of mental and cognitive capacities and activities of the characters while healthy and harmonious relations with nature certainly enhance and stimulate thinking skills and abilities.

Already we know almost literally nothing about the Revolution and the years before the Revolution. Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book has been rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street and building has been renamed, every date has been altered. [...] History has stopped. [...] I know, of course, that the past is falsified, but it would never be possible for me to prove it, even when I did the falsification myself. After the thing is done, no evidence ever remains. The only evidence is inside my own mind, and I don't know with any certainty that any other human being shares my memories.⁶²

Along with the loss of past memories, the people are prevented from identifying the true sources of the problems systematically and deliberately generated by the party. They also unavoidably suffer from displacement and uprootedness since their sense of origin and belonging has been irreparably damaged, which makes them mentally, bodily and emotionally vulnerable and delicate. The knowledge of where we belong to and where we have come from fortifies our mind, body and soul by fostering our capacity for resistance so that we can stand up against every attempt that aims to subdue and subjugate us. Although Winston has a vague memory of what the past was like, he still has the desire and determination to challenge the overwhelmingly oppressive system: “It was true that he had no memories of anything greatly different. In any time that he could accurately remember, there had never been quite enough to eat [...] Why should one feel it to be intolerable unless one had some kind of ancestral memory that things had once been different?”⁶³ As Stephens indicates, Orwell conveys “new visions of old lessons, chances to recognize our contemporary social ills and to start curing them by reconnecting with nature and with history across a wider spectrum of understanding”.⁶⁴ The memories of the past are necessary to reconnect ourselves to nature by providing satisfaction, relaxation, productivity and happiness, which will certainly help us to attain our overall health and wellness. The Party collapses the inherent connection between the outer and the inner worlds in order to avert all possible defiant, transgressive and overreaching activities by hindering the true knowledge of the self and the natural world. Since whoever looks outside, in deed, looks inside, the inside cannot be fully understood without understanding and appreciating the outside world. Hence, that the Oceanian people are deprived of the awareness and perception of the natural world keeps them in self-ignorance with no notion of where they come from, who they are and what they are capable of doing. The lack of self-knowledge and self-awareness necessary for emotional regulation and mental stability can be seen as a root cause of irrational behavior, psychological disorders, and even madness.

The possession of unchallengeable and infallible power is the fundamental motivation of the Party. The agents of the Inner Party exercise tyrannical power over everything including the people, body, mind, and nature. With the absolute authority they attain via advanced technology, they attempt to “make the laws of Nature”. Orwell's narrative subtly points out the close relation between technological advancement and ecological disasters. However, the desire to dominate nature is not only ecocidal but has always been self-harming. From an ecopsychological perspective, as Roszak suggests, “the re-evaluation of certain compulsively ‘masculine’ character traits [...] drives us to dominate nature as if it were alien and rightless realm.”⁶⁵ This desire to control, conquer and possess nature results in “original trauma”⁶⁶, as stated by Glendinning.⁶⁷ She is concerned about the influence of industrial technology on mankind and identifies separation from the Earth as the original trauma that leads to subsequent traumas like genocides and abuses: “Technological society's dislocation from the only home we have ever known is a traumatic event that has occurred over generations”.⁶⁸ The characters are entrapped in completely human-constructed and technology-driven reality.

⁶¹ Orwell, 50.

⁶² Orwell, 140-141.

⁶³ Orwell, 55-56.

⁶⁴ Stephens, 76-98.

⁶⁵ Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology*, 320-321.

⁶⁶ See, Hibbard, “Ecopsychology: A Review”, 34-35.

⁶⁷ Chellis Glendinning, “Technology, Trauma, and the Wild,” in *Ecopsychology: Restoring The Earth, Healing the Mind*, ed. Theodore Roszak, Mary E. Gomes, and Allen D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierrro Club Books, 1995), 53.

⁶⁸ Glendinning, “Technology, Trauma, and the Wild,” 53.

Disconnection from nature and exposure to mass technological society along with the artificial life and world it offers generate mental pathology and traumatizing experiences. Instead of the real sun and day light, the Oceanian people are constantly exposed to telescreens and mechanical voices. Michiel Schwarz argues that “technology has become our environment as well as our ideology”.⁶⁹ The characters have lost their notion of what the real universe is like since their experience, sense of reality and knowledge have been determined by mass technology. What is worse, they have lost their ability to discern the deadening influence of technology upon their mind, body, spirit and psychology.⁷⁰

The inner party shows obsession with not only controlling the actions, opinions and behaviors of workers but also the natural world. The way the working life and social relations are designed also shapes how we interact with nature. The jobs and workers get separated, fragmented and compartmentalized to distort unity, wholism, collectivity and integration. This resonate with the way our perceptions, experiences and feelings get separated from each other. Thus, the absence of nature and the violation of the very basic principle of ecosystem, that is interconnectedness, interdependence and interrelatedness, cause the characters to suffer from mental, cognitive and emotive disorders. The traumatic responses the characters in Oceania display include dissociation which means “we split our consciousness, repress whole arenas of experience and shut down our full perception of the world”.⁷¹ Since the loss of perception and the loss of self-control are aggravated by the loss of nature, they can only be recovered by reunion with nature.

The ruling party deliberately inhibits a life that can provide the inherent needs and expectations of human psyche for full development and wellbeing. People who maintain their relation with the Earth have dignity, wisdom and individual sense of self and their nature-oriented cultures are opposed to abusive systems and structures of domination. The technology that has replaced nature destroys “the primary sources of satisfaction once found routinely” in life including “physical nourishment, vital community, fresh food, continuity between work and meaning, unhindered participation in life experiences, personal choices, community decisions, and spiritual connection with the natural world”.⁷² The outer nature is an inseparable aspect of human nature and thus, the rupture between these two creates an obstacle for thinking, freedom, awareness, liberty and emotional expression.

The Party`s attempt to control and dominate the outside world goes hand in hand with the manipulation of human nature: “We control life, Winston, at all its levels. You are imagining that there is something called human nature which will be outraged by what we do and will turn against us. But we create human nature. Men are infinitely malleable. They are helpless, like the animals.”⁷³ This project of redesigning human psychic and mental structures not only fail to acknowledge the holistic, symbiotic system and mutual relations on this planet but also ignores the essential fact that “The needs of the planet are the needs of the person, the rights of the person are the rights of the planet”.⁷⁴ The Party acts like a God and sees human beings as “helpless” creatures who should be modified by completely depriving them of their human qualities. As a result, the dictatorial system has initiated “a process of nonliving that is progressively death-oriented”.⁷⁵

Another strategy the Party makes use of to control human mind and body is to abolish all the sources and materials that provide pleasure, happiness and satisfaction, which automatically leads to negative emotional states. The logic behind the omission of delight and joy is to produce negative affect, “that is defined by the common variance between anxiety, sadness, fear, anger, guilt and shame, irritability, and other unpleasant emotions”.⁷⁶ While aesthetic and natural beauty offers joy and bliss, nature deprivation causes depression, anxiety, and despair. The objective is to suppress human individuality, privacy and agency by transforming compliant citizens into unfeeling, unthinking, and mechanized beings. In such a system, subjective feelings and emotions are intolerable: “There will be no art, no literature, no science. When we are omnipotent we shall have no more need of science. There will be no distinction between beauty and ugliness. There will be no curiosity, no enjoyment of the process of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed.”⁷⁷ The most threatening experiences for the Party include love, sexual intimacy, recreational and outdoor activities, as well as personal care. Thus, naturally existing desires are repressed. Marriage and sexual intercourse are allowed only for reproductive purposes and thus mechanically conducted with a sense of obligation and duty to the state. Due to the fact that the repression of sex instinct is impossible, engaging in sex without pleasure is tacitly permitted; so, prostitution is

⁶⁹ Michiel Schwarz, “The Technological Culture,” in *The Technological Culture* eds. Michiel Schwarz and Rein Jansma, (Amsterdam: De Bailie, 1989), 3.

⁷⁰ Langdon Winner, *Autonomous Technology: Technics-out-of-Control as a Theme in Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978).

⁷¹ Glendinning, “Technology, Trauma, and the Wild,” 53.

⁷² Glendinning, 53.

⁷³ Orwell, 243.

⁷⁴ Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology*, 320-321.

⁷⁵ Anne Wilson Schaefer, *Codependence: Misunderstood-Mistreated* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1986), 25.

⁷⁶ Deborah M. Stringer, “Negative Affect,” in *Encyclopedia of Behavioral Medicine*, eds. Marc D. Gellman and J. Rick Turner (New York: Springer, 2013), 1303-1304, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005-9_606.

⁷⁷ Orwell, 242.



not regarded as a serious problem as long as prostitutes belong to an inferior class: “Its real, undeclared purpose was to remove all pleasure from the sexual act. [...] The Party was trying to kill the sex instinct, or, if it could not be killed, then to distort it and dirty it.”⁷⁸ Julia, aware of the intentions of the Party, takes enough courage to challenge and violate the established rules in Big Brother’s society whenever she finds the opportunity: “‘When you make love you’re using up energy; and afterwards you feel happy and don’t give a damn for anything. They can’t bear you to feel like that. [...] If you’re happy inside yourself, why should you get excited about Big Brother and the Three-Year Plans and the Two Minutes Hate and all the rest of their bloody rot?’”⁷⁹ The Party restricts citizens from participating in outdoor or recreational activities that might offer the therapeutic benefits of nature. As a result, they become consumed by negative emotions such as hatred, fear, and suspicion. Their lack of exposure to the natural environment further deepens their depression, misery, and overall unhappiness.

Personal care, especially that of women, is another aspect repressed by the Party. In Oceania, women who work for the Party are not allowed to wear makeup, use perfume or get dressed in a feminine style. Feminine charm and attractiveness are also discouraged to prevent sexual attraction and emotional intimacy. All natural human desires, drives and instincts become the target of attack by the Party in their attempt to reengineer human psychology and cognition at the expense of naturalness. In order to protect her female psyche, Julia gets rid of the highly masculine uniform the comrades of the Party have to wear. Instead, she wears makeup, dresses in feminine clothes and uses perfume when she meets Winston in the room above Mr Charrington’s shop: “Her lips were deeply reddened, her cheeks rouged, her nose powdered; there was even a touch of something under the eyes to make them brighter. With just a few dabs of colour in the right places she had become not only very much prettier, but, above all, far more feminine.”⁸⁰ This illustrates Julia’s struggle to preserve her human and feminine side by safeguarding her mental stability and physical health through the fulfillment of her biological and psychological urges.

The most conspicuous scene in the novel to study from an ecopsychological point of view is the one Winston and Julia meet at the countryside. Being in nature enables Winston to experience “self-examination, self-confrontation, and self-realization.”⁸¹ His engagement with nature brings him into deeper awareness about what he needs and wants in his life and activates his will towards self-improvement and actualization. Maybe because “affection for nature may act as a psychological safety valve against authoritarianism”,⁸² both in his dream world and the real nature, his experience provides him with relaxation, safety and freedom. Winston and Julia tune themselves to the rhythm of nature, which makes them feel genuinely human. Roszak also emphasizes the importance of establishing mutual communication with nature to gain understanding and wisdom and in order to do so, it is essential to give a hearing to nature’s voice, like the song of the thrush: “Understanding the universe was a matter of listening, having ears to music of the spheres, the voice of the Earth. Wisdom meant connecting.”⁸³ Nature offers a lot to teach us if we have ears to hear and wisdom to understand. Winston’s psychological improvement and restorative experiences in the countryside are best understood through an ecopsychological lens. His consciousness expands; his stress and anxiety diminish, and he becomes more attuned to his feelings, needs, and inner world. In other words, reuniting with nature heals both his mind and soul, empowering him mentally, physically, and emotionally.

The Party makes use of the utmost fears of the people as a controlling mechanism. Winston’s fear of rat is related to his childhood traumas and becomes the focal point of his torture in Room 101. The purpose is to break Winston’s soul so that he will give up resisting and betray Julia, thereby shattering his resilience, self-esteem, and self-trust: “Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don’t care what you do to her. Tear her face off, strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!”⁸⁴ The Ministry of Love, where Winston is detained for his reconditioning and psychological redesign, is entirely cut off from nature. This stark absence of the natural world illustrates how disconnection from nature leads to the erasure of the natural self.

The other strategy the Party uses to distort the perceptions of the society is to make them believe that there is an ongoing war. War does not only cause the destruction of the physical world but also devastates the society’s mental health. Feeling fear under constant threat in the social setting causes the individuals to identify culture with destructiveness, corruption, insecurity and violence while the natural environment is associated with comfort, relaxation and a sense of security. This overwhelming fear leads to the intellectual disorder among the citizens who have “no way of knowing

⁷⁸ Orwell, 61.

⁷⁹ Orwell, 121.

⁸⁰ Orwell, 129.

⁸¹ Schroll, “Wrestling with Arne Naess: A Chronicle of Ecopsychology’s Origins,” 43.

⁸² Stephens, 93.

⁸³ Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology*, 16.

⁸⁴ Orwell, 259.

which direction is up and which is down”⁸⁵ and they blindly obey the authorities since the “rulers of such a state are absolute, as the Pharaohs or the Caesars could not be”.⁸⁶ The Party’s major goal in establishing the psychology of war as the prevailing mental state is to make the people live their pain psychologically rather than physically. “War, it will be seen, accomplishes the necessary destruction, but accomplishes it in a psychologically acceptable way. [...] All that is needed is that a state of war should exist.”⁸⁷

After all, *1984* covers important issues that can be explored through the lens of ecopsychology with the focus on the negative impact of nature deprivation on human overall wellbeing. We are living in “a sick society” where as Freud argues, “...possibly the whole of mankind-have become neurotic”.⁸⁸ Oceania is a reflection of the urban dwelling “shaped, designed consciously and unconsciously, by identity cripples, who are deprived in various social and ecological dimensions, yet who are also cripples in the sense of potential capacity, the possibilities of personal realization”.⁸⁹ In Oceania, there is systematic and deliberate exclusion and destruction of nature by the state authorities. Nature is treated as either absent or dead because of its potential to stimulate thinking, and creativity and to arouse the feeling of freedom and pleasure. The disconnection from nature leads to the emergence of hollow men since their human qualities are removed. Self-alienation and the estrangement from the human community and environment are other consequences of the separation from nature that seriously disturb human wellness. In the novel, natural settings are replaced by prison-like, panopticon buildings where characters completely suffer emotional detachment. In order to ensure the mind control through brain washing, conditioning and posttruth, the Inner Party destroys the memories, thoughts, emotions and authentic and autonomous identities. To reclaim their health and wellbeing, the people of Oceania must rekindle their bond with nature, liberating themselves from the dehumanizing grip of oppression and control.

Conclusion

Orwell brought together political and social issues with ecological concerns in his novel *1984*. This article has pointed out the close link between the wellbeing of human and nature from an ecopsychological point of view. Rozsak argues that “the core of the mind is the ecological unconscious. For ecopsychology, the repression of the ecological unconscious is the deepest root of collusive madness in industrial society. Open access to the ecological unconscious is the path to sanity.”⁹⁰ *1984* puts the emphasis on the necessity of restoring our broken connection to nature for the healing of all our relationships, including personal, societal, cultural and ecological. Because of the detachment from nature, identities are no longer shaped by natural inclinations, self-reflection and personal aspirations but by technology, consumerism, and capitalism. Due to detachment from the natural world, modern societies create sick, cripple people since emotions go unchecked, desires go unexamined and fears constantly grow in the state of anxiety. *1984* illustrates the cycle in which disconnection from nature leads to disconnection from the self, which in turn leads to disconnection from others, ultimately resulting in widespread violence, societal dysfunction and collective psychological collapse. Without nature to reflect and anchor them, the characters in the novel become disoriented internally. They lose touch with primal instincts, intuition, emotion, and authenticity, drifting into numbness, apathy and madness. Given the interdependence between the self, others, and nature, the breakdown of one inevitably leads to the disintegration of the others when mutual support and nourishment are absent.

As discussed in *Ecotherapy: Healing with Nature in Mind*, the intense feelings of grief and fear are “the natural responses to the death of so many living beings and the ongoing distress of Earth, air, and ocean life all around us. Because we’re not being informed about links between mental health symptoms caused by the way we live and the accelerating inner and outer devastation, we remain mystified about why we feel so much pain.”⁹¹ An ecopsychological insight into *1984* is promising since dystopian novels, with their capacity to inform and warn human beings about both the resulting and the possible consequences of their destructive practices and habits, have to power to raise ecological consciousness and lead to a drastic change in attitudes, perceptions, values and lifestyles of human beings. The Earth does not exist independently outside the human body, mind and soul; on the contrary, the Earth is within us and thus overcoming self-alienation, discovering eco-affinity with nature can enable us to connect to our deepest selves. *1984* sharply demonstrates our unbalanced, disproportionate and deranged lifestyles which generate undesirable and adverse impacts both on human

⁸⁵ Orwell, 179.

⁸⁶ Orwell, 179.

⁸⁷ Orwell, 173- 174.

⁸⁸ Paul Shepard, “Nature and Madness,” in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, ed. Theodore Roszak, Mary E. Gomes, and Allen D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995), 24.

⁸⁹ Shepard, “Nature and Madness,” 33.

⁹⁰ Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology*, 320.

⁹¹ Linda Buzzell and Craig Chalquist, “Psyche and nature in a circle of healing” in *Ecotherapy: Healing with Nature in Mind*, eds. Linda Buzzell and Craig Chalquist (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2009), 17.

body and psyche as well as on cultural and ecological life. It also suggests that because of nature's therapeutic effects, when the characters struggle with depression, frustration or anxiety, they are driven by the natural inclination to go out in nature. Therefore, for the health of every living being on Earth, it is essential that the mankind invest their effort and energy in creating "an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling", and a fair socio-economic system so that both humans and the more-than human can healthily thrive. In order for the human to grow whole, we should develop intimacy with our soul and mind along with the soul and mind of the Universe. When we fail to craft this relational self and construct symbiotic relations, the apocalyptic vision as presented in *1984* will unavoidably come true soon.

Extended Abstract

This study presents an ecopsychological analysis of George Orwell's *1984*, examining the intricate relationship between human psychology and the natural environment within the context of a dystopian social order. Ecopsychology, an interdisciplinary framework that explores the psychological impact of humanity's disconnection from the natural world, is used here to reveal how Orwell's depiction of a totalitarian regime exposes the devastating consequences of nature deprivation on individual and collective mental health. To appreciate the intrinsic significance of life beyond humankind and to comprehend the true, natural condition of being with its full potential for development, ecopsychology promotes the idea that we must reconnect with the wildness both inside ourselves and in the natural environment.

In addition to providing insight into the grim future that lies ahead, the dystopian novels highlight a number of factors and circumstances that have caused significant harm and deterioration to both the ecosystem and the human race. Among the major causes of mental disorders, physical illnesses, and ecological disasters are industrial advancements, the transhumanist project of using science and technology to perfect human skills and capacities, capitalism's exploitative and instrumentalist mindset, the misuse of science and technology, nuclear wars, and the unquenchable human desire for greater power and control. The novel demonstrates how the political and socioeconomic structures do not uphold environmental reciprocity or meet the physical, emotional, and psychological requirements of many living forms. In contrast, human instincts, urges, and desires are tightly repressed and restricted. Thus, the system's unnatural expectations that keep nature out of human society lead to the development of unpleasant and artificially fitted feelings, emotions, and thoughts. In the same manner that human and natural oppression and suffering occur together, ecopsychology firmly believes that cultural, sociological, and ecological healing go hand in hand. Thus, by incorporating nature as a pertinent category to examine in relation to dystopian fiction, an ecopsychological study of *1984* can transcend the current debates and analyses that concentrate on the political and social evils of the society.

In *1984*, the Party's systematic eradication of natural elements from daily life functions as a tool of control and domination. The absence of nature is not incidental but ideologically motivated, reinforcing the regime's efforts to sever all ties between individuals and any external reality beyond the Party's influence. The natural world is symbolically and physically removed, replaced by artificial environments that reflect the sterile, mechanized order imposed upon society. This detachment from the organic world leads to a profound psychological fragmentation in the characters, most notably Winston Smith, whose fleeting encounters with nature, such as his moments in the countryside or his dreams, represent a subconscious yearning for truth, freedom, and emotional wholeness.

1984 covers crucial problems that can be explored via the lens of ecopsychology with the focus on the detrimental impact of nature deprivation on human overall wellness. Oceania's state leaders intentionally and systematically exclude and destroy nature. Since nature can inspire creativity and thought as well as a sense of freedom and enjoyment, it is either viewed as dead or absent. Because of the loss of their human characteristics, hollow men emerge as a result of the separation from nature. Separation from nature also has negative effects on human well-being, such as self-alienation and estrangement from the environment and human community. In the book, the natural surroundings are swapped out by panopticon, prison-like structures where the characters are emotionally detached. The Inner Party destroys memories, thoughts, emotions, and genuine, independent identities in order to maintain mind control through brainwashing, indoctrination, and postruth. Oceania's people must reestablish their connection to nature and free themselves from the dehumanizing hold of oppression and control if they are to regain their health and well-being. *1984* exemplifies the vicious cycle that results in widespread violence, societal instability, and collective psychological collapse: detachment from nature leads to disconnection from the self, which in turn leads to disconnection from others. The novel's characters experience internal disorientation when they are unable to find solace and reflection in nature. They sink toward indifference, apathy, and craziness as they lose touch with fundamental instincts, intuition, emotion, and genuineness. Since the self, other people, and nature are all interdependent, when one falls apart, the others will also fall apart in the absence of mutual care and nutrition.

Through an ecopsychological lens, this article argues that Orwell's novel portrays a society suffering not only from

political oppression but also from ecological alienation. The suppression of nature parallels the suppression of authentic human experience, contributing to emotional numbness, cognitive dissonance, and spiritual desolation. The discussion here highlights how the absence of ecological connection exacerbates authoritarian control by undermining the psychological resilience and autonomy of individuals.

By linking the inner psychological world to the outer ecological world, this study underscores the necessity of maintaining a harmonious relationship between humans and their environment for the preservation of mental, emotional, and societal health. To appreciate the intrinsic significance of life beyond humankind and to comprehend the true, natural condition of being with its full potential for development, ecopsychology promotes the idea that we must reconnect with the wildness both inside ourselves and in the natural environment. The ecopsychological reading of *1984* thereby extends the novel's significance beyond its political critique, suggesting that ecological estrangement is a key dimension of dystopian control. In doing so, the study contributes to broader ecocritical and psychological discourses, reinforcing the idea that the integrity of the human psyche is fundamentally dependent on its connection to the natural world.

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