



A Gynocritical Analysis of Newman's *Julia* as a Response to Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

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ABSTRACT

Elaine Showalter believes it is restrictive to read stories about women written by male writers because male-dominated narration is filled with stereotypical representations of women, which consequently maintains the victimization of women. With her idea of *gynocriticism*, she refers to the need for female writers to write about the female. In that sense, she demands female characters to be put at the centre of literary works in order to reach a more inclusive understanding of human experience. Building on her theory of female writing, this paper attempts to show that female experience, perspective, and voice must be communicated within the literary landscape to have a better and multifaceted understanding of the lives of women and to fix the misinterpretations of womanhood through the analysis of *Julia* (2023) by Sandra Newman and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) by George Orwell. Even though Orwell manages to critique the horrible outcomes of totalitarianism in his canonical dystopia through his protagonist Winston, he completely ignores what Julia feels, thinks, or experiences. There is not much information about Julia's life as an individual or as a woman. Therefore, Newman reconstructs Julia as the protagonist of her dystopia by focusing solely on Julia's thoughts, endeavours, and emotions by filling in the missing parts that Orwell does not touch upon. Accordingly, this paper examines how a female writer establishes a society that is not solely governed by universally accepted male-dominated ideals, creating a space for a formerly silenced and decentralised character so that she can be valued on her own terms.

Keywords: Showalter, gynocriticism, Julia, feminist criticism, female writing

Introduction

By the late 1970s, Elaine Showalter, an American feminist and literary critic, observed that feminist criticism had encountered what she termed a 'theoretical impasse' which she attributes to the male-dominated nature of 'theory' itself. "When we consider the historical conditions in which critical ideologies are produced" (Showalter, 1997, p. 218), it can be seen that feminist criticism was the most avoided out of all the critical approaches because during this period theoretical perspectives were predominantly shaped by men. By highlighting the male-centric nature of much feminist critique, Showalter underscores the risk of perpetuating the very dynamics that feminism seeks to challenge. She points out that feminist critics may unintentionally continue to marginalize women's authentic voice and experience with stereotypes created by men, critics being male, or interpretive methodologies developed by men. This may obscure the historical and ideological biases inherent in these theories.

In this respect, in her influential essay "Towards A Feminist Poetics," Elaine Showalter explains two forms of feminist criticism. The first one is *feminist critique* which "is concerned with *woman as reader* - with woman as the consumer of male-produced literature" (Showalter, 1997, p. 216). She argues that feminist critique often focuses too much on men because when one examines the stereotypes about women, what is learned is only the male perspective of women, not women's actual experiences and feelings due to the biases of male critics and the restricted roles of women in literary history. In other words, feminist critique reinforces the established patriarchal values and gendered biases by emphasizing the inferiority and victimization of women rather than giving them a voice. Accordingly, Showalter created a new form of feminist criticism, which she calls *gynocriticism*. Gynocriticism "is concerned with *woman as writer* - with woman as the producer of textual meaning, with the history, themes, genres and structures of literature by women" (Showalter, 1997, p. 216). Showalter offers a shifting perspective of feminist criticism towards a more woman-centred approach, one that acknowledges and values women's perspectives and experiences independently of male-dominated frameworks. She claims that this change would not only enhance feminist scholarship but also foster a more nuanced and equitable understanding of gender in literary studies. This is because "the task of feminist critics is to find a new language, a new way of reading that can integrate our intelligence and our experience, our reason and our suffering, our scepticism and our vision" (p. 219). In her model of gynocriticism, Showalter explains that what women experience to find their place in society is reflected in their writing.

Showalter describes the three stages of the evolution of women's voice in literature with *feminine*, *feminist*, and *female* to show how women have found their place in society and gained awareness. *Feminine phase* (1840-1880) is a "phase of imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and internalization of its standards of art and its views on social roles" (Showalter, 1977, p. 13). She explains that at first, women were considered to be weak and passive members of a male-dominated society. Consequently, female characters are depicted as characters who lack freedom and agency. Since "all language is the language of the dominant order, and women, if they speak at all, must speak through it" (Showalter, 1981, p. 200), female authors internalized the male-dominated narrative standards. This meant that they had to adopt the dominant stereotypes about women, which influenced the way they wrote in terms of the tone, characters, and structure of their novels. They even wrote under male pseudonyms because it was "particularly problematic for those women who want to appropriate the pen by becoming women writers" (Gubar, 2014, p. 253). On the other hand, in the *feminist phase* (1880-1920), which coincided with the suffrage movement, female writers wanted to destroy the stereotypical perceptions of femininity. Therefore, they became more overtly political and engaged with feminist themes in their works; hence, there appeared "a phase of protest against these standards and values, and advocacy of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy" (Showalter, 1977, p. 13). Female writers thus created female characters who are more active, dynamic, and not confined to the space of the house. In a way, female writers explored women's rights and independence in their literary works by emphasizing the importance of female autonomy and addressing the oppressive nature of patriarchal society to "protest against male values and advocate separatist utopias and suffragette sisterhoods" (Selden et al, 2005, p. 127). The last phase, *the female phase*, ongoing since 1920, is associated with self-discovery. Showalter believes that in this phase, women recognize their unique identity and their distinct features from men. As a result, they develop self-awareness and are able to free themselves from the constraints of male-dominated perceptions in patriarchal societies. In this phase, female writers attempt to "turn instead to female experience as the source of an autonomous art, extending the feminist analysis of culture to the forms and techniques of literature" (Showalter, 1997, p. 218). Hence, women have stopped being obedient to male dominance and started to express their own experiences by themselves. She claims that this self-discovery enabled women to redefine their roles as independent individuals, which they represented through their characters in their literary works. This means "as for other subcultures, literature became a symbol of achievement" (Showalter, 1977, p. 21) for women as well. Showalter

claims that the purpose of gynocriticism is to create the idea of female not based on the male point of view, but on the female perspective, enabling women to underscore the fact that they have their own thoughts, emotions, ideas, and independent experiences.

Showalter's approach intends to rediscover and revalue women's contributions to literature, and thus create a more inclusive and diverse literary landscape that includes the full spectrum of human experience. Therefore, it can be suggested that "gynocriticism is a framework for women in which a woman can judge a woman's literature, womanly" (Gharachorlou & Derabi, 2017, p. 629). From this perspective, in this paper, two modes of feminist criticism will be analysed through two dystopian novels. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell is an example of a male-produced literature where the woman is the reader (feminist critique), while *Julia* by Sandra Newman is a portrayal of a woman-centred work where the woman is the producer (gynocriticism). Newman reconstructs one of the marginalized female characters, Julia, in canonical literature in order to reflect the different portrayals of this undermined female character in both novels. Showalter's theory of gynocriticism is relevant because it helps the reader realize how a contemporary female author reconstructs the female character's identity by bringing her own experience into the foreground and emphasizing the formerly discredited female subjectivity. This article attempts to convey how Newman fills the blanks that Orwell leaves unattended and explores why Julia is attracted to Winston, what happens to Julia after the torture, and how Julia feels as an individual throughout the story.

Through 'His' Eyes, Not 'Hers': The Analysis of Male Narrative in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by Orwell

Nineteen Eighty-Four stands out as one of the most widely known dystopias warning the reader about the consequences of oppressive regimes. Published in 1949, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* depicts the story of a totalitarian government ruled by The Party, watching everyone and controlling thoughts by changing language. In addition to the themes of loss of individuality and freedom, constant surveillance, and government control, another disturbing pattern is putting a male character at the centre of the novel while presenting female characters as secondary, which makes the reader navigate through the nightmarish society only from the perspective of a male protagonist, Winston Smith.

Apart from the protagonist, all figures holding power in shaping, creating, transforming, or preserving societal structures, as well as those who play a role—whether

major or minor- in the course of events, are all male. This male dominance reinforces the patriarchal framework of the society. The face of the Party is represented by Big Brother. Although his physical presence is never encountered, the whole society is under the rule of this symbolic figure of man. Therefore, the idea of masculinity runs deep in the minds of the citizens. Moreover, the notion of "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU" can be interpreted through the lens of the male gaze, which directly puts women in the inferior position. Additionally, the most powerful man in the Party, whom Winston admires, is O'Brien. The relationship between O'Brien and Winston is at the centre of the novel more than what happens between Winston and Julia, the only distinguishable female character in the novel. Therefore, "when the reader is a woman, ... she becomes aware of being excluded by the narrative,- of being outside the intimate narrative framework of author-text-reader" (Patai, 1984, p. 17). As Showalter argues in her theory, Orwell is a writer who completely leaves feminine experience outside of his story by portraying Julia as merely a companion of the male protagonist rather than a distinct individual with distinct experiences, ideas, and feelings.

Orwell uses a third-person narrator to tell the story; however, the narrator presents Winston's thoughts as though they constitute an objective truth. When Winston sees Julia for the first time, he refers to her appearance in the following manner:

She was a bold-looking girl, of about twenty-seven, with thick dark hair, a freckled face and swift, athletic movements. A narrow scarlet sash, emblem of the Junior Anti-Sex League, was wound several times round the waist of her overalls, just tightly enough to bring out the shapeliness of her hips. (Orwell, 2023, p. 15)

From the very beginning, Winston perceives Julia merely from a physical and visual lens rather than considering her agency, personality, thoughts, or individuality. Julia is reduced to a sexual object as "the sash that seems to mark Julia's submission to the anti-erotic policies of [the] Party ... makes her an object of desire for Winston, whose sexuality is bound up in his nascent resistance to the regime" (Jacobs, 2007, p. 8). Therefore, the way Winston reduces Julia's identity to her physicality shows that his perspective on her seems to be shaped by his own desires and ideological conditioning. This is a clear manifestation of the patriarchal framework that prioritizes Julia's bodiliness and sexual function over her agency, reinforcing the dynamics of the male gaze rather than presenting her as an independent subject. The male-dominated language is

flawed in that it is "like the gray inaudible wife who services the great man: an ideal engine, utterly self-effacing, devoted without remainder to its task" (Gass, 1972, p. 93). In that sense, Winston's portrayal of Julia reflects the way in which language is often used as a medium for male meaning-making as "men look at women from their point of view and even teach women to look at themselves from men's point of view" (Mhamane, 2021, p. 114). Therefore, just like the language of the story is controlled by a male author, Julia is constructed in a reductionist way through Winston's gaze by the narrator.

At one point, the narrator says that Winston "hated her because she was young and pretty and sexless, because he wanted to go to bed with her and would never do so" (Orwell, 2023, p. 20). This is most probably because he assumes that she is a member of the Thought Police, which means the act of sex would never happen between them. Winston apparently wants Julia's body; however, having sex with Julia is not a symbol of his love for her. Since "the Party seeks to discourage any form of intimacy or personal connection between individuals" (Philip, 2023, p. 39), Julia would be committing sexcrime. Accordingly, being with Julia is a form of rebellion for Winston; when they are together, he only talks about political issues. He neither has romantic dreams about having a life together nor contemplates on love or their relationship. Although at one scene he tells Julia that he loves her, he never appreciates her as a person as "their initial love-making was infused with political hatred" (Connors, 1971, p. 470). Basically, Julia does not matter in the story of Winston; she is a side character appearing as an expendable tool in order to construct Winston's journey. Since Showalter believes "the woman-produced text will occupy a totally different status from the 'male' text" (Moi, 1988, p. 76), this is exactly what she is against because it prevents Julia from being an individual by herself.

Besides being a physical object, Julia is also described as an ignorant woman with expressions such as "not clever" (Orwell, 2023, p. 135) and "didn't much care for reading" (p. 135). In one scene, Julia is portrayed as "bored and confused" (p. 161), paying no attention to what Winston is saying based on politics, which demonstrates her indifference to any intellectual activity. She even falls asleep while Winston reads the ideologies of the Party from Goldstein's book. While Winston has different rebellious ideas about the Party, Julia defies the system with small acts of rebellion such as buying things from the black market, wearing make-up, putting on fancy dresses, or wearing perfume, which makes her "not only very much prettier, but, above all, far

more feminine" (pp. 147–148). Even when Orwell reflects Julia's rebellious nature, he does so by emphasizing her sexuality, rather than her intellect. Basically, throughout the novel, her body becomes the primary focus. She does not look for any permanent changes in society; instead, she tries to find a way to live the best of her own life. Apart from these features, there is not much else to her character. Winston describes Julia as "a rebel from the waist downwards" (Orwell, 2023, p. 161), existing solely as a means of fulfilling Winston's sexual desires and existing as a tool for him to make his own rebellion real, rather than as a multifaceted person. Namely, for him "the simple animal instinct ... and the primitive emotions and intimacies to which it gives rise carry a revolutionary potential" (Jacobs, 2007, p. 8). Julia is undermined by O'Brien as well. When Winston and Julia go to O'Brien's apartment, O'Brien "almost ignored Julia, seeming to take it for granted that Winston could speak for her" (Orwell, 2023, p. 179). They both treat Julia as if she does not exist in that room. Winston is expected to speak on her behalf, leaving the woman out. This scene shows that while the two male figures have serious conversations, the woman and her ideas are always left aside because for the male "the experience of woman can easily disappear, become mute, invalid and invisible" (Showalter, 1997, p. 219). That is why the reader cannot hear Julia uttering even a word of her own, which is a highly restrictive point of view, and this kind of narration puts the male protagonist in a smart position while the female character stays relatively shallow. It is disappointing to realize that "the 'social construction of reality' has been done by males, and that construction cast women in the role of the other and seen their experience as deviant, or has not seen it all" (Donovan, 1984, p. 102). While Orwell portrays Winston as intellectual, smart, and politically engaged, he depicts Julia as silly, emotional, and empty-minded. She is obviously the "other" in Orwell's world.

Similarly, when O'Brien tortures Winston to death after his arrest, the narrator depicts Winston's unending thoughts for O'Brien. Even though Winston is betrayed by O'Brien, whom he considers to be a friend and ally, he "continues to feel a sense of kinship with O'Brien, admiring his intelligence and his ability to navigate the treacherous world of the party... [and] continues to cling to the idea that O'Brien is secretly on his side" (Philip, 2023, p. 39). However, Julia is rarely mentioned as Winston "hardly thought of Julia. He could not fix his mind on her...He felt no love for her, and he hardly even wondered what was happening to her. He thought oftener of O'Brien with a flickering hope" (Orwell, 2023, p. 237). There is a competition between O'Brien and Julia, which O'Brien wins at the end because "Winston has

sacrificed Julia to save himself" (Hunt, 2013, p. 559). Winston's so-called "love" for Julia is easily crushed with the statement "Do it to Julia" (Orwell, 2023, p. 295). With regards to the feminist critique of Showalter, it can be claimed that Orwell lets Julia exist in the narrative; however, he does not let Julia be a part of the author-reader connection; therefore, female readers would most probably feel distanced from the story as Julia is never fully appreciated as an individual or given a voice. Orwell's silencing or sidelining of Julia in a male-centred narrative makes her presence bound to her relationship with Winston rather than her own agency. She exists if Winston thinks about her and has a scene with her, and she disappears if he does not think or talk about her.

Considering this masculine mode of writing, it can be claimed that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* reflects the diminishing of women's agency. It lacks the opportunity to focus on what women uniquely experience while living under totalitarian regimes. The predominance of male characters can be noticed with the female character depicted as a side character in the journey of the male protagonist. Due to his underrepresentation of female experience, Orwell "has been criticized by feminists ... that his works offer a portrait of patriarchal power, was colored by personal overtones and gender issues" (Xinyue, 2021, p. 153). He does not provide Julia with the opportunity to express her ideas, feelings, or motivations, and he portrays her as a low-profile figure whom the reader can only see in relation to men. Even though Julia somehow exists in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the reader cannot learn about her personal feelings, emotions, or experiences because the story is based on what the protagonist experiences, neglecting the female voice and experience. While Orwell may have unconsciously centered masculinity in his works, he openly states his discomfort with feminist ideas in his personal letters or essays; hence, it can be claimed that regrettably "he was certainly conscious of his own misogyny and antifeminism" (Patai, 1984, p. 17). That is why, while he creates a dystopian world where Winston has full autonomy, agency, intelligence, and self-determination, Julia is reflected as a secondary figure whose voice, emotions, and experience are neither fully realized nor given equal importance. At the hands of the male author, Julia exists as a tool to satisfy the desires and needs of the male protagonist, Winston. This oversimplifies the life, struggles, emotions, and thoughts of Julia. It is apparent that "equal gender representation is limited" (Lucas and Ordeniza, 2023, p. 9) as Orwell lacks the nuanced understanding of female experience in his novel.

Through 'Her' Eyes, Not 'His': The Analysis of the Female Narrative in *Julia*

In order to deconstruct the male vision of dystopia, Sandra Newman recreated the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from the perspective of "the inscrutable femme fatale whose manipulations send Winston Smith to his doom" (Adee, 2023). In other words, in Newman's novel, Julia appears not to be a mere seductress causing Winston's doom, but an individual navigating the harsh realities of the Party with her intelligence, adaptability, and self-preservation. Orwell portrays Julia as a flat character even without a surname, while the novel starts by mentioning the name and surname of the male protagonist, Winston Smith. To a certain point in the novel, Winston describes Julia by using the phrases "the girl" or "she". The reader cannot learn much about Julia's background, her ideas about the topics that interest her, or her motivations for her actions; however, the narrator depicts her body in a detailed way. By making the name of a female character the title of her novel, Newman adopts a more female-centred narration because within the boundaries of the male-constructed language, a woman's "experience lies outside the dominant discourse" (Greene, 1990, p. 83). Therefore, in Newman's novel, where there are many female characters but only a few male characters, women's experiences, which are invisible in male-dominated narrations, are highlighted and depicted in a more detailed way. Newman gives Julia the surname Worthing, showing that she belongs to somewhere and has a family like every other individual. Basically, while the overall story is the same as Orwell's, *Julia* moves her voice to the front to show that she is a 'worthy' human being just like Winston. In doing so, "Newman furnishes her with a rich backstory and a life of her own" (Hughes, 2023) and portrays both her achievements and failures.

In public, Julia follows all the rules set by the Party, such as using the Newspeak language, showing excitement for false Party propaganda, and joining the Anti-Sex League. Beneath the surface, however, she is clever and sociable, and she has numerous sexual affairs with men. Her first job involves writing porn for the proles with titles like "Inner Party Sinners: 'My Telescreen Is Broken, Comrade!'". At the beginning of the novel, she works as a technician in the Fiction Department, living in a dormitory with thirty other single women. Like many people living under authoritarian regimes, she is trying to figure out a way to bend the rules and find moments of freedom, joy, and self-expression outside the telescreens' reach. Thus, it can be suggested that Newman's Julia embodies the qualities that Showalter describes; she is a feminine, feminist, and

female character. In other words, she is neither a totally submissive nor entirely defiant; rather, she is "a nuanced and psychologically complex character" (Ettler, 2024).

Orwell presents Julia as a character reflecting the prejudices related to female sexuality; women being abused by men or women being inferior due to their sexuality. Newman describes how Julia is abused by a much older Party member. When she is only sixteen and staying in the village with her revolutionary mother during their exile, Julia is sexually violated by Plentyman, who is in charge of agricultural collectivisation. She willingly exchanges her body in return for food and information as she wants to survive the famine. Newman shows with this painful story that this is what women experience in a patriarchal society. Julia's "teenage molestation has profoundly and negatively impacted her adult sexuality" (Ettler, 2024). In other words, this sexual abuse explains the reason behind her sexually liberated attitude. Due to this abuse, as Julia grows older, she constantly has fantasies with various men, such as the pilots, Big Brother, O'Brien, and Winston. "Women's presentation in male terms trivializes traditional female experience" (Kitch, 1987, p. 11); although untraditional, Julia's childhood is presented with a preceding narrative to explain her survival skills, which helps the reader to gain a deeper understanding of her actions. Julia is chosen for the ArtSem program to bear the child of Big Brother; "with Big Future, [she is] to be a true bride of Ingsoc, one of the pure vessels of a higher race" (Newman, 2023, p. 198).

By depicting Julia as biologically destined for reproduction, Newman foregrounds the feminine aspect of womanhood and women's being passive carriers of life rather than autonomous individuals. Accordingly, Julia feels lucky to be chosen for the program and does not act against it because she considers the baby a protection. Since she has a lot of affairs with various men and does not have access to birth control, she thinks this would help her hide her real pregnancy from another man, who is either Parsons or Winston.

While Orwell does not give any explanation for Julia's interest in Winston, Newman grounds their affair on O'Brien, who manipulates Julia to perform a job. Her duty is to deceive men from the Records by having sex with them in the room with a telescreen in it and make them speak ill about the Party, so that they can be caught by the Thought Police. All O'Brien is to get the funds of the Records Department by showing that the men working in that department are criminals and the department itself is corrupt. By saying "you are more than a woman; more indeed than a man." You are *Homo oceanicus*,

the race yet to come" (Newman, 2023, p. 143), O'Brien officially weaponizes Julia's femininity by making her a Thought Police. Basically, the Party exploits Julia's sexuality, turning her into a tool for their purposes. She gets frustrated at first, but she hides her feelings because she knows that she has no other choice but to accept if she wants to live. Clearly, Julia is "a toothpick, a tissue—a thing that gets used once and thrown in the bin" (Newman, 2023, p. 284). Being confined to a room to please men sexually and to entrap them by using her body is a stereotypical portrayal of womanhood, but Julia reveals an important plot twist. The reader learns that she actually participates in the betrayal of Winston and other male members of the Records Department. Newman prefers to justify Julia's actions based on what she herself experiences; hence, the reader now knows the real reason behind Julia's interest in Winston and how she feels about this task.

Newman depicts Julia as a mobile and self-confident figure going from one place to another. Through Julia, the reader can visualize the daily life in Oceania. One day, when she is stalking Winston, Julia sees him going inside a mysterious shop. She actually considers this a leverage against Winston. Should any issues arise, she can use his secret visit to this shop in order to save herself. Therefore, the moment Winston comes out of the shop, she thinks "she'd caught him at some unspeakable crime" (Newman, 2023, p. 72). Besides, by giving more details related to the diary Winston keeps, Newman gives another reason why Julia sustains the relationship with him. The fact that Winston keeps a diary strikes "her as simple madness" (p. 124). She tells him to destroy it and warns him not to write her name. Actually, Julia wants to end the relationship, yet she cannot because then he would "write about her in his blasted diary" (p. 127). Obviously, Julia is keeping the relationship going not out of love but out of necessity as she is planning to convince him to destroy the diary. Unlike Orwell's Julia, Newman's Julia has her own schemes and ideas, and she is a strong-willed woman, not a passive one. Accordingly, in Orwell's novel, it is implied that Julia loves Winston due to the 'I love you' note she has given him; however, Newman cleverly reverses this in *Julia*. First, Vicky, who is a 17-year-old girl, gives the note to Julia. Vicky lives in the dorm with all the other girls, and she is secretly in love with Julia. Then, Julia hands the note to Winston at the Ministry of Truth just to get rid of it. This is a brave and smart portrayal of Julia as opposed to the shallow and ignorant one in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which shows that there is an "essential difference between the work of women who write from within their gender identities and that of writers ... who follow the forms of traditional, male-dominated literature" (Kitch, 1987, p. 7). Julia is a clever woman; she knows that she

cannot keep the note in the dorm. She has considered all the possibilities of getting caught while passing the note and makes her own choice:

if it came to Julia's word over Smith's, he would never be believed. She was a well-liked, attractive girl, and one who would compromise twenty well-placed men if she were ever interrogated. Smith was a friendless prig, who worked in the disreputable Records Department. (Newman, 2023, p. 96)

Julia has total self-confidence due to her popularity and position at the department. She believes that nobody would be suspicious of her because both the writing does not belong to her and she is admired by everyone. On the contrary, Smith is portrayed as an isolated and insignificant man. This scene creates a sharp distinction between Julia and Winston in terms of power dynamics, giving Julia the upper hand. While Julia's social network and charm provide her with reliability, Winston seems to be prone to any kind of mistrust. Besides, she knows little about Winston; he might hurt or even kill her, yet she continues with the urge to be with him "for romance, for erotic delight, she was courting death" (Newman, 2023, p. 107). This shows that Julia wishes to give the note to someone else and chooses Winston for the mission. Nonetheless, she has not done this out of love, but simply to get rid of the note.

The female writer basically challenges the marginalization of the female character in the male-dominated literary canon; hence, Newman makes the female protagonist, Julia, visible. Unlike Orwell's narrator, Newman's third person narrator follows Julia everywhere so that the reader can understand what she has been going through. Actually, the reader goes to the places Winston never goes, as exemplified by Julia's meetings at the Junior Anti-Sex League, her dealings on the black-market, her trysts with her other lovers, and the place she lives. In some of the memorable scenes where Julia is portrayed as a secondary character in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Newman represents what she has been actually thinking during those moments, reflecting her personal growth, struggles, and own ideas. In that sense, Newman adopts a hypocritical approach that focuses on the history, themes, genres, and structures of literature by women, aiming to uncover and explore the female experience "to make the invisible visible, to make the silent speak" (Showalter, 1981, p. 201). Therefore, the narrator always focuses on Julia's inner world, thoughts, and emotions. Basically, *Julia* challenges the traditional male-dominated narrative by highlighting the female perspective and experience.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, "the woman is stripped of her intellectual and physical freedom" (Rania & Latiff, 2020, p. 902); hence, the place where Julia and the other girls live or the lives of women is not depicted, which adds to the total erasure of female identity and autonomy. However, Newman offers a comprehensive depiction of this feminine space, providing an intricate portrayal of female bodily representations. Newman's portrayal of the dorm thus stands as a symbolic space because it helps the reader recognize the subtle distinctions and complexities of womanhood and female identity, which Orwell deliberately ignores. "Women's fiction describes a world so alien to the patriarchy" (Pratt, 1982, p. 177) that these female spaces serve as sites of identity formation and resistance with Newman's depiction of the dorm and the women's experiences within it. Life in this dorm is not easy for the girls; during their sleep, they hear the voice of the Big Brother, which is sometimes disturbing and sometimes comforting for the girls. They are so accustomed to the sound of him that they cannot go to sleep without his voice. In addition, Newman portrays the hardship of female experience in such an oppressive society with the scene where Julia is called to fix a blocked toilet in the hostel and finds a fetus aborted by Vicky. Vicky has been sexually molested and impregnated by the Central Committee Chairperson, Whitehead, for whom she works. Besides, Whitehead is the same person who has arranged "anti-sex" pills for her to abort the baby. This drastic scene portrays that "women constitute a muted group, the boundaries of whose culture and reality overlap but are not wholly contained by the dominant (male) group" (Rani, 2013, p. 4). Newman depicts what women might go through under the regime of a patriarchal and oppressive government, which is often neglected in male-dominated literature. With the detailed depiction of the life in the dorm, Julia's connections with other women are introduced, showing how women's lives differ from men's, and proving the fact that female "experience is directly available in the texts written by women" (Moi, 1988, p. 76). Surveillance and loss of private life weigh differently on women, manifesting more acutely in the form of abuse, lack of physical autonomy, and the threat of unwanted pregnancy. Therefore, Newman shows that "good sisterhood is the only thing these women can do, in order to be able cope with those problems" (Putri, 2014, p. 5). In the dorm, there are telescreens everywhere and "Julia had a habit of smiling at each telescreen as she passed, imagining some bored men in surveillance being cheered by her appearance" (Newman, 2023, p. 9). Julia clearly likes being watched because she likes her body and she is aware of the voyeuristic nature of the surveillance system; hence, she intentionally plays with the system in her own way as a form of resistance. Instead of being abused by it, she tries to manipulate the system psychologically. Unlike Winston, who is afraid of the

telescreens and tries to hide from them all the time, Julia has no fear of engaging with them. She in a way claims her own autonomy, control, and resistance in her own way. This is a strong example of a character created by female writers who "develop their own language suitable/proper to express female experiences, emotions and feelings" (Mhamane, 2021, p. 116). Unlike the shallow and passive Julia in Orwell's world, Julia here might turn the Party's mechanisms against itself by performing compliance while secretly maintaining her independence.

Contrary to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston in *Julia* does not have much to offer as an individual. Once celebrated as the protagonist of a canonical text, Winston now exists in the shadow of Julia. In another instance, when she is with Winston, he tells her that O'Brien has invited him to his apartment, which makes Julia jealous and disappointed because she is actually O'Brien's partner in crime. In this scene, Julia has the upper hand over Winston. Even though Winston has naïve thoughts about O'Brien and feels that he is special, the reader and Julia herself know that Winston is not special at all since Julia has been to his apartment before. Newman explores Winston's transformation from a grounded and bold character to a relatively meek character. Accordingly, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell depicts the scene in which Julia and Winston go to O'Brien's apartment in a way that reinforces the passivity of Julia as a woman. Nevertheless, Newman shows the motivation behind Julia's silence in this scene; she is basically pretending not to make Winston suspicious of her deceptive duty. When Julia and Winston are at his apartment, O'Brien asks him if he can commit various crimes, to which Winston says "yes". O'Brien in a way tries to test Winston's loyalty to the Brotherhood to see if he is willing to rebel. Nevertheless, during this moment, like in the original novel, Julia stays silent, but the narrator describes her thoughts. Julia feels surprised because she does not think he has the courage to do all these things; "he could not even buy his own black-market goods! Murder, blackmail, suicide—he hadn't the foggiest conception what these words really meant" (Newman, 2023, p. 222). These small details show that "there is an innate difference between men's writing and women's writing" (Mhamane, 2021, p. 113). Since the male and the female have distinct social, cultural, and personal experiences, this affects their tone of voice, the themes they choose, the way they represent their characters, and the priorities in their writing, which can be clearly seen in the distinction between Orwell's and Newman's modes of writing.

During their arrest, interrogation, torture, and afterwards, Orwell does not provide any explanation or details about what happens to Julia, which Newman alters by letting

her think and feel. The fact that the Thought Police arrest and beat Julia as well does not make sense for her, and she actually feels scared; "she tried to think she was afraid for Winston, but that was a lie. She had no room in her fear for him" (Newman, 2023, p. 272). After all the torture, Julia wakes up in another room and sees Winston staying in another cell on the telescreen. She watches from the telescreen that O'Brien talks to Winston about Room 101 and the rats. In the meantime, "Julia tried to tell herself that she was safe." Rats were Winston's fear, not hers" (p. 301). At the moment of seeing the rats, Winston yells out of fear "Do it to Julia!". As a result, they put Julia's head in a cage filled with rats; "Julia tries desperately to think. Winston had escaped by betraying her, but whom could she betray? She'd betrayed everyone already. There was no one" (p. 303). Julia remembers her conversation with Diana Winters, a former revolutionary, about Room 101 in the prison, so she bites a small part of her tongue and throws it at the rats so that she can distract them for fifteen minutes. Basically, Newman creates a powerful, self-determined, and autonomous woman protagonist as "she games the harsh system for forbidden luxuries and even Room 101 cannot completely break her spirit" (Shilling, 2024). After they have been released, she is still pregnant but feels insecure and lonely. However, as long as she has the baby, she believes she is safe. Two months later, she sees Winston in the neighborhood, and she thinks he would kill her due to her betrayal, but he does not even care; "all he saw was that his lover had lost her figure. He'd been cheated as a man: that was all the bloodshot eyes expressed" (Newman, 2023, p. 326). Winston feels disappointed, and they never see each other again.

Since Julia knows that it would be impossible to survive under the rule of the Party, she wants to join the Brotherhood and become a member of it. However, she needs to be interviewed first and her past has to be rewritten. She thinks of lying about her past, which is not so difficult for her as she "had told such implausible lies all her life" (Newman, 2023, p. 380). She even answers in the affirmative when asked all the questions, including throwing sulphuric acid to a child's face. Newman actually justifies Julia's actions with her pregnancy because Julia claims that she does not have any other choice but to do "what was safe" (Newman, 2023, pp. 383–384) for her baby. Therefore, instead of ending the novel with Winston being crushed, Newman continues with Julia's self-discovery, will to survive, and personal journey. Newman gives Julia Worthing the chance to live her own story and destiny; hence, "unlike Winston — but like so many women — she is the ultimate pragmatist, cynically using the system to survive" (Morris, 2023). After all she has gone through, she wants to find the rebels if they exist. Therefore, Newman chooses to make the Brotherhood real and allows Julia to join

them to see if it would offer a better path to go along with an alternative resistance group. When Julia accidentally finds the Crystal Palace where the Brotherhood keeps Big Brother, whose name is Humphrey Pease, she is offered to meet him in person. Even though she feels hatred towards him at first, when she sees him in a desperate situation, she does not "want a suffering person to suffer more" (Newman, 2023, p. 369). This might seem as weakness, but it can also be taken as an act of resistance to the dehumanizing effect of the totalitarian government. Julia's empathy might be due to her choice not to cause further suffering, which shows a female character's autonomy and personal rejection of the vicious cycle of violence and retribution.

Surprisingly, in the Crystal Palace, Julia sees Vicky, who has already joined the Brotherhood as well. This is a big relief for Julia because "beneath all the misery and preoccupation of these days, she'd been thinking of Vicky" (Newman, 2023, p. 232). Having Vicky on her side, Julia would not be more pleased. At the end of the novel, it becomes clear that "while Newman's Julia enjoys voyeuristic pornographic sex with men, she can never truly love them . . . because beneath all the rubbing, juicing and performing for the telescreens Julia nurses a secret passion for her fellow at the women's hostel, Vicky" (Ettler, 2024). Newman chooses to finish the novel with Julia and Vicky coming together in order to showcase the critical role of women in each other's lives. In patriarchal societies where women are marginalized, silenced, or put aside, the relationship between women means overcoming their isolation, inferiority, and disempowerment. This emphasizes the idea that "the female's tradition can be positive source of strength and solidarity" (Showalter, 1981, p. 204). Besides, by having Vicky as her future partner, Julia completes her self-discovery as she is ready "to live out the rest of her life as another person" (Newman, 2023, p. 384).

Considering what Julia has been through, it can be suggested that Newman wishes to promote a more nuanced world for the women living under the rule of the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. While male-dominated language creates a hierarchy between men and women by putting women in an inferior position, female-dominated language endeavours to bring equality by showing that women also have feelings, emotions, and a voice. In male-dominated literature, the narrative voice generally aligns with the male character's point of view and concerns, whereas female-dominated novels written by female writers prioritize female voices, giving depth to their experiences and thoughts. In this novel, Newman saves Julia from being only Winston's lover. She has her own life, personal experience, personal choices, and her own story. In this respect, gynocriticism

enables the reader to witness the experience of the female by looking beyond the traditionally set patriarchal stereotypes. In *Julia* Newman expands Orwell's world into one where women have humanity and voice, and where women are not the projections of male desire, but people with personal desires to see "how such a character would behave in the settings the author provides her, what would be an exciting way of revealing the character's secrets to the reader" (Gardiner, 1981, p. 357). She is neither fully submissive nor rebellious, which is the way male authors have been portraying women. Lerner asserts that "woman's culture is not and should not be seen as a subculture" (qtd. in Showalter 1981, p. 199). If feminist criticism remains fixated on the portrayal of women as victims, it can inadvertently reinforce a narrow and disempowering view of women. Showalter strongly believes that the representation of female characters through the male gaze prevents the reader from witnessing the inner lives of women. This shift in focus could provide a more balanced and empowering understanding of women's roles and achievements. Hence, Newman creates Julia as a human being like any other human being trying to survive in an oppressive regime, "which projects the pure woman character which breathes without the help of maleness" (Dasgupta and Sharma, 2013, p. 2). Therefore, Julia navigates through the rule of the Party both by submitting to some of its deeds and by secretly rebelling. She is not to be regarded as a damsel in distress in need of saving by the male, nor is she a seductive femme fatale trying to destroy the male. Rather, she is a human being striving to survive. Therefore, *Julia* can be regarded as offering a more nuanced and fuller representation of Julia by including her family background, the reasons and motivations underlying her actions, and her personal thoughts and feelings, the parts that Orwell does not bother to explain.

Conclusion

Showalter claims that if one limits themselves to a male-oriented feminist critique, which only deals with the stereotypical representations of women and the restricted female agency in literary history, one will never be able to fully grasp "what women have felt and experienced, but only what men have thought women should be" (Showalter, 1997, p. 216). Accordingly, gynocriticism begins where one can reinterpret the established male literary history. However, gynocriticism is not about destroying the differences between men and women or creating a utopia where there are no gender issues. Instead, it asserts that writers must "stop trying to fit women between the lines of the male tradition, and focus instead on the nearly visible world of female

culture" (p. 217). Gynocriticism enables female writers to move beyond the superficial approach and to create a literature where female characters are on stage reflecting their own experiences and feelings, giving way to a more balanced and nuanced literary landscape.

While Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* portrays Julia as a minor character with a limited voice, Newman's *Julia* reflects her as the protagonist and lets the reader see, hear, and feel what it is like to be a woman in the dystopian world. Newman has established a world that is not governed only by universally accepted male-dominated ideals. This is the main endeavour of gynocriticism, which Newman implements in a successful way by focusing on the female experiences and feelings of Julia. The fact that *Julia* was "written by a woman for a woman and is also addressed to a woman" (Pujara, 2024, p. 1255) emphasizes female authorship and readership in literature. By portraying Julia as sexually promiscuous and rebellious, Orwell wrongly contributes to the idea that women can only be described through their sexuality. Therefore, the objectification of women and the absence of female autonomy portrayed in the novel demonstrates the male author's prejudiced perspective towards women. Since the narrator's voice is masculine, it is impossible to have access to the life, views, or inner world of Julia in the story; thus, she serves in Winston's journey as a side character. Just like Showalter, "feminist writers believe that the entire literary tradition, which men had a monopoly over, has misinterpreted feminine reality" (Nodeh & Pourgiv, 2012, p. 2) because the existence of female characters in a way depends on their relation to men. Therefore, in Orwell's narration, Julia's worth as an individual only matters at the physical level. However, with Newman's narration, the reader can see her being scared, confused, vulnerable, desperate, exploited, and brainwashed but also joyful, determined, and fearless. Thus, it can be claimed that the purpose of this rewriting is not to depict Julia as a heroine overcoming and defying all the challenges, but to imagine her seeking ways to survive and make the most of her life under the totalitarian regime. Newman achieves this by portraying Julia fully with her family background, with the reasons and motivations behind her actions, and with her thoughts and feelings towards, which Orwell does not even partially mention. Showalter emphasizes the significance of exploring and portraying the distinct and often marginalized experiences of women that have been overlooked or misrepresented by traditional, male-dominated literary criticism. Representing the uncharted, unexplored territory of women's experiences that lie beyond the dominant male culture's understanding, Showalter's model of gynocriticism aims at establishing a space for women where they can be heard and

valued on their own terms, rather than through the lens of male interpretation and standards. Women's writing would make it possible for women to shape a new understanding about what it means to be a woman "to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt male models and theories" (Showalter, 1997, p. 217). Consequently, through their writing, women can discover themselves and be no longer in the inferior position. Showalter's ideas are still relevant based on the fact that a contemporary author creates a work of literature to critique the neglection of the female perspective by giving voice to Julia.

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