

How do both texts examine resistance and its consequences?

George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which depicts a dystopian future set in Oceania and Anna Funder's episodic non-fiction text *Stasiland* which examines the former GDR, both emphasise the rebellion that a totalitarian has to combat and remove as they attempt to maintain power over their "potential enemies". Orwell and Funder contemplate resistance through the actions and thoughts of a few brave citizens who deny the inner party and the SED total control. The two controlling forces exercise power, surveillance and torture to systematically destroy individuality and ensure power is sustained and perpetuated. Both regimes humiliate and degrade their people and keep them in constant fear via the prospect of interrogation, however there is much more defiance in Funder's text as clearly the communist government is dismantled.

Relationships are extinguished and condemned in both authoritarian states however the authors reveal that love is present and a clear sign of rebellion. Orwell reflects on a world in which love and sex are to be eliminated, where the freedom of eroticism is to be eradicated. Winston's wife Katherine is a vulgar woman who only had sex with Winston as she believes it were her "duty to the Party". Love isn't present as the party states that you should only love Big Brother. However Winston does resist the tight constraints, having a loving and sexual relationship with Julia. Although a dangerous act that Winston knows he will be caught for, the time he spent with Julia was his most enjoyable. Orwell contemplates that their relationship is monitored the entire time and consequently they are captured and systematically tortured until they betray each other and are a shell of what they once were.

Similarly, Funder discovers that Julia is kept under strict surveillance as it was known to the Stasi that she had an Italian boyfriend. Funder reveals that Julia bluntly refuses the Stasi's request for her to spy on him and in doing so has all her mail intercepted and opened in order for the Stasi to exert and maintain complete control. Julia's small act of resistance "damaged" her and is an example of the Stasi's cruel tactics.

Orwell and Funder reveal the ultimate power the parties had over their people, where any sign of rebellion will lead to torture and degradation. The totalitarian regimes torture and oppress in order to shape a world in which they have no threats. Orwell examines that if caught with the wrong expression upon your face you can be captured and "vaporised". Winston is starved, beaten and shocked in order for the party to violate his "inner heart" and force him to betray Julia when faced with his greatest fear in room 101. Orwell reveals that any notion of defiance would lead to a them "sooner or later, getting you".

Additionally the Stasi too, imprison and torture those who don't share their communist ideals.

Funder examines that the Stasi brutally incarcerated Miriam for "sedition" when she was only 16. Miriam distributed leaflets that questioned the SED's method of control and the simple act led to her being taken to prison and stripped of any dignity she still had.

Furthermore, Funder explores how the Klaus Renft Combo and antiestablishment rock band "scratched the GDR at its marrow" and thus was almost "liquidated" before being told by the Stasi it "no longer existed." The band gave the people a voice against the SED and this meant that they were obliged to dismember it. The band's experience illustrates the controlling regime that adopts malicious means in order to maintain their dominance.

Both texts reveal that resistance exists in a population however in Oceania there was much less, as it is seemingly overwhelming and removes potential enemies before they become a problem. In West Berlin many more actively resist the regime and live to tell the tale, as seen in the ultimate

dismantling of the SED. Orwell investigates the complete removal of means of rebellion in the Newspeak language which contains no words of resistance in order to deny the people of “the few centimetres in the skull that is [theirs]”. Through a complete indoctrination of the youth the society has no means of retribution as they are too fearful of their own families. Orwell considers that even thinking thoughts against the party would lead to “a person simply disappearing”.

In contrast, Funder notes that although fearful of possible consequences many of the citizens only showed “outward compliance” and were able to protect themselves from being taken into custody. Although by defying the Party Frau Paul became a “teary, guilt wracked wreck” she was allowed to live after refusing a Faustian bargain put forward by the Stasi. Funder reflects that only those who were caught in opposition to the party are severely punished and those who are secretly against the party keep what they can from the authorities and therefore manage to stay safe.

Nineteen Eighty-Four and Stasiland both depict the resistance that is present during an authoritarian rule and the harsh suffering that is faced by those who do rebel. Orwell’s fictional dystopia reveals that relationships and individuals thoughts, are scrutinised and although it will end in death a minority including Winston and Julia will not let the Inner Party of Oceania dictate their lives. Orwell describes the cruel and relentless interrogation that is exercised by the party if they caught anyone opposing them with their myriad of surveillance tools. Similarly, Funder’s Stasiland presents a world in which “souls were buckled out of shape” through utter brutality if you are found to be speaking poorly of the oppressive government. The Stasi crippled their opposition and were instructed “to know everything about everyone”, however did not liquidate their own people as freely as the Inner Party. The invasive and disruptive means of control and suppression exerted by the regimes in the texts seek to remove individuality and crush the resistance that was present.

