

POLITICALLY MANIPULATED EMOTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ENEMY

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Abstract

Both love and hate can be manipulated to the advantage of power, even when the citizens are subjected to poverty and famine. True or forced love is what dictators seek from their subjects, but situations differ a lot: although Ceaușescu's authoritarianism was inspired by communist China and North Korea, specific details pertaining to Romanian reality and himself distinguish him from Asian dictators. Totalitarian states also need to foster hate against real or invented enemies, and are adept at selecting the types of enemies and hatred that serve their purposes.

Keywords: Orwell, dictatorship, famine, forced love, hatred, enemy.

1. Reality versus dystopia

Day after day, media around the world speak of Orwellian states, Big Brother, Newspeak, Thought Police, Doublethink and other fictitious *topoi* extracted from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and presented as naked truths, whether the subject is one of poetic creation or one of public concern: from CCTV surveillance in London and the National Security Agency's spying on both foreign and its own citizens, to architecture in China and legislation in the UK. Needless to say, most of these alarms are not sounded in authoritarian states.

Ever since some European countries fell into the totalitarian grip in the first half of the 20th century, and dystopian authors such as Capek, Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley and Orwell invented their own fictional brands of totalitarianism, an answer has been sought to the haunting question: Can reality be as bad as dystopia?

A multitude of answers may indeed be obtained by comparing phenomena from both the material and spiritual life, e.g. the quasi-permanent state of shortage and the ersatzes that come with it, or the authorities' control over thought and emotions. The latter category includes hatred, a pillar of totalitarianism and, when staged, a surrogate in its own right.

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In *The Nature of Hate*, Sternberg & Sternberg present eighteen enemy “stories” routinely used to incite hatred, some of which are recognizable in the examples given below. Each story ascribes a different, precise role to the enemy, activating a particular combination of the components of the “triangle of hate”: passion, commitment, and negation of intimacy.

Certainly, what prompted Orwell’s imagination had already happened, mostly in Soviet Russia. And, just as fiction followed reality, very soon after the publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* reality took after fiction. But, despite the similarities between the public bashing of the early communist years and the Two Minutes Hate scene, or between many other aspects of life in Oceania and newly-communist Romania, no one doubts that the real perpetrators did not need any inspiration from fiction.

2. A case of paradoxical grief

In December 2011, following the death of Kim Jong Il, Westerners watched in disbelief scenes of North Korean mourners weeping en masse in the streets of Pyongyang, and ruling party members “banging tables and crying out loud” (BBC, 2011) in what appeared to be a case of hysterical, but genuine mass despair. The North Korean agency KCNA reported that “All the servicepersons, workers, farmers, intellectuals, youth and students across the country are mourning the demise of Kim Jong Il in reverence, calling him in choking (*sic*) voices” (KCNA, 2011b), and “weeping bitterly out of self-reproach and regret that they failed to keep Kim Jong Il in good health despite the behests of the President” (KCNA, 2011a). Even “Former unconverted long-term prisoners, too, could not stand to their feet, grieving over his demise before the mosaic at the Mansudae Art Studio” (KCNA, 2011b).

The regime of Kim Jong Il, which invented the brash catchphrase “the freedom of the free world consists of the freedom to starve” (Cornell, 2002:42), was responsible for permanent food deficit and malnutrition, and even worse: according to one of the reserved estimates (Hardcastle et al, 1998), Kim’s first four years in office (1994-1998) brought death by starvation to more than two million, or 10%, of his nationals. Under his reign, millions lived in poverty and persecution. Although he admits that “The *Juche* [self-reliance] ideology led the North Korean people to starvation and destitution”, a former ambassador to North Korea concludes that “It seems hardly likely, though, that the catastrophic famine will lead to insurrection, because historical experience tells us that famine leads to apathy rather than revolt” (Cornell, 2002: 45, 146).

Cornell also cites the famine caused by Stalin’s policies, without further details in the context. There are divergent historians’ opinions on the causes and death toll of *holodomor* (Ukrainian for extermination through hunger), the great famine unleashed by Stalin against Ukraine in 1932-1933, but no mentioning of revolt

comparable to previous uprisings against forced collectivization. Nor did the euphemistically called “Three Years of Difficult Period”, which resulted in at least 45 million premature deaths between 1958-1962 (Dikötter, 2010: 734), roughly 7% of the population of Mao’s China, lead to massive revolt. Although some rebellion existed in China, especially in the Tibet area, where the 1959 armed uprising, “quelled with heavy artillery”, sent the Dalai Lama into exile, it was crushed by the regime, to which it never represented a threat. Dikötter’s remark echoes Cornell’s: “As starvation sets in, famished people are often too weak and too focused on their own survival to contemplate rebellion” (Dikötter, 2010:516).

Whether it was generated by the intention to enfeeble a nation considered too nationalistic, Ukrainians, and exterminate an entire class, the prosperous peasantry, or kulaks, as in Stalin’s Soviet Union (Courtois, 2011: 200; and others), by reckless collectivization and application of Lysenko’s pseudo-scientific farming methods as in Mao’s China (Lynch, 2004: 6, 38-39), or by a combination of failed policies, economic dependence on friendly, but economically shaky countries (the USSR, then China), and natural disasters, as in North Korea, in brief, whether driven by intention or by incompetence, the famine brought about by the regimes of the likes of Stalin, Mao and Kim Jong Il was a form of cruel genocide, given the duration and the effects on the human body and mind. It was also the cheapest, most efficient way of extermination. Not least, using a famous phrase coined by Ernst Nolte to rationalize Nazism as a response to Bolshevism, it usually had a “rational core”.

Besides the annihilation of the physical and moral strength, the people’s weak response may indicate acceptance of famine as a natural aspect of life in traditional societies, as casually encapsulated by a former member of the Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Sellasie’s court:

Death from hunger had existed in our Empire for hundreds of years, an everyday, natural thing, and it never occurred to anyone to make any noise about it. Drought would come and the earth would dry up, the cattle would drop dead, the peasants would starve. Ordinary, in accordance with the laws of nature and the eternal order of things. (Rubin, 1987: 106)

This being the prevailing mindset, it is no wonder that the Ethiopian monarchy slapped taxes on foreign aid.

There may also exist a more metaphysical “rational core” to explain famine, voiced by O’Brien in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:

*‘How does one man assert his power over another, Winston?’
Winston thought. ‘By making him suffer,’ he said.
‘Exactly. By making him suffer. Obedience is not enough. [...]’ (Orwell, 1976: 897)*

Resigned North Koreans peacefully mourning their leader would have been an understandable image. What made North Koreans appear to suffer so terribly when Kim Jong Il died? A Western viewer may suspect that the almost grotesque manifestation of grief was orchestrated and enforced by the authorities, and that citizens caught in a different mood ran the risk of sharing the fate of Kim Chol, vice minister of the army, who was “obliterated” by a mortar round upon the new leader Kim Jong Un’s order because he had drunk alcohol during the official mourning period (Ryall, 2012). Indeed, the purges ordered by the new Kim instilled an atmosphere of fear throughout the country.

We have few insights into the effects of the massive cult of personality of the “Dear Leader” on his subjects. Officially, on his demise a long series of natural wonders happened, duly reported by the KCNA agency. Therefore, the answer to why a nation loves its criminals in power could be found in better documented cases.

3. Pain as a source of love

Barely four years had passed since the greatest famine on 18 August, 1966, when over a million people, most of them in their twenties or even teenagers, invaded Tiananmen Square chanting for Mao Zedong and waving copies of his red booklet in support of the nascent Cultural Revolution initiated by the 73-year old despot they idolized (Lynch, 2004: 50).

Whereas a rationale exists in the inaction of a starving population, it is more difficult to understand how leaders who had driven their peoples to widespread cannibalism, like Stalin, Mao and Kim, were able to muster so much unconstrained love.

What these regimes did to their populations is analogous to the torture undergone by Winston Smith under O’Brien’s supervision: they peeled their humanity layer by layer, torture by torture. Hunger is mentioned several times during Winston’s incarceration. At the beginning, the “dull pain in his belly”, which never goes away, overcomes the fear of harsh punishment, prodding him to search his pockets for some leftover breadcrumbs and quell his terrible hunger.

But starvation pales before the prospect of the dreaded “Room 101”. Winston’s cellmate, the “skull-faced man”, begs his guards:

‘Comrade! Officer!’ he cried. ‘You don’t have to take me to that place! Haven’t I told you everything already? What else is it you want to know? There’s nothing I wouldn’t confess, nothing! Just tell me what it is and I’ll confess straight off. Write it down and I’ll sign it – anything! Not room 101!’ (Orwell, 1976: 879)

It is this other torture that eventually breaks both Winston’s free will, which enabled him to say that two and two is four, and his emotional homeostasis,

making him love his worst enemy, Big Brother. A pronged physical-mental weapon made of sheer *pain* – and *fear* of it: “Nothing in the world was so bad as physical pain. In the face of pain there are no heroes, no heroes, he thought over and over as he writhed on the floor, clutching uselessly at his disabled left arm” (Orwell, 1976: 880).

A good explanation to the love of one’s torturer may be found in the complex relation between Winston and O’Brien. But even just stopping terrible pain inflicted on someone seems a good enough reason to love the person who stopped it, even if it is the torturer himself:

He had never loved him so deeply as at this moment, and not merely because he had stopped the pain. The old feeling, that at bottom it did not matter whether O’Brien was a friend or an enemy, had come back. O’Brien was a person who could be talked to. Perhaps one did not want to be loved so much as to be understood. (Orwell, 1976: 888)

Alternating periods of torture and suppression of torture create a traumatic bond between the aggressor and the victim at his mercy, which, according to Freudians, determines the latter to identify with the former as a means of defending his ego, a phenomenon known since 1973 as the Stockholm syndrome. It may be that the syndrome functions as well at the large-scale level of an entire nation.

This forced love is counterbalanced by Winston’s courtly love for Julia – courtly not in its manifestations, somehow enforced by the seedy setting, but in its *illicitness*. Even before becoming famous, Orwell was often considered by critics less skilful in rendering human emotion. Brenda Salkeld, an intelligent, educated lady he met in 1928, “came to the conclusion that he really did not understand people, women in particular”, this being due to a “failure to connect” (Stansky & Abrahams, 1981: 245).

The fact that Winston’s love for Julia becomes, in the end, just another surrogate in their lives, along Victory gin, Victory coffee, and Victory cigarettes, may be a confirmation of Orwell’s critics. Indeed, Orwell does not dive too far into the depths and contradictions haunting Winston’s conscience:

He hardly thought of Julia. He could not fix his mind on her. He loved her and would not betray her; but that was only a fact, known as he knew the rules of arithmetic. He felt no love for her, and he hardly even wondered what was happening to her. (Orwell, 1976: 874)

But Orwell’s concision – and Winston’s detachment from memories of his former lover – may simply denote his hero’s defense against the thought of her being tortured like himself. The fact that the moral aspect muffles the emotional one does not necessarily mean that Winston is incapable of genuine affection, but that he

needs to protect Julia, even in his thought, by keeping her as far as possible from the pain he has to endure:

He thought: 'If I could save Julia by doubling my own pain, would I do it? Yes, I would.' But that was merely an intellectual decision, taken because he knew that he ought to take it. He did not feel it. In this place you could not feel anything, except pain and foreknowledge of pain. (Orwell, 1976: 880)

The pain that bonds him to his torturers is the pain that detaches him from his former lover.

The pain inflicted by the Romanian communist regime may have been insufficient to produce the Stockholm syndrome, and it is a mystery if the Romanian people were affected by it. Romanian communist propaganda did its duty to depict communism as Prince Charming, “forever young, handsome, invincible”, to quote none other than the man in charge of propaganda and censorship during the Ceaușescu regime (Popescu, 2006b: 51). But Popescu, nicknamed “God”, a keen observer, knew that the “fatal sign of narcissism” under which communism had marched for seven decades was not enough to offset the dictator’s belief in the efficacy of authoritarian rule and disdain for “strategies of seduction”.

Propaganda about the great things they were doing for the country did not succeed in drawing much disinterested love for the regime or its leaders, at least not from the adult population. In 1971, after visiting both Kim Il Sung and Mao, Ceaușescu reckoned that manifestations of love like those he had seen on North Korean and Chinese stadiums were possible in Romania too, so the architect of the dictator’s cult of personality, the same Popescu-God, set about a gaudy campaign that would have Ceaușescu compared to luminaries of all times. Many historians agree that the Asian voyage inspired the Romanian “cultural mini-revolution”, although Popescu blames the cultural freeze on the major precautions against a possible Soviet intervention in Romania after the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968 (Popescu, 2006a: 232). In spite of an incredible amount of time spent with rehearsals and hard work, just like the preparations for Hate Week, during which even “the staffs of all the Ministries were working overtime” (Orwell, 1976: 810), the grand shows mounted for the presidential couple, a replica of the Chinese and North Korean ones, were not exactly a Love Week.

Unfortunately for him, Ceaușescu lacked Mao’s rock-solid background. For historical reasons, Romanians have traditionally viewed authority, the more so the communist one, with skepticism. Four thousand miles away, it was different. Anthony Grey, a British journalist detained for more than two years in China (quoted in Lynch, 2004: 57-58), attributes the “irrational” love of the Chinese for Mao to the traditional, Confucian respect for hierarchical superiors, from the emperor to local authorities.

But Mao's charm relied on much more than custom. Despite his failures and crimes, he was viewed by his own people as a romantic revolutionary, an idealist who fought to abolish all exploitation, and a hero who had saved the country from the humiliation of a hundred years of Western domination, turning it into a global power. In contrast, the shamelessness of the comparisons with famous people and the maladroit attempt to revamp both Ceaușescu's and his wife's biographies as young revolutionaries of the 1930s, coupled with the disastrous policies that ruined the economy and the absurd restriction of freedoms, announced the certain failure of the Romanian dictator.

At 73, with the responsibility of tens of millions of deaths behind him, Mao's charisma alone could still rally millions in the streets. Such scenes were unthinkable in Romania, except maybe for the delusional dictator who, three years before reaching that age, was shot at the climax of the anti-communist revolution.

Whereas Winston's love for Big Brother is forced upon him, the Chinese people's love for Mao was genuine until his late years in power. As for Romanian communist leaders, despite sustained propaganda, there were always more reasons to hate rather than to love them.

Was propaganda more successful in instilling hate?

Before seeking an answer, some attention must be given to an issue concerning the nature of hatred that has elicited contradictory answers: Is hatred an emotion? Or is it a disease, one with chronic and acute phases? If it is a disease, one is entitled to believe that medical research has determined its pathology, and some remedies have been experimented with.

4. Is hatred a disease?

Without attempting a universal definition of "normalcy" or insisting on the lexicographic aspect of the matter beyond the following definitions, it must be said that, according to respectable dictionaries, some manifestations of hatred presented here are definitely symptoms of disease and/or its synonyms. Here are a few definitions of *disease* (my italics):

Concise Oxford 1975: "morbid condition of body, plant, or some part of them, illness, sickness; any particular kind of this with special symptoms & name; *deranged or depraved state of mind or morals*".

Webster's 1984: "*an impairment of the normal state of the living body or of one or more of its parts* marked by disturbance of vital functions and usually traceable to a specific cause (as a parasite, a toxin, or a dietary deficiency)...".

www.britannica.com: "*a harmful deviation from the normal structural or functional state of an organism*. A diseased organism commonly exhibits signs or

symptoms indicative of its abnormal state. Thus, the normal condition of an organism must be understood in order to recognize the hallmarks of disease. *Nevertheless, a sharp demarcation between disease and health is not always apparent*".

www.medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com: "any deviation from or interruption of the normal structure or function of any body part, organ, or system that is manifested by a characteristic set of symptoms and signs and whose etiology, pathology, and prognosis may be known or unknown".

www.medilexicon.com: "1. An interruption, cessation, or disorder of a body, system, or organ structure or function. 2. A morbid entity ordinarily characterized by two or more of the following criteria: recognized etiologic agent(s), identifiable group of signs and symptoms, or consistent anatomic alterations".

www.medterms.com: "illness or sickness often characterized by typical patient problems (symptoms) and physical findings (signs)".

www.merriam-webster.com: "an illness that affects a person, animal, or plant; a condition that prevents the body or mind from working normally; a problem that a person, group, organization, or society has and cannot stop".

www.dictionary.reference.com: "1. a disordered or incorrectly functioning organ, part, structure, or system of the body resulting from the effect of genetic or developmental errors, infection, poisons, nutritional deficiency or imbalance, toxicity, or unfavorable environmental factors; illness; sickness; ailment. [...] 3. any harmful, depraved, or morbid condition, as of the mind or society: His fascination with executions is a disease...".

The causes and sources of hatred as a hypothetical illness have naturally become an object of cognitive neuroscience. Unfortunately, today there is only one tested way of detecting and measuring hate: functional magnetic resonance imaging, which, upon activation of various stimuli, shows an increased or a decreased blood flow in the region of the brain supposed to generate and sustain hate. Most researchers believe that this region is the limbic system, or more exactly, the amygdala, the structure responsible with emotional behavior, because it seems to show more "hate responsiveness". But Glaser (2008) suspects that the association with the amygdala is due to the traditional belief that hate is an *emotion*. In this case, the "amygdala hypothesis" is no more than a prejudgment.

A singular attempt to locate hate by means of fMRI, undertaken in 2008 by Semir Zeki and John Paul Romaya, switched the focus away from the amygdala. The subjects whose brains they scanned completed score sheets based on Sternberg & Sternberg's triangular theory of hate, and then watched images of persons they hated and of persons for which they had no particular feelings. The experiment revealed "a unique pattern of activity in the brain in the context of hate" that took

place *outside* the limbic system. The pattern is quite distinct from those of other related emotions, although it shares with these some areas. What is more, it shares two subcortical areas with romantic love too: the putamen, part of the lenticular nucleus, a basal ganglion, and the insula, a portion of the cerebral cortex (Zeki& Romaya, 2008). Still, this discovery by itself does not answer the question: emotion or illness?

Glaser's claim that there is no syndrome related to mental disease and associated with hate (Glaser, 2008: 17) is contradicted by Willard Gaylin, a leading theorist and practitioner of psychotherapy, who describes hatred as a combination of three elements: intense emotion, or *passion*, the "darker side of the human spirit" that manifests itself in irrational behaviors dictated by primitive neural system; a *psychological condition* that involves a form of quasi-delusional thinking; and *attachment*, the object of which may be rational or irrational, which depends on the personal history of the hater rather than the attributes or actions of the hated. (Gaylin, 2003: 28-29). The pathological aspect of hatred resides in the second component, since delusion is a symptom of serious mental illness. A form of Freudian "projection", the process whereby an external "other" is identified as the cause of one's personal unhappiness is considered the essential ingredient of hatred. Gaylin names it the "paranoid shift", whose multiple roles include the preservation of self-respect in dishonorable contexts, the replacement of guilt and fear with rage, and eventually a "conspiratorial view of life" (Gaylin, 2003: 115). Not only is hatred lethal, destroying the hater and his humanity, but it is also a highly contagious "social disease" (Gaylin, 2003: 234).

However, Gaylin does not go so far as to exonerate perpetrators of hate crimes on the grounds of their sickness, maintaining that even if their condition is a neurosis, it does not absolve them of responsibility (Gaylin, 2003: 241). This leaves the question still unanswered: illness or emotion gotten out of control?

Relativizing the issue even more, Jerrold Post, a psychiatrist, and Robert Robins, a political scientist, both political psychologists, contend that "psychopathologies [...] appear in all societies, but circumstances in which they are defined as illness are culturally determined" (Robins& Post, 1997: 53). One is almost compelled to conclude that, after all, blaming others for one's own failures and misery, whether it goes by the name of paranoid shift, projection, or simply scapegoating, is a universal trait of human nature, and differences among societies consist only in the degree of acceptance.

Just as "a sharp demarcation between disease and health is not always apparent" (see above www.britannica.com), the boundaries between illness and emotion, on the one hand, and these and social or cultural determination on the other are still indefinite.

5. Linguistic ambiguities

In English, a second ambiguity exists at linguistic level, where two words vie for similar meanings. Some dictionaries list *hate* and *hatred* (hate + Old English *ræden* condition) as perfectly interchangeable synonyms (when decontextualized), with the meaning of intense/strong dislike (Concise, 1975; Oxford, 1978; Roget's, 1988; oxforddictionaries.com; merriam-webster.com), while others reveal fine distinctions not always discerned by the average person: "*Hate* is the preferable term when the emotion is thought of in the abstract as the diametrical opposite of *love...*", while "*Hatred* is the preferable term when the emotion referred to is actually experienced and is therefore personal and individual in character..." (Webster's, 1984).

In scientific papers, a distinction may be found between *hate* as a mere emotion of intense dislike, therefore ignored by neuroscientists as too vague, and *hatred*, a feeling "leaning toward intensity, that is, odium" (Glaser, 2008: 11). To compound the problem, many other authors consider hatred to be mere hate enhanced by a feeling of *attachment* to its object.

Then, if the phenomenon were categorized as an illness, could we equate its chronic phase with hatred, and its acute phase with hate? Many authors claim that hatred is not only more lasting, which is a characteristic of chronicity, but also more intense, i.e. acute, than hate. That is to say hatred, which is long-lasting and acute, and hate, which is short-lived and less acute, share characteristics of both acuteness and chronicity. The only way out of this quandary is probably to coin new terms, either to complement the dichotomy chronic/acute, or to expand the semantic family of *hatred* and *hate*.

To simplify understanding of the following, *hate* and *hatred* will be used interchangeably, and the pair *chronic/acute* in reference to duration, rather than intensity, without medical connotations.

Thus, the similarity between the fictional Oceania and the real communist Romania consists in the presence of *chronic hate*, whose role is to maintain a constant level of negative emotion over a long period of time, chiefly by means of propaganda, and *acute hate*, whose background is the former, which may be turned up when the occasion or need arises, usually in the presence of its target, either spontaneously or in organized fashion: the Two Minutes Hate and public bashing respectively.

6. Enemies: individual versus collective, permanent versus temporary

Naturally, there are differences as well. One, between the fictional and the real worlds, consists in the characteristics of the enemies.

Nineteen Eighty-Four and *Animal Farm* reveal a complex double symmetry. In the former, the two types of enemy, both quintessential, are the individual and permanent (Goldstein) and the collective and intermittent, indeed interchangeable (Eurasia and Eastasia). *Animal Farm* has both types, with their characteristics reversed: the individual enemy, Snowball (like Goldstein, a repository of Trotskyist traits: the “best at writing” and a good organizer, among other things of Animal Committees and defense, etc.) is temporary, while the collective enemy, humans, remains constant. Group stereotyping takes a step backward from Major’s blunt first commandment: “Whatever goes upon two legs, is an enemy”, later reduced by Snowball to the essential principle of Animalism: “Four legs good, two legs bad” (Orwell, 1976: 16, 25) to the rather vague “sad Mongolian faces” of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The classical analogy between Goldstein and Bronstein (Trotsky), that begins with their names and physical traits (“lean Jewish face, with a great fuzzy aureole of white hair and a small goatee beard” – Orwell, 1976: 749) and includes their political views and renegade status, becomes inoperative in two essential points: presence and destiny. Nobody, except a chosen few, knows if Goldstein actually exists: he may well be the creation of the Ministry of Truth. Thus, although he is an individualized enemy, Goldstein does not, and perhaps cannot, suffer direct abuse. It is impossible to know if he can be brought to justice and punished. Which, of course, was not the fate of his prototype, Leon Trotsky, when Stalin decided to do away with his own enemy.

Why does Oceania need Goldstein? Orwell certainly noticed that totalitarian regimes employed more than one enemy, but not for the sake of variety. Eurasia and Eastasia may alternate between being friends or foes depending on the will of the regime, but Ingsoc is equally well served by keeping the proles’ anger ready and focusing daily on an individual with a face rather than a collective enemy. The uniform faceless foes cannot draw as much acute hatred as an individual enemy.

Then why doesn’t Oceania also provide a more palpable, flesh-and-blood enemy to quench the anger of its inhabitants? This seems to be a matter of economy. Oceania is a thrifty state. The chronic shortage or absence of any imaginable item, from staples to freedom, has been a natural state, like famine in Ethiopia, for as long as anyone can remember. Opposition has been muted, so inventing enemies only to destroy them would be both uneconomical and superfluous. Real life is usually less rational.

The US has been the favorite collective enemy of many autocratic regimes. In North Korea, for example, it traditionally catalyzes the nation's anger and hate as a permanent enemy, keeping hatred at a chronic level and serving as target when an acute phase is required. The US "is seen as responsible for the division of Korea, for the deaths of millions of Koreans during the war, and for preventing the reunification of the peninsula" (Harrold 2004:396) while America is not even always aware of the scope of this hatred. As anti-Americanism is the strongest unifying factor, North Korean leaders have no interest in subduing it, hence the unusually harsh official language that defies diplomatic usages, a language of radical groups rather than national states.

Kim Jong Un's March 2013 report, for instance, avoids straight name-calling: the enemy is "our opponent" the US and its "followers" or "hostile forces", unspecified (but implicit) imperialist "aggressors", or simply "the enemy" or "enemies". The bite in the speech is given by verbs: the "vicious" enemy is "picking up a quarrel" without a serious reason, "blackmailed us", "is scheming" to "isolate", "stifle", or "strangle" the Republic, "cooked up" or "invented" outrageous resolutions against North Korea, and commits "diabolic acts of hostility" (Kim Jong Un, 2013).

The US is an almost perfect enemy, because regimes like the North Korean one can make it play quite a few enemy roles defined by Sternberg & Sternberg: the *stranger*, the *controller*, the *barbarian*, the *criminal*, the *power monger*, the *thwarting of destiny* (i.e. unification with South Korea). But there are also disadvantages. First, to ordinary North Korean citizens, the US is also a distant, rather abstract enemy: a *faceless foe*, with faces undistinguishable from one another, like Orwell's Eurasian – or Eastasian – soldiers. Secondly, despite the fiery rhetoric, it cannot be punished or brought to justice. It remains at the stage of uniformization, and North Koreans who are unlucky enough to be targeted by their regime serve as temporary, individual enemies.

When in almost total control, finding new enemies all the time is both an easy task and an excellent power builder, a principle that Stalin applied ruthlessly. Obviously, with the advent of communism in Romania, the new regime embraced Stalinist methods, especially in the first, brutal decade. Like all totalitarian regimes, the Romanian one had its own Goldsteins, or rather Trotskys, the most prominent of which were communists fallen out of grace, like the trio Ana Pauker-Vasile Luca-Teohari Georgescu, but with one exception, Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, they did not meet Trotsky's end. By disposing of its lesser Trotskys without a big fuss, the regime concentrated on groups that it wanted eliminated or disciplined, and succeeded to a large extent.

Of course, faceless foes such as imperialistic "aggressors" were useful to maintain chronic hate, but the regime could not bring them to justice any more than Oceania could do so with Goldstein and North Korea with the US. The bourgeois class, the

fundamental, permanent, chronic, and present enemy, was a reachable target. In fact, judging by the constant supply of enemies, the country teemed with a variety of real and invented enemies of the new order, who could be blamed for anything that went wrong – real, arrestable Goldsteins: *morally bankrupt* exploiters, *greedy* kulaks and industrialists, *subtle infiltrators* (a story used by Stalin since 1927 to induce hate against groups such as managers, academics, religious leaders, and other members of the intelligentsia accused of conspiring with foreign powers against the young Soviet state – Sternberg & Sternberg, 2008: 92), and *thwarters of destiny*, who had to be swept away on the “inexorable” path to communism.

All that the reprisals against these required was a shift from abstractness and uniformization to hate-inspiring dehumanization and practical individualization, of which the regime made a lot of use, or rather abuse. Enemies had to be fully individualized before being eliminated. Meanwhile, chronic hatred against the group was maintained by means of a less spectacular medium than in Oceania: the written press, one of whose “literary” contributions to the hunt for enemies is what Sternberg & Sternberg call the *animal pest story*, analyzed in a separate paper as a major instrument of dehumanization, hence a chief crime facilitator.

Romanian communist propaganda preferred temporary enemies to permanent ones. For almost two decades following WWII, it denounced and waged campaigns against an incredibly long series of enemies, some real and others deviously invented, including both actual and conceptual groups.

In a country where anyone could become an enemy of the state without warning, nobody, not even the political leaders, could feel safe. The answer to: “Can reality be as bad as Orwell’s dystopia?” is, definitely, yes.

7. Enemies: in effigy versus in flesh and blood

Another difference between the Orwellian dystopia and the communist regime is in the way of dealing with the targeted enemy.

The communist regime did not treat its enemies cinematically, like Oceania, but theatrically, by bringing them on stage in front of a live audience, or rather amphitheatrically, since public bashing was much farther from dramatic plays than from ancient Coliseum-style entertainment.

Not that Oceania does not have its fair share of public trials. Julia dutifully takes her place in the Youth League detachments that “surrounded the courts from morning to night, chanting at intervals ‘Death to the traitors!’” (Orwell, 1976: 834). But Oceania’s more pragmatic regime has learned a thing or two from Stalinism: those who provoke the “displeasure” of the Party are vaporized and forgotten.

The great purges involving thousands of people, with public trials of traitors and thought-criminals who made abject confession of their crimes and were afterwards

executed, were special show-pieces not occurring oftener than once in a couple of years. (Orwell, 1976: 768)

The permanent enemy exists only on screen. The montage and the close-ups of Goldstein's face – a Deleuzian “affection-image” – are excellent catalysts of fear and anger. The downside is that they rob the viewers of control over the recipient of hate, forcing them to turn their hate onto other members of the audience. Just like his love for Julia, rationalized in prison, Winston's anger is “an abstract and undirected emotion which could be switched from one object to another like the flame of a blowlamp”, even against Big Brother (Orwell 1976:750). As to efficacy of the Two Minutes Hate kind of propaganda, Orwell is explicit:

But what was strange was that although Goldstein was hated and despised by everybody, although every day and a thousand times a day, on platforms, on the telescreen, in newspapers, in books, his theories were refuted, smashed, ridiculed, held up to the general gaze for the pitiful rubbish that they were – in spite of all this, his influence never seemed to grow less. (Orwell, 1976: 750)

The (amphi)theatrical appearance compensates the absence of “affection-images” by investing the viewer with control over the live “actor”, in a reversal of roles whereby the members of the audience send messages to passive “actors” on stage.

After a period of relative lull, in 1958 the Romanian communist regime resumed the persecutions, officially to fight ideological opponents, but in reality to prove its allegiance to Moscow after the retreat of the Soviet troops from Romania. Public “unmasking” gatherings held day after day in factories, universities and cultural institutions became a national psychosis, as almost everyone was a potential suspect. The victims went on stage, a scaffold of sorts, to be publicly humiliated, then sent to jail or – the lucky ones – dismissed from their jobs:

On the stage, the physician and professor Marius Nasta and Mrs. Nasta, [the painter] Milița Petrașcu, [the opera singer] Dora Massini and others, all standing. The “workers” in the galleries start yelling: “To death! To death! Booo!” The accusation begins: enemies of the people, plotters... Accusatory questions are raining. From the auditorium incessant accusations and yells are heard: “To prison with them!”, “Enemies of the people!” (Bîțfoi, 2012: 487)

But the self-protective and normative needs behind the shouting did not obstruct the “workers” fair judgment, as in the following illustrative episode, which explains their increasingly anemic reaction to the slogans launched by the agitators:

For three days, workers from the biggest factories in Bucharest had been brought in front of the Army House (today the Military Academy) and urged to shout all kinds of boos and slogans, among which the most frequent were: ‘Death to the enemies of the people!’, ‘To death! To death!’. I confess that on the first day I heard them I was impressed, but then I got used to it and eventually I almost felt

pity for them. On the first day, those who were in the auditorium were also hostile and repeated the boos of those whose role was to shout them. But as the debate went on, they must have realized that the whole trial was a simulacrum. (Chioreanu, 1992: 184)

Distance protects. From the aggressor's viewpoint, it is essential to the efficacy of the aggression, and inversely proportional to it. In an air raid, for example, as each group is invisible to the other, both the attackers and the bombed can deny that there is something personal in the attack. They are faceless foes. That denial does not work in physical proximity, when the perpetrators, the victims, or both are not sociopaths, but normal persons that can see each other, because empathy and individuation step in to neutralize the process of dehumanization of the enemy (Grossman, 2009: 78). Agitators had to compensate the proximity by creating another type of distance – emotional distance, i.e. mechanisms that generate cultural, moral, or social detachment. The cases above were not ethnic or religious in nature. Distancing was either social-professional, as between “workers” and other groups, sometimes presented as less human (intellectuals, former politicians, industrialists, etc.); or moral, e.g. justice had to be administered to morally inferior criminals guilty of “plotting” against a legitimate cause. Moral distance is less likely to lead to atrocities than cultural distance, which seeks the dehumanization of the target (Grossman, 2009: 168). As in the Milgram experiment, authority was also a powerful situational force: its proximity to the perpetrator (agitators were among the “workers”), the intensity of its demands, the authority, respect, and legitimacy it enjoyed (or not) were all major factors. Not least, although partially desensitized, the “workers” were not perpetrators themselves, i.e. they were not urged to actually kill the victims. From the latter account one may assume that they were less violent than many football fans in Romanian stadiums. Whether judicially motivated or political frame-ups, the trials were put up as communist-morality shows.

One thing that the Two Minutes Hate and communist public bashings have in common is the staged hatred. Neither Oceanian, nor Romanian hatred was genuine, spontaneous, born from the personal experience of the haters. In both cases it was mounted and conducted from the wings, under the command of the authority. After reaching a climax, as soon as the show was over, the audience peacefully returned to their workplaces. Efficiently conditioned, their latent hatred would be again roused when necessary. Neither Ingsoc, nor the communist party could afford to lose control over the anger of their subjects.

But differences are more significant than similarities: whereas the hate aimed at Emmanuel Goldstein is in effigy, the hate of Romanian viewers was directed at persons in flesh and blood standing in front of them, whom they could curse, spit, condemn to death. The real feelings of those who attended as “spectators” are a knotty problem. From the perspective of those on the stage, subjected to public

opprobrium, the answer to the question “Can reality be as bad as Orwell’s dystopia?” is: Yes, even worse.

8. Conclusions

Like infectious diseases, totalitarian regimes undermine the individual’s resistance and free will. To this purpose, they engage both physical constraints, such as shortages and starvation, and the manipulative use of emotions.

Regarding positive feelings, cold facts are puzzling: they show beyond doubt that genocidal communist leaders from Asia garnered considerably more love from their victims than the more benign East-European Ceaușescu, who took them as models, but obviously lacked their charisma. A chilling conclusion is that a charismatic mass murderer can get away with his crimes. Unlike Ceaușescu, both Kim and Mao, in a manner of speaking, died in their beds.

As for Big Brother, whose “function is to act as a focusing point for love, fear, and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt towards an individual than towards an organization” (Orwell 1976:863), what he seems to be after is rather the fear of pain he can inflict on his subjects until they totally submit their will to him. The love for Big Brother felt by “traitors” reduced to “shells of men” after prolonged torture seems as genuine as the love for Stalin professed by one like Bukharin in his 10 December, 1937 letter to the Soviet leader, written in his death cell before his execution:

I am preparing myself mentally to depart from this life, and there is nothing that I feel for all of you, for the Party and the Cause, except immense, boundless love. (Courtois, 2011: 149)

This paradoxical declaration of love is nothing but a proof of the absurdity and duplicity that govern both the real USSR and the fictitious Oceania, where love for Big Brother and O’Brien’s cynical prophecy do not rule each other out:

The old civilizations claimed that they were founded on love or justice. Ours is founded upon hatred. In our world there will be no emotions except fear, rage, triumph, and self-abasement. Everything else we shall destroy – everything. (Orwell, 1976: 898)

Hatred is a more efficient tool, because enemies are not only a government’s quasi-permanent necessity, but also a frustrated individual’s.

As far as the ruling power is concerned, the function of the enemy is to deflect potential discontent. The focus of attention must be switched from the actual problems ordinary citizens are confronted with: state terror, shortages, absence of freedoms, etc., as well as from the persons who are responsible for them. This powerful tool perfectly matches the need to transfer responsibility for personal

failures onto another individual or an out-group in an act of scapegoating, described by Gaylin as a “paranoid shift”. The convergence of interests between power and the citizen has devastating social consequences on the targeted enemies.

Not only must an enemy be fabricated when an actual one does not exist: it must also be as plausible, and even tangible, as possible, because a generic enemy is hard to hate and fight. Therefore it may go through the process of individualization, the reverse of uniformization. Then, it may either remain in effigy, as a permanent enemy, like Orwell’s Goldstein, or materialize as a real person to absorb hatred, as in the numerous cases of public bashing staged in Romania in the 1950s. It is up for power to decide.

Irrespective of the material or immaterial condition of the enemy, hatred can be maintained at a latent, chronic level, but also escalated to an acute intensity. Chronic hatred against large groups such as Muslims, Jews, infidels, politicians, etc. has always existed and will continue to do so; but from time to time, given the occasion, it will zoom in on a particular Muslim preacher, Jewish businessman, Christian pop star, American president, and even Mickey Mouse (Ibrahim, 2008), to satisfy its prejudices and stereotypes.

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