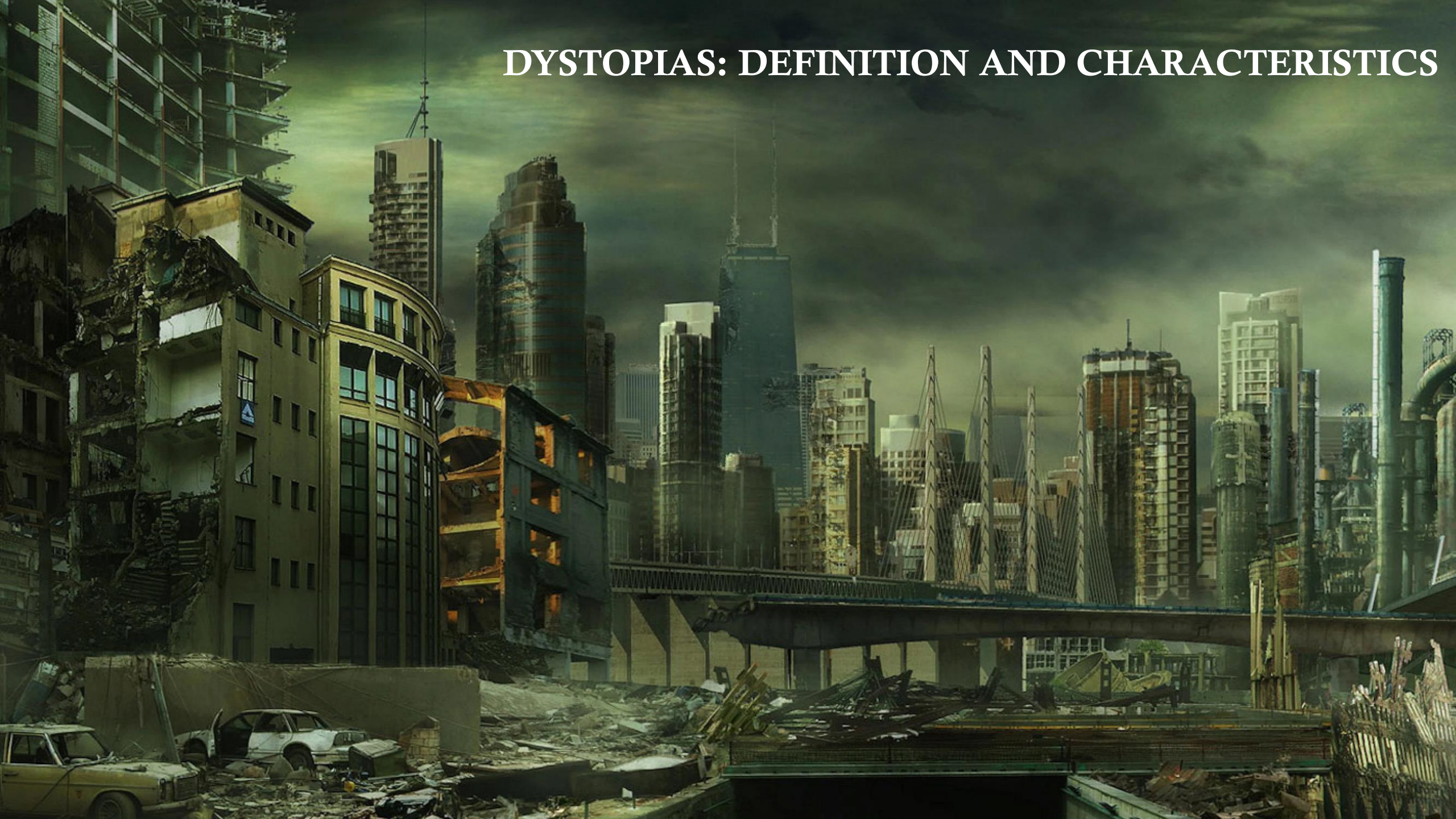


DYSTOPIAS: DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS



A quick reminder

UTOPIA

- A place, state, or condition that is ideally perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs, and conditions.



DYSTOPIA

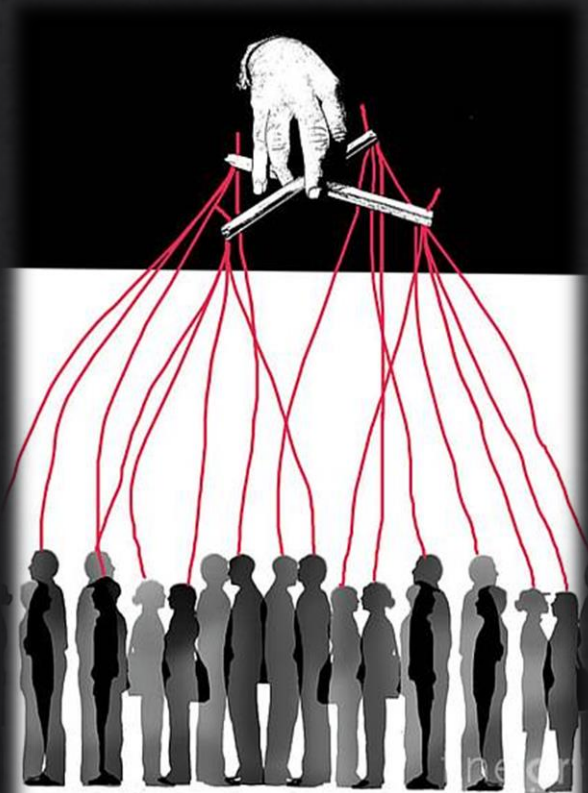
- A futuristic, imagined universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral, or totalitarian control.
- Dystopias, through an exaggerated worst-case scenario, make a criticism about a current trend, societal norm, or political system.

Characteristics of a Dystopian Society

- Propaganda is used to control the citizens of society.
- Information, independent thought, and freedom are restricted.
- A figurehead or concept is worshipped by the citizens of the society.
- Citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance.
- Citizens have a fear of the outside world.
- Citizens live in a dehumanized state.
- The natural world is banished and distrusted.
- Citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad.
- The society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.

Types of Dystopian Controls

Most dystopian works present a world in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through one or more of the following types of controls:

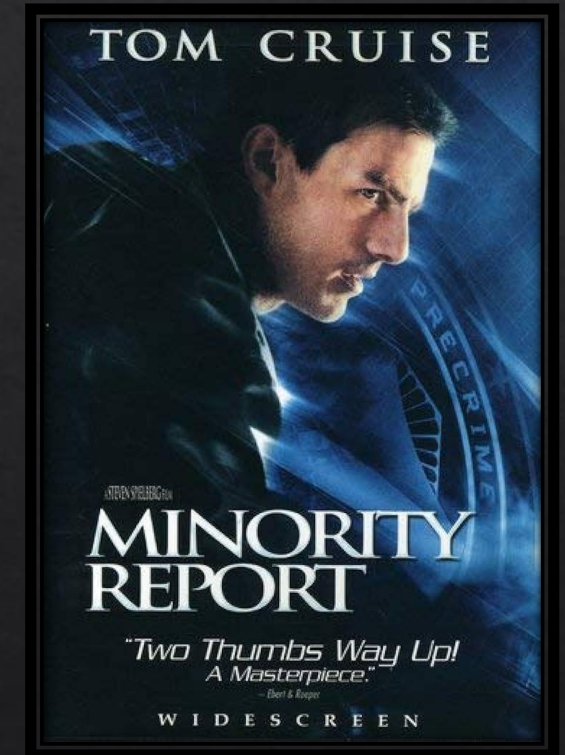
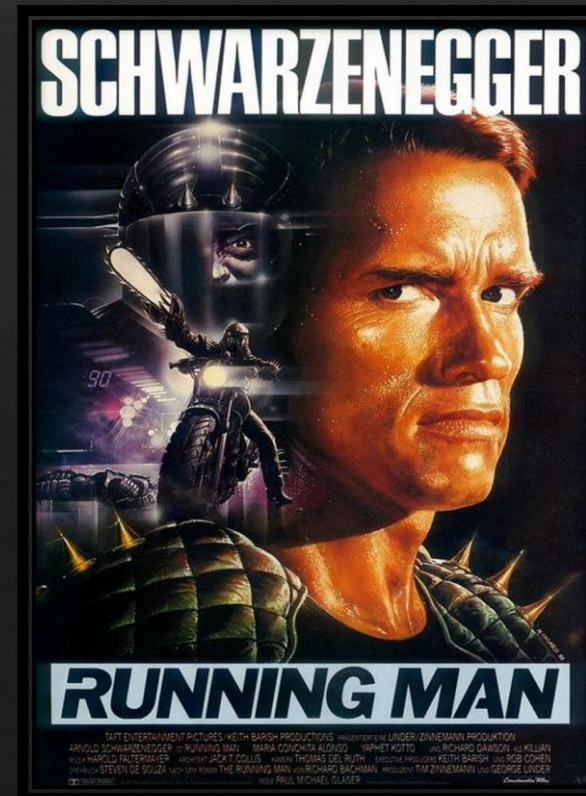


LET'S TAKE A LOOK...

Corporate control

- ◆ One or more large corporations control society through products, advertising, and/or the media.

- Minority Report (Philip K. Dick, 1956)
- Running Man (Stephen King, 1982)



Bureaucratic control

- ◆ Society is controlled by a mindless bureaucracy through a tangle of red tape, relentless regulations, and incompetent government officials.

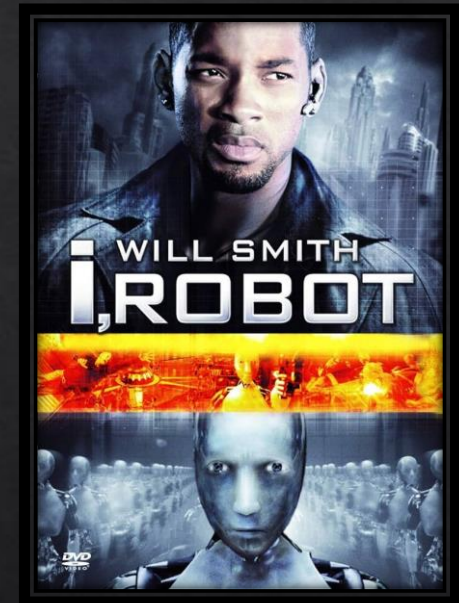
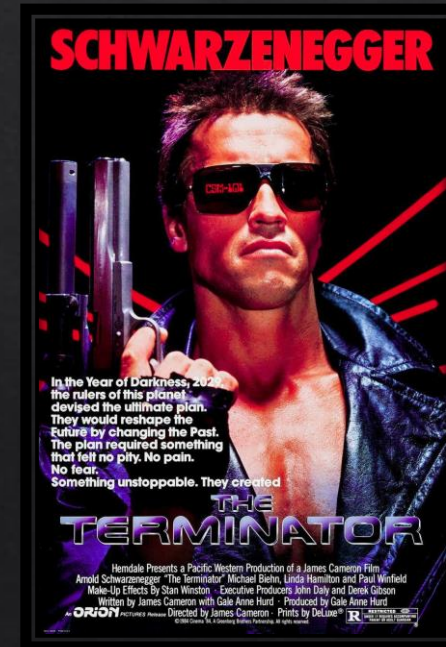
- Brazil (Terry Gilliam, 1985)



Technological control

◆ Society is controlled by technology—through computers, robots, and/or scientific means.

- The Matrix (1999)
- The Terminator (1984)
- I, Robot (Isaac Asimov, 1950)



Philosophical/religious control

- ◆ Society is controlled by philosophical or religious ideology often enforced through a dictatorship or theocratic government.

The dystopian protagonist



NEW SPEAK ACTIVITY: Language & Dictatorships

- ✓ Pick one of the concepts from the list (see next slide).
- ✓ Take a few minutes to describe or explain that concept without using any of the related words listed.
- ✓ Afterwards, present your explanation and see if the others can guess which concept you chose.

↗ Language is a vital aspect of Freedom.

↗ Censorship is detrimental to the formation of complex thoughts and ideas.

CONCEPTS (WITH WORDS YOU CANNOT USE)**SLAVERY**

Abolish	Hostage	Serf
Abolition	Imprisonment	Servant
Captive	Labor	Serve
Captivity	Master	Slave
Detain	Own	Struggle
Free	Owner	Submissive
Freedom	Peon	Subservient
The Help	Prisoner	Worker

FREEDOM

Abolish	Free	Slave
Abolition	Independence	Slavery
Autonomy	Independent	Self-
Captive	Liberation	Determination
Captivity	Liberty	Sovereign
Democracy	Privilege	Sovereignty
Emancipation	Right(s)	Unrestraint

RELIGION

Belief	Following	Ritual
Church	God(s)	Sacred
Creed	Goddess(es)	Sanctity
Denomination	Holiness	Sect
Devotion	Holy	Spirit
Devout	Ideology	Spirituality
Divine	Lord	Temple
Divinity	Morality	Theology
Doctrine	Piety	Worship
Dogma	Pray	
Faith	Prayer	

FREE WILL

Autonomy	Judgment
Choice	Liberty
Choose	Self-Determination
Decision	Self-Imposed
Determination	Will
Free	Willing
Freedom	

REVOLUTION

Anarchy	Dissent	Noncompliance	Rebel	Riot
Change	Foment	Oust	Rebellion	Scheme
Coup d'état	Insubordination	Overthrow	Reconstruct	Strike
Defiance	Insurgency	Overturn	Reform	Takeover
Disobedience	Insurrection	Plot	Reformation	Transform
Disorder	Mutiny	Putsch	Revolt	Uprising
Disregard				

How to recognize a dystopia - Alex Gendler



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6a6kbU88wu0>

FOCUS ON VOCABULARY

- Some of which at first seemed impressive, but **turned out to be seriously flawed**
- To **pursue** extravagant and useless schemes
- He **established a blueprint** for dystopia
- To expose the **underlying flaws**
- **Slums**
- **Tycoons**
- Many **feared** where such conditions might **lead**
- Some promised **to erase** all social distinctions, while others **sought** to unite people around a mythical heritage
- **Ruthless** efficiency
- He **envisioned** how easily democracy **gave way to** fascism
- Workers **toiled** in space colonies above an earth of **depleted resources** and **overpopulated, crime-plagued cities**
- **At their heart**, dystopias are **cautionary** tales not about some particular government or technology, but the very idea that humanity can be **molded** into an ideal shape

FOCUS ON MENTIONED WORKS

- In the video several works (novels, movies, comics) are mentioned. Can you list them?
- Try to find out what these works are about!



1984: ZOOM IN THE TEXT

1. What kind of author does Orwell employ in his novel? Whose point of view does the narrator employ?
2. What is dystopian about the following elements? Give examples from the text:
 - a) The time on the clocks
 - b) The posters on the walls
 - c) The electric power system
 - d) The telescreen
 - e) The colours of the city
 - f) The police
 - g) London
 - h) Winston's memories
3. Now consider the message BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU. What does this tell us about the way the citizens of Airstrip One are treated?

1984: ZOOM IN THE TEXT

Now consider the three ideological slogans of the party. What do you notice about their logic?
Fill in the following paragraph with the appropriate words.

World	slavery	truth	IGNORANCE	PEACE	contradictory	slogans	FREEDOM	war
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At first, the three _____ of the party appear to be completely _____ and absurd.

However, if we consider them carefully from the state's point of view they have a certain logic.

The first, WAR IS _____, suggests that the condition of peace in a country and or empire is dependent on being almost constantly at _____ with ist enemies – those countries which threaten ist economic and political interests.

The second slogan, _____ IS SLAVERY, can be read in two ways. Firstly, it implies that freedom itself is a form of _____ to the individual will and thus undesirable. but we also have the idea that real freedom means to renounce one's individual's liberties and submit voluntarily to the state's will.

Finally, _____ IS STRENGTH can be connected to the values which regulate Huxley's Brave New _____.

Knowing too much creates dissent and schisms, and thus weakens the univocal _____ propounded by the state.

FOR DISCUSSION

- ❑ Do you think television is used to control the ideas and behaviour of the public? Give examples of your own experience.
- ❑ Can you think of any dystopian elements in contemporary societies? Compare them with Orwell's state.



Write away!

Now that you have read both Huxley's and Orwell's extracts imagine your own dystopia. You can find inspiration in their totalitarian scenarios or rework certain aspects of contemporary society you find particularly 'dystopian'.

- You can base your description on two main aspects which are interrelated. First of all, try to imagine what transformations your 'dystopian' society has undergone. You can focus on aspects like work, education, entertainment, culture, social relationships and so on. Then, try to think how these changes may affect the structure of the city, its houses, the countryside etc.
- In writing your dystopia try (like Orwell and Huxley) to give precise names and descriptions of the systems and technologies of control and repression used. For example, one could imagine a totalitarian society based on the logic of sport and physical fitness. Here instead of 'thought police' we could have a force of brain trainers with slogans such as 'mind is muscle'.

Time for some writing