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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Reality as a Palimpsest:
Information Disorder Practices
in George Orwell's *1984* and *The Loudest Voice*

Abstract: Drawing upon mass communication theories, with special emphasis on Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacra and simulacrum, we will examine distortion of information practices in George Orwell's *1984* (1949) and in the American TV miniseries *The Loudest Voice* (2019). Even though there is nearly a century between both works, socio-politically speaking, the control of information dissemination is equally important in both narrative products: in the maintaining of the *status quo* in an authoritarian system in *1984* and in the process of undermining the current US democratic system in *The Loudest Voice*. With this, we will argue that these literary and audiovisual texts are key for citizens to develop critical thinking skills and to question their worldviews, or, in Orwell's own words, to exercise an uncommon common sense, which entails independence of thought and integrity of mind.

Keywords: mass communication theories, fake news, George Orwell, *The Loudest Voice*, simulacra

1. Introduction

In our current model of information society, citizens experience an overload of information in their everyday lives, through traditional communication channels as well as social media. We face serious challenges trying to discern which information is based on verified facts, which has been, to some extent, manipulated, or simply created to disseminate as disinformation and, thus, cause confusion

regarding specific issues. Fake news, defined by Carmi et al. as "information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country" (3), is everywhere we look, and is circulated by both individuals and institutions, in private and public spheres, in order to mislead public opinion regarding diverse political, scientific or social issues. Significantly, the phenomenon of fake news has emerged as a global concern (Bharali and Goswani 118), having a considerable impact on the public's perception of the world. Let us consider the following example. In November 2020, during the American presidential elections, Donald Trump deliberately used social networks such as *Facebook* or *Twitter* to sow doubt about the U.S. election process and, in particular, the mail-in voting. Specifically, on the night of the elections, while the votes were being counted, Trump tweeted: "We are up BIG, but they are trying to STEAL the Election. We will never let them do it. Votes cannot be cast after the Polls are closed!" (Graham, para. 2) In the two days after Election Day (3 November, 2020), after major controversy on whether social networks should limit the freedom of speech when disinformation is spread, *Twitter* added warning labels to nine of Trump's related-election tweets as containing misleading information.

As Martin Moore states in the report of the *Centre for the Study of Media, Communication and Power* at King's College London, fake news is a phenomenon that is centuries old. In this sense, Moore observes that "[t]he political, economic, and social motivations for creating fake or highly distorted news have existed since the invention of the printing press" (Moore 5). The difference, however, between older disinformation practices and the present phenomenon of fake news lies primarily in their extent, their dissemination, and their effects (Moore 5). Tellingly, Moore relates information manipulation in media and literature with his reference to Mark Twain's "Petrified Man," a satirical news story – what we would consider a hoax nowadays – published in *Territorial Enterprise* on 4 October 1862. While Twain intended to "illustrate the absurdity of many of the stories being published in the press about 'petrification' by satirizing them" (Moore 5), his satirical attack was not understood as such by his readership and the story was published as verified news in newspapers all around the world.

Literature and journalism have always been intertwined, even before the latter existed as a profession. The list of authors pursuing career paths in journalism and of those who led a double professional life, as journalist-writers, is extensive, including acknowledged names in the canon of literature written in English, such as Jonathan Swift, Walt Whitman, Charles Dickens, Stephen Crane, Mark Twain, Ernest Hemingway, or Martha Gellhorn, among others,. As a result of their experience in journalism, many of these authors formed a forward-thinking conception of information dissemination and of its influence on public opinion. Best known as a novelist, essayist and critic, George Orwell (1903–1950), the pen name of Eric Arthur Blair, was no stranger to the journalistic profession. In fact, he worked as the literary editor of the left-wing weekly magazine *Tribune*, to which – from 3

December 1943 until 16 February 1945 – he also regularly contributed a column under the heading "As I Please" (Orwell et al. 54). Orwell's writings were intellectually provocative, encouraging his readership to become more self-conscious of the way they think and feel and to question conventional opinions. In this process of self-awakening, as Orwell believed, common sense played a significant role: "[G]enuine common sense," if hard to acquire (since it is discredited through the misconceptions of it permeating society, culture and politics) "is needed to counter what we have come unthinkingly to accept as 'common sense' – the received views that all of us are accustomed to and that we tell ourselves we know are true" (Cain 76). Non-conformity and unorthodox thinking, which led toward independence of vision, were among his central terms.

In the present article, drawing upon the theory of simulacra and simulation by the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard and the concept of "information disorder," we will analyze the manipulation of facts carried out in Orwell's masterpiece *1984* (1949), comparing the techniques used in the novel with the tactics employed by Roger Ailes from Fox News in the American mini-TV series *The Loudest Voice* (McCarthy et al. 2019). We will argue that these two works, despite being set in completely different socio-political scenarios - a totalitarian regime and the current democratic political system in the US, respectively - show similar strategies of thought control and (dis)information dissemination, which are key in influencing the public's mindset. Additionally, we will claim that these fictional narratives urge their audiences to exercise that unorthodox common sense that Orwell advocated in order to question the information they consume and readjust their vision of reality.

2. Information Distortion as Simulacra

Training the public to think and act according to the agenda of institutionalized power entails the control of the information citizens receive.[1] What is more, it requires providing a fake narrative of the facts that aligns with the interests of that power. According to Lazer et al., fake news is "fabricated information that mimics news media content in form but not in organizational process or intent" (1094), fostering information disorders to deceive people. In this sense, it is necessary to note that the concept of information distortion includes three main categories: disinformation, defined as "information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country" (Carmi et al. 3); misinformation, that is, "information that is false, but not created with the intention of causing any harm" (Carmi et al. 3); and finally, malinformation, defined as information that is based on reality, but whose content is misled to inflict harm on a person, organization, or country (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017).[2]

Baudrillard's theory of *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994) becomes relevant in order to explain the process of information distortion in *1984* and *The Loudest*

Voice. First, the French sociologist introduces the concept of 'simulation,' defined as a faithful representation of events which stands for some truth. In Baudrillard's words, "[e]verywhere we live in a universe strangely similar to the original-things are doubled by their own scenario" (10). Therefore, the narrative of the events the public gets when approaching the news will never be what actually happened, but an interpretation of the facts made by the professional who recounts them. Following the ethics of the journalistic profession, the main aim of journalists should be to convey rigorous, verified facts to the public, avoiding prejudging the reported issue based on personal interests (Ward 301) – a faithful simulation of reality in Baudrillard's terms.

There is a significant difference between what simulation is in its first stage and the same concept in a subsequent phase. In this second stage, the distinction between the sign and the reference starts to break down: simulation distorts the events conveyed in such a way that the public is given an image which masks the real course of matters. In this kind of simulation, the purpose of journalists, or the person in control of the narrative, "is to modify the truth according to their own interest or the agenda of the mass media for which they work" (Valverde and Pérez-Escolar 104). Therefore, the narrative of the events is not any longer a faithful and disinterested representation of reality. Finally, Baudrillard points to a last stage in which we are no longer in front of a simulation of reality, but in the presence of a simulacrum. According to the French sociologist, "the transition from signs which dissimulate something to signs which dissimulate that there is nothing, marks the decisive turning point" (6). In this stage of representation, signs precede and determine what they represent, the real. There is no valid distinction between reality and its representation; there is only the simulacrum. Enlightening in this sense is the epigraph from Ecclesiastes with which Baudrillard opens his philosophical treatise *Simulacra and Simulation*: "The simulacrum is never what hides the truth-it is truth that hides the fact that there is none. The simulacrum is true – Ecclesiastes" (3).

Baudrillard claims that this third stage of simulacra is associated with the postmodern age. The sign is no longer considered a value; it has become the reversion and death sentence of every reference. As Baudrillard states, when it comes to the postmodern simulacra, "it is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real" (2). He argues that, in the postmodern age, all ability to distinguish between nature and artifice has been lost. As a consequence, in this day and age, the notion of truth appears to be absolutely distorted, with simulacra prevailing over simulations. What matters nowadays is to impose a convenient narrative, a vision of reality which constitutes a simulacrum of what truth genuinely is. When informing the public, the representation of the facts resembles less and less what really occurred, and, consequently, simulacra are presented as information that could be considered real but that no longer mirrors reality. In Baudrillard's words:

"simulation threatens the difference between the "true" and the "false," the "real" and the "imaginary" (4). It is this "elusive twisting of meanings" (Baudrillard 14) what gives birth, therefore, to a hyperreal vision of society in which it is difficult to distinguish between the real and the imaginary world. The public is given a fake narrative of events which, in many cases, has nothing to do with the real world. However, the veracity of the facts depicted is not questioned as long as such narrative goes along with the individual's previously formed perceptions. In this scenario, fake news seems impossible to distinguish from real facts without a thorough research of events, comparing and contrasting different versions of the same facts. Baudrillard refers to Disneyworld as an example of hyperreality: "This world wants to be childish in order to make us believe that the adults are elsewhere, in the 'real' world, and to conceal the fact that true childishness is everywhere – that it is that of the adults themselves who come here to act the child in order to foster illusions as to their real childishness" (11). In this sense, Disneyworld represents the same vision adults have of the real world; it is a voluntary suspension of disbelief that Baudrillard considers an "infantile" response (Pinsky 100). As a result of this "childishness," the image of the world the public prefers to consume is an easy and already digested one, turning citizens into passive consumers of information.

3. Information Distortion in *1984* and *The Loudest Voice*

In this section, we will examine the existent manipulation techniques in the communication of information in Orwell's *1984* and *The Loudest Voice*. In *1984,* we will mainly focus on analyzing the control of the present through the manipulation of the past on the part of the Party. History is transformed, as the authoritarian establishment can alter the past through the Ministry of Truth, where Winston works. In this vein, we will analyze the construction of simulacra, as in Baudrillard's definition (1994), through which the signs of the real become a substitute for reality. Not only does Ingsoc alter the past, but they also adjust the citizen's present worldview to the party's strategic interests; equally worryingly, they dominate the visions of the future. Similarly, concerning *The Loudest Voice*, we will concentrate on the creation of simulacra in the field of mass media, examining journalistic professional malpractices when reporting information to the public. Journalistic practices fictionalized in *The Loudest Voice*, if viewed in the light of Baudrillard's theory, cannot be considered faithful simulations of reality; on the contrary, Roger Ailes and his collaborators purposefully manipulate the narrative of events and spread simulacra so that the public's views align with their financial and political interests. This is nothing but information disorder. As we shall see, both malinformation and disinformation – black propaganda, following Jowett and O'Donnell – play a fundamental role in the professional journalistic practices dramatized in *The Loudest Voice*.

Even though readership could see Orwell's *1984* as distant in time and its narrated circumstances as impossible to conceive in the democracies in the Western world, the novel has experienced a major revival of interest in recent times. As Packer notes, it is significant that Orwell's novel is still notable these days:

> [...] Orwell never intended his novel to be a prediction, only a warning. And it's as a warning that *1984* keeps finding new relevance. The week of Donald Trump's inauguration, when the president's adviser Kellyanne Conway justified his false crowd estimate by using the phrase alternative facts, the novel returned to the best-seller lists. A theatrical adaptation was rushed to Broadway. The vocabulary of Newspeak went viral. An authoritarian president who stood the term fake news on its head, who once said, "What you're seeing and what you're reading is not what's happening," has given *1984* a whole new life." (Packer 41)[3]

In this vein, a comparative analysis of *1984* and *The Loudest Voice* regarding information disorder and its effects on the public opinion is of utmost relevance to explain the way in which the manipulation tactics Orwell dramatized in his masterpiece are currently used in western democracies. Significant in this sense are the malinformation and disinformation practices – examples of Baudrillard's stage of simulacra – used by a fictionalized Roger Ailes as he guides the rise of Fox News, a cable TV channel that belongs to News Corp, property of Rupert Murdoch. In fact, Ailes's decisions on the way Fox News convey (dis)information to the public show uncanny similarities with the Party's *modus operandi* in *1984*.[4] In this train of thought, both the Party and Ailes practice what Habermas called the "fragmentation of consciousness": "everyday knowledge appearing in totalized form remains diffuse. [...] *Everyday consciousness* is robbed of its power to synthesize; it becomes *fragmented*" (1987, 355; original emphasis). This process of fragmentation of consciousness blocks enlightenment, allowing "the imperatives of autonomous subsystems make their way into the lifeworld from the outside – like colonial masters coming into a tribal society – and force a process of assimilation upon it" (Habermas 1987, 355). Ingsoc and Fox News, with their systematically distorted communication practices and the dissemination of simulacra, foster that process of fragmentation of their audience's consciousness, impeding enlightenment and colonizing public opinion. What is more, both ruling structures pursue a similar aim: the control of their respective societies through the manipulation of facts and the narrative of events.

The substitution of reality by simulacra is fully appreciated in *1984* through the manipulation of the past*,* since, as Tyler notes, "in the Orwellian world of *1984*, the control of knowledge, of information – indeed of history itself – is paramount for the exercise of power and the disciplining of society" (139). The main aim of the Party is to dominate the narrative of present events; and, in order to achieve this, they alter the past, that is, history.[5] As Xhinaku and Pema put it, building on the

dark wisdom succinctly expressed by the slogan "Who controls the past, controls the future," the Party has managed to reduce history into an ever-changing narrative that only serves to legitimize its latest political twists and turns, while facts are constantly being made up in order to lend credibility to the most outlandish fictions (29).

Written records are not the only ones used to manipulate the stream of thought. Audiovisual means are also controlled in order to disseminate disinformation and mislead the public's view of reality every single minute of their lives: "Day and night the telescreens bruised your ears with statistics proving that people today had more food, more clothes, better houses, better recreations–that they lived longer, worked shorter hours, were bigger, healthier, stronger, happier, more intelligent, better educated, than people fifty years ago. Not a word of it could ever be proved or disproved" (Orwell 85). Similarly, in *The Loudest Voice*, we witness a process of imposition of simulacra through malinformation and disinformation practices, using both verbal and visual codes. As Valverde González observes, even though Ailes defines himself as "a newsman, first and foremost […] and states that Fox News' intent is first and foremost to be objective when conveying information, […] all his decisions are aimed at manipulating his audience" (111). Tellingly, in line with Ingsoc's control of the information the inhabitants of Oceania consume, in episode 1, Ailes categorically states: "People don't wanna be informed. They want to believe they are informed" ("1995").

We will focus first on episode 3, "2008," to exemplify the practice of malinformation in the TV mini-series. During that year's presidential election campaign, Fox News takes a real image, a simulated fist bump between Barack and Michelle Obama at one of their rallies, and purposefully reports it in a misleading way. What was clearly a sign of affection between the Obamas, becomes a "terrorist's fist jab" ("2008"). David Axelrod, Obama's campaign manager, complains to Roger Ailes about this issue, but Ailes refuses to retract because, as he tells Axelrod, in Fox News "[w]e let the viewer decide, you know" ("2008"). In this same line of action, the continuous use of Obama's second name, Hussein, is imposed on the host of the news programs in the channel to spread a vision of Obama as foreign and suspicious. With the continuous use of real images and facts but commenting on them deceitfully, Roger Ailes and Fox News are manipulating reality in order to change their viewers' mindset. In his distorted communication practices, not only does Ailes use malinformation practices to manipulate the public; he also disseminates a series of simulacra so that Fox News' audience, the conservative half of the country, aligns with his strategic interests.

The order that Ailes gives to his collaborators in Fox News in episode 2, "2001," is significant: "We need to drive the news. Not just cover it." The first significant example of disinformation occurs in episode 4, "2009." We are in the first days of President Obama's first administration and Ailes wants to undermine the new presidency at all costs. With that purpose in mind, through a communicative

strategy similar to the repetition of slogans in Orwell's *1984* – "Freedom is Slavery" or "Ignorance is Strength" – Ailes informs his employees of the channel's new tactic of disinformation:

> This White House hates America, hates capitalism, hates anyone who is not in the lockstep with their way of thinking. Every time they bring up a talking point, we are gonna counter it. They say progressive, we are gonna say socialists, they say safety net, we are gonna say welfare cheat. They say Health Care, we are gonna say fucking Death Panels! Just push the message, we are gonna say, socialists, muslims, un-Americans. Just keep hitting those things, over and over again. ("2009")[6]

In this same episode, Fox News, following Ailes' directions, informs about a fake story on ACORN,[7] an association that receives funding from the government in order to pursue social justice and build stronger communities. Through the use of disinformation, Ailes finally manages to get an investigation opened by the American Congress at the same time that he accuses Obama of corruption for having funded ACORN.

Ailes uses in this case one of his most disrupting and obnoxious hosts, Glenn Beck. Beck turns also to malinformation practices, offering biased information and manipulated images to the public, so the viewers get a misleading idea of what ACORN does with the money obtained. Brian Lewis, Ailes' loyal PR executive for years, boasts about the way they have manipulated the whole issue in their own interest:

> How does Ailes' journalism work? This is like baseball. First base, we find a story. Like the ACORN story. We put it out there. Second base, everyone else picks up the story, our story. It doesn't matter if it is real or fake. Third base, The New York Times says that if a lot of people are talking about a story, it has to be important. And, real or not, they have to cover it. And finally, a democratic congress just defunded ACORN without a single investigation […] because of us. ("2009")

Another relevant example of disinformation practices happens in episode 2, "2001." In his report of the war in Iraq, one of the journalists working for Fox is caught in a lie. Some of Ailes' employees in Fox show their concern because this is clearly a case of journalistic malpractice and argue that the channel must apologize. However, Roger Ailes refuses to issue an apology:

> We [people in Fox] don't have to apologize. Say this is the fog of war. An honest mistake. This journalist is in Fox because he is a patriot, he is loyal. There is "no pulling back" [regarding mass destruction weapons in Iraq]. [W]e are giving the people what they want. This country needs to heal, we need to see who we are

fighting. No more of this faceless enemy bullshit. The current face of evil is Saddam Hussein's." ("2001")

Tellingly, Ailes states that the US must win that war because "when America wins, Fox News wins" ("2001"). Therefore, the reason why Fox News fabricates simulacra concerning the existence of mass destruction weapons in Iraq and dis- informs the public is not to support the American government on their supposed war against terrorism, but to maintain their audience share and continue making more money.

A final example of disinformation happens again in episode 4, "2009," when Roger Ailes induces the citizens of Garrison, the town where he lives, to vote against the rezoning designed by the Town hall. He uses his newly acquired town's newspaper and Joe Lindsey, his editor, to twist the town supervisor's plans, spreading a fake version of reality. Ailes gets to manipulate the town supervisor's words, as he wants to turn his original plan for the town into a debate of public versus private property. Actually, what he is doing is bringing to the table one of the pillars of American society, private property, a concept that nobody would ever question, to win this battle. Interestingly, he gets the majority of the inhabitants to support him in a meeting by quoting George Washington: "A violation of my land is a violation of my being" ("2009").

The creation and imposition of both verbal and visual simulacra attain the objective of dominate the public's view of actuality in both, Orwell's novel and in *The Loudest Voice*. Oceania's citizens' perception of reality is transformed in a subtle way. The Party fabricates simulacra to adapt history to their current interests in an attempt to provide the society with the impression of living in an everlasting, homogenous indivisible whole (Xhinaku and Pema 32). Therefore, not only is the flow of events biased, but the past is also restructured in a way that gives the Party's acts an unwavering status of coherence and justice (Pavloski 8).[8] What is more, this disinformation practice not only affects the narrative of the present of past events; it has also altered the citizens' conception of time itself, which is also turned into a simulacrum: "[a]nd so it was with every class of recorded fact, great or small. Everything faded away into a shadow-world in which, finally, even the date of the year had become uncertain" (Orwell 48). A similar strategy to control the public's perception of reality is perfectly exemplified in episode 4 of *The Loudest Voice* (2009), in which the town of Garrison becomes a synecdoche for the US. In his attempt to alter Garrison people's mindset, Ailes utilizes disinformation for his interests to prevail. This is exactly the same as what Fox News is doing with their audience in the whole country regarding Obama's first presidential term. Actions have consequences, and in this case, Garrison, a peaceful place to live until Ail- es's family moves there, becomes a town with a population which, in the political sense, becomes increasingly polarized. Its citizens cannot reason their problems out anymore; instead, they heatedly argue and cannot agree on a compromise. The

depiction of the ideological polarization on a small scale – in Garrison – finds its reflection, on the one hand, in the large-scale disharmony of the whole American society that is observed throughout the series, and, more generally, also in contemporary Western societies.

The progressive ideological polarization of societies is a strategy that clearly serves political interests. Polarization can be attained by manipulating the way information reaches the public in our overconnected world. In this process, online social media play a relevant role. Companies owning networks such as *Facebook*, *Instagram* or *Twitter* create algorithms in order to feed the public the information which best suit their previously conceived ideas. This is directly connected to the so-called "filter bubble," defined by tech entrepreneur and internet activist Eli Pariser as a state of intellectual isolation, a phenomenon that affects internet users' perception of reality by their use of search engines and feeds on social media. As a consequence of these "filter bubbles," citizens get suggestions to follow people or join groups whose political views align with their own ones. As Bruns observes (2), "filter bubble" is a phenomenon more connected to the Internet; however, it is precisely there where the public gets most of the information they consume throughout the day, as this is not only a question of browsing feeds in social networks, but also reading newspapers or even watching TV channels online. All the information on citizens' use of the Web is gathered and used to provide the audience with points of view as similar as possible to the ones they already hold. In this sense, as stated in the documentary *The Social Dilemma*, "[p]eople are manipulated like computer programs, as if they were computer programs."

As a result, there is a tendency among citizens to believe those facts which are more likely to accord with our point of view and, hence, our tendency not to regard as real those other facts that contradict our beliefs. As analyzed in the cases of *1984* and *The Loudest Voice*, audiences take news for real, without running any fact-checking or asking themselves if there could exist a different narration of reality, just because in that way life is easier, more bearable. In our current society, human beings are malleable through the consumption of media, either TV, radio, printed press, or the Internet. Contrary to what could be thought, Orlowski argues that the Internet does not sell a product to suit the public's needs, "[i]t's the gradual, slight, imperceptible change in your own behavior and perception that is the product. Changing what you do, how you think, who you are." Hence, today, the media is the market, and the human being is the product. As Shoshana Zubob states in *The Social Dilemma*, "we now have markets that trade in human future."

4. Conclusion

The existence of discourse manipulation practices is not new. The phenomenon of information disorder has occurred, at least, since the times when the first records

of printed documents appeared. Today, the notion of manipulation of the narrative and dissemination of simulacra has been amplified due to the existence of new channels of communication, such as the different social networks found on the Internet (Varona and Herrero 15). The analysis carried out in this article shows that the control of information exerted by Ingsoc in Orwell's *1984* and by Roger Ailes through Fox News in *The Loudest Voice* can be taken as examples of how simulacra prevail over facts and how easily public opinion can be misled in our current societies, both in authoritarian regimes and in Western democracies. This goal is obtained by the manipulation of the present and past events in *1984*, on the one hand, and journalistic malpractices in *The Loudest Voice*, on the other. We can conclude that through the control of language, memory and thought; through the repetition of slogans as part of the power gray and black propaganda dissemination program, the structures of power are able to shape the public's understanding of reality so that they would align with the power's strategic interests.

In both works analyzed in this study, reality as such no longer exists; it has been replaced by a simulacrum of reality, the third stage in Baudrillard's theory. The first stage, simulation, which should be the pillar of any journalistic practice, has disappeared. The public is surrounded by a narrative that has nothing to do with facts: while in *1984* we find a manipulated narrative of past events that have been turned into a present interpretation of former deeds, in *The Loudest Voice* a distorted narrative has been created to represent reality, the so-called fake news. In an undermined democratic socio-political scenario, there is "an entire global generation who are raised within a context in which the very meaning of communication, the very meaning of culture is manipulation" (*The Social Dilemma*). In addition, the strategies of thought control implemented by the *status quo* in *1984* and *The Loudest Voice* for their interests to prevail restrict as well the capacity of the public to listen to standpoints different from theirs and to question critically their own positions. People, through media, and more specifically through social networks, consume information that is in accordance with their previously conceived ideas and, without running any fact-checking, tend to regard as false any fact that contradicts their beliefs. The main consequence of this is a progressive ideological polarization of societies.

In order to prevent this manipulation of public opinion, institutions such as the European Commission (2018) insist on the importance of fostering awareness on disinformation practices and of the means to combat them. With this objective in mind, the use of literary and audiovisual works, such as the ones examined in this study, is of utmost importance in order to make the public more educated and, therefore, more prepared to envisage the possibility that the news they receive may be delivered with the intention of misinforming. In other words, as Orwell emphasized in his work, it is essential to prompt citizens toward "uncommon common sense" which entails independence of vision and integrity of mind.

Notes

1. In fact, in light of the challenges associated with the overwhelming flow of disinformation in our time and the difficulties in distinguishing the truth from falsity, the European Union has developed "The European Commission Action Plan against Disinformation." This plan defines disinformation as "verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public, and may cause public harm" (*European Commission* 3). One of the main objectives of this plan is raising citizens' critical awareness and societal resilience against the threat that information distortion poses. With that purpose in mind, the plan fosters initiatives "linked to awareness raising and media literacy as well as support to independent media and quality journalism" (*European Commission* 2).
2. The recent development of the concepts of malinformation, misinformation, and disinformation as categories within the phenomenon of information disorder dissemination is closely related to the conceptions of propaganda that grew out mainly of the two world wars. The definition of propaganda by Jowett and O'Donnell is significant in this sense: "Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (7). In their classification of the forms of propaganda, Jowett and O'Donnell first mention white propaganda; in this case, the source from which the information comes from is identified correctly as well as accurately reported (16). However, there are two more forms of propaganda that are closely associated with the phenomenon of information disorder: first, gray propaganda, where the source "may or may not be correctly identified, and the accuracy of the information is uncertain" (20). In addition, Jowett and O'Donnell identify the form of black propaganda, "which is credited to a false source and spread lies, fabrications and deceptions" (17).
3. Actually, Orwell's name and his work has also been made part of disinformation campaigns in recent years: During the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, propagandists at a Russian troll farm used social media to disseminate a meme: "'The People Will Believe What the Media Tells Them They Believe.' – George Orwell." But Orwell never said this. The moral authority of his name was stolen and turned into a lie toward that most Orwellian end: the destruction of belief in truth. The Russians needed partners in this effort and found them by the millions, especially among America's non-elites. (Packer 42)
4. A connection may be established between Roger Ailes' egocentric personality and that of the soul of the Party, Big Brother. Both pursue the same objective: instituting their vision of reality as the only possible one. As Maleuvre puts it: "It is easy to see how a conversation between solipsists can soon degenerate into the tyranny of one solipsist who says that his truth is the truth – a person

whose belief is that only his belief should prevail, and that the world will be happier if everyone lives in his fantasy" (43).

5. In connection with narrative manipulation, the use of the prefix re- in the following extract is enlightening: "Do you realize that the past, starting from yesterday, has been actually abolished? [...] Already we know almost literally nothing about the Revolution and the years before the Revolution. Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book has been *rewritten*, every picture has been *repainted*, every statue and street and building has been *renamed*, every date has been altered. And that process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right" (Orwell 178; emphasis mine).

6. The use of lexis in Ailes' tactic of disinformation is especially relevant here, with the substitution of terms: "socialist" instead of "progressive"; "welfare cheat" instead of "safety net"; and "Death Panels" instead of "Health Care." Ailes intends to eliminate any possible positive nuance in the narrative of Obama's administration policies, reducing the language used in Fox News to "socialist, muslims, un-Americans." Manipulation of language is also crucial in *1984* (Enteen 211). Ingsoc exerts the control of the accounts of events through the creation of Newspeak, the ultimate simulacrum. As Habermas claimed, "language is also a medium of domination and social force. It serves to legitimize relations of organized power" (Habermas 1979, 130).

7. ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) was the largest community organization in the US for low- and moderate-income families, working with the objective of fostering social justice and creating stronger communities. From 1970 to its ceasing of activity in 2010, ACORN grew "to more than 175,000 member families, organized in 850 neighborhood chapters in 75 cities across the U.S. and in cities in Canada, the Dominican Republic and Peru. ACORN's accomplishments included successful campaigns for better housing, schools, neighborhood safety, health care or job conditions" (*Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now*).

8. A key example of manipulation of the present and past narrative is the episode of change of alliances in the war that occurs on the sixth day of Hate Week: suddenly, Eastasia, and not Euroasia, is the enemy. The orator giving the discourse of that day, significantly described as "[a] little Rumpelstiltskin figure" (Orwell 209), proves perfectly able to alter the narration of events in the middle of his speech without any change of his voice or manner: only the name of the enemy is different. As a consequence of this unexpected change, as Winston observes, the truth of "a large part of the political literature of five years was now obsolete," and therefore, had to be rectified (Orwell 211).

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