The genre of dystopia, or anti-utopia, is one of the most popular ones in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as it raises the issues that are vitally important for humanity. There is no doubt that George Orwell’s novel *1984* written in 1949 remains one of the most powerful and frightening warning against totalitarianism. The message of the novel was relevant in the time of its creation, it was relevant in *1984* and it is strikingly relevant today as humans still have a chance to see their own reflection in it like in a mirror. One of the key tools that make *1984* so impressive is the author’s skillful use of symbolism to convey his ideas. By introducing such symbols as the face of Big Brother, Newspeak, Winston’s mother and some others George Orwell intends to demonstrate that government control is dangerous for human society and for each individual person.

Big Brother is the symbol that has become part of culture since society got acquainted with Orwell’s novel. Since that time it works as a collective image of a dictator or of the totalitarian system whose aim is to control people’s thoughts and actions and deprive them of freedom. As the novel was written in the 1940s, the character of Big Brother was inspired by real-life dictators who came to power: Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin. Big Brother as a symbol is omnipresent in the novel: it appears virtually in any space where government control works. It can be seen on telescreens, on posters and paintings. The idea is to create the impression that a person is control wherever he or she is located. From the novel it is not clear whether Big Brother is a real person or a myth. Chances are that he does not exist but was generated by the ruling party. Moreover, it does not matter whether Big Brother exists because what matters is the symbolism that lies behind the image. Big Brother is not a personality; it stands for the system because he possesses larger than life traits. He hypnotizes by his appearance and steady eye look, he is a superhuman that can hardly be compared with an ordinary person. It is interesting that wherever in the room a person is, there is always an impression that Big Brother is watching...
directly at them. This symbol reveals the fact that powerful politicians become symbols anyway because people are detached from communication with their real personalities. There is always a split between a real personality of a person in power and the image that was artificially created. Instead, they are offered a myth that is created to reach certain goals. These goals usually consist in making people obey and turning them into faceless crowd with no personal desires and purposes. People in Oceania are just instruments in the hands of the ruling party, and Big Brother helps manipulating them.

The symbol of Big Brother is closely connected to the symbol of an eye and watching.

The eye metaphor tends to recur whenever the narrator portrays a character or conveys his/her state of mind. Thus, for instance, Syme's sharpness manifests itself in protruding eyeballs, which scrutinize Winston and appear to see right through him (198). On the contrary, the Ministry of Truth's employees have small eyes and wear glasses (a detail deserving attention, as we shall see). They are short-sighted, literally and figuratively, and they all `look' the same (208). (Verrocchio 98)

The difference in the eye expression is what characterizes the heroes of the novel and reveals some of their attributes and attitudes. Freedom or slavery is definitely reflected in the eyes, for instance there is a contrast between Julia's gaze and that of Winston. Secret police can detect “thought crime” just by the way a person looks, that is why people avoid eye contact. People of the totalitarian society hide their eyes; they are not able to watch bravely and openly. Many people wear glasses, especially members of the Party, which is also symbolic. The glasses are a kind of a screen that is placed between the real world and the people's idea about it. It distorts the picture of the real world, so the people see a mutilated image of reality. At the same time they can be imagined as a kind of a screen that helps people hide their real self from the world, they help to hide the thoughts.

Speaking of the gaze, it is worth mentioning Julia who is contrasted to the rest of the characters by having an open and bold look. This is what makes her dangerous to the system and makes Thought Police watch her. In fact, Julia as
a character is symbolic. She stands for everything that is forbidden by the Party: forbidden beauty, forbidden sexuality, forbidden freedom of thought and action. In fact, she symbolizes Nature as opposed to Civilization and its limitations. Julia is free by nature, she takes reckless decisions, and this is what attracts Winston to her. Unlike Julia, Winston is not so free inside, he feels doomed because of his anti-system behavior because system is part of him, it is incorporated in his mind. For this reason when he exposes himself to “criminal” behavior he feels guilt and fear, and expects punishment. He is not able to enjoy freedom, unlike Julia who is natural and has no boundaries inside her mind.

Telescreens are another symbol that was invented by Orwell before the actually emergence of television. In the novel they perform several important functions: they both watch and broadcast. “Rather than something to be watched--the ‘recreational’ aspect of the cinema, ironical as it may be, is totally missing--the screen is an instrument to spy on people, the extension of the Police eye, an essential element of the heavy-handed, brutal nature of the totalitarianism shown in Nineteen Eighty-Four"(Varricchio 98) They are placed everywhere except some proles districts because the Party believes that they are unable to think. The reason is that they are obsessed with entertainment and are not willing to get involved in serious matters. In order to control proles, telescreens are used to broadcast cheap shows, lotteries, soap operas and pornographic films. In this way people are distracted from being politically active and their energy is wasted on fun activities. Although Orwell’s epoch was far from today’s boom of technology, he still foresees how technology is going to be applied to push the interests of the ruling regime and to manipulate people’s mind.

Another symbol used by the author is mentioned under the name “the place where there is no darkness”. This idea chases Winston throughout the whole novel since the time he meets O’Brien and imagines him to be a secret member of Brotherhood, an organization that presumably struggles with the regime of Big Brother. “The place where there is no darkness” is a metaphor that symbolizes hope and dream, often naive and ungrounded. This reflects Winston’s desire to believe in the triumph of truth and freedom but at the same time it demonstrates the loss of touch with the real world. Ironically, his dream
comes true and he meets O’Brien in the place where light is always on. However, this place is not heaven but hell and is called Ministry of Love. In this place he is tortured to learn how to love Big Brother, and the efforts are successful. Winston is broken and lost, he betrays Julia because he cannot endure tortures and this means that the system wins. His feelings for Julia disappear and he becomes a good member of society controlled by Big Brother.

Physical illness is often used in literature to symbolize spiritual illness. This is also true in 1984, where Winston has burning varicose ulcer on his leg. This detail that is repeated throughout the novel symbolizes restrictions and internal conflicts that Winston has. Because he has to work hard and live a restricted life, his body suffers. Body symbolizes connection to the nature, so the troubles with the body reveal the fact that the man has lost his power and energy. The nature in him and his mental problems are confliction, so his body has the signs of this struggle. Winston who is physically weak is contrasted with Julia who is full of natural energy and zest for life. She is definitely the one who symbolizes health that is related to nature, and while communicating with Winston she gives part of this power to him. It is interesting that when he has affair with her he gains weight and his ulcer on the leg heals. This happens because he returns to his real self in these moments and the nature supports him.

The description of the events in 1984 has many references to the past, so part of symbolism is devoted to the character’s memories. Thus, one of such symbol is a vintage paperweight that Winston buys to have connection to his lost past. Because Ministry of Truth is working hard to eliminate people’s memories and replace them with the “right” information that is necessary for the Party, keeping memories is a real struggle and a chance to keep his own personality. Because Winston works in Ministry of Truth, he knows how past is simply deleted and realizes that the loss of memory is inevitable. However, he makes some attempts to restore such memories because he realizes that this means keeping his soul alive. These memories are not welcome by the party because people remember that in the past no power of Big Brother was present in the country and that life was much better. There was place for love, freedom and feelings. People could communicate without being watched and express
their attitude to each other without fear.

St. Clément’s church is another image from Winston’s past that is related to his happy childhood and his mother. It is present in his mind and in a childish poetry that he recollects together with Julia, and this fact give hope and believe that the Party cannot penetrate people’s head. However, this optimism is broken in the prison of Ministry of Love, which proves that in fact each person can be broken and each head can be controlled. The idyllics memories of childhood where there was place for love are contrasted with the gloomy picture of totalitarian reality. The Thought Police is a symbol of the idea that the system is afraid of free thinking people, and that freedom in fact starts in the head as well as slavery.

Another interesting approach that the author uses to symbolize the corrupted character of the system is change of concepts by their opposites:

The Ministry of Plenty assures that citizens scrape by on a bare subsistence diet of horrid food that recalls Orwell’s detested boarding-school diet based on margarine and lard, with anything appetizing, like chocolate, severely rationed. The Ministry of Peace conducts constant meaningless subatomic warfare against Eurasia and Eastasia with fearsome new weapons like rockets, keeping the population in a state of perpetual war fever. The Ministry of Love enforces Big Brother’s will by terrorism and brute force, and the Ministry of Truth relentlessly bombards the regimented citizens with patriotic propaganda, constantly spying on them with the latest technological devices—and their own Party-indoctrinated children. (Brunsdaile 140)

This exchange of concepts is what is strikingly relevant today and exploited by politicians and advertisers to manipulate public consciousness. Because these words are abused by Ministry of Truth, they lose their original meaning. Overall, language as an instrument and cultural phenomenon is one of the main symbols in the novel. The ruling party understands the power of language, and creates the so-called Newspeak that makes revolt impossible. It just excludes or falsifies those concepts that are seen as dangerous. So, there is no way even
to think about revolution because there are no words to express this idea.

Overall, symbolism plays an important role in Orwell’s *1984* and draws a picture of impressive and frightening dystopian world. By using symbolism like Big Brother, Newspeak, Julia, Thought Police and others the author proves that humanity is able to create hell on earth by their own hands. The novel demonstrates that a person can be helpless against the system that controls his thoughts and actions. It explores the idea that even if a person has enough bravery and independence to struggle with the system, he or she still cannot endure its powerful influence. The fate of Winston Smith reveals the fact that when power is given to immoral people they are able to destroy human spirit and make people blind slaves of the system. Mass hypnosis that dictators used to have and are still having in their countries demonstrates that people are vulnerable when they become part of the crowd. The events of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries prove the idea that Orwell foresaw the future of humanity, and that something has to be done to prevent these nightmares from coming true in real life.
WORKS CITED

