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Social and Political Suppression of Common People in the Current Developing Countries in the Context of George Orwell's Novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1984)

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Abstract: *The study examines the nexus of the ruling party's slogans in the state of Oceania, "war is peace, ignorance is strength, freedom is slavery" in George Orwell's novel 1984 to the present societies in developing countries, using the lens of Marxism. Sufyan Al-Dmour states; Three different classes are present in the depicted novel: the ruling class, which is echoed by the Inner Party; Outer Party represents the middle class, the Proles consist of the working class (Sufyan Al-Dmour, 2020). The class system is dominating all over the world, specifically in developing countries. MacCartney and Zaidi argue; It was the military-bureaucratic control of a few influential figures, with the three classes which kept what can be called Pakistan's political setup. (MacCartney, Zaidi, 2019). Common people in 1984 were severely penalized for who exerted to think or act differently. The pertinence of the slogan "freedom is slavery" in 1984 is still dominant in developing societies.*

Key Words: Totalitarianism, 1984. Slavery, Exploitation, Surveillance, Propaganda, Control, Marxism

Introduction

Erik Arthur Blair (1903-1950) is called George Orwell is his pen name; he was born on 25th June 1903 in Bihar, India). He was well known English novelist, critic, essayist and journalist. He was a proponent of socialist ideas and a candid critic of oligarchy or dictatorship. Orwell's sheer opposition to totalitarian ideas in his literary contributions is noteworthy. In 2008, *The Times* placed George Orwell second among "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945". He mirrored objectively

whatever he observed with his discerning eye in his society with his acute insight. Although Orwell was serving in the Royal police in Burma, his service never influenced his standpoint related to authoritarian ideas. Orwell's *Burmese Days* (1934, *Animal Farm* 1945) and other writings are depictions of his socialistic ideas.

Along with his friend Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx composed his magnum opus *Das Kapital* (1867-1895), a striking critique of political economy. The work remains so influential that

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many intellectuals and prominent literary figures have contributed their input to Marx's philosophy all over the world. Marx affirms that people would live together in a community as a classless body of primitive society. They used to work together and earn their livelihood collaboratively; commodities and other sorts of earnings would be distributed equally. They would help one another at the time of any hardship. There were no masters or bosses in that ancient society. Later on, feudal lords started to rule the common people gradually. Lands were grabbed as a result of conquest or plunder, and the involvement of the middle man or merchant crept into society. Consequently, the capitalist mode of production took place, and the society was controlled and manipulated economically and politically by the capitalists. The working class is paid meagerly, which results in surplus value. The legitimate owners of the surplus value are the capitalists (*Das Kapital*, 1867-1895). The ruling elites flourish capitalism by creating leniency in the laws of government. That is how classes are created, and the lower and middle classes are exploited politically and economically. According to Marxist philosophy, the labour class of capitalist society could hardly meet both ends, even after working for more than a day; that is how the working class of society is totally controlled by the capitalists. *1984* novel mirrors a similar society which is totally controlled by Big Brother. Various techniques are applied in the state of Oceania to dehumanize the Proles in order to make them suitable subjects for the state's narrative.

Background

The novel *1984* (1949) was written after World war II, when the wounds of War were still green. People were still going through the agony of war; destroyed places were frequently witnessed in the real-world similar to the places mirrored in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* many times. Totalitarian ideas remained dominant in the 20th century, and both of World Wars (I, II) left common people in mental stress and desperation. Wars are enforced on nations against their will. People were treated inhumanly, specifically during the wars; free thoughts, awareness, and the right to make

decisions among common people face many obstructions in the postmodern world. Orwell felt the suffocation of common people and echoed it nicely in *1984*. Stalinism and Nazism was prevailing threat to free thoughts and dissenting opinions. *1984* novel was published in 1949; Orwell rightly predicted the impending menace of the authoritarian approach of the politicians all around the world. As long as the leaders keep their subjects suppressed and ignorant, there is no threat to their tyrannic rule; therefore, people are kept in the dark to the possible extent. Being a part of the Spanish civil war, Orwell closely observed the unfair uprooting of the elected Spanish government in 1936. Orwell foresaw the oppression of common people in the upcoming years, as the dictators were getting stronger. Not only in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* but also in his other novels like *Animal Farm* and *Burmese days*, one can come across the threat of possible suppression and atrocities in future. It is affirmed in a research article that; A autocratic regime is revealed as "an ideology which both control and attempts to restructure all aspects of society; it is also the establishment of absolute state control and coordination of the economy (Isubaini, Ismail, 2020).

Literature Review

1984 novel is one of the striking writings of Orwell, which depicts various elements of society. According to Marxist theory, excessive exploitation of proletariats can ignite a kind of revolutionary thoughts, which would destroy the bourgeoisie. The same idea is expressed by the protagonist Winston Smith in the novel *1984*, "if they chose, they could blow the Party to pieces tomorrow morning. Surely sooner or later it must occur to them to do it" (*1984*, 1949). Winston is certainly aware of the power that proles possess, but at the same time, he is anxious about the prospective revolutionary thoughts; they may not prosper due to the excessive vigilance of the party. "Big brother is watching you" is written everywhere. People in the state of Oceania are constantly under surveillance. Cameras are not only installed in public places but also in homes, no individual is able to even think about any action against the party rules. In order to prevent free acts,

World states prohibit those activities which may lead to free thinking or retrospection. The police-manufactures monolithium of the party resulted in a bureaucratic indemnity which became the source of all kinds of abandonment and corruption. (GÓMEZ, 2008, Howe, 1982, p.240). Leaders get uneasy and insecure when they are asked questions; the simplest way for political leaders to sustain their supremacy is to suppress dissenting acts. Currently, various states in the developing world keep their subject oblivious of the state's affairs. Panopticon is a concept brought to life by placing a tower in the middle of a prison to watch over the prisoners. Prisoners have no idea whether they are being monitored or not. In Oceania, telescreens are perpetually switched on, no one is allowed to switch them off. Molly Keisman states Michel Foucault's view about Panopticons; Foucault uses the Panopticon for the analogy of power in societies. This is certainly applicable to both *Brave New World* and *1984* (Foucault & Keisman, 2016). State narratives are propagated using media and other sources. News is presented in such a way that brutal killing of people is justified smartly; Orwell argues in this regard, People are put into jails for years without trial, or shot dead or sent to die with humiliation in Arctic lumber camps: this is called elimination of unreliable elements (Orwell 'Politics' 373-4 Subaihi & Ismail, 2020). In *1984* telescreens were placed everywhere not only to monitor the proles but also to propagate the state's agenda, Picture of the enemy (Emmanuel Goldstein) is shown for two minutes, and The Enemy of the People appears on the screen in the form of the Two Minutes Hate. People's opinions about certain elements are manipulated, they are taught theories like patriotism and grand narratives. Similar to the ruler in the state of Oceania, the present-day developing world has leaders similar to Big Brother, "Victory" word is written on various things in *1984*, which reflects the idea of constant war, and the so-called victory of the subjects, in fact common people are brutally exploited in that way. The Marxist theory advocates the social injustice caused by the class system, such kind of exploitation and manipulation are brought to light in *1984* as well. The working class is kept so busy that they can't

retrospect. Proletariats live to run the wheels of industry; similarly, in *1984* working class had to abide by the law of the Party all the time, Proles are supposed to think as the party wanted them to think, and it was for progress and strength of proles, according to the party. [Mohammad Nur Al-Subaihi . Hanita Hanim Ismail \(2020\)](#) assert, that Winston gets through class struggle as he observes it Big Brother's totalitarian regime, which makes him isolated. Newspeak is a language designed to coin words which suit to Party's interest. Old memories are being washed and replaced by new memory, which leads people to end in the cloud. Marxist theory is an exponent of revolution against the bourgeoisie governing system. The injustice and constant exploitation cause revolution, and as a result of the revolution, a classless society would come into being, according to Karl Marx's philosophy. V.I Lenin asserts in this regard that the collection of capital triggers the replacement of workers by machinery, creating wealth at the one side and poverty at the other ([Lenin,1930](#)). An awful sketch was rightly presented in advance in *1984*.

All of the civil institutions and their activities are monitored vigilantly; there is no fixed domain of power and authority which is put into practice in order to prevail a truly democratic system. Winston Smith trusts O'Brien and reveals his hatred against the system, O'Brien was, in fact, a loyal member of the inner party; he was dealing with "thought crime". Later on, O'Brien entrapped Winston and Julia, and both of them are charged of a thought crime. In the present-day world, trustworthy leaders are scarcely found in the developing world. States' representatives have their own secret agendas like O'Brien in *1984*. Developed European countries have taken a few steps to empower common people, but lots more need to be done to make the masses independent. A free world with arbitrary decision-making authority doesn't suit to the leaders who carry Big Brother's attitude and approach towards subjects.

Marxist theory has its roots in the primitive structure of society in contrast to the capitalist structure. Democratic values are trivial and one of the great deceptions in developing countries; military leaders have the actual power to take any

decisive step, irrespective of the consent of the common people. The electoral process in developing countries is unreliable. Non-elected individuals carry the business of governments. Orwell's 1984 novel predicted the impending menace which may lead to a fascist world, if not obstructed by common people. Oligarchic capitalism deprives common people of their freedom and fundamental rights in developing societies. Myriads of narratives are placed in the minds of common people to make them believe that the current governing system is the best choice for them. In 1984 the party spread propaganda in the proles. The proles believe that the state of Oceania is taking measures solely for the betterment of subjects but in reality, the party works for their ultimate power over the people.

Dmour affirms that, So, the people of Oceania think that it is a high-quality step taken by the party, and it is for their benefit. While the real purpose of propaganda was to enhance the Party's control over citizens of Oceania (Dmour, 2020). The capitalist system is a Big Brother is the developing world that considers common people as consumers. Private ownership and control over the means of production trigger the vacuum among classes. Desperation and anxiety in the working class are getting higher and higher. Like Winston Smith in 1984, common people seek a way out in order to get away with the current political and economic system. Revolutionary thoughts in common people are the result of excessive exploitation and inequalities in developing countries.

Methodology

In order to proceed the study further in a systematic way, The investigation of the current research study is conducted through following various steps. The qualitative research method is applied for the study. Previously written literature related to the research problem and text from the primary source, which is a novel, *Nineteen Eighty-four* written by George Orwell, are used to develop the study. Marxist theory is used as a framework to the study. Qualitative research is highly appropriate for collecting, analyzing and developing critical theories; therefore, the researcher has adopted a

qualitative research strategy. Every research needs a precise, disciplined and systematic approach to find out suitable results. Qualitative research is inductive, and researchers unfold meaning and insight in selected study (Mohajan, 2018,p.4). Qualitative research is an appropriate method for literature, that is why it is applied for the present research work. Since the nature of the study is descriptive, the study can be analyzed, observed and interpreted. The content can't be computed or measured statistically, so the only apt strategy is qualitative because the research deals with quality, not quantity.

The purpose of the current research work is to explore the elements of total state control over subjects' thoughts and opinions in *Nineteen eighty-four* and its similarity to the present-day developing countries. The exploitation of the working class and rigid surveillance over the actions of common people in Orwell's novel 1984 is identified in the current world's political scenario. Research instruments are the primary source, a novel by George Orwell *Nineteen eighty-four*, secondary sources, such as research journals articles, dissertations, thesis, newspapers in which the relevant content is published and Orwell's other literary contributions which are associated with the present research work. The work is processed through proper planning and some steps are followed in order to make the work more precise and clearer. Initially, the researcher studied Orwell's novel *Nineteen eighty-four* with its minute details. The elements of slavery and state severe control are identified as major aspects of the novel *Nineteen eighty-four*. Secondly, the relevant data is found through internet browsing, such as research articles and dissertations. Books Reviews and newspapers are also studied as a process of the current research work. The above data is added through careful and critical observation. The works of George Orwell, research articles, dissertations and newspaper reports related to the current research work are included. The works which are not related to the present research problem, are excluded. The style which is applied for the present research work is American Psychological Association (APA) by the researcher. Modern Language Association is a writing style which is approved and practised by academics all over the world.

Analysis

It can be affirmed in the light of the above study that various fabricated narratives are injected in subjects' minds in developing countries, in order to make them submissive citizens. Free thoughts lead to reasoning and logic, and questions about inequalities and suppression of common people take place in free minds; therefore, free minds are put to an end by consent of coercion. Developing countries such as Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and some African countries are governed by a political system which keeps the working class under constant suppression and deprivation. The constant threat of war provides an opportunity to accumulate more and more wealth across the borders from common people. In 1984 the war between Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia enabled Big Brother to keep strong control over the means of production. Common people of developing countries are given the impression that there is always a threat of an enemy. It can also be witnessed how fear of war is exploited by Big Brother to manage social integration (Isubaini, Ismail, 2020). Fear of an enemy is one of the most effective strategies, which is reflected in 1984 by the character of Goldstein, who is the leader of the enemies. Picture of Goldstein is shown all of the time on telescreen in such a way, that people hate him and at the same time proles are intimidated with his facial expression. The party propagates all news about so called enemies to give the impression that all of the decisive steps are taken for proles' protection. common people stay unaware of what decisions are made at the state level. A report from *Dawn* newspaper Pakistan reflects that, the stake holders of the United States have kept the Pakistani general's message covered, may we in Pakistan ask our Army officials and the Foreign Office what kind of information or message was delivered by the chief through non-diplomatic and informal channels days after the Raymond Davis incident in Lahore? (*Dawn*, 2016). world war I and World War II took place as a result of struggle of power expansion of the world leaders. Slavery and sanctions over free thoughts and expression are given new names, such as patriotism grand narrative in the present-day world. World leaders can't enslave people directly, as it is understood that

people have enough power to uproot any totalitarian regime therefore, common people are manipulated politically in various ways. As in 1984, people are observed through telescreen on a regular basis similarly, agencies are formed to observe masses, such as FBI, CIA ISI. Intelligence agencies keep an eye not only on the external elements but people with in a country are also kept under the constant surveillance. And even an ordinary movement leading towards revolution is suppressed. Edward Pankowski state, the disputed torture policies of the Central Intelligence Agency, or CIA, are compared to the thought police and their torture and brainwashing of Winston Smith in the basement room of the Ministry of Love ([Pankowski, 2018](#)). Agencies go ahead threateningly out of control. Common people of developed countries are given the right to information and freedom to ask questions to a great extent, but developing countries need to work a lot for a true democratic system, which may foster free thoughts and actions.

Conclusion

The above study reveals the prevailing behavior of world leaders to enslave humans, but new terms are invented other than modern words. Limitations over subjects are made sure to restrain free movements and thoughts. Orwell desired to have a peaceful world where all humans have equal rights and opportunities. Rigid suctions over free speeches and thoughts, invoke revolts in different communities, because human beings are born free. Freedom of speech and action are indispensable to all humanity, love, unity, tolerance, sympathy and actual democracy are the best replacement of authoritarianism according to George Orwell's perspective. As it is stated, persecutors and subjugated ones, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open conflict, a conflict that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common destruction of the contending classes ([Samuel, Marx, Angels & Moore, 1969](#)). War is one of the most effective weapons to be used for the accumulation of wealth, and controlling people's thoughts and opinions. New weapons are bought and sold in international market, nuclear weapons are constant threat not

only to humans' lives, but also to the rest of the creatures. Restrictions on people's speech and legitimate action may trigger revolutions; if the

current world leaders change their authoritative approach towards democratic one, then the world can be a better place to live.

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