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Analyzing Mind Manipulation in George Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four"

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Abstract:

George Orwell's novel '1984' published after the Second World War unveiled his nightmarish totalitarian vision that remains relevant in the 21st century. It reveals Orwell's concerns about abuse of power, self-denial, and the erasure of the past and future continue to resonate with contemporary debates about politics and society. Everyone thinks that there will be enhancement if revolution comes, but those who bring revolution start ruling. However, the principal goal of this paper is to expose the tactics used to manipulate people's thoughts. It looks into how much power these discursive strategies have in shaping attitudes and altering behaviour. Furthermore, it describes the role of government and how the spatial and temporal regulation of day-to-day affairs helps to discipline areas within a totalitarian society using theoretical insights. It also shows how the act of writing and language can create areas of opposition within structured environments.

Keywords: Survival, Totalitarianism, Surveillance, Resistance, Language.

"Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains." (Rousseau 49); This quote made by the famous Geneva-born political philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, is entirely applicable to Orwell's novel "*Nineteen Eighty-Four*." Man has been in pursuit of his existence since the creation of this world. Those who could easily assimilate into their surroundings survived; those who were unable to do so would become victims of their fate. Survival was defined as achieving a balance between nature and nurture. No doubt, the emergence of civilization coincided with the beginning of a change in manners. But, due to the nature of man, there is no distinction between man and the

beast if he is not restrained. Several people contributed to the advancement of civilization. When civilization developed, people began establishing laws to restrain human instincts. By people for people, society, family, institutions, and justice were created. Undoubtedly, all humans are born with equal rights, but some are deprived of these rights and enslaved by the chains of compulsion. The chains of slavery, poverty, class, and sect are indicators that man is enslaved at some level. Indeed, you have enhanced society on a mechanism level; a revolution is futile if it does not improve social welfare. Without emancipation, there will be a revolution in which people's rights will be violated, living conditions will deteriorate, and societal discord will escalate. It is imperative to address these issues comprehensively to ensure true liberation and progress for all individuals. Through collective effort and empathy, we can dismantle these oppressive structures and build a society where every person can flourish freely.

George Orwell's dystopian novel "*Nineteen Eighty-Four*" portrays the autocracy of those who are in power. He exquisitely examines the nature of power, how some people assume dictatorial roles while claiming to be the saviour, and how they attempt to subjugate others. In today's world, propaganda and surveillance are ubiquitous. There is pervasive literature that has evolved around it. Orwell's contemporary writers Aldous Huxley and Evelyn Waugh have written about the same genre as well, but *Nineteen Eighty-Four* serves as a crucial point of juxtaposition in both genres. Around 1940, George Orwell wrote this book. At the time, he was more aware of the geographic locale of the world's great war. It is about people who live their lives under constant observation from someone or something, even when they are alone. This is nothing more than the government's attempt to exert control over people's opinions and worldviews. Following the narrative, Adolf Hitler and Stalin both carried out analogous conduct in their nations under a totalitarian regime. The government was the supreme head, monitoring everything. Here, George Orwell tries to paint a clear image of what would transpire in a free nation like England if an environment like Russia moved there.

George Orwell's foresight into the potential abuses of power and erosion of individual freedoms remains profoundly relevant today. As societies grapple with the complexities of governance and the balance between security and liberty, Orwell's cautionary tale serves as a stark reminder of the dangers of unchecked authority and the importance of preserving democratic

principles. Through his vivid portrayal of a dystopian future, Orwell challenges readers to question authority, resist oppression, and safeguard the fundamental rights and dignity of all individuals.

The story takes place in the fictional future of 1984 when much of the world is at constant war. Britain, now known as Airstrip One, has become a province of a totalitarian oceanic superpower ruled by Big Brother, a dictatorial leader supported by an intense cult of personality created by the Party's thought police. The Party actively targets individualism and independent thought through the Ministry of Truth's pervasive government monitoring, historical revisionism, and ongoing propaganda.

Winston Smith is the central figure around whom the story revolves. He is a 39-year-old man who works for the government, harbors a hidden hatred for the Party, and cherishes rebellious fantasies. Like everyone else, Winston leads a meaningless lifestyle. He initiates a romance with a co-worker, Julia, and they discover a mysterious opposition faction known as the Brotherhood. Nevertheless, their liaison within the Brotherhood is a party operative, and Smith is apprehended. He undergoes extensive psychological indoctrination and torment by the Ministry of Love and is liberated only after he has developed an affection for Big Brother.

Now the question arises, if you kill self-identity, further what's the point of living? One of the most fundamental human desires is freedom; instead, life has no purpose. However, an overabundance of it can also be life-threatening. Plato rightly said, "Dictatorship naturally arises out of democracy, and the most aggravated form of tyranny and slavery out of the most extreme liberty."

Orwell exposes an extreme level of despotism, the exercise of absolute power, especially cruelly and oppressively. In the society of Oceania, the worst part is that the government keeps an eye on what people are doing. A world ruled by an oligarchical group known as "The Party," which holds absolute power, In London City, the setting is described as being depressing. A location where nothing was stable and everything was trash when neither food nor drink was obtainable. With no clothes to wear and nowhere to go because of the ongoing fighting, Even the general populace is unaware of the purpose of this war.

Wherever one goes, some signs read all across the city, and there is the 'enormous face gazing from the wall' (Orwell 7) that has its caption beneath it, "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU" (Orwell 7). He might be Big Brother's most powerful leader throughout the city, comparable to Hitler in Germany and Stalin in Russia. How people are still frightened by this constant, awe-inspiring phenomenon is difficult to decipher. Around the city, the authorities installed covert cameras and microphones. There is the omnipresent 'telescreen' (Orwell 8) that 'receives and transmits simultaneously' (Orwell 8). The telescreen picks up any sounds of conversation or whispers somewhere in the lower level, transmitting them immediately to headquarters. At home or abroad, the government is keeping an eye on you. You can't turn your TV off if you watch it on TV since you can see it everywhere. You can't accomplish a lot of things by yourself. If you do, the police may arrest you and subject you to severe torture. There remains the ubiquitous 'Thought Police' (Orwell 8) that plugs a wire or something into anybody to monitor and read his or her physical as well as mental movement. One is 'overheard and scrutinized', (Orwell 8) constantly.

You are unable to cultivate close friendships, romantic relationships, or even sexual relations with your partner. Whatever emotional energy you have in your life, you need to preserve it for the government, such as through government endorsement and encouragement. Whether you want to or not, you must comply with all government orders. Every texture and aspect of the state exudes a terrifying aura that closely observes and examines every conceivable external action as well as any internal thought or action. Orwell says, "Every sound you made was overheard, and every moment scrutinized". (Orwell 8)

Individualism had ended, and London City had become autarchic. It is kin to Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini, who called his regime the "Totalitarian State": "Everything in the State, nothing outside the State, nothing against the State." (Orwell 18)

The entire infrastructure of the buildings and things in Oceania exudes a perpetual sense of threat, in addition to the language and verbal exchanges that incite fear throughout the entire atmosphere. "The Ministry of Love was a frightening one. There were no windows in it at all" (Orwell 9). Orwell shows enormous locations without a window: "a maze of barbed wire entanglements, steel doors, and machine gun-nests" (Orwell 9). It's a sign of how cruel humans are to other humans.

In this novel, language also plays a vital role. The emergence of a language is primarily focused on molding the functions of the human psyche. It has been reduced to a mind-controlling tool that flies charismatically about destroying the yearnings and imaginations of citizens. In Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the aspect that deserves the most engrossment is none other than language, because it creates and determines what and how people think and convey. The ruling party in Oceania promotes itself to have unwavering control over the language, as this is the only way to prevent people from rationality about any form of defiance or rebellion. This machination achieves its accomplishment based on 'Newspeak' that has been coined and is being deliberately watered down to thwart any idea or perception that might come in the way of the party's autocracy. The 'Newspeak' of the political monopoly eases schemes and plots through which they go a long way ahead to refrain people from realizing the apropos macrocosm. The government ruled people's mental processes by regulating their speech and history was manipulated and reality was kept under control to control everything by Big Brother's wishes.

In the dystopian Kingdom of Oceania, the concept of 'Doublethink' was built to achieve the goals of Newspeak, the official language of Oceania, which is to render any thought impossible, except those which the Party allows.

'Doublethink' means the power of holding two antithetical beliefs in one's mind contemporaneously, and accepting both of them. The party intellectual knows in which direction his recollections must be attended; he thus knows that he's playing tricks with reality; but by the exercise of 'doublethink' he also satisfies himself that reality isn't violated. (Orwell 182)

Albeit, to put it another way, language has evolved into a tool of mind control. The destruction of will and imagination is the ultimate objective.

Alice Robb in his work *How Capital Letters Became Internet Code for Yelling (2014)* citing a reference to Professor Paul Luna, who is the Director of the Typography and Graphics Department, explains that people use capital letters to make words appear "louder". Robb also highlights that caps are used to express 'grandeur', 'pomposity', and 'aesthetic seriousness' and have been a linguistic ritual since the time of the Roman monarchs. In George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, all capitalization can be easily explained. The weight and glory of written sentences say it all in capital letters. There's a poster with a giant face with the words "BIG" underneath it, clearly showing the majesty, "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU" (Orwell 7). Even if no one has any literal idea of the linguistic expression of capital letters, the splendor of the above sentence is so

provocative that it can scare someone to the maximum extent. There is another alluring message that reveals the hidden motive of the authorities as follows:

"WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH" (Orwell 9).

Robb (2014) studied the history of the use of capital letters and highlighted the fact that Roman emperors had their statues and monuments inscribed with capital letters in heroic glory. He also believes that there is a tradition among writers to write in capital letters to express anger and displeasure. George Orwell used a similar methodology to show the majesty or pomp of the Oceania Empire.

Although, the concept of surveillance is not a new thing. History demonstrates how tyrant kings have governed people over varying generations while restricting their liberties. The idea of panoptic control was inspired by Jeremy Bentham's model prison architecture from the late 1700s, which aimed to control inmates' behavior by making them feel like they were constantly being surveilled. To avoid punishment, prisoners would follow the established code. Michel Foucault rekindled interest in Bentham's ideas in the 1970s by examining how power dynamics functioned inside this "panoptic" architecture. (Foucault 195).

Orwell took this concept from both of them, advancing both surveillance and propaganda to their furthest extremes. His novel has the iconic value it does for theorists in both literatures, considering that by writing them large, he throws significant features of both into stark relief. The term propaganda is used to refer to the circulation of information that seeks to convince or manipulate public opinion. On the other hand, surveillance, particularly from an organization such as the police or military, means that someone is being watched carefully. But *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is intriguing for more reasons than just what it might add to theories about propaganda or surveillance. In the book, propaganda and monitoring are fundamentally connected, not simply incidentally. The government performs complementary functions in a ridiculous scheme to completely control society that affects both behavior and cognition. Ingsoc's administration is terrorized to such an extent that no one is allowed to keep a diary or notebook, let alone write anything down, and if caught or known, writing anything against the omniscient 'Big Brother' will result in a death penalty.

Winston Smith writes a diary post at the beginning of the novel in which he laments this life. He is recording minute details of his life, even though the government considers the diary he is keeping to be illegal, for which he faces execution if discovered. Orwell shows his suspicions about Winston writing something in the diary. “He was about to open a diary which once detected would get him punished by death” (Orwell 11). The diary serves as evidence of society's existence. Smith reflects on what may have transpired on a different course in his life. We all have such a horrible life. Winston had no right to think at all, whatever he was contemplating, as all the history books, etc., were destroyed by the regime. The government wants to write a new history of itself.

The other concept of the ministry of love is too deluding. Winston's lover, Julia, publicly espouses party doctrine as a member of the fanatical Junior Anti-Sex League. She also had hatred for the party, but even after doing all the bravery she did, she remained out of the government's sight. Julia enjoys her small acts of rebellion, and she is not interested in giving up the lifestyle. Besides, making love is illegal under the Oceana regime. Those who sin love affairs are to be found in the Ministry of Love. It is an illusion of a jail, a place where the loved prisoner is confined. When it is discovered that Mr. Charrington is an undercover Thought Police agent. Winston and Julia are apprehended and sent to the Ministry of Love, where they are separated and imprisoned. O'Brien leads Winston to Room 101, which houses every prisoner's darkest dread, for the last phase of re-education. To frighten him, rats are released on him. Winston accuses Julia and swears allegiance to the Party. None of them in the totalitarian government could be trusted. Everyone was staring at one another with suspicion.

O'Brien is an enigmatic figure who works for the Inner Party and pretends to be a part of The Brotherhood, the counter-revolutionary opposition, in order to apprehend Winston. Winston believes in O'Brien. However, later on, O'Brien ends up being the cause, and he gets sent to prison. He is a spy who plans to trick, trap, and apprehend Julia and Winston.

What an absolute system of containing people's thinking and imagination! The party treats people as though they are nothing but playthings in its hands. It is a hegemonic situation. Yet, these citizens are to be made to understand that they're advantaged and taken care of constantly by virtue of the innumerable noble conditioning of the government. Orwell demonstrates that language has the Power in politics to mask the verity and mislead the public, and he wishes to increase the awareness of this power (Berkes 2000).

George Orwell's novel incorporates key elements of panopticon theory: an omnipresent God-like figure at the pinnacle; covert surveillance; and hierarchical organization, inescapability of punishment, and covert surveillance. This will ensure regime hegemony, regardless of the various actors operating within it.

This novel not only creates a fictional society that incorporates Bentham's ideas, but shows how panoptic design can, in the wrong hands and with the necessary technology, come to be a largely effective instrument of totalitarian control. Orwell's novel not only provides a societal model of Bentham's design but foreshadows Foucault's work some twenty-five times in an erudite illustration of the darker possibilities of panopticism. The veritable nature of panoptic control enables the power relationship between the party and its citizens to serve automatically. Any individual struggles on the part of the novel's characters become futile.

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