

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of the study, the research question, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, and the scope limitation. This chapter, which will be used to introduce the thesis, will be written by the writer.

1.1. Background of the Study

According to Marx and Engels (2008), marxism is a comprehensive socioeconomic and political theory that profoundly criticizes capitalism and argues for constructing a classless society based on common ownership of the means of production. Marxism is based on the notion of historical materialism, which holds that the economic structure of a culture shaped by its method of production determines its social, political, and ideological superstructures. This theory leads to the argument that society development is fueled by class conflict, particularly between the bourgeoisie, who control the means of production, and the proletariat, who sell their labor.

Marx and Engels (2008), believe that capitalism necessarily leads to worker exploitation and alienation because workers are cut off from the rewards of their labor and subject to the whims of capitalists. They believe that this exploitation will culminate in a revolutionary insurrection by the proletariat, leading to the downfall of capitalism. Marxism's ultimate objective is to develop communism, a stateless and classless society in which resources are shared evenly among all persons, eradicating private property and class divisions. Marxist philosophy has had an extensive effect outside academics, inspiring countless political groups and revolutions across the world that advocate for worker rights and social justice. Its concepts have served as the foundation for many socialist ideologies, resulting in substantial sociopolitical transformations in several nations throughout history.

According to Orwell (1949), totalitarianism is a political system in which authority is centralized under a single party or leader, and the state strives to control all aspects of public and private life, frequently using repressive tactics such as censorship and opposition suppression. In such regimes, the government maintains

control by propaganda, monitoring, and the use of force, intending to instill a unified ideology across society and eliminate any form of resistance or individual liberty. Totalitarian nations frequently use considerable propaganda to distort public perception and retain control over their populations, creating an atmosphere in which dissent is not allowed and conformity is enforced.

According to Podgorna (2020), Orwell's work conveys the subject of totalitarianism by demonstrating the government's aim of full power without directly acknowledging it. Instead, he examines authoritarian control through interrelated notions like authority, terror, propaganda, and monitoring. These themes represent a society characterized by strong power, terror, continual monitoring, and a single ideology that suppresses other perspectives. Totalitarianism is a political system in which a single party wields ultimate authority, regulating both public and private life, repressing opposition, and imposing ideological conformity. It results in limited individual freedoms and privacy, with current monitoring technologies undermining democratic values and civil liberties.

Class struggle is a fundamental concept in Marxist theory that describes the ongoing conflict between different social classes, with a focus on the bourgeoisie (the capitalist class that owns the means of production) versus the proletariat (the working class that sells its labor). Marx and Engels contend that this conflict is more than just a historical fact, but a driving force in society's evolution and change. Marx and Engels argue that *"the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles,"* implying that all societies have been distinguished by conflicts caused by economic imbalances and competing interests among classes. Throughout history, tyrants and enslaved have been at odds with one another, resulting in societal reorganization or mutual annihilation (Marx & Engels, 2008).

Throughout history, societies were often separated into classes and levels of hierarchy, social position. In ancient Rome, there were various classes: patricians, knights, plebeians, and serfs. In the Middle Ages, there were feudal lords and serfs. During the Middle Ages, there were feudal lords, vassals, tradesmen, servants,

unfortunates, and unfortunates, each with their subordinates. Although modern bourgeois society emerged from the demise of feudal civilization, class struggles persisted. Creating new classes, oppressive conditions, and modes of struggle replaces the old ones. The Middle Ages' servant class gave rise to the first city-dwellers. These citizens gave rise to the bourgeoisie's earliest elements (Marx & Engels, 2008).

The novel's themes and characters serve as striking metaphors for the perils of authoritarianism and the decline of individual liberty. The concept of "1984" has become synonymous with government surveillance and control, with words such as "Big Brother" and "doublethink" entering popular culture. Orwell's book is a timeless warning about the dangers of unfettered government power and the manipulation of language and history. Winston begins to question the Party's philosophy while writing in his diary and having an affair with Julia. They believe they are part of a resistance movement, but their contact in the Brotherhood turns out to be a Party agent. They are arrested and sent to the Ministry of Love, where O'Brien subjects them to psychological manipulation and torture. The novel's conclusion happens in Room 101, where Winston is forced to face his darkest fear (rats) and betrays Julia, resulting in his ultimate subordination to the Party. Following his release, Winston has lost his individuality and now embraces Big Brother, reflecting the totalitarian regime's complete victory over individual liberty (Orwell, 1949).

In this research, the writer uses five previous studies for developing this research which is, *The Effects Of Totalitarianism And Marxism Towards Dystopian Society In George Orwell's Selected Fictions* by Syed Ahmad Raza and Prof. Dr. Abdul Ghafoor Awan, *George Orwell and Totalitarianism: A Master of Political and Social Commentary* by Gol Man Gurung, *Governmental Hegemony Of Stalin's Totalitarian Regime In George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four* by Abdullah Sajjad, *Social Class And Rebellion In George ORWELL'S 1984* by Andika Aliyansyah Putra, and *Winston's Alienation And Class Struggle In George Orwell's 1984* by Erzal Pratomo Kurnianto.

1.2. Research Question

1. How does the novel represent the impact of totalitarianism on individuals and society?
2. What does Winston's rebellion reveal about class struggle in the novel?

1.3. Objective of the Study

1. To know how Winston's rebellion reflects class struggle and control in the novel.
2. To know how totalitarian control affects individuals and society, focusing on surveillance, propaganda, and loss of identity.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study advances the theoretical understanding of Marxist criticism, specifically concerning totalitarianism and class conflict as they are portrayed in George Orwell's "1984". It does this by offering a framework for examining how literature both reflects and critiques sociopolitical realities and the relationships between the oppressed and dominant classes. In addition to being a useful resource for future researchers who are interested in Marxist theory, totalitarianism, or class conflict in literature, this study promotes the investigation of different critical viewpoints such as psychoanalysis, feminism, or LGBTQ+ theory when examining "1984" or related works. By demonstrating how socio-political theories are applied in literary analysis, it also provides instructional value by encouraging critical engagement with both primary texts and theoretical ideas.

1.5. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on how George Orwell's 1984 illustrates the disastrous repercussions of totalitarianism on both people and society, as seen by Winston Smith's rebellion. The Party's full control, achieved via surveillance, propaganda, and fact manipulation, eliminates personal autonomy and group identity, leaving citizens alone and helpless. Winston's efforts of disobedience, such as writing in his journal and seeking truth among the proles, reveal

Oceania's vast class differences and underscore the repression of class awareness. From a Marxist standpoint, Winston's failed attempt to resist the regime demonstrates how totalitarian power not only oppresses individuals but also prevents the working class from uniting and challenging the ruling elite, effectively eliminating the possibility of class struggle and revolutionary change.

This study is limited by the novel's exclusive focus on Winston Smith's personal experience, which narrows the perspective on the broader effects of totalitarianism on both society and class struggle. The psychological and social consequences of the Party's absolute control, such as constant surveillance, propaganda, and the suppression of autonomy, are explored mainly through Winston's isolated acts of rebellion. His struggle reveals the deep class divisions in Oceania and the Party's efforts to prevent the development of class consciousness, aligning with Marxist concerns about the suppression of collective resistance. However, the narrative provides minimal insight into the daily realities or revolutionary potential of other groups, particularly the proles, who from a Marxist perspective embody the possibility of meaningful change. Their responses to oppression, like the brief protest by a prole woman in the theater, are mentioned only in passing and not deeply examined. As a result, the novel limits a comprehensive analysis of totalitarianism and class struggle, focusing on individual defeat rather than the potential for collective transformation within society.