CHAPTER IV

DISSENT THROUGH PARODY: AN ANALYSIS OF
ORWELL’S NINETEEN EIGHTY FOUR

In this chapter an analysis is made of Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949), which is a nightmare story of totalitarianism of the future. The writer’s dissent is registered by parodying by exaggeration not so much any literary text, but by recreating with exaggeration the socio-political scenario that prevailed in England and Russia in the Mid-War years of the twentieth century. Irrespective of the prevalent political ideology – Communism or Capitalism – people in power try to perpetuate their strong hold through use of power and media discourses. Orwell also implies the powerful influence of the media in the society developing a special language ‘Newspeak’ to prevent independent thinking, and parrot the governments ideology. So an attempt is made in this chapter to analyse the text closely to substantiate the parodic structure of the novel.

A Parody is a literary device that imitates a person or a system with a view to critiquing the same. According to Fowler, it is one of the most calculated, and analytical literary devices as “it searches out, by means of subversive mimicry, any weakness, pretention or lack of self-awareness in the original” (137). Orwell critiques the totalitarian governments, and the resultant suppression of individualism through his novel *Nineteen Eighty Four*. It presents an autocratic government built on hierarchical society. The original title of Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four* was ‘The Last Man in Europe.’ As this original title indicates, this novel portrays the predicament of human beings during the twentieth century. It is considered by many as a direct attack on the type of Socialism in Russia. The revolutions in Russia, the
great purges under the dictatorship of Stalin, and the atrocities done in the name of
the Party have got direct references in this novel. Hitchens observes that the
twentieth century is shaped by the political institutions such as Fascism, Nazism and
Stalinism. “Most of the intellectual classes were fatally compromised by
accommodation with one or other of these man-made structures of inhumanity …”
(4).

A close reading of the novel indicates that it is true of the predicament of
human beings in all countries, independent of the ideologies be it Capitalism or
Socialism on the basis of which society is organized. Crick ed. quotes the words of
Julian Symons to highlight the condition of England during the 1940s. “The
reduction in rations, the odious food, the sometimes unobtainable and always
dubiously authentic drink, these were with us still when the book appeared” (20).

Orwell criticizes the role of government in suppressing the individuality of
people, and the dichotomy between the owners of the means of production, and
proletariat in Nineteen Eighty Four. Many earlier writers foresaw the emergence of
Heel (1909) foretold the ills of Fascism. Zamyatin’s We (1923), and Aldous
Huxley’s Brave New World (1932) presented imaginary worlds highlighting the
problems of Capitalism.

Orwell’s Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty Four share similar political
thinking. In Animal Farm, revolution, instead of bringing hope, betrays the mass
because of the power hunger of the most intelligent animals of the farm. Other
animals fail to strike back in time against their new masters. Nineteen Eighty Four
presents a similar situation where people fail to rebel against the exploitation of the
Party. Crick ed. quotes the words of Orwell who comments “the moral to be drawn from the dangerous nightmare situation is a simple one. Don’t let it happen. It depends on you” (111).

Crick ed. endorses the view of Czeslaw Milosz, the Polish poet and writer, who wrote of this novel in 1953 in *The Captive Mind* that it was amazing to find a Western writer like Orwell, who had never lived in Russia, capable of a keen perception of its life. “The fact that there are writers in the West who understand the functioning of the unusually constructed machine of which they are themselves a part, astounds them and argues against the ‘stupidity’ of the West” (5).

In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, we find a critique of the political ideologies, as they are always capable of being abused when power is bestowed upon the wrong hands. Orwell parodies the political scenario of his age in order to express his dissent. The novel projects a terror-stricken nightmarish world. It is set in London, chief city of Airstrip One in Oceania. People in this city live under constant surveillance with the police patrolling in helicopters, and constant snooping into the windows of the houses. People are more afraid of the Thought Police, the secret police in Oceania, who monitor people and kill the members of the society if they show the potential to challenge the authority. An instrument called telescreen, which transmits and receives simultaneously, is used by the Thought Police to monitor the movements of the people. Any sound produced by the people above the level of a low whisper can be picked up by the telescreen. People can never know whether they are being watched at any given moment. “You had to live – from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every moment scrutinized” (NEF 3). The face of the Big Brother in the
poster watching the movements of the people creates an eerie feeling that the events of the novel take place in an unusual setting.

Indeed, Orwell’s meetings with different Communist groups such as Trotskyists and ILP members in Sheffield make him understand the need for an egalitarian society. Orwell considers them working-class activists, and is not worried about their different political theories. Thus, he discovered the need for Socialism, but is equally critical of its abuse. “He is a socialist with a difference. He claimed that the middle-class opposition for Socialism is not against the doctrine of Socialism but against some individual socialists” (Fyvel 65). In addition, Orwell’s stay in Burma has made him understand the dichotomy between the oppressed and the oppressors. According to Oxley, in The Road to Wigan Pier Orwell expressed his hatred for imperialism as follows:

I was conscious of an immense weight of guilt that I had got to expiate …. I had reduced everything to the simple theory that the oppressed are always right and those oppressors are always wrong: a mistaken theory, but the natural result of being one of the oppressors yourself. I felt that I had got to escape not merely from imperialism but from every form of man’s dominion over man. (45)

4.1. Post-War English Society

Nineteen Eighty Four portrays the pathetic living condition of people in Oceania ruled by the Party. The people live in shabby buildings with stinking kitchens. They are even deprived of essential commodities like buttons, razors and
Actually, through the novel, Orwell depicts the living condition in England after the World War I.

The standard of living of the citizens of Oceania resembles the living condition of people in England. The living condition of the people is pathetic. The dingy apartments, shabby kitchens, crowded canteens, and regular power shutdowns portrayed in Nineteen Eighty Four remind us of the squalid living condition in Russia and England after the War. The squalid living conditions of the citizens in Nineteen Eighty Four are based on the observation of Orwell during his visit to the industrial town Wigan. Orwell’s The Road to Wigan Pier (1937) presents the condition of miners in the industrial town, Wigan. Orwell finds the workers’ families living on unemployment benefit. He holds that Northern England remains a class-ridden capitalist society. He has witnessed the ardous condition of the miners. “He emphasized how the gross overcrowding in working-class dwelling which he came across made it impossible to keep the house clean. He described the squalor of jerry-built back-to-back terrace housing …” (Fyvel 64).

Though, England did not suffer much physical destruction caused by World War I, the post-war years found growing bitterness in industrial relations which resulted in general strike in 1921. As a result, over two million people became unemployed. It witnessed the decay of Capitalism. “In fact, between 1922 and 1940 the unemployment figures never dropped below one million, and the presence of these men seemed to many to prove the Marxist view of the essential degeneracy of Capitalism” (Oxley 32-33).

Unemployment, accentuated by the Depression, led to financial crisis. These made the people aware of their misery, and feel the need for having political power.
During the thirties, British Labour Party replaced Liberal Party as the main force of
democratic opposition. Meanwhile, The British Communist Party was founded in
1920 and became popular. But it never assumed considerable importance in British politics.

Orwell had witnessed how the people in power misused the principles of Socialism to perpetuate their own power. In Russia, Stalin had betrayed the principles of Communism to retain his power. His critics were exterminated or murdered as traitors. Orwell warned the English community about the possible abuse of Socialist principles by rulers. Orwell himself was a Socialist. In Orwell, however, one finds the critical traditions of Machiavelli, Burke, and de Tocqueville. He says that ‘a writer can never be a loyal member of a political party.’…Even the committed writer … must always tell the truth and preserve his art. The catch-phrase of the 1930s and the 1940s ‘ideologically correct’ was anathema to Orwell (Crick 8).

4.2. The Concept of Equality and its Implication

Orwell, having witnessed the agony of the oppressed in Burma, and later the exploitation of the mine labourers in England, expressed his disgust for inequality, in his novels *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty Four*. In the latter novel, the Party came to power promising equality, but equality among people was never established as it is detrimental to the very existence of the Party as the controlling factor. Inequality is established by the creation of a hierarchical society. In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Goldstein, the revolutionary leader who was branded as a traitor by the Party, explains the failure of all political systems in establishing equality.
In the novel, “The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism”, an imaginary book written by Goldstein, the antagonist of the Party, explains the real purpose of having such a hierarchical society. The world is divided into three groups—High, Middle and Low. Whenever the High are ineffective they are overthrown by the Middle with the support of Low by promising them to establish equality and liberty. Once getting power, the Middle make the Low go back to their old position of servitude, thereby themselves becoming the High.

In the past, the need for a hierarchical society was preached by kings and aristocrats, and by priests, lawyers and others “who were parasitical upon them” (NEF 202). They are able to convince the Middle and the Lower classes by promising compensation “in an imaginary world beyond grave” (202). Similarly, in the past, the middle class used the terms such as ‘equality, liberty and freedom’ to topple the High and get power. But after getting power they established new tyrannies.

The new Middle groups in effect proclaimed their tyranny beforehand. Socialism, a theory which appeared in the early nineteenth century and was the last link in a chain of thought stretching back to the slave rebellions of antiquity, was still deeply infected by the Utopianism of past ages. But in each variant of Socialism…the aim of establishing liberty and equality was more and more openly abandoned…Ingsoc in Oceania, Neo-Bolshevism in Eurasia, Death Worship, as it is commonly called, in Eastasia, had the conscious aim of perpetuating UNfreedom and INequality. (203)

These new movements simply paid lip service to their ideologies and aimed at arresting progress and freeze history at a chosen moment.
The novel emphasises that equality is not an ideal to be striven after, but a danger to be averted. Every new political theory that concentrates on hierarchy and regimentation is totalitarian in nature. So, the rulers who advocate such theories, also, tend to be autocrats. Orwell parodies, in this novel, the abuse of the Marxist principle of equality by some of the Communist leaders in Russia. Lamont quotes the words of Stalin who interpreted the concept of equality during the Seventeenth Congress of Communist Party as follows:

By equality, Marxism means, not equalization of individual requirements and individual life, but the abolition of classes … Furthermore, Marxism proceeds from the assumption that people’s tastes and requirements are not, and can not be identical, equal, in quality or in quantity, either in the period of socialism or in the period of communism … all should wear the same clothes and eat the same dishes in the same quantity is to deal with vulgarities and to slander Marxism. (53)

But U.S.S.R. under the rule of Stalin, who is not against the ideals of Marx, suffered the same predicament. Orwell has pointed out this in Animal Farm, where the pigs that usurp power for the sake of establishing equality, and liberty, create laws which will make them remain in power forever. “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal” (129).

4.3. Class Consciousness

Fixing the social status of people of different groups to establish stability, and making them aware of it is called class consciousness. Both Capitalist and Communist countries maintain inequality among classes. In Nineteen Eighty Four,
people are controlled by the Inner Party members. This novel satirises the Communist leaders who wanted to retain their power by maintaining inequality among classes. Capitalism, too, has not overcome class consciousness. In his speech made in Belgium during April 2000, about the relevance of Trotsky today, Taffe (2000) asserts that Capitalism has intensified class consciousness:

There are at least one billion poor people on the planet who receive each year as much as 600 men and women who rule Western monopoly capitalist firms. The division between rich and poor has increased exponentially, not just between the advanced industrial world and the neo-colonial world but also within the so-called ‘rich’ countries themselves. Half-a-percent of the population of the USA own as much as the bottom 90%. In the US, the model of the new so-called ‘economic paradigm’, 50 million workers are worse off than 20 years ago while the living standards of 80% have stood still.

Published in 1949, Nineteen Eighty Four presents a not-so-distant futuristic world, where the condition of human living is reduced to mere existing. Fyvel, the biographer of Orwell, remarks that London, portrayed in Nineteen Eighty Four, is similar to St Cyprian, a small private boarding school where Orwell studied. It embodied all the typical Edwardian class snobberies. It aims at “imbuing them (students) with right class-consciousness, patriotic and sorting values.”

Orwell has always supported the poor labourers and expresses his disgust against the exploitation they are subject to. Das clarifies that Orwell’s Socialism was another symbol of “common decency”. “Orwell’s political ideal was never based on
any dogma, or creed for orthodox faith. It was entirely based upon his vision of a classless social order with complete equality and respect for each other” (34).

4.4. Structure of Oceanic Society

In Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four*, the Party rules Oceania with Big Brother at the helm of affairs. The social structure of *Nineteen Eighty Four* has Big Brother as an all-powerful leader. He is the guise in which the Party chooses to project itself to the world. “His function is to act as a focusing point for love, fear and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt towards an individual than towards an organization” (NEF 208). It is done with such a precision that everybody is assigned with tasks, and the people, except Inner Party members, do not know the real purpose behind them. Anybody capable of becoming conscious of the nature of their work does not find a chance to express it. Even the instincts against the Party ideals are not tolerated.

Stability is maintained by making a hierarchical society consisting of Inner Party members, Outer Party members, and Proles. It has got a pyramidal structure. At the apex comes Big Brother followed by Inner Party members who constitute less than 2% of the total population. Outer Party members who constitute 13% of the total population have to work to the designs of the Inner Party members. But the Proles who constitute 85% of the total population are considered insignificant masses.

The Party governs Oceania by maintaining this rigid class system. Orwell has witnessed the inequality between the working class, and the ruling class in Edwardian England which was built on the foundation of liberal-Capitalist society,
leading to exploitation of the masses. Since Capitalism will lead to exploitation, such societies are unjust ones. Oxley quotes the words of Beatrice Webb, a leading Socialist intellectual of that time, who observed in her diary that “the landslide in England towards Social Democracy proceeds steadily. But, it has ended in what we call the cradle-to-grave welfare state… ‘bourgeoisification of the class structure” (31).

In Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four*, the membership of Inner Party, Outer Party, and Proles is not hereditary. Admission to Inner Party, or Outer Party is done on the basis of an examination taken at the age of sixteen. There is no racial discrimination or no province tries to dominate the other. Further, the administrators of any area are selected by the inhabitants of that area, so that nobody feels that they are ruled by an outsider.

There is far less to-and-fro movement between the different groups than happened under capitalism or even in the pre-industrial age. Between the two branches of the Party there is certain amount of interchange, but so much as will ensure that weaklings are excluded from the Inner Party and that ambitious members of the Outer Party are made harmless by allowing them to rise. Proletarians, in practice, are not allowed to graduate into the Party. (NEF 198)

Maintaining the hierarchical structure is the sole motto of the government, and to do that power is not handed over to the children of the Inner Party members, but to the ablest of people. “All beliefs, habits, tastes, emotions, mental attitudes that characterize our time are really designed to sustain the mystique of the Party, and prevent the true nature of society from being perceived” (210). Compared to the
Party members, Proles are given some liberty as there is nothing to fear from them. Left to themselves, they will survive without any impulse to rebel. Only when they are highly educated they can be dangerous.

Winston, the protagonist of the novel, believes that the only hope lies in Proles, the disregarded masses who constitute eighty five percent of the population of Oceania. Once he heard a loud sound, and thought that the Proles revolt finally. But, to his disgust, he found that it was nothing but a quarrel between the women who were successful in buying saucepans and those who could not. “Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they can not become conscious” (70).

Revolution aims at bringing about a change. As far as Proles are concerned, there is no change in their lifestyle. Capitalism, or Communism does not make any change in their standard of living. The only beneficiary of the Revolution seems to be the Party itself. The Party rules with an iron fist so that the enemies can never come together, or even identify one another. Any revolution needs the support of the masses. In this nightmarish world, even if the Brotherhood (a Secret Organisation against the party) exists, it is “inconceivable that its members could assemble in larger numbers than twos or threes” (69).

The Party claims that under Capitalism, before the Revolution, the Proles suffered as they had been starved and flogged, children were sold into the factories at the age of six. The Party also claims that it is responsible for liberating them from the bondage. The citizens are made to believe that the Party has established a society built on equality.
At the same time, the Party teaches its members that Proles are natural inferiors who must be treated like animals. It can effectively be done by the application of a few rules. As a result, Proles are no longer given any importance as long as they continue to work and breed. They are allowed to lead a natural life like their ancestors. “They were born … grew up in the gutters … work at twelve … passed through a brief-blossoming period of beauty and sexual desire, married at twenty … take care of their home and children, petty quarrels with neighbours, films, football, beer … gambling fill up the horizons of their mind” (71). They can be easily controlled. Dangerous individuals are eliminated by the Thought Police, but no attempt is made to indoctrinate the Party ideology to them. Even if they are discounted of their life, their lack of general ideas leads them to indulge in petty quarrels. “The larger evil invariably escaped their notice” (72).

In the novel, the history text book for children produced by the Party projects London before Revolution as a shabby, and a miserable place, to live under Capitalism. It propagates that before Revolution, among the poor slums of London, there were just a few big houses of rich men called Capitalists. This is how the Party highlights the predicament of people under Capitalism:

The capitalists owned everything in the world, and everyone else was their slave. They owned all the land, all the houses, all the factories, and all the money. If anyone disobeyed them they could throw them into prison, or they could take their jobs away and starve him to death. When any ordinary person spoke to a capitalist he had to cringe and bow to him, and take off his cap and address him as ‘sir’. (73)
However, similar inequality prevails among the Inner Party members, Outer Party members, and the Proles. Proles are considered animals. “Proles and animals are free” (72) is the stand of the Party. There is no evidence to prove that what the Party says about Capitalism is wrong. Moreover, fear and punishment are used as weapons against those who show the slightest indifference to the Party ideals.

When the memory failed and written records were falsified—when that happened, the claim of the Party to have improved the conditions of human life had got to be accepted, because there did not exist, and never again could exist, any standard against which it could be tested. (93)

An important tenet of Marxist Literary Criticism is interpreting history in terms of class struggle. The Marxist critics highlight the class struggle created by the conflict between owners of means of production, and those who work for the means of production. In doing so, they make the readers aware of the class distinctions and the resultant tensions in a novel. The analysis of Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four* in the light of Marxist Literary principles illustrates how class distinction is designed and encouraged by the rulers for exploiting the masses.

In the novel, the old man, whom Winston meets in a pub meant for Proles, recalls that he has not worn the top, a hat usually worn by Capitalists as propagated by the Party, for many years. “The last time I wore one was at my sister-in-law’s funeral … I could not give you the date, but it must’a been fifty years ago. Of course it was only “hired for the occasion, you understand” (90). But Winston can not get the answer from the old man whether today’s life is better than life under capitalism before the Revolution. His mind is full of useless information. The Proles are “like the ant which can see small objects but not larger ones” (93).
The Proles embody the vast majority who live under the illusion that they are happy. In reality, they are made to indulge in frivolous activities such as playing football and gambling. But they are unaware of the fact that they are denied education and decent living. By highlighting the exploitation of Proles, Orwell criticises the modern society for indulging in superficial activities without realizing they are exploited by the rulers. He also expresses his concern about the futility of modern life through the portrayal of Proles:

It struck him that the truly characteristic thing about modern life was not its cruelty and insecurity, but simply its barrenness, its dinginess, its listlessness … The ideals set up by the Party was something huge, terrible, and glittering—a world of steel and concrete, of monstrous machines and terrifying weapons—a nation of warriors and fanatics, marching forward in perfect unity, all thinking the same thoughts and shouting the same slogans, perpetually working, fighting, triumphing, persecuting—three hundred people all with the same face. (73-74)

The Party has double standards one for the Proles, and the other Party members. The majority of the population, Proles, are easily controlled by making them engage in all sorts of trivialities while the Party members are kept under the threat of severe punishment. Winston finds a Prole woman singing a song composed for Proles by the Music Department. He has not even heard of a Party member singing alone and spontaneously. “It would even have seemed slightly unorthodox, a dangerous eccentricity, like talking to oneself. Perhaps, it was only when people were somewhere near the starvation level that they had anything to sing about” (142).
Moreover, the distinction between Outer Party members and Proles is evident when Julia visits Charrington’s room, managing to buy some cheap make-up materials in proletarian quarters. Winston is startled to find her reddened lips and rouged cheeks. He has never seen, or imagined a Party woman with cosmetics on her face. Besides, Julia tells that she will buy a real woman’s frock and wear it instead of the blue overalls (the uniform for outer party members). “I’m going to be a woman, not a Party comrade” (142). The grasp of the Party over the minds of its citizens is made obvious when Winston can not conceal his shock when he finds Julia with make-up, though he is against the ideals of the Party.

Even among the Inner and Outer Party members there is no equality. Julia smuggles some packets containing real sugar, coffee, tea and a tin of milk to the secret room in Charrington’s antique shop. Unlike Victory coffee or Victory gin, the filthy food items meant for outer party members, they have real flavour. Real coffee and real milk are meant only for the Inner Party members, but the servants used to steal them. In addition, Julia’s fascination over the things like double bed, twelve-hour clock and the glass paperweight in Charrington’s room reveals the inequality among the members of the Party which claims to establish equality among people. As a result, the Inner Party members are detested by the Outer Party members. But they can’t express it openly. “There is nothing those swine don’t have, nothing. But of course waiters and servants and people pinch things…” (141).

Again it is through the visit of Winston, and Julia to O’Brien’s quarters that we understand the class distinction between Inner Party members and Outer Party members. The rich and spacious buildings, smells of good food and good tobacco, white-jacketed servants, and soft carpet in the quarters of the Inner party members,
are in direct contrast to what we find in Victory Mansion, and any other apartment meant for Outer Party members. Further, Winston, and Julia are shocked to find O’Brien switching off the telescreen, as the outer party are not permitted to do it, and their shock knows no bounds when O’Brien informs that this privilege has been given only to Inner Party members.

4.5. Propaganda

Propaganda is the method through which the rulers condition the people to accept, or to force them to accept, their designs. Hence, it is an important tool for all types of rulers. In totalitarian countries, coercive methods are used to propagate the principles of the rulers. People never protest against it as they have to live in fear of punishment. In Capitalist countries, it is done through discursive methods. The real motive behind such propaganda stands unrevealed. It requires critical thinking on the part of the common people to understand the real nature of it.

Welch considers Nazi’s rise to power as a classic example of political achievement by means of propaganda. He quotes the speech of Goebbels (1897-1945), the Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, who outlined his views on the role of the new ministry to the German press on March 15, 1933:

I see in the newly established Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda a link between government and people … Propaganda must aim at winning people over…the press must not merely inform: it must also instruct … the press … is like a piano in the hands of the Government and on which the Government can play, a situation in which it is an enormously
important and significant instrument of mass influence that the Government can make use of in the work for which it is responsible. (131-132)

Although Goebbels maintained that the press would have freedom to criticise, such freedom remained illusory. He used press to propagate the ideas of the government in order to make the citizens accept those ideas without questioning it.

*Nineteen Eighty Four* portrays a society conditioned by the constant propaganda of the Party. Every day, the Party claims that it is responsible for the better living condition of the citizens compared to that of the previous rule. The Ministry of Plenty projects the Party, and its high-command Big Brother, as the saviours of Oceania from its miserable condition. Moreover, the citizens’ minds are crammed with unverifiable statistics about the good work done by the Party. They are also made to believe that the Party is the only means of saving them from their enemies, Eurasia and Eastasia. But the enemy of the Party is changed often, at least in records, according to its present policy.

However, propaganda is used by the early Marxists to enlighten the proletariats with the ideas of Marx. Lenin, during his early years as a revolutionary, faced the challenge of introducing Marxist ideas to working class. This was necessary to correct the errors of the other groups which pretend to be socialists. Harding observes that according to the strategy of the St. Petersburg Marxists, “…the urgent task of the movement was to train a force of worker intellectuals who … would return to the working class to act as the catalysts in an ever-broadening schema of working-class enlightenment” (75). But the followers of Socialism after Lenin, especially Stalin, used propaganda not as a tool for enlightening the working class. Rather, it is used by the rulers to condition the minds of the people with
falsified truth. In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Orwell ridicules the distortion of propaganda that can be used to condition the masses amenable to the national policies of a totalitarian regime. Apart from maintaining rigid class system, the Party ensures that its policies are propagated for total compliance:

In a way, the world-view of the Party imposed itself most successfully on people incapable of understanding it. They could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity of what was demanded of them, and were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening. By lack of understanding they remained sane. They simply swallowed everything, and what they swallowed did them no harm, because it left no residue behind, just as a grain of corn will pass undigested through the body of a bird. (NEF 156)

In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Winston, and Julia rebel against the Party as they feel suffocated by the political system of Oceania. The movements of the people are constantly monitored, and even their thoughts are studied, though there is no privacy in that world. Substance, a Marxist critic, comments that all the members of the Outer Party are treated like robots. “They are assigned daily tasks, their data is reviewed and any anomalies found are dealt with.”

Two Minutes Hate is a programme conducted to channelise the fear and anger of the people towards Emmanuel Goldstein, who is considered a traitor of the Party. Once he was a leading figure of the Party, on par with Big Brother, and then he indulged in counter-revolutionary activities for which he was condemned to death. He had mysteriously escaped, and it is believed that he had formed a Brotherhood to overthrow the Party. During the Two Minutes Hate, Goldstein’s
picture in the telescreen abuses Big Brother denouncing the dictatorship of the Party, and demands freedom of speech, freedom of the Press, freedom of assembly, freedom of thought, and also asserts that the revolution has been betrayed by the party. Immediately, people, like sheep, give vent to their anger towards Goldstein by hurling objects against his picture shown in the telescreen. Everybody is expected to attend such Hate meetings to establish their conformity to the Party.

Once, the picture of an Eurasian soldier is pasted on all empty spaces to kindle the anger of the people and channelise it towards the enemy. The moment it is announced that many people are killed by the frequent rocket bombs, the angry mob becomes violent, and burns the effigy of Goldstein and the posters of the Eurasian soldier. Even the Proles, who normally do not pay much attention about the war, become patriotic. This proves that the patriotic fervour is, also, capable of being used by the rulers to unite people in supporting it. But it is a challenge for the rulers to keep this momentum forever. It is possible only when people have short memory, and the past is always changed in tune with the present.

One major dimension of propaganda is the Hate Week (an event organized by the Party to make the people hate its enemies). People are frantically getting ready for Hate Week. Already they are used to systematic power shut downs to preserve it for Hate Week. The staff members of all the Ministries work overtime for Hate week. It provides a platform for the party to instigate the patriotic fervor of the people.

In addition, the Party keeps the people anxious about the horror of war by announcing that Oceania is always fighting against its enemies. The citizens are made to watch the agony of enemy soldiers to understand the need for the Party to
protect them. Winston, the protagonist of the novel, writes in his diary about war films, and how the audience shouts with laughter on witnessing the suffering of others. Only a Prole woman, who belongs to the lowest rung of the social hierarchy, shouts not to show it as the children will be affected. The people can not think of anything but horror. It is made possible by creating a false impression that their country is always at war with other countries.

For example, the manner in which the Party’s stand is conveyed to the people is expressed during Hate Week. The crowd waiting anxiously for the hanging of two thousand Eurasian soldiers is told all of a sudden that Eurasia is the ally of Oceania. Earlier, an announcer has explained the atrocities, massacres, lootings, rapes, and torture of prisoners by Eurasian soldiers which kindles the anger of the crowd against them. After getting the message in a sheet of paper that Eurasia is an ally, he reads it without any pause while he has just explained their cruelty.

Nothing altered in his voice or manner, or in the content of what he was saying, but suddenly the names were different. Immediately, there is commotion and the crowd is made to think that it is Goldstein’s work. Then the Hate continued exactly as before except that the target had been changed. (181)

Apart from witnessing the invincible power of the Party to protect the citizens of Oceania, the people are also constantly informed of their better living conditions. The Ministry of Plenty is entrusted with the job of glorifying the present economic condition:

For example, the Ministry of Plenty’s forecast had estimated the output of boots for the quarter at 145 million pairs. The actual output was … sixty-two
millions. Very likely, no boots had been produced at all. Likelier still, nobody knew how many had been produced, much less cared. All one knew was that in every quarter astronomical numbers of boots were produced on paper, while perhaps half the population of Oceania went barefoot. And so it was with every class of recorded fact, great or small. (NEF 41)

Similarly, in the month of February, the Ministry of Plenty made an announcement that there would be no reduction of the chocolate ration during 1984. Later, it was reduced from thirty grammes to twenty grammes. Immediately the Ministry of Plenty announces that there have been demonstrations thanking Big Brother for raising the chocolate ration to twenty grammes a week. But Winston remembers that only the day before the ration was reduced from thirty grammes to twenty a week. Just after twenty four hours, people forget it. Besides, nobody can prove it, as all the records are modified with regard to the latest stance of the Party.

Winston Smith, considers that readjusting Ministry of Plenty’s figures is not mere forgery. Rather, it appears like substituting one piece of nonsense for another because most of the figures mentioned do not have any connection with the real world. “All that was needed was to substitute for the original promise a warning that it would probably be necessary to reduce the ration at some time in April” (39).

People are deprived of essential commodities such as buttons, darning wool, shoelaces, and razor blades. The supply of those commodities is not regular, and the people have to furtively buy them in the ‘free’ market. Almost a quarter of one’s salary has to be earmarked for “voluntary subscriptions, which were so numerous that it was difficult to keep track of them” (56). Instead of ensuring the equal distribution of commodities to people, the Ministry of Plenty creates false statistics
to make them live under constant illusion. The sagging morale of the people is stimulated by false announcements:

Attention, comrades! We have glorious news for you. We have won the battle for production! Returns now completed of the output of all classes of consumption goods show that the standard of living has risen by no less than 20 percent over the past year. All over Oceania this morning there were irrepressible spontaneous demonstrations when workers marched out of factories and offices and paraded through the streets with banners voicing their gratitude to Big Brother for the new, happy life which wise leadership has bestowed upon us. (58)

However, Julia is far less susceptible to Party propaganda than Winston. She casually remarks that, in her opinion, war is not happening, and the killing of people by the rocket bombs is the design of the Party itself. She, too, believes that the Party has invented aeroplanes. In his school days in the late fifties, Winston remembered, that it was the helicopters that the Party had claimed. When Julia was at school, it claimed aeroplane, and after a generation it will be claiming for steam engine. But nobody is worried who has really invented aeroplane. What is more important is the pace at which lies are turned to become truths. It is done with precision by reducing the memory of citizens. The invention of aeroplanes was dated before Julia’s birth, and there is no wonder she is not able to identify the truth behind it. But, she can not even remember that four years ago Oceania was at war with Eastasia, and at peace with Eurasia. Like a typical Party member, she too is unable to understand it.

In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, propaganda is, thus, used by the Party to create an impression among the citizens that the present scenario is always better than that of
the past. But the comparison between the present and past by the citizens will expose the false claims of the Party. As a result, the ability of the citizens to think critically is reduced by the Party. According to Bounds, Orwell was deeply influenced by Marxist approaches to culture and consistently portrayed media as “one of the main means by which the ruling class disseminated its ideology” (63).

4.6. Thought Reduction

Thought reduction aims at minimising the range of man’s rational power by reducing the capacity of his brain. Practitioners of Communism, as well as Capitalism, use it as a tool to achieve their aim of perpetuating their power. To retain the status quo of power equation forever, the ability of the citizens to compare the present with the past is be destroyed. It is effectively done in Nineteen Eighty Four by reducing thought process of the citizens of Oceania.

Nineteen Eighty Four expresses Orwell’s view that totalitarianism has abolished freedom of thought to such a great extent which is unheard of in any previous age. It isolates an individual from the outside world, and shuts him up in an artificial universe where he has no standards of comparison. Sensing that mere propaganda will not serve any purpose if the citizens of Oceania are able to think critically, the Party reduces the thought process of the people by minimising words. As a result, people, in due course, will never find a proper word to express any indifferent idea against the Party ideals. Winston, the protagonist of the novel, secretly buys a diary from an antique shop. But he does not know what to write. He can not even remember the exact year. He believes that it should be 1984. “It was never possible to pin down any date within a year or two” (NEF 7).
In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, even the word ‘science’ is no longer used in its original sense. In Newspeak, the official language of Oceania, there is no word for ‘science’. As scientific achievements require empirical method of thought, they are detrimental to the principles of the Party. “And even technological progress only happens when its products can in some way be used for the diminution of human liberty … The fields are cultivated with horse-ploughs while books are written by machinery” (193).

Already the Party finds success in “breaking the thoughts which have survived before the Revolution” (267). The Party, after coming to power, destroyed family values. As a result, nobody trusts his own wife or children. According to O’Brien, a member of the Inner Party in the novel, there will be no wife or friend in the future:

Children will be taken from their mothers at birth … The sex instinct will be eradicated. Procreation will be an annual formality … We shall abolish the orgasm. There will be no loyalty except the love of Big Brother. There will be no laughter, except the laugh of triumph over a defeated enemy. There will be no art, no literature, no science … There will be no distinction between beauty and ugliness. There will be no curiosity, no enjoyment of the process of life … always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. (NEF 267)

Once, during Physical Jerk, a mechanical exercise, Winston tries to recollect his early childhood. He finds it to be extremely difficult as there are no external records to refer to. “You remembered huge events which had quite probably not happened, you remembered the detail of incidents without being able to recapture
their atmosphere and there were long black periods to which you could assign nothing” (32).

Anybody capable of critical thinking is a potential threat to the ideals of the Party. So, the ability to think critically is systematically discouraged, and destroyed, by the Party. The person showing signs of intelligence will soon be vapourized. Winston feels that Symme, an intelligent Outer Party member, despite being a true follower of the principles of the Party, will disappear one day as he is too intelligent, and will never be liked by the Party.

Capitalism, and Communism rests on the acceptance of the respective ideology by proletariat. Intelligence will enable them to ask questions which may even threaten the existence of that very ideology. Here we find Symme as a committed Party worker, but what he lacks is “discretion… and a sort of stupidity” (55). Thus his “zeal and an up-to-datedness of information” (55) make him different from other Party members.

O’Brien, an Inner Party member, at the time of conditioning Winston to make him accept the Party ideals, says that the Party seeks power for its own sake. It is different from all the oligarchies of the past, as it knows what it is doing. The Nazis and the Communists came very close to its methods, but they did not recognize their own motives. They thought that they got power for a limited period to create a paradise where humans can be made equal. But the Party in Nineteen Eighty Four knows that power is not a means but an end. “One does not establish dictatorship to safeguard revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish dictatorship” (263). Reducing the range of thought will make the masses accept their social status without questioning it.
O’Brien continues that power can not rest with individuals, because they are bound to be defeated. By complete submission, the individuals lose their identity and become one with the Party which is all powerful and immortal. So, power has to be collective. The Party slogan “Freedom is Slavery” (264) can thus be interpreted as “Slavery is Freedom” (264).

The Party ensures that the citizens are engaged in various activities, and are never alone. As a result, their minds are filled with non-essential ideas, and they never have time to think about the quality of their living. The Party carefully checks the attendance at the Community Centre, where the citizens have to spend their time after their working hours.

In principle a Party member had no spare time, and was never alone except in bed. It was assumed that when he was not working, eating or sleeping, he would be taking part in some kind of communal recreations; to do anything that suggested a taste of solitude, even to go for a walk by yourself, was always slightly dangerous. There was a word for it in Newspeak; ownlife. (82)

The Thought Police vigilantly takes note of any sign of abnormality in the dissidents. It is dangerous to reveal one’s thought in public, or within the range of the telescreen. Even a small gesture of dissent is carefully watched, and dealt with severely. “A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself … to wear an improper expression on your face (to look incredulous when a victory was announced, for example) was itself a punishable offence” (62).

Orwell, through this novel, criticises the suppression of individualism in totalitarian countries. The rulers try to govern even the thought process of
individuals. The predicament of citizens in a totalitarian regime is portrayed in this novel. Winston bemoans the loss of freedom and blind acceptance of what is told by the Party as follows:

The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command. His heart sank as he thought of the enormous power arrayed against him, the ease with which any Party intellectual would overthrow him in debate, the subtle arguments which he would not be able to understand, much less answer. And yet he was in the right! They were wrong and he was right … Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows. (81)

4.7. Mutability of the Past

The knowledge of the past will make the citizens of Oceania compare the present scenario with that of the past. In that process, they will understand that the past is not so inhuman as it is projected by the Party. So, the party ensures that past is continuously modified to suit the present. According to Berger, Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty Four presents a Dystopia where “the record of the past – nations, history, persons – has been obliterated or altered, and one floats in the present, isolated except for the cobweb thread of memory trailing down to his childhood” (91).

Books published after 1969 were destroyed and found nowhere in Oceania. Charington, the owner of an antique shop, explains to Winston about a picture of an old building that it was a church, St. Clement’s Danes. He even recollects the rhyme:
‘Oranges and lemons,’ say the bells of St. Clement’s

‘You owe me three farthings,’ say the bells of St. Martin’s—. (NEF 100)

St. Martin’s Church is the present Victory Square which is used as a museum for propaganda displays. The Party has banished all churches to use them for its services. But the Outer Party members and Proles do not remember the existence of churches or saints in the past.

In the former eras religion was required to provide a common platform for people to meet, and exchange their ideas. It also required them to pledge loyalty to one another. Capitalism used churches to propagate its ideas to the masses. The Party is against the formation of any loyalty among individuals. They should be loyal only to the Party and Party ideals. Hence churches have been banned.

The chief principle of ‘Ingsoc’, the political ideology of the Party, is the mutability of the past. Past lives only in the records, and the memories of the people. By having control over the records and the minds of the people, the Party creates the past as it deems right. In ‘Oldspeak’, the plain language which the Party tries to supplant with a new version, it is called ‘reality control’ and in ‘Newspeak’, deliberately impoverished version of the old language, it is called ‘doublethink’.

History is constantly rewritten to suit the current goals of the Party. Only the destruction of human memory will make it possible. So, the Ministry of Truth (Minitru) modifies history perpetually to the tune of the ideals of the Party. Winston, the protagonist, could remember the fight at the time of Revolution when an atom bomb was dropped on Colchester. But the history of the fighting could not be traced out.
In the year 1984, Oceania is at war with Eurasia and Eastasia is its ally. “In no public or private utterance was it ever admitted that the three powers had at any time been grouped along different lines” (34). Though Winston knows that four years ago Oceania was at war with Eastasia, and in alliance with Eurasia, he could tell it to no one, and nor can it be proved as the records are rewritten to create an impression that Oceania is at war with Eurasia, as its eternal enemy. “The enemy of the moment always represented absolute evil, and it followed that any past or future agreement with him was impossible” (34).

Winston’s work is to modify the records according to the orders, received from the Ministry of Truth, written in small cylinders of paper that used to flopp out of the pneumatic tube explaining the work to be on that day. They ran as follows:

- times 17.3.84 bb speech malreported Africa rectify
- times 19.12.83 forecasts 3 yp 4\textsuperscript{th} quarter 83 misprints verify current issue
- times 14.2.84 miniplenty malquoted chocolate rectify
- times 3.12.83 reporting bb dayorder doubleplusungood refs unpersons rewrite fullwise upsub antefiling. (38)

After calling for the appropriate issues of *The Times*, which slide out of the pneumatic tube after only a few minutes delay, Winston works to do the necessary correction using speakwrite, a machine used for transcribing spoken words into typed forms. For example, it appeared from *The Times* of the seventeenth March that Big Brother, in his speech of the previous day, had predicted that the South Indian front would remain quiet but that a Eurasian offensive would shortly be launched in the North Africa. On the contrary, the Eurasian High Command had
launched offensive in South India and let North Africa alone. As a result, a paragraph in Big Brother’s speech should be rewritten in such a way “to make him predict the thing that had actually happened” (39).

Similarly, *The Times* published on the nineteenth of December, carried an article that highlighted the official forecast of the output of various classes of consumption goods in the fourth quarter of 1983, which was also the sixth quarter of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. But, a later issue contained a statement contradicting the actual output giving the appearance of the “forecasts were in every instance grossly wrong” (39). Winston’s job was to change the original figures by making them agree with the later ones.

After making necessary corrections to the appropriate copy of *The Times*, and pushing them into the pneumatic tube, Winston crumpled up the original message, and the notes he himself had made, and dropped them into the memory hole meant for destroying such papers using flame. After making corrections, the required copies of *The Times* would be reprinted to replace the original copies which would be destroyed.

This process of continuous alteration was applied not only to newspapers, but to books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, sound-tracks, cartoons, photographs—to every kind of documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance. (NEF 40)

Every prediction made by the Party could be corrected, and news, or opinion which contradicts the needs of the moment will be removed from the records. Such practices are used by dictators to wipe out people’s memories of the past. The largest section of the Records Department worked to track down, and collect all
copies of books, newspapers, and other documents “which can be superseded and were due for destruction” (40). Even the written instructions about modifying what was written in the past were destroyed as soon as the corrections were carried out. They never state or imply that “an act of forgery was to be committed: always the reference was to slips, misprints, or misquotations which it was necessary to put right in the interests of accuracy” (40).

The Ministry of Plenty ensures that the masses are conditioned to live in false belief that their standard of living is better than what it was before the Revolution, by making announcements with false data.

Day and night the telescreens bruised your ears with statistics proving that people today had more food, more clothes, better houses, better recreations—that lived longer, worked shorter hours, were bigger, healthier, stronger, happier, better educated, than the people of fifty years ago … The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became truth. (74)

During the fifties, and sixties of the twentieth century, the original leaders of the Revolution were wiped out completely. By 1970 none was left except Big Brother. The rest of the leaders had been exposed as traitors or counter revolutionaries. During the trials they were made to confess their supposed crime. They remind us of the Russian purges conducted by Stalin in order to exterminate his critics.

During the purges after the Moscow Trials, many prominent Communist leaders were stigmatized as traitors, and killed for it. Trotsky was not only condemned as a traitor, the rulers went to the extent of “rewriting history in an endeavour to erase from the records all accounts of the leading role he played in the
1917 revolution and in the defence of the Socialist Republic during its initial stages” (Lamont 86).

In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Symme, Winston’s colleague who works on the eleventh edition of Newspeak dictionary, is intelligent, and understands the real motive behind the reduction of words. His intelligence in sensing the reason for Party activities is the only reason for his disappearance. Suddenly, he is found missing in his work place, and some people commented on it on the first day, and in the next nobody mentioned him. Winston looks at the notice containing the names of the Chess Committee of which Symme was a member. He finds the name list in its usual place, and nothing has been crossed out. But Symme’s name is not found. “Symme had ceased to exist: he had never existed” (NEF 147). The readers are shocked at the indifferent attitude of the people towards a fellow human being. But they can’t be fully blamed for it as they have become puppets in the hands of the puppeteer that is, the Party.

The citizens of Oceania are used to such disappearances. As a result, the sudden absence of a person without valid reason is soon forgotten. In the novel, once Big Brother awarded the order of Conspicuous Merit, Second Class to a person known as Withers, for his work in an organization FFCC. Soon FFCC was dissolved for no obvious reason. Withers and his associates might have fallen out of favour of the Party. However, it was not reported in the Press or on the telescreen. It was unusual for political offenders to be tried publicly, and denounced publicly. Occasionally, traitors and criminals were made to confess their crimes publicly, and afterwards they were executed. It is a show-piece that occurred rarely, once in a couple of years. But, more commonly, “people who had incurred the displeasure of
the Party simply disappeared, and were never heard of again. One never had the smallest clue as to what had happened to them” (45).

The award given to Withers should be rewritten so that the very existence of a human called Withers will never have any proof. Winston had to rewrite the speech of the Big Brother, and submit it to authorities for editing. Winston knew that he would not be the only man working on it. He thought that Tillotson, a man who sat next to him, as well as a few others would all be producing different versions, which would finally be edited, and the best piece would be selected.

Actually, in Russian history such things did take place. Lamont comments that many people in the Western democracies thought the Moscow Trials in 1936-38, when prominent Communist leaders were convicted of treason, were frame ups. Since prominent Communist leaders like Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin and others believed that Stalin had betrayed Socialism both at home and abroad “they felt justified as revolutionaries in adopting any methods whatever to get rid of his regime” (85).

In the novel, Winston was ordered to rewrite the speech of the Big Brother without mentioning FFCC and Withers. He invented a name, Captain Oglivy, who sacrificed his life fighting for the nation. Though he did not exist in real life, Big Brother’s tribute to Oglivy, and some faked photographs would make others believe that he was a real character.

In Nineteen Eighty Four, Winston, once, gets a concrete proof against the Party’s falsification. The last survivors of the Revolution, Jones, Aaronson and Rutherford were arrested probably in the year 1965, and vanished in a year or more. Suddenly, they were brought forth in the usual way, and confessed to intelligence
with the enemy (at that time it was Eurasia), embezzlement of public funds, and murdering various trusted Party members. Finally, they were pardoned, and reinstated in the Party. They appeared to have accepted the Party ideals wholeheartedly. When Winston finds them in Chessnut Tree Café, he shuddered to note that all of them having broken noses, may be the work of the Ministry of Love. A little later, all the three were re-arrested, and made to confess their new crimes along with the old ones, and finally executed.

About five years after this, in 1973, Winston found a fragment of paper along with other documents flopped out of the pneumatic tube on to his desk. It was torn out from *The Times* about ten years earlier. It contained a photograph of the delegates at some Party function in New York. The three executed members were prominent among the delegates. They confessed, at the time of the trial, that they had been at Eurasian plotting against the Party on the given date. Winston understands that the confessions were lies.

The fragment of *The Times*, like a “fossil bone which turns up in the wrong stratum and destroys a geological theory” (NEF 78), is a concrete evidence against the Party. Winston thinks of writing about it but finally drops in the ‘memory hole’ to destroy it. It is ironical that ‘memory hole’, as the name suggests, is used to destroy memory.

“The past is not only changed, but changed continuously” (79). Winston knows how it is done but does not know why it is done. Having a different opinion about what is told about the past may be a sign of madness. Winston, however, is not worried about being a lunatic as what is believed as true is proved to be false by
science. He is horrified that he may also be wrong because people are persuaded to
deny any evidence of the sense:

In the end the Party would announce that two and two made five, and you
would have to believe it. It was inevitable that they should make their claim
sooner or later: the logic of their position demanded it. Not merely the
validity of experience, but the very existence of external reality, was tacitly
denied by their philosophy … they would kill you for thinking otherwise …
(NEF 80)

Likewise, the role of Winston, and Julia gets expunged from the records of
government in the novel, *Nineteen Eighty Four*. This can be read as an allegory of
Stalin’s efforts to obliterate the contribution of Trotsky in the Russian Revolution.
The process of rewriting history to suit the national policies is apparent in the
Russian encyclopedias. Crick remarks that Trotsky was portrayed as a hero in the
first edition of the Soviet Encyclopedia, but presented as a traitor in the second
edition, and a non-person in the third. History is something created by rulers. In the
words of Crick, “false history can only make the past irretrievable” (80).

Orwell, thus, asserts that the need for rewriting history is to encourage
propaganda. Crick quotes Orwell’s words in a *Tribune* column on war propaganda
where he has expressed his concern for the loss of objective truth:

In the last analysis our only claim to victory is that if we win the war we shall
tell less lies about it than our adversaries. The really frightening thing about
totalitarianism is not it commits “atrocities” but that it attacks the concept of
objective truth: it claims to control the past as well as the future. In spite of
all the lying and self-righteousness that war encourages, I do not always think
that it can honestly be said that the habit of mind is growing in Britain …

(79)

These words of Orwell clearly indicate that *Nineteen Eighty Four* is not about any futuristic society where there will be a possibility of rewriting history. It has been taking place throughout the world, especially in Russia and Britain. The rulers in power want to create an impression they are always right, and can never lose any war. By rewriting history, they achieve their purpose. Thus, Orwell satirises this tendency of the rulers in *Nineteen Eighty Four*.

4.8. Education

Education is another dimension of propaganda. Education should aim at enlightening human beings by making them conscious of their role in society. It is to make the individual aware of the past, thereby preventing them to repeat its errors. But in *Nineteen Eighty Four*, education is used as a means by which the Party can propagate its principles. It enables the party to propagate its ideology effectively so that the masses are left with no other option but accepting what is propagated. In the real world, the need for having closer control of ideology was felt during the communist party rule in Russia. Education was used in Soviet Russia to indoctrinate the principles of the Party. Oxley traces the role of education in Russia to condition the masses as follows:

The Soviet system can not tolerate the education of youth in a spirit of indifference to Soviet politics, to ideology, with a couldn’t-care-less attitude. The strength of Soviet literature, consists in the fact that it is a literature in which there are not and can not be interests other than
... the interests of the state. The task of Soviet literature is to help the state to educate youth correctly, to answer its requirements ... (41)

Black in a recent article in *The Guardian* illustrates the same trend followed by modern governments. Preparing text books assumes greater importance nowadays as the children understand history only from what they study. Any attempt to change history will lead to ‘conditioning’ similar to what we find in the futuristic societies of Orwell and Huxley. The order of the Israel’s Educational Ministry to remove the word *nakba* – Arabic for ‘catastrophe’ – in the text book for young Arab children is considered to be a set back in historical narrative by Arab people. Palestinians have always maintained that the 1948 refugees were the victims of Israel’s ‘ethnic cleansing’ while Israelis are of the opinion that it makes the creation of their country, and the use of the word *nakba* while referring the incident is the tantamount to spreading propaganda against Israel. History should be written with all its glory and gore, and any effort to rewrite it to make it feasible for the present rulers will result in biased opinions (*The Hindu* 9).

In totalitarian states, the governments ensure that all evidences contrary to the ideology of the Party are destroyed, and the records are falsified / forged. They also ensure that the falsification does not get exposed.

4.9. Language as an Instrument of Propaganda

Language is used effectively to suit the purposes of the people in power. Language, rhyme, and metre are used by dictators to condition their citizens. The creative potential of language is used effectively by people in power in Orwell’s futuristic world to make people accept the designs of the government. In *Nineteen
Eighty Four a few cubicles away from that of Winston’s we find a man named Ampleforth juggling with rhymes, and metres to produce gargle versions of poems which “had become ideologically offensive, but which for one reason or another are to be retained in the anthologies” (42).

A new language called ‘Newspeak’ was created by the government in Nineteen Eighty Four to minimise the use of words, and thereby limiting the process of thought itself. Newspeak, the official language of Oceania, was created with the intention of meeting the ideological needs of ‘Ingsoc’ or English Socialism. Though, in the year 1984, it was not used by all as the sole means of communication, in speech or in writing, newspaper articles were written in it with the help of a specialist. Newspeak is to provide mediums of expression, and also “to make all other modes of thought impossible” (299). This is a significant medium of thought control.

Newspeak is created by the Party in order to annihilate the past. Jain traces Machiavellian motif in the creation of the new language. “It is aimed at destroying the polysemic nature of language, every concept being expressed by exactly one word … It is a Machiavellian move towards the attainment and perfection of power” (49).

Symme, Winston’s colleague, explains that in the eleventh edition of Newspeak Dictionary, instead of inventing new words they are destroying them “cutting the language down to the bone” (48). In Oldspeak, the plain language used in Oceania, the opposite of ‘good’ is ‘bad.’ Words like ‘excellent’ and ‘splendid’ are the stronger versions of ‘good.’ Instead, in Newspeak, ‘ungood’ for ‘bad’, ‘plusgood’ for ‘excellent’, and ‘doubleplusgood’ for ‘splendid’ are used. “In the end, the whole
notion of goodness and badness will be covered by only six words – in reality, only one word” (51). Words are reduced to the minimum in the futuristic world of Orwell:

Newspeak is the only language in the world whose vocabulary gets smaller every year? ... Don’t you see the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it … Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller … Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect. Newspeak is Ingsoc and Ingsoc is Newspeak. (52)

According to Stockwell, Orwell’s totalitarian state is engaged in establishing, and promoting a language called ‘Newspeak’, “an extrapolated caricature of what Orwell saw as the linguistic degeneracy of his own 1940s. In the novel, the Party aims to reduce the total number of words to reduce the availability of meaning” (54-55).

The necessity of taking control of language to maintain power is emphasized by Taylor. He affirms that a totalitarian government does these things to sustain something integral to itself, to wield power for its own sake. As it calls into question the historical justification on which this power is based, objective knowledge must be destroyed, and the means to destroy it lie in language. (404)

Berger too affirms that language and self-discovery are interconnected:

Through the progressive verbicide of “Newspeak”, the Party seeks to narrow the precision and range of thought … One can not help but grasp Orwell’s
unspoken conviction that with the death of a word there also dies a fragment of self-discovery and potential for experience. (91)

4.10. Conditioning the Non-Conformists

People like Winston, and Julia who are against the Party ideals are imprisoned and conditioned to accept them, before being sent back to the world, because the Party believes that rebels should not be allowed to organize. By suppressing the spirit of individuality, the Party eliminates any possible threat to its power. The only difference between the past, and present governments is that in the past it could not keep their citizens under surveillance as effectively as the present government does:

The invention of print, however, made it easier to manipulate public opinion, and the film and the radio carried the process further. With the development of television, and the technical advance which made it possible to receive and transmit simultaneously on the same instrument, private life came to an end … and in the sound of official propaganda … all other channels of communication closed. The possibility of enforcing not only complete obedience to the will of the State, but complete uniformity of opinion on all subjects, now existed for the first time. (NEF 205)

Goldstein asserts that there are four ways in which a ruling group can fall from power. Either it is defeated from outside, or it governs inefficiently that the masses revolt against it, and overthrow it. Or it allows a strong discontented Middle group to develop or it loses its own self-confidence and will to govern. These factors, however, do not operate in isolation. “A ruling class which could guard
against all of them would remain in power permanently. Ultimately the determining factor is the mental attitude of the ruling class itself” (207).

By influencing the consciousness of the masses, the government controls them to scrupulously obey it. Wealth and privileges can easily be defended when they are possessed jointly. Collectively the Party owns everything by the abolition of private property. But individually the members of the Party do not own anything. It also disposes of the products as it thinks.

Further, the people are not allowed to have any opinion on their own. An individual is never alone as he is constantly watched by Thought Police.

His friendships, his relaxations, his behaviour towards wife and children, the expression of his face when he is alone, the words he mutters in sleep, even the characteristic movements of his body, are all jealously scrutinized. (210)

It is not enough for a Party member to have the right opinion. He should also have the right instinct. He should not have any private emotions, and should always be enthusiastic about the Party activities. By using the right language, Newspeak, to suit the ideals of the Party, and by killing the rebellious instinct of the Party members with the help of programmes like Two Minutes Hate, the Party controls even the instinct of its members. Hence the Party members fail to grasp even simple analogies if they are against ‘Ingsoc’ and are “bored and repelled by any thought which is capable of leading in a heretical direction” (212). It is called ‘crimestop.’

To ensure that the Party is infallible, the records have to be corrected and often falsified. It is called ‘blackwhite’. If it is applied to a Party member, it means “a loyal willingness to say that black is white when Party discipline demands this”
(213). It also means that one should forget that “one has ever believed the contrary”
(213). This demands a continuous alteration of the past which is known in
Newspeak as ‘doublethink’:

Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory opinions in one’s
mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them. The Party intellectual
knows in which direction his memories must be altered; he therefore knows
that he is playing tricks with reality; but by the exercise of doublethink he
also satisfies himself that reality is not violated … Doublethink lies at the
very heart of Ingsoc, since the essential act of the Party is to use conscious
deception while retaining the firmness of purpose that goes with complete
honesty … Ultimately it is by means of doublethink that the Party has been
able … to arrest the course of history. (214)

The Party uses Hate meetings to channelise the anger of the citizens against
the common enemy Goldstein. Winston has mixed feelings about the Hate meetings.
At one moment, his hatred is turned against Big Brother, the Party and the Thought
Police. And the very next moment, he adores Big Brother as an invincible and
fearless protector. But having the very idea that, Big Brother is a dictator, is
considered “thoughtcrime.” Nobody wants to commit a “thoughtcrime” which is
punishable by death. Winston wishes for privacy, love and freedom but can not
disclose it because of fear of death.

After instinctively writing in his diary “DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER”
(18). Winston shudders. Whether he continues to write the diary, or stops writing in
it, hereafter does not make a difference. Thought Police will arrest him for what he
has done. “Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed for ever … sooner
or later they were bound to get you” (19). Moreover, the arrests invariably take place at night. “People simply disappeared, always during the night. Your name was removed from the registers, every record of everything you had ever done was wiped out, your one-time existence was denied and then forgotten” (19).

There is no room for individualism in Oceania. The Party’s principles become the principles of the individuals. When Winston takes out a twenty-five cent piece out of his pocket he finds the slogans of the Party “War is Peace; Freedom is Slavery; Ignorance is Strength” (27) being inscribed, and on the other face of the coin he finds the face of Big Brother. The Party monitors the citizens for signs of indifference to its principles:

Even from the coin the eyes pursued you. On coins, on stamps, on the covers of books, on banners, on posters, and on the wrappings of a cigarette packet—everywhere. Always the eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, working or eating, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or in bed—no escape. Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimeters inside your skull. (27)

The non-conformists are treated severely by the Party to make them accept the principles of the Party. Winston is tortured and humiliated to get his power of reasoning destroyed. Questioning goes on for hours together till he breaks down. Finally “he became simply a mouth that uttered, a hand that signed, whatever was demanded of him” (242). He confesses that he is a spy of the Eastasian government from 1968, an admirer of Capitalism, murderer of many Party members, and has been in contact with Goldstein.
By inflicting pain, the non-conformists are forced to accept the supremacy of the Party. O’Brien tells him that he has the power to inflict pain on him whenever he lies or falls below his usual level of intelligence. He also affirms that Winston is mentally deranged, and he is suffering from a defective memory. Winston remembers that just one week ago, the Party was at war with Eurasia, and O’Brien says that it is a hallucination. He even showed a piece of photograph of Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford, and put it in the memory hole saying that it never existed. Winston knows that it is ‘doublethink’.

The four Ministries of Oceania do the contrary to what their names suggest. These contradictions are not accidental, nor do they result from ordinary hypocrisy; they are deliberate exercises in ‘doublethink’. “For it is only by reconciling contradictions that power can be retained indefinitely” (216). The Party expects its members to ‘doublethink’ for its survival. It wants the members to be ‘sane’. Even it aims at curing the prisoners of their ‘mental deficiency’ instead of punishing them. They have to accept the principles of the Party wholeheartedly. They should know that reality is not external. It exists in their minds which are controlled by the Party. For that matter, even history is not concrete as it exists only in records and the memories of the people. By fixing their memories, and falsifying the records history can be rewritten.

Two and two can make four in reality. But if the Party wants it can be three or five or anything else, and the people have to be tuned to accept it. Hence the Party does not aim at merely destroying enemies, but actually changing them. During the Middle Ages when there was inquisition, a heretic may be burnt alive, though in later years he may be raised to the level of a martyr for his conviction.
“Men were dying because they would not abandon their true beliefs. Naturally all the glory belonged to the victim and all the shame to the Inquisitor who burned him” (230). In the twentieth century, totalitarians like the German Nazis and Russian Communists were stricter in not allowing opposition to grow. They believed that they have learnt it from the mistakes of the past. Instead of making their enemies martyrs, they exposed them to public trials, and they deliberately set themselves to destroy their dignity. Since the confessions made were not true they became heroes. But the Party in *Nineteen Eighty Four* makes sure that the confessions are made true. It also ensures that the posterity will never hear of those condemned prisoners. “You will be annihilated in the past as well as in the future” (254).

Goldstein comments that the Party rejects the original principles of Socialism, and does it so in the name of Socialism. This is a direct attack on Socialists in the West as well as in Russia.

It preaches a contempt for the working class unexampled for centuries past, and it dresses its members in a uniform which was at one time peculiar to manual workers and was adopted for that reason. It systematically undermines the solidarity of the family, and it calls its leader by a name which is a direct appeal to the sentiment of family loyalty … (216)

Without any trial, the prisoners may be wiped out. However, the Party makes sure that when they finally surrender to it, it is done with their freewill. It converts the people who resist it, and makes them accept it before killing them. “Even the victim of the Russian purges could carry rebellion locked up in his skull as he walked down the passage waiting for the bullet. But we make the brain perfect
before we blow it out” (255). The party ensures that prisoners will never ever be able to have human feelings like love, friendship or joy of living.

Lamont quotes the words of Andrei Y. Vishinsky to highlight the political situation in Russia under the regime of Stalin. In his book *The Law of the Soviet State*, Andrei Y. Vishinsky, former Procurator-General (Attorney General of the U.S.S.R.) points out the loss of freedom of speech in Soviet Union. “In our state, naturally there is and can be no place for freedom of speech, press and so on for the foes of socialism” (82).

Unlike the political purges and trials in Russia, the trials in *Nineteen Eighty Four* do not merely aim at punishing the non-conformists. Rather, they change the mindset of the non-conformists by coercive means, and make them accept the supremacy of the Party. After the humiliation he suffered at the hands of O’Brien, Winston feels much better when he is given a pillow and a mattress on the plank bed, allowed to take bath, and even given a pack of cigarettes. He gets happier dreams and seems to have lost intellectual powers, and desire for conversation or distraction. He becomes completely satisfied with what he is. He, thus, understands that he can not fight against the Party any longer. “He had grasped the frivolity, the shallowness of his attempt to set himself up against the power of the Party” (NEF 276).

Winston’s change of mindset is conspicuous when he writes in the slate given to him

“FREEDOM IS SLAVERY …
TWO AND TWO MAKE FIVE …
GOD IS POWER.” (277)

Finally, he accepts the supremacy of the Party, and the futility of individual’s resistance against it. “It was like swimming against a current that swept you backwards however hard you struggled, and then suddenly deciding to turn round and go with the current instead of opposing it” (NEF 277).

Winston has learnt that the mind should develop a “blind spot” (278) whenever a dangerous thought against the ideals of the Party presented itself. More importantly, the process should be automatic, or else, they will be caught by the Thought Police. He has learnt the true meaning of ‘crimestop’. But in his deep heart, he still loves Julia, and O’Brien knows it. So, O’Brien remarks that Winston is intellectually improving but emotionally he fails to make progress. As a result, he has to be sent to room no.101.

Room no.101 contains the worst thing in the world. But it varies from one individual to other. Rats are the worst things for Winston. At times humans can withstand pain even to the point of death. But for all, there will be something non-endurable. They are the only things capable of destroying one’s instincts. So, O’Brien shows a cage with rats. After releasing the first lever of the cage he threatens Winston that the rats would leap on to his face. Winston closes his eyes in fear, and on hearing the sound of the release of a lever he shouts “Do it to Julia! ... Not me! I don’t care what you do to her. Tear her face off, strip her to the bones …” (286). Actually O’Brien has closed the first lever instead of opening the second lever. He has succeeded in breaking the emotional bondage between Winston and Julia by showing Winston his worst fear.

At the end of the novel we find Winston Smith spending most of his time in the corner table of The Chessnut Tree, a restaurant, drinking jin. The waiters fill his
glass with jin whenever it is empty, and others are indifferent to him. His job in the
Ministry of Truth is also made very simple that at times he just goes there just twice
a week, and offered a handsome salary. He understands that he no longer feels the
same emotions which he used to have before he was taken to the Ministry of Love.
It seems he is purged of these emotions. The Party is successful in getting into
human minds, and both Winston and Julia betrayed each other when they had to
confront their worst fears. The song trickled from the telescreen towards the end of
the novel is also ironic:

“Under the spreading chestnut tree
I sold you and you sold me—” (293)
Crick (1984) interprets it as the rearrangement of the popular song
“Under the spreading chestnut tree
I loved you and you loved me,
Oh how happy we shall be
Under the spreading chestnut tree!” (449)
Finally, Winston starts loving Big Brother.

The beliefs, attitudes and values of a society form an ideological base on
which the superstructure that is, law, religion and politics are used to support it.
Here, the Party plays a vital role in shaping the superstructure to suit its ideology. It
is effectively done with the help of fear of death or cruel punishment. People with
contrary opinion, like Julia and Winston, have to follow the masses as there is no
chance for them to express their opinion. Human values are no longer significant in
_Nineteen Eighty Four_. Marxist criticism interprets literature as a reflection of reality
with all its contradictions. In _Nineteen Eighty Four_, Orwell ridicules both the
Capitalist and Communist governments for failing to ensure real equality which they had promised.

4.11. Personal Life and Popular Culture

In Nineteen Eighty Four, the citizens of Oceania are not allowed to have personal life though they have got families. Personal life and values such as faith, love and friendship are held under restraint through the surveillance of the Party. In Nineteen Eighty Four, family is no longer a place of comfort. Love and affection, the values that hold the family together, have given way to suspicion and fear. Even children are trained to monitor the movements of their parents and neighbours. Clubs such as Spies and Youth Leagues are meant for children and young people who are “systematically turned into ungovernable savages” (24). Yet, this type of training did not produce in them any tendency to rebel against the discipline of the party.

… they adored the Party and everything connected with it. The songs, the processions, the banners, the hiking, the drilling with dummy rifles, the yelling of slogans, the worship of Big Brother – it was all the sort of glorious game to them. All the ferocity was turned outwards, against the enemies of the State, against foreigners, traitors, saboteurs, thought-criminals. (24)

In Russia, during and after the Revolution, people were not sure whether a person was their friend or foe, though they used to call the other ‘comrade’. Similarly, in Nineteen Eighty Four real camaraderie is missing. The children of Mrs. Pearson, Winston’s neighbour, behave violently as they could not go to the hanging of Eurasian prisoners. It is also normal in this society for people over thirty to be
frightened of their own children who are trained to look for the slightest opportunity to find ‘unorthodoxy’ of their parents and neighbours. Nobody can be sure whether a person is a friend or an enemy. That’s why Winston is skeptical of O’Brien.

Winston dreams of his parents who were killed during the purges of the fifties. But tragedy does not find a place in the nightmarish world of *Nineteen Eighty Four*:

Tragedy … belonged to the ancient time, to a time when there was still privacy, love, and friendship, and when the members of a family stood by one another without needing to know the reason … Such things … could not happen today. Today there were fear, hatred, and pain, but no dignity of emotion, no deep or complex sorrows. (30)

But Winston is not altogether pessimistic. He dreams of the ‘Golden Country’ where a girl with dark hair “tore off her clothes and flung them disdainfully aside. Her body was white and smooth … but it aroused no desire in him” (30). Rather, Winston admires the gesture with which she has thrown her clothes away. For him, it is annihilation of the total culture created by Big Brother, the Party, and Thought Police.

Winston’s mind is haunted by the memories of his poor mother and his little sister after his father was vapourized one day. She seemed to have expected it, and did all sorts of jobs mechanically to feed the children. He even feels guilty of sharing their portion of food for his sake. One day the mother and the little sister also disappeared. Either they would have died, or would have been sent to labour camps (Reclamation Centres). He even told Julia about his dream where a woman shields her little boy with her body to protect him from enemy’s bullets though it will
be of no use. But Julia never cared for it. Mere love and affection can not create any change in the present scenario. Still they give solace. Marxist and Neo-Marxist literary criticism acknowledges family as a superstructure that influences, and also gets influenced by the economic base. By establishing control over family relationships to their advantage, the rulers ensure that the existing political set up is sustained:

The terrible thing that the Party had done was to persuade you that mere impulses, mere feelings, were of no account, while at the same time robbing you of all power over the material world. When once you were in the grip of the Party, what you felt or did not feel, what you did or refrained from doing, made literally no difference. Whatever happened you vanished, and neither you nor your actions were ever heard of again. You were lifted clean out of the stream of history. (164-165)

But people of only two generations ago had private loyalties, and did not alter history. “What mattered were individual relationships, and a completely helpless gesture, an embrace, a tear, a word spoken to a dying man, could have value in itself” (165). The Proles still live in this condition. “The Proles stayed human. They had not become hardened inside. They had held on to the primitive emotions which he (Winston) himself had to relearn by conscious effort” (165). Winston and Julia know that they will be caught one day, and will be made to confess their crime. What matters most for him is not confession but turning him to stop loving her. But Julia assures him that the party can’t get inside a human being. “If you can feel that staying human is worthwhile, even when it can’t have any result whatever, you’ve beaten them” (166). Despite its cleverness, the Party does not know the secret of
finding out what the other person thinks. They could not alter your feelings. But, human values keep asserting through the characters, consciously and unconsciously, as in the pursuit of love by Julia and Winston.

The popular culture of Oceania does not permit the citizens to be guided by their senses. The root of the ideology of the Party will be shaken once people are allowed to go by their senses. So Outer Party members are not allowed to have personal feelings and are “never alone except in bed” (82). But even when they are in bed they are forced to abide by the Party rules.

The superstructure helps to maintain the economic base that is, the status quo. Family, love, and even sex – some elements of the superstructure-- are banned, or at least distorted, in this imaginary world. The people, however, need to give vent to their feelings, or else it may result in rebellion. So, they are unofficially allowed to satisfy their physical pleasure, but only with distortion. The Althusserian concept of ‘ideology’ as a force used by the rulers to exercise their power is exemplified in the novel by the manipulation of human emotions by the Party for making ‘dutiful’ citizens who embrace its ideals without questioning it.

In Nineteen Eighty Four, sex is used as a tool for maintaining social order. The Party has double standards in dealing with sex. Winston’s wife Katherine, an ideal Party worker, hates sex while requiring it only for producing a child. She even has used two names for sex – ‘making baby’ and “our duty to the Party” (67). The members are heavily punished for having illegal affair with other Party members in order to have an outlet for releasing their emotion and passion. But if the Party members go to Proles women to satisfy their physical need, they can escape with minimum punishment. The Party, tacitly, encourages prostitution as an “outlet for
instincts which could not altogether be suppressed. Mere debauchery did not matter very much, so long as it was furtive and joyless and only involved women of a submerged and despised class” (65).

Quite contrary to the Party workers the disregarded Proles are permitted to have family, children, and engage in petty quarrels that keep them engaged forever. They are also allowed to play Lottery which is “their delight, their folly, their anodyne, their intellectual stimulant” (85). Berger comments that the Party attempts to distort sexual instinct, and convert it into mass hysteria:

Through insufficient and disagreeable food, decrepit houses, drab clothing, the paucity of even petty luxuries—cigarettes, chocolate—the Party starves the body so that, sensation-poor, it forgets itself. Realizing that the erotic generates self-concern and personal loyalties, the Party attempts to kill or dirty the sex instinct and divert choked-off desire into hysterical enthusiasm for its policies. (90-91)

Julia was picked to work in Pornsec, a subsection of the Fiction Department that produces cheap pornography for distribution among the Proles. The Proles used to buy it furtively under the impression that they are buying something illegal. The Party does it for the purpose of making Proles immersed in trivial activities forgetting the greater ones. Except the heads of the departments of Pornsec, all the remaining workers are young unmarried women. “The theory was that, men whose sex instincts were less controllable than those of women, were in greater danger of being corrupted by the filth they handled” (131).

In the novel, Winston’s married life is a failure. He and his wife Katherine are unable to build a warm relationship. Her attitudes and priorities are different
from his. She is an ideal Party worker blindly accepting the Party domination resulting in rigidity and insensitivity. “She had not a thought in her head that was not a slogan, and there was no imbecility, absolutely none, that she was not capable of swallowing if the Party handed it out to her” (66).

As a result, Winston establishes an illegal relationship with Julia in order to compensate for the loss of warmth of love and affection in his married life. Julia is able to understand the ‘sexual Puritanism’ of the Party better than Winston. It is not that a mere sexual instinct can create its own world against the Party ideals. Rather, “sexual privatization induced hysteria, which is desirable because it could be transformed into war-fever or leader worship” (133).

Preventing men and women to form loyalties is not the only reason for the Party to condemn promiscuity. Rather, it aims at removing the pleasures in the sexual act. The Party members have to get the permission of the Party for marriage and the people who show physical attraction towards one another are denied permission. Marriage is required only to beget a child. “Sexual intercourse was to be looked on as slightly disgusting minor operation, like having an enema” (65). All children were to be begotten by artificial insemination. “By careful conditioning, by games and cold water, by the rubbish that was dinned into them at school and in the Spies and the Youth League, by lectures, parades, songs, slogans, and martial music, the natural feeling had been driven out of them” (68).

When you make love you’re using up energy; and afterwards you feel happy and don’t give a damn for anything. They can’t bear you to feel like that. They want you to be bursting with energy all the time. All this marching up and down and cheering and waving flags is simply sex gone sour. If you’re
happy inside yourself, why should you get excited about Big Brother and the
Three-Year Plans and the Two Minutes Hate and all the rest of their bloody
rot?. (133)

Interestingly, Proles are allowed to indulge in sex, and also have personal
loyalty towards their families. Since they are deprived of decent education, and are
made to spend their time in insignificant activities like gambling, they can not think
of joining hands for a greater cause. As a result, the possibility of revolution by
Proles is cleverly averted by the Party. According to Taylor this novel is not
altogether without hope:

The proles, in which ‘hope’ resides, are a debased and powerless lower order,
but it is in their innate humanity, the sense of genuinely popular culture
running on its silent defiance of the lofted torches and the marching feet, that
redeem the nightmare landscape on which Oceania, the world of Big Brother,
Thought Police and the Ministry of Love, is fashioned. (402)

While the Party members live in constant fear, the Proles, despite their poor
economic environment, are able to enjoy their life. The Prole family Winston meets
in the train highlights the contrast between the family of the Party members and the
family of Proles. The Prole family in the train contains members of all ages going
out to spend an afternoon with their relatives, a thing that can not even be imagined
by a Party member.

But the party can not altogether abolish family. Here, we find the parents are
fond of their children. But the children are systematically trained to spy on them.
“The family had become in effect an extension of Thought Police. It was a device by
means of which everyone could be surrounded night and day by informers who knew him intimately” (133).

Tom Parson, Winston’s neighbour, who works in the Ministry of Truth, subscribes to the Party doctrines and was a member in the Spies and Youth League. He is a leading figure in the Sports Committee and other committees engaged in organizing community hikes, demonstrations, savings campaigns and voluntary activities. However, once, he committed the mistake of Thought Crime. In his sleep, he had muttered ‘Down with Big Brother’ which was noted by his young daughter who, in turn, informed it to the patrols. But Parson, like a coward, feels happy as he has not done any substantial thing against the Party. So he hoped that his life as an active Party worker will help him to get his punishment minimised. He says that he will say thank the Party for stopping him from indulging in thoughtcrime before it is too late. It indicates how the Party does not tolerate not only the actions against its rules but even the very instinct against it. Like the children of Oceania youngsters in Soviet Russia were also used to join on their own families:

The official hero of all Communists was Pavlik Morozov, a fourteen year old ‘Pioneer’ who had turned in his family to the Soviet police for the offence of hoarding grain. The villagers had slain him as a result; statues of the martyr-child were common place in the USSR and it was the obligation of a good member to emulate his example. (Hitchins 113)

Orwell’s disgust for such betrayals is effectively portrayed by the family of Parson. He suggests that the destruction of family system will lead to the destruction of mutual trust. He affirms that “…any regime that destroys the primary institution, in which we first learn mutual trust and mutual aid, and how to behave towards
others, destroys any possibility that morality rather than force will govern social relations.” (Crick 26)

In the novel, brute force is used by the party to make its citizens submissive. All the prisoners are afraid of going to room no.101 in the Ministry of Love. A man, as lean as a skeleton, was taken from the room much to the horror of other prisoners. They know that he is starving to death. One of the prisoners tries to give him some pieces of bread he has got though they are monitored through the telescreens. But immediately the guards enter and whack him down. The lean man pleads that it is not his fault. Finally, he has to throw the pieces of bread. His hunger has made him to go to any extent. “I’ve got a wife and three children. The biggest of them isn’t six years old. You can take the whole lot of them and cut their throats in front of my eyes, and I’ll stand by and watch it. But not Room 101!” (236). In that wretched place one can not feel anything except pain and the foreknowledge of pain.

All totalitarian countries view family relationship as a menace that can shake the very foundation on which it is built. Love and affection can make a person do anything to protect him and his beloved ones. So, these possible threats to the existence of the totalitarian set up are avoided in Nineteen Eighty Four. Morgan remarks that “we can not fully understand the institution of the family or relationships within it, without taking into account factors ‘outside’ the family such as work, ideology, politics and so on.” (74) The knowledge of the role of the Party in making the citizens of Oceania accept their role in the society without dissent, helps the readers to understand that the distortion of family values has political significance.
4.12. Conclusion

_Nineteen Eighty Four_ sums up Orwell’s political ideas and his disgust towards totalitarian government. The modern readers can appreciate how his warning is deep rooted in his humanism, especially his compassion for the downtrodden people.

Western readers tend to interpret this novel through anti-communist prism. But Mynick observes that this novel is not an endorsement of the West. It highlights only

an unaccountable elite rules in its own interests and maintains power by taking state-run mind control to its logical extreme…the book considers the psycho-social machinery of unaccountable state power in general—regardless whether it originates from a ruling bureaucracy or from finance capital.

In _Nineteen Eighty Four_ Orwell creates a government that controls the masses by fear, torture, and police espionage. Orwell clarifies that his novel is not an attack on Socialism. Rather it is a warning against any centralized economy. _New York Daily News_ in its editorial, pointed out that this novel was an attack on the British Labour Government. So Orwell had to make a statement as follows:

My recent novel is not intended as an attack on socialism or on the British Labour Party (of which I am a supporter) but as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralized economy is liable and which have already been partly realized in Communism and Fascism…The scene of the book is laid in Britain in order to emphasize that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else and that totalitarianism, _if not fought against_, could triumph anywhere. (Hitchins 61)
This novel reflects the political scenario of the early twentieth century. The society presented in the novel is no more or no less than a Nazi Concentration Camp. It was specifically organized to destroy its own citizens. Those who can live in this society without rebellious instinct are already dead as human beings and are no threat to the government. According to New, the people who are left are the members of the Outer Party, caught between Power and Paralysis, between political psychosis and moral catatonia. They are the only human beings left in Oceania, purposely created by the State so that they can be murdered at the most efficient time and in the most efficient manner. (105)

A Marxist/Neo-Marxist reading of the novel indicates that it is well grounded in the socio-cultural matrix of the middling years of the two World Wars. At that time, the governments aimed at restricting individual freedom, and insisted on conformity to its policies through twin instruments of power—coercion and discursion. They also make the media subserve their ideology in order to perpetuate hegemony. The novel is relevant in the context of reception too. Young endorses that the novel has got its contemporary relevance:

… *1984* does have lessons beyond the totalitarian experience. Take the book's definition of “doublethink,” the ideal mental state of the citizen of Orwell's dystopia … It is not just governments-democratic or not-that engage in a less extreme version of such mental gymnastics. It's activists of all stripes; talk show hosts and pundits across the political spectrum; and, finally, ordinary people. The same is true of “newspeak,” a terminology invented to shade the real meaning of certain beliefs or acts and make them more appealing … Looking at much of our political discourse today, from right-
wing talk radio to left-wing blogs, it’s hard not to think of such rituals as “Two-Minute Hate” and “Hate Week.” On too many political websites, every week is Hate Week—whether the object of hate is liberals, Muslims, neocons, or Christian bigots. Partisan propagandists and professional hate-mongers bear a large share of the blame, but so do “regular” people who need little encouragement to demonize political opponents.

In our own contemporary society too the free will of an individual is restricted to make him amenable to the policies of the government. Any criticism against the policies of the government is not tolerated by the people in power. For example, the American President, Barrack Obama, during his visit to China intended to talk about censorship in an interaction with college students of Shangai. But this event was not broadcast on public television. In addition, it was found out, later, that the authorities had filled the auditorium with members of the ruling Communist Party’s Youth Committees, to ensure that no politically sensitive questions are raised. The U.S. Ambassador to China, Jon Hunstman, told Bloomberg News in an interview that the “U.S. was not altogether pleased with the restriction.” (Krishnan 18)

Fernandes considers this novel a warning against totalitarian tendencies in society where all human values of liberty and fraternity perish. The Party aims at perpetuating its power by means of eradicating the possibility of independent thought. “The idea of torturing the opponents was … to assert power and to serve as a warning to others” (80).

Williams remarks that Orwell, in Nineteen Eighty Four, is, actually, parodying the contemporary political situations in Russia and England. Kermode
ed. quotes Williams to highlight the fact that Inssoc is English Socialism. “Orwell
took his model from the controlled and military society from Soviet Communism,
even including detailed elements of its past such as the conflict between Stalin and
Trotsky (Big Brother and Goldstein). The ideology of Airstrip One is Ingsoc—
English Socialism” (76). Orwell exaggerates these facts to heighten the effect.
There are elements in its life which remind us of some of the evils of State control,
but they are exaggerated to provoke derisive laughter. It is in this sense that the
novel is a parody representing Orwell’s disgust of a totalitarian regime. It aims at
promoting awareness among readers of the novel that they have to be vigilant, if
their liberties are not to be overridden. As Beaugrand said, the promised equality is
always an aspect of theory, not practice.