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## THE CORRUPT ABSOLUTE POWER OF BIG BROTHER: A CRITICAL READING OF ORWELL'S NINETEEN-EIGHTY FOUR

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### Abstract

This study aims to determine the interconnection of absolute power and corruption, and to confirm the relationship of power and ideology in George Orwell's dystopian political novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This study argues the way the totalitarian political regime of Big Brother, misuses power and imposes its ideologies to exploit, deform, and overpower the society and reshape its classes, identity and culture, which ultimately results in the catastrophe of corruption and creates dystopian society inside the novel. This qualitative study adopts thematic analysis to investigate the concepts of power, corruption, and ideology in the narrative text. Besides, it conducts textual analysis of the selected data by employing Marxist Criticism and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as analytical tools. The findings of this study indicate that absolute power practices are interconnected with corruption in the novel, and those who are in power impose their ideology upon the society to retain power through manipulating in language and discourse to reformulate awareness and thinking of the society. It is hoped that the current study will provide better understanding of the interconnection of absolute power and corruption as a missing feature in literature on this novel. This study contributes to literature on Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in particular and the field of the political English novels in general. It will extend the base of the researchers' knowledge in this area.

**Keywords:** Absolute power and totalitarianism, Class, Corruption, Dystopia, George Orwell and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Ideology.

### Introduction

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the narratives encoding human sufferings and aspirations for better conditions have been highly circulated among the readers. In the period of Modernism of English literature the value of the writing is based on the assumption that works of arts and literature must be used as weapons against the corrupt systems. To this

end, the 'dystopian literature' has been materialized as a new narrative genre that modern novelists use to unmask the dark side of human lives caused by the evil powers represented by totalitarian regimes. The modern novel deals with the important events that have affected the world and literature (Nouasri, 2015). As explained by Suci (2013), dystopia has connected its roots with disaster in the thought of

the twentieth century. The dystopian novel could fundamentally detect the totalitarian regimes that appeared during the evolution of Nazism, Fascism, and Communism. Arendt (1951), cited in Backes (2007), describes the totalitarian regime as a political regime who controls people and every aspect of their lives. Political themes in dystopian societies and totalitarian states have been the focus of so many literary works, especially the modernist English novel. The novels have reacted to the political situation development and threats brought up by the evolution of new political establishments. These novels were directed by their writers to the readers for bearing in their mind the importance of warning people about the danger of such totalitarian states. Among the most distinctive works written on these themes is George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This novel depicts atrocities that have been committed by Big Brother regime against its subjects, where the inhuman political ideologies have been exercised by this totalitarian regime, which cause physical, mental and psychological torment of the individuals and the society, in order to retain power. Absolute power represented by totalitarian regimes and dictatorships, has occupied large areas of literary and political studies because of the importance and seriousness of this theme and its impacts on the lives of peoples. In addition, corruption due to political absolute power and abuse of power is one of the most prominent phenomena in our real world. The great negative effects of corruption extend to touch the loaf, dignity and human values. These political themes have been encoded in the political novels, especially the novel under the study.

This study investigates the concepts of absolute power, corruption, and ideology as encoded in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to determine the relationship between absolute power and corruption in this narrative text. There have been many studies conducted about the theme of absolute power in this novel. Thus, the current study draws on previous research to highlight the gap regarding the link between absolute power and corruption. Previous studies, for example; Sebastian (2001), Pelissoli (2008), Navratil (2008), Suci (2013), Loverinovic (2014), Tereza (2016), and

Dikiciler (2017) focused on drawing the form of absolute power and its authoritarian methods and negative effects on society through the interrogation of the narrative text of this novel. However, the relationship between absolute power and corruption in the previous studies about this novel is not researched. Thus, the gap of research could be identified through previous studies that focused on: i) The form of absolute power, and ii) Authoritarian method and its negative effects on society. So, the gap appeared in: i) Lack of research in examining the interconnection between absolute power and corruption, and ii) No study has applied Marxist criticism with CDA (together) as analytical approaches. To bridge the gap, the current study; i) Examines the image of corruption and the social reaction against absolute power practices through inquest of the text to show the evidence of interconnection of absolute power and corruption, ii) Employs Marxist criticism with CDA as the analytical approaches. The use of these two analytical tools together in conducting the textual analysis of the selected data creates integration in the analysis of the narrative text, where the literary and linguistic aspects of the text are covered and surrounded. From the researcher's point of view, this makes the analysis more in depth, and makes the results more reliable. In order to address the research problem and objectives of the study, this research question emerges: How does absolute power interconnect with corruption, and how does power relate to ideology in the selected narrative text? The contribution (originality) of this study lies in determining the interconnection of absolute power and corruption as a missing feature in the literature. It provides better understanding to this interconnection as a prominent phenomenon that touches people's lives deeply in the old and the modern human history, which English literature widely addresses it. This study contributes to the existing literature on Orwell's political novel *Nineteen-Eighty Four* in particular and the political English novels in general.

#### **Literature Review**

This section explains the major terms in this study, in addition to report the findings of the previous studies that related to the topic of the

current study. This study investigates the concepts of absolute power, corruption, and ideology as encoded in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Power, according to Wrong (2017) is often defined as "a capacity to control or influence others" (p.6). However, absolute power means a complete authority which is not restrained by review or supervision to act in an area. The main forms of power are; force, manipulation, and persuasion (Wrong, 2017). When political absolute power is practiced by an individual, a group, or by a one-party government, it will take the form of totalitarian regime or dictatorship. According to Wrong (2017), the term 'totalitarianism' refers to "tyrannical political regimes that wield more extensive, comprehensive, and intensive power than any of the monarchies or tyrannies of the past" (p.19). Progress of technology, techniques of surveillance, new media of communication, and violence instruments increased highly the strength of power in the totalitarian states. Gregor (2004) stated that the aims and strategies of the totalitarian rulers, being very extreme, often described as total or totalitarian, wherein such regime controls every part of human life. The last century witnessed several inhuman and oppressive regimes that came in power including the major Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union, the Nazis in Germany, and Mao's Communists in China. Roughly, over one hundred million people were killed by these governments (Werth, 1999).

Corruption in the political sense means the abuse of power. Corruption, due to political absolute power and abuse of power, in institutions of a state and a society is one of the most prominent phenomena in our real world. There are great negative effects due to corruption extend to touch the loaf of humans, dignity and values. Literature in general tackles this issue, especially the novel under the study. Corruption penetrates all life aspects of society inside the novel under the study, wherein political, ideological, and social corruption is prevalent. Corruption deprives the society of essential rights and freedoms; it badly affects all aspects of life in the society. Werlin (2013) mentioned that corruption is a "robbing people the opportunities they fought for." (p.4). Thus,

corruption, in its all forms, leads to create the dystopian society and finally disintegration of the society. The concept of 'dystopia' is related to absolute power and its corruption in the selected narrative text under this study. 'Dystopia', in contrast to utopia, refers to an imaginary place where everything is bad, in which people are ruled in a dehumanized way and often spent their lives in fear (Navrátil, 2008).

Gramsci explored how the totalitarian regimes use culture as a means to reshape an individual's identity in the dystopian state. Gramsci introduced the theory known as 'cultural hegemony' wherein political regimes controlled the minds and passions of the multitude not just by direct destructive force but by a coherent system of notions to serve their political intentions (Haralambos, 2013). Hegemonic culture propagates its own values and norms so that they become the "common sense" values of all and thus maintain the status quo. If culture is the network system of interrelated doctrines and practices then ideology is central to that system. Van Dijk (2000) stated, cited in Schäffner (2003), that "ideologies have something to do with systems of ideas and especially with the social, political or religious ideas shared by a social group or movement"(p.6). Ideology "is a basis for the social practices of group members"(2003, p.8). In the novel under study, political absolute power was based on the marketing of its own ideologies to persuade and to subject the society for total authority. The ruling class uses processes of manipulation and distortion of these ideologies, from time to time, in order to retain its power and own interests. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, manipulation in language and discourse has been greatly used by the Party to impose its ideology and control people's minds. According to Van Dijk (1999), the process of manipulation has been adopted to be the masterful strategy for influencing the minds of individuals and society by distorting and internalizing of certain ideologies, values, beliefs, or attitudes, through the use of language and discourse.

However, some previous studies can be mentioned by what they have done through investing the theme of power in Orwell's novel. The

theme of absolute power in Orwell's novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, was investigated by Sebastian. He stated that the holders of absolute power control over individuals lives. This researcher concentrated on exposing practices of power, wherein the love of power was the major motive behind the political action (Sebastian, 2001). Navratil (2008) focused on revealing the role of absolute power of the totalitarian regimes in creating dystopian society in this novel. Pelissoli (2008), through studying Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, investigated absolute power and revealed that the signals to Communism as sort of totalitarian regime represented absolute power should be generalized to read as signals to any sort of totalitarian regime (Pelissoli,2008). Loverinovic analysed the features of totalitarianism as absolute power in this novel. Loverinovic stated that the society was governed by strict rules, and explained the absolute obedience of the citizens to their tyrannical political regime (Loverinovic, 2014). Tereza (2016) analysed the dystopian novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and focused on the concept of the dystopian society which created by absolute power represented by totalitarian regimes. However, no previous study has investigated corruption as a result of absolute power, nor determined the link between them in Orwell's novel under the study. Thus, this study is motivated by a desire to contribute to the body of research on *Nineteen Eighty-Four* focusing on absolute power-corruption correlation as a missing feature in the literature in order to fill this gap and enrich the body of research in this field.

### **Method**

The data of this study is the text of Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Data collection includes extracts taken from the narrative text. This qualitative study adopts thematic and textual analysis of the data. The thematic analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data to examine the data to identify themes (Cresswell, 2003). The qualitative data of this study are in the form of extracts taken from the narrative text to be analysed. These selected data (extracts) are based on the themes that relate to the key concepts of the study; power, corruption, and ideology. Thus, the extracts have been selected based on the mentioned

related concepts. The textual analysis is used to describe and interpret the text, where information, assumptions, symbolism and values can be detected from the text. The textual analysis is conducted by employing two analytical tools; Marxist Criticism and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to reveal manipulation of language and discourse used in the text. Furthermore, the notion of binarism or binary oppositions is used as a platform to serve the analysis. It is a mode of thought on stable oppositions (such as good and evil). As Tahreem and Khan (2020) have mentioned, binarism or binary relationship has always been established on the basis of power, economy, and politics, in addition to gender and caste. This notion is a central to the literary creation, especially in drama and fiction. The analysis is built on binary opposition in the society inside the narrative text on the basis of power, ideology, and class. Identifying the social classes in the narrative text helps in tracing class, ideology, and power. The textual analysis of the data of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is conducted by using two analytical tools and through two phases as follows:

- i) Analysis of the data by employing Marxist Criticism (Marxist literary criticism) which focuses on the role of ideology and class difference within the literary work, the role of money and power, author's ideologies, and the context. The notion of binary oppositions or duality, and manipulative techniques used in the text, such as manipulation and propaganda, are used in doing analysis from literary perspective.
- ii) Analysis of the data by employing Critical Discourse Analysis: CDA is used to conduct the second phase of analysing the text (extracts) by using linguistic strategies of implication, euphemism, lexicalization, syntax exploitation, manipulation, and contrast.

It is worthy to mention that the use of these two analytical tools together creates integration in the analysis of the narrative text, where the literary and linguistic aspects of the text will be covered and surrounded. From the researcher's point of view, this makes the analysis more in depth, and makes the results more reliable. The analysis involves the

totalitarian regime in Oceania represented by the ruling Party (its symbol Big Brother) which imposes its ideology on the society by various means such as, propaganda, surveillance, violence, torture, and killing in a way that strengthens its absolute power and exacerbates corruption.

#### **Orwell and the World in *Nineteen Eighty-Four***

This study employs Marxist critique which deals with the text in its historical, political and social context, and the environment of the author and his ideological orientations. In addition to CDA who studies the text in its context. Thus, it is significant to shed light on the text and its author to understand the world behind the text. The purpose of this section is to discuss the context of the study, and to contextualize the text. It provides description and introductory signals that have significance in understanding the analysis, and paves the way to the analysis. George Orwell is an English novelist, critic, essayist, and journalist. Orwell's writings are characterized by outspoken support of democratic socialism and opposition to totalitarianism (Gale, 1996). In this novel he depicts a futuristic dystopian society and predicts the future of the forthcoming world divided into tremendous power forces where people are run by government propaganda. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has led to appear the term of 'Orwellian', an adjective that describes mechanisms of totalitarian for controlling thought (Tavlin, 2015). The political and ideological thought of Orwell is reflected in his novels. For the subject matter of his novels Orwell made use of the problems of his time and lived in an atmosphere of chaos and political turmoil. He criticized the writers of the twenties in his essay entitled "Inside the Whale" for their lack of interest in the social problems (Orwell and Mackay, 2000, p.129). Orwell assumes that he could do his best writing when inspired by some political purpose. The initial impetus comes from "a sense of injustice, a lie to be exposed or something to be drawn attention to" (Orwell, 1984, p.5).

Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia are three superstates that control the world within the novel. For controlling the remaining unconquered lands of the world, there is a perpetual war among the superstates to this end. The social structure in

Oceania takes a pyramid shape. At the top there is Big Brother. Although no one has seen Big Brother personally, his portrait has been selected by the Party to become a symbol which represents the whole political system in Oceania. Big Brother is the icon that people worship and fear it, so this serves to accumulate and establish absolute power to the dictator. Under the leadership of Big Brother, The Party has been divided into the 'Inner Party' and the 'Outer Party'. The Inner Party members are much better educated; they are forming the elite ruling minority. No more than six million members, this number forms two per cent of the total population of Oceania, or maybe less. The Inner Party members enjoy many privileges, while the Outer Party members are deprived of. Thirteen per cent of the whole population the Outer Party members make up. The Outer Party members suffer from poverty and deprivation. They live under hard conditions in tacky, dark and dilapidated departments, opposite to the luxurious living condition of the Inner Party members. The Outer Party members work, day and night, in the four ministries of the State as subordinates to the Inner Party members. The Outer Party members are under surveillance, they have no real privacy, because their apartments are equipped with two-way telescreens. Thus, it is possible to the Inner Party to watch or listen to them any time. Many devices of surveillance, like hidden microphones, have been put by the government to monitor the Outer Party members in public places. However, the written correspondence is under observation, it should be read by the Party before delivering it to someone of the Outer Party members (Yun-fei, 2016). Outside the Party, at the bottom of the social pyramid, there is a great number of people, make up eighty five per cent of the population of Oceania, who are called 'proles' (hint to 'proletariat'). The Inner Party looks at the proles as they are inferiors, and they should be kept in total subjugation. The Party considers them like animals and it is easy to keep them under the control of the Party. Since they are generally ill-educated, they just concentrate on trivial grievances and neglect the greater evils and dangers. The job of the protagonist (Winston Smith an Outer Party member) is to rewrite the past in favour to the Party that makes

the people, currently and in the future, unable to realize what has truly happened before. But, Winston is the only man who thinks of the dictatorship of Big Brother, while the others keep in living as usual in a situation of slavery. Winston decides to rebel against the political regime of Big Brother. He starts his secret rebellion by recording down everything that he sees or knows in a diary. In Oceania, people live under the mercy of the party and its repressive apparatus, the most dangerous of which is the Thought Police. Secret agents have been employed to serve in the Thought Police, who pretend as common citizens. The job of the secret agents is to spy and to report anyone with subversive tendencies against the Party. The Thought Police are recruiting children to report suspicious citizens, including their parents, to the Party. Surveillance covers all people and their details. A tiny hint of rebellion, even a facial expression, can lead to prompt arrest. The people, including and particularly party members, are forced to obedience (Yun-fei, 2016).

### **Findings and Discussion**

In Oceania, the party has created some agencies which reflect the totalitarian regime of Big Brother. These agencies include; the "Ministry of Truth" (Ministry of Propaganda), which is charged with falsification of facts, it distorts the historical records to promote the Party's ideology, the "Ministry of Peace" which is concerned with war, the "Ministry of Love" which is in charge of torturing the people who their loyalty to the party is questioned; it is a place where people are interrogated and tortured, and the "Ministry of Plenty" which falsifies economic figures and plans for economic shortage. Other than these administrations Orwell draws on some institutions such as the Junior Spy for national security, Junior Anti-Sex League, and Thought Police, which practices surveillance and the arrest task (Orwell, 2003). Thus, Oceania is governed by an authoritarian political system, wherein surveillance and spying on people are among the main means that the regime uses to control the entire society. Two groups of characters in this novel seem to be in binary opposition socially, economically and intellectually, and each group represents a class, and there is a conflict between these classes. Identifying

the social classes in the narrative text helps in tracing class struggle, discourse, ideology, and power relations. O'Brien is a powerful mysterious member of the Inner Party who rules Oceania under the leadership of 'Big Brother'. On the other side, there is another line, which contradicts the line of totalitarianism, represented by Winston Smith. Winston is a contemplative and intellectual thirty-nine-year-old. He is a proletarian who hates secretly the enforced repression and the totalitarian control of the government, and he has revolutionary dreams. In the same side there is Julia, Winston's lover. She is a beautiful girl, twenty-six-year-old. She works at the Ministry of Truth in the Fiction Department, in addition to her membership of Junior Anti-Sex League (Orwell, 2003). Julia "hates the Party, and says so in the crudest words, but she makes no general criticism of it" (Orwell, 2003, p.178). Winston's job in Ministry of Truth is to change the history; he burns the old historical records and substitutes old events and people with new one that will go in favour of totalitarian rule. Through Winston's suffering, and breaking his will and spirit at the end of the novel, Orwell demonstrates totalitarianism by awarding its effects on an individual's life (Orwell, 2003).

### **Interconnectedness between absolute power and corruption, and relationship of power and ideology in the narrative text**

The analysis of the data is conducted through two phase (as mentioned above in section 3. Method):

#### **i) Analysing the text by employing Marxist Criticism:**

**Extract 1:**"BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU" (Orwell, 2003, P.2).

Everywhere in Oceania, this cautionary statement has been written in upper case. From Marxist critique view, this extract shows that the ruling class represented by the Party, who controls the economic sources, has put the ruled lower class under strict surveillance. The purpose behind this act is to make sure that the whole society is loyal to the political system of Big Brother and its ideology (Ingsoc, English Socialism). The main goal of the ruling upper class is suppress the ruled lower class in

order to gain full control upon the society and to retain power. In Oceania, the Party has created some agencies which reflect the corrupt totalitarian regime of Big Brother. The purpose of these agencies is monitoring people, spying on them, restricting their freedoms, practicing violence and torture, and killing if necessary. These agencies include; i) the "Ministry of Truth", which is charged with falsification of facts. It distorts the historical records to promote the Party's ideology, ii) the "Ministry of Peace" which is concerned with war, iii) the "Ministry of Love" which is in charge of torturing the people whose loyalty to the party is questioned; it is a place where people are interrogated and tortured, and iv) the "Ministry of Plenty" which falsifies economic figures and plans for economic shortage. Other than these administrations Orwell draws on some institutions such as the Junior Spy for national security, Junior Anti-Sex League, which prevents sex, and Thought Police, which practices surveillance and the arrest task (Orwell, 2003). Thus, Oceania is governed by an authoritarian political system, wherein surveillance and spying upon people are among the main means that the regime uses to control the entire society.

The aim of writing this statement in capital letters is to warn the people, and to send a message, that no one can hide himself from the eyes of the Party, and to spread fear among the people in order to tame opponents if there are. What causes fear and terror in people's hearts is that this warning statement is written beneath a big poster of Big Brother with frown and angry face that gazes from the wall. These pictures make people feel that "the eyes follow you about when you move"(Orwell, 2003, p.2). The psychological effects of these posters are very heavy on the people because the pictures are everywhere and the eyes (spies) follow the people. In this terrifying cautionary statement, Big Brother refers to the Party and the government intelligence agencies. The word "watching" means "spying", but the action of spying is not done by Big Brother himself. Instead, it is done by the faithful members of the Party and those who work in the government intelligence agencies, and they represent Big Brother's eyes. The pronoun "you" in the statement indicates everyone who sees the

poster, or reads the words of the statement, or hears it from media (Hama, 2016).

Subsequently, it could be said that nobody in Oceania is free; everybody is under surveillance of the Party. The people cannot escape from surveillance, there is no way. Even the sons and the daughters of the Party who are called 'the junior spies' become Big Brother's eyes. They spy even on their own parents. In addition, if the people in Oceania close their doors and sit in a secure corner and turn off the lights, they will actually remain under surveillance. So, the people cannot find a way to make them feel safe, because 'to be seen' means you will be 'penetrated' (Atwood, 2010). Surveillance used by totalitarian regimes has always been an essential metaphor for dystopian fiction to the extent that the known statement "Big Brother is watching you" has become familiar. It is usually mentioned by many people in any instance of a government that observing its people and intruding upon their privacy, and in terms of security and the retention of power, it becomes useful for them to discuss this statement (Hall, 2008). Thus, it could be said that surveillance is viewed as a manifestation of the corruption of the totalitarian regime; in addition, it is an illegal means of retaining power. In this text, the author exposes the practices of the totalitarian regime and its corruption, and expresses his anti-totalitarianism ideology. Thus, the text is propaganda against the status quo. At the same time, the text supports the issues of the oppressed class and calls for justice and freedom through depicting suffering of the people within the narrative text due to the corrupt absolute power.

**Extract 2:** "Power is power over human beings. Over the body – but, above all, over the mind. Power over matter – external reality, as you would call it – is not important. [...] We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull" (Orwell, 2003, p.361).

These words have been said by O'Brien to Winston in Room No.101, in the Ministry of Love, during Winston's interrogation who has been arrested by Thought Police. In this extract, O'Brien has tried to inform Winston how the Party sees and understands power. O'Brien is the most prominent

member in the Inner Party. Winston, the protagonist of the novel, is an Outer Party member who has tried to rebel against Big Brother to get emancipation from the totalitarian regime. Two characters in the novel seem to be in binary opposition socially, economically and intellectually, and each character represents a class, and there is a conflict between these classes. O'Brien represents the ruling class; he tries to suppress Winston who represents the ruled class. Winston is a contemplative and intellectual thirty-nine-year-old. He is a proletarian who hates secretly the enforced repression and the totalitarian control of the government, and he has revolutionary dreams. Winston has started his rebellion through writing his own diary. He records his life details, opinions, and thoughts which grow silently against the Party's policy and tenets to extent that he writes in his diary, "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER"(Orwell, 2003, p.23). Then, he falls in love with a fellow Outer Party member, Julia, who sets out along with him to rebel against the totalitarian and oppressive political regime in Oceania. However, their movements have been monitored by the eyes of Big Brother. It is clear that the individuals in dystopian society of Oceania have been monitored, but most of them are unable to discover the tricks of the Party and realize the reality of their situation (Hall, 2008). According to the Party, Winston has committed many crimes against the political regime; i) he writes 'Down With Big Brother' in his diary, ii) he has an illegal love affair with Julia, and iii) he joins the anti-Party Brotherhood. So, Winston and Julia have been arrested by the Thought Police and sent to the Ministry of Love, Room 101.

Winston's interrogation, done by O'Brien, has conducted by adopting corrupt methods of physical and psychological torture aimed at breaking the morale and the will, then brainwashing and reshaping the culture and identity of the prisoner according to the party's ideology and orientations. O'Brien's words indicate clearly that the most dangerous threat on the total supremacy of the Party is the individual consciousness. Exactly for this cause, it becomes fundamental for the Party to get total dominance over the individuals to the point of reaching inside their skulls and occupying them intellectually. The individual consciousness is the

core in which the seeds of renaissance may root and grow to build an opposition ideological front to struggle against the political regime. This opposition may eventually have the strength to rid of the powerful regime. Winston is a proletarian, but he is contemplative character and possesses the cognitive and cultural ability that is enough to read the political, social and cultural situation. Winston represents the individual consciousness in the novel, and his voice represents the voice of resistance. But, at the end he is forced to give up his idea of rebelliousness. This confirms the political, ideological and moral corruption practiced by the Party due to absolute power and complete control over the society. O'Brien explains to Winston the concept of power form perspective of the Party. He confesses that the Party seeks power wholly for its own sake, and the Party doesn't care about the good of others. The Party interested only in power, 'pure power'. He states that the Party is totally different from all the others oligarchies who have ruled in the past, because the Party realizes completely what must be done. O'Brien confirms that all the others are hypocrites and cowards, even those who are somewhat similar to us. O'Brien says, according to the ideology of the Party, that "The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives"(Orwell,2003, p. 359). O'Brien explicitly acknowledges that the true motives of the Party for seeking and retaining power are subjective and utilitarian. He admits that the Party believes that "no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it", and according to the ideology of the Party "Power is not a means, it is an end". Furthermore, O'Brien states boldly that "One does not establish a dictatorship in order to protect a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship". O'Brien continues to express the corrupt beliefs and ideologies of the Party and its members by saying; "The object of persecution is persecution", "The object of torture is torture", and "The object of power is power"(Orwell, 2003, p.360). From point of view of Marxist critique, the narrative text reveals the ideology of the party and its members, as the ruling class, and in return it sheds light on the



ideology of Winston, who represents the oppressed ruling class. Dialogues and events in the narrative text indicate that the author, Orwell, exposes the party's corrupt ideology. He criticizes and attacks the practices of the totalitarian regime, and confirms the interconnection of the overt corruption with the absolute power of Big Brother. Orwell has presented Big Brother as the worst model of corrupt totalitarian ruler that can appear anywhere and at any time. Thus, it could be said that Orwell's cautionary message (of emergence such political regimes everywhere in our world) to the readers has been clearly sent through this novel.

Orwell introduces 'Room No.101' in the climax of his novel; it is the room of torture that lies in the basement inside in the Ministry of Love. In this room, a prisoner is subjected to the worst nightmare that no one has ever seen or imagined it. It is a world of fear or phobia, by and through it, the party attempts to break down the resistance of the prisoner, then to practice brainwashing (Orwell, 2003). Winston is badly tormented in Room 101, and the aim behind that is to not kill him but to break the spirit and soul. He has been forced to accept what the Party wants that 'two plus two equals five', and not four as he believes. However, "This is a fundamental principle that has become the symbol of the Party's unlimited control, reaching even into the individual's mind" (Wien, 2012, p.5). The totalitarian rule of Big Brother makes Winston non-existent and became nothing, "unperson". Thus there is a sense of annihilation. Winston is eventually transformed to a faithful member in the Party; he surrenders his mind and soul to Big Brother. For Winston "the end was contained in the beginning"(Orwell, 2003, p.218). In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell presents the totalitarian political system of Oceania and depicts the corruption which is interconnected with absolute power of the dictator, Big Brother.

**Extract 3:** "WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH."(Orwell, 2003, p.5)

These paradoxical words are the official slogans of the Party in Oceania. These slogans have been deliberately written on the facade of the Ministry of Truth building, which represents the

Ministry of Propaganda of the Party. They are introduced at the beginning of the novel in order to serve as an introduction to the reader about the notion of doublethink. Doublethink is a prominent term in Newspeak of Oceania. Doublethink is an intricate idea which refers to accept two contradictory concepts as true. Doublethink is a "psychological means fostering the diminishment of rational language and preventing individuals from imagining rebellious ideas". Since the thought of human "is affected by eliminating words, behaviour is modified towards a manifestation of doublethink"(Muradian, 2017, p.37). Throughout the novel, these ideological slogans have been repeated five times. They represent a powerful example of the idea of doublethink that the Party has invented. Consequently, it is an ideology adopted by the ruling class to retain its power, so it has been imposed upon the ruled class. For imposing its ideology and reinforcing its domination over the ruled class, the Party works on weakening the minds' strength of individuals and their independence. It compels the people to live under a continual situation of fear due to propaganda. As a result of this policy, the Party becomes able to make the people accept anything and any decision decreed by the Party even it is unfair or illogical. By using manipulation, the Party could convince the people of its contradictory national slogans. This shows evidence about the strength of the Party's campaign of mental and psychological control over society. The Party employs these slogans to distort the truth and to make the people ready psychologically to accept the Party's lies. The Party claims that "War Is Peace", because convincing the people of with idea of existing a common enemy makes them united against that enemy, not against the Party. According to the Party "Freedom Is Slavery", that because the individual who has independence will be doomed to fail. So, each individual should be subjected to the collective will (of the dominant group) to be free from danger. In same orientation, "Ignorance Is Strength" because the Party claims that knowledge brings contradiction that weakens one's mind. But in fact, unconsciousness of the people about the contradictions of the Party's discourse reinforces power of the authoritarian political regime in

Oceania. The third slogan "is highly indicative in sustaining the idea that being unable to understand on the part of the masses is a precondition of being safe from the contradiction they may feel if they think or have the ability to know" (Abdu & Khafaga, 2019, p: 426 ). This reveals how ideology is employed to maintain power. Orwell states, in his essay *Politics and the English Language*, that "Political language... is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind" (Hama, 2015, p. 268). The people in Oceania lose the concept and meaning of truth, but they have to accept what is said by the Party as facts.

To carry the meanings that the Party wants, these slogans have paraphrased in Goldstein Book. Therefore, the first slogan means that, in the new age in Oceania, the normal condition is war. This indicates that Oceania will remain in a state of war with its opponents and other countries. From the perspective of the Party, this will institutionalize the forbidden, and will justify violence. Clank of servitude chains to one's environment is the free choice pain; this idea has been communicated in the second slogan. In other words, the people have not to be free. The third slogan has been paraphrased to make it means that owners of knowledge is taken (by their knowledge) to the universe of contradiction thought. The goal of employing these slogans is to manipulate the society for complete compliance to the Party without realizing or thinking of what is happening around them, because clarification make the people think. However, thought is a crime under the regime of Big Brother. Language is a means of producing discourse, which in turn is a means of producing an ideology, then ideology is employed to gain and retain power. When the Party creates "Newspeak" in Oceania to replace "Oldspeak", the exploiting of language has reached its peak for controlling the people's minds. Newspeak is a language established on the base of reducing the number of words and terms used by the people in order to make the language limited and restricted. Imposing this language to be used by the people makes very difficult or impossible to express the thoughts of freedom that awaken the society to rebel against the totalitarian political regime. Newspeak, a fictitious language created by Orwell in

this novel, reflects tragic imaginations of the novel's author about reality. It is invented to serve ideological orientations of English Socialism (Ingsoc) which lead to annihilate the human thought in Oceania. Simply, the purpose of Newspeak is "to make communication, exchange of ideas, preservation of knowledge, and exchange of human emotions impossible, or at the very least very difficult" (Reznikov, 2001, p. 56). Manipulation and deception practiced by the Party become easier through using Newspeak to prevent the people from understanding of the real world. The political discourse of the Party depends on language, so it redefines language in order to fit the Party's dominant ideology. The political regime in Oceania is "relied on the combination of violence, and specific jargon and carefully contrived propaganda to spread their dogmas and justify their atrocities" (Luchini, 2006, p.97). INGSOC, according to 'Newspeak', refers to "English Socialism". It is the political philosophy that has been adopted by the Socialist Party who rules Oceania. INGSOC involves a doublethink meaning. The government of Oceania's totalitarian superstate rules its people by the ideology of "INGSOC", and the orders of the invisible ruler Big Brother. The philosophy of "INGSOC" has three major principles. The first one is 'Newspeak', it is the official language of the Party which communicates its ideology and thoughts effectively, and conveys its messages to the people. The second is 'doublethink', it the idea of holding two contradictory notions in the mind. The third principle is the past mutability; it is built on the idea of not holding on certain events or beliefs in the past that should be changed to serve the Party's policy (Orwell, 2003). The ruling Party's ideology is based on these three principles. And this ideology is imposed in two ways: the first through massive powerful propaganda, and the second through coercion, by using violence and intimidation. What has been explained above shows evidence that ideology relate to the corrupt power in the narrative text.

**ii) Analysing the text by employing Critical Discourse Analysis:**

**Extract 1:** "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU" (Orwell, 2003, P.2).

The Party promotes its discourse through various means to control the people and retain power, among them are using of slogans and captions. The party has used simplification's strategy that is represented in the use of slogans and captions. This strategy "is totally based on the use of words. Slogans and captions are considered a form of control" (Abdu and Khafaga, 2019, p: 425). This statement, in this extract, is an important caption created by the Party for this end. Through its manipulative discourse in this caption, the Party has employed many linguistic strategies:

- i) Implication: This statement involves 'implication'; it implicates the idea of surveillance (is watching you). This caption is extremely indicative in reinforcing the notion that every individual in Oceania is under control of the Party. It is a message that says the dictatorial leader is always there. This message has been communicated through combination of the big poster of Big Brother and the caption underneath it which serves this end
- ii) Euphemism: The Party employs the word of 'watching' instead of the word of 'surveillance'. The word 'surveillance' means a close observation of criminals or spies in particular, so using the word 'watching' is more conventional or familiar. In its slogans and captions, the Party has used convenient lexis to hide their bad connotations.
- iii) Lexicalization: The Party has employed certain lexis to create significance and influence in this caption such as; Big Brother (the powerful symbol of the political regime), watching (it implies threat), and the pronoun YOU (you are targeted).
- iv) Syntax exploitation: (is watching) refers to a continuous act. The present continuous tense has been used in writing this caption to indicate continuity, i.e. surveillance is continuous.
- v) Manipulation: This statement is an example of manipulative discourse that involves manipulation in language to spread fear among the people in order to control them. This statement has been written in upper case to

bring attention. The purpose behind using this caption is to retain the Party's power and control the society. Abdu and Khafaga (2019) mentioned that the posters and captions that the Party has employed in this novel play very significant role in sustaining control over the society. The posters and captions are totally based on the use of words, and "Slogans and captions are considered a form of control" (2019, p.425)

The manipulative discourse of the Party appears in the misleading names of the four ministries. There are two strategies have been used in naming the four ministries include contrast and euphemism:

i) Contrast: It is one of the strategies used by the Party in its discourse to control the minds' people and to retain the Party's power. This strategy appears clearly in the names of the four ministries; Peace, Love, Plenty and Truth. These names are used by the Party for the contrary purposes hidden behind their meanings and literal names. These names are ambivalent lies that cover the real evil activities of these ministries:

i) The "Ministry of Peace", but it is actually a "Ministry of War ."

ii) Arts and education in Oceania are the responsibility of the "Ministry of Truth", but it is actually responsible for concerning with the falsification of history and records, in order to match the policy of the Party. It is a "Ministry of Propaganda"

iii) The task of the "Ministry of Plenty" is to develop economy, but in contrary its activities aim at depriving people of living a decent standard and creating economic reduction .

v) Maintaining of law and order is supposed to be the work of the "Ministry of Love", but its real task is the mental conditioning of people by torturing them. In fact, there is no practicing of the real activities of all these ministries; instead they have devoted to do the opposite acts.

ii) Euphemism: In addition to contrast in the names of names of the four ministries, the Party has used the strategy of euphemism in naming the ministries in order to soften the evil actions of these ministries:

i) the "Ministry of Peace" deals with "war", ii) the "Ministry of Truth" produces "lies", iii) the "Ministry of Love" makes "pain and torture", iv) the "Ministry of Plenty" provides "poverty and starvation". The four ministries are tools in the hand of Big Brother to suppress the people, and to torture them, as well as they are eyes of Big Brother to monitor the people. These ministries are images of corruption that interconnected with the practices of absolute power.

**Extract 2:** "Power is power over human beings. Over the body – but, above all, over the mind. Power over matter – external reality, as you would call it – is not important. [...] We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull." (Orwell, 2003, p.361)

The words in this extract have been said by O'Brien to Winston in Room No.101, in the Ministry of Love, during Winston's interrogation. O'Brien's discourse involves the following strategies:

i) Implication: These words indicate the danger of individual consciousness. The Party has to control people's minds; this implication appears in: "over the mind", and "inside the skull". O'Brien's words indicate clearly that the most dangerous threat on the total supremacy of the Party is the individual consciousness. Exactly for this cause, it becomes fundamental for the Party to get total dominance over the individuals to the point of reaching inside their skulls and occupying them intellectually.

ii) Lexicalization: O'Brien has employed certain lexis to create significance and influence such as; "power", "body", "mind", "we", and "control". The purpose of using these words reflects the policy of the Party that aims to enslave the bodies and minds of the people. O'Brien explains to Winston the concept of power from perspective of the Party. He confesses that the Party seeks power wholly for its own sake, and the Party doesn't care about the good of others. This shows the corrupt practices of Party that linked with its absolute power.

**Extract 3:** "WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH."(Orwell, 2003, p.5)

This extract includes three major slogans of the Party, in which the party has used manipulative

discourse for imposing its ideology and controlling the people. For this end, the Party has presented three paradoxical definitions of three essential concepts, WAR, FREEDOM, and IGNORANCE, by using three linguistic strategies:

i) Contrast and language style of paradox: Through these slogans, the Party has linked between concepts that are originally contradictory, because war is the contrary of peace, freedom is the contrary of slavery, and ignorance is the opposite of strength, it also involves a style of paradox. This confirms the doublethink's principle adopted by the party to mislead the people who have to accept two contradictory ideas, in the same time, as true.

ii) Manipulation: The Party has manipulated the people by giving illogical interpretations for the meaning of these slogans. The Party has claimed that "War Is Peace", because convincing the people with idea of existing of a common enemy makes them united against that enemy, not against the Party. According to the Party, freedom is slavery, because individuals who have independence will be doomed to fail. Consequently, each individual should be subjected to the collective will (of the dominant group) to be free from danger. In same orientation, "Ignorance Is Strength", because knowledge makes people think about the contradictory ideas, issues, and things that knowledge contains, so knowledge weakens people, and so strength lies in ignorance. But in fact, unconsciousness of the people about the contradictions of the Party's discourse reinforces power of the authoritarian political regime in Oceania.

iii) Syntax exploitation: The use of the strategy of syntax exploitation by the Party has appeared in writing these slogans. The three slogans show the same syntactic structure\_ they have been written in simple grammatical structures and in the simple present tense\_ in order to refer to continuity. This means that these slogans are strategic, not interim. This reveals how ideology is employed to maintain power.

"Newspeak" of Oceania, invented by the Party, is based on reducing of the number of words in the "Oldspeak" is to minify the range of thought. The Party thinks that the old language involves words

that allow the people much expression and freedom of thought. So many words have vanished; e.g. freedom, and justice. "Newspeak" is also based on inventing new words in a language; e.g. Newspeak, and Oldspeak. In addition to combining words together, e.g. doublethink, and thoughtcrime. Newspeak is a manipulative language, for example, "Ingsoc" which indicates the ideology of the Party "Socialism" in its apparent meaning, but in fact, it is used to manipulate. The purpose of inventing Newspeak is to serve the Party's ideological agenda, control the people, and retain power. As stated by Fairclough (1989), "the role of language is significant in the production, maintenance, and change of social relations of power". As well as, "the language contributes to the domination of some people by others. Language is a powerful tool in the hands of politicians to manipulate people and history both in the past and present" (Muradian, 2017, p.35). Orwell (1946) states in his essay *Politics and the English Language*, cited in (Hama, 2016), that "Political language... is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind" (2016, p.268). 'Newspeak' is the most interesting idea in the novel that shows the power of language. The language has acquired great importance in this narrative text as a means used by the Party to retain power, because "By controlling language and information through a complex coercive apparatus, the Party realizes a mind control of its subjects". This could be 'total' in intensity and extension together. In intensity, "because any individual thought is totally dominated", and in extension, "because the totality of the subjects is dominated"(Hama, 2016, p.226). This view makes clear that the political regime of Oceania controls, by using the language as an effective weapon, the minds of the individuals in the society. The novel could be viewed as finding out that totalitarianism is a mind-set, and the major aspect in this novel is the use of language and discourse as an influential means of manipulation and oppression. This is the essential of 'Newspeak' that has been imposed by the Party on the people (Gaupseth, 2004). According to Orwell, the main goal of using "Newspeak" is to minify the range of thought. The Party has imposed this language to be

used in Oceania for many aims; decreasing understanding, limiting freedom, and reducing vocabulary in order to manipulate the people. This is a specific system of derivation which allows formation new expressions and vocabulary that serve the Party's ideological agenda; this is morphologically characterizing "Newspeak" to achieve thought control over the people. The Party thinks that the old language involves words that allow the people much expression and freedom of thought. So, these words must be vanished, and this is the purpose behind inventing "Newspeak". Big Brother's regime has decided to control everything, and this will be realized, as the Party thinks, by changing language to fit with its new political system. Thus, many words have been eliminated from the "Newspeak", Such as; "democracy", "justice", "liberty" and "religion". Muradian (2017) mentioned that "language contributes to the domination of some people by others. Language is "a powerful tool in the hands of politicians to manipulate people and history both in the past and present"(p.35). Finally, the analysis above reveals how the Party has imposed its ideology by using manipulative discourse to retain its corrupt power.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It could be concluded that this study has determined the interconnection of absolute power and corruption and provided a better understanding to this interconnection as a prominent phenomenon in the old and the modern human history that have always been portrayed in the literary works, because it touches peoples' lives deeply. The analysis of the data has clearly shown that the corruption, resulting from absolute power, has appeared in multiple images; political, ideological, and social corruption. The Inner Party, as a ruling class, has oppressed the people in Oceania. The Party has imposed its own language and ideology upon the society. In Oceania, it is forbidden to think. Those who opposed the Party faced torture and murder. The members of the Inner Party have enjoyed a life of luxury. In return, the lower classes have suffered from poverty, and lived in a big prison. This confirms the corruption of the totalitarian political regime of Big Brother that related to its absolute power. Besides, it could be concluded that power is related to ideology in the

narrative text. The manipulation of language and discourse and the intense propaganda along with the violence have led to impose ideology of the totalitarian political regime. The findings of this study have expanded the work of the previous research on the theme of absolute power in the selected modernist English novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The current study has bridged the gap that left by previous research through finding the link between absolute power and corruption as a missing feature in literature. Since this study has focused on political and ideological corruption of absolute power, thus further research is recommended about social, financial, and moral corruption results from absolute power of the totalitarian regime in the society within the narrative text of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In addition, the link between the corruption of totalitarian regimes and reshaping class, identity, culture of the individuals and the society inside this novel in particular and in the political novels in general

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