Alteration of the Past to Enforce Ignorance in *1984*

Have you ever realized that you are controlled by a single power that limits your freedom, thoughts, and even the language you use to speak? In the 20th century in England, those limitations were created to repress the mind of society so that people could not even feel the urge to rebel against this single power. George Orwell, who is one of the most eminent novel writers in terms of satirizing governmental issues and who teaches us how to resist this pressuring control imposed by the government, is the writer who opens readers' eyes so that they are not manipulated by the government. *1984*, which was written by George Orwell, is a fictional novel that satirizes the government's decisions about changing their own past. This article will explain the role of the past that was deluded and presented as the truth of history while being fictional, in three sections: mind control, changing the past, and finally controlling the past to control the future.

To begin with, the first subject is mind control, which is emphasized in *1984*, written by George Orwell to open society's eyes toward the government, to reveal their delusional acts of changing history and sweeping the truth away, and to teach people not to be deluded by this mind control. O'Brien goes on to say, "We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull. You must get rid of those nineteenth-century ideas about the laws of Nature. We make the laws of Nature" (277). In the story, party leaders focus on manipulating society by changing the truth of the past in order to get inside people's minds so that they can control them and ensure obedience. Furthermore, the party leaders' aim in controlling the minds of society is to legitimize their new legacy in the present by disconnecting people from historical facts. If society were able to learn about the government's past mistakes, they might rebel when they realized that the same mistakes were being repeated in the present. Therefore, in the story, the party leaders attempt to control

minds by lying about historical facts and truths so that the present process of government is not affected. Besides this, the party even claims achievements by inventing new things to draw society's attention, to appear glorious, and to pull people to their side. "In Newspeak, there is no word for Science. The empirical method of thought, on which all the scientific achievements of the past were founded, is opposed to the most fundamental principles of Ingsoc." Moreover, the party invented a new language called Newspeak, which aims to prevent the process of rebellion. Their aim was to eliminate all words related to rebellious ideas because if society became aware of the facts of the past, the party or government would be in danger of being eliminated by the people.

Another grave criticism presented in the novel is the changing of the past by the party. To begin with, the party already knows the fundamental truth that the past is an important period, and they are aware of the value of keeping records of the true past so that mistakes made by former leaders can be learned from. However, in the novel, the party does not allow the public to access the true facts of history and keeps them away from learning about the mistakes of past leaders so that they cannot judge whether the present government is making the same mistakes or not. Furthermore, the party turns the true facts of history into a fictional narrative by eliminating parts that could be criticized by the public, while also erasing all evidence of the past from books and newspapers. In this way, the party attempts to rewrite the past to legitimize its present authority and to gain control over history. In addition, the party pretends that it has solved the mistakes of the past by changing the details of events and making them fictional. That is to say, the party does not want to be connected with the past, but instead turns it into a story by creating its own fictional world, allowing it to claim that all past mistakes have already been resolved. For instance, in the story, even the names of wars that occurred in history are changed so that people will not recognize them and will remain ignorant. Besides this, the novel conveys the idea that if the public is not aware of the past,

they cannot attempt rebellion or create change in the present based on past mistakes. O'Brien states, "We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means; it is an end" (275–276). The elimination of the past is therefore rooted in the party's awareness of the power of history, which leads them to turn historical truths into false statements so that they can be forgotten.

The last significant aspect of *1984* is the idea of controlling the past in order to control both the present and the future. The party's pressure on the past plays a crucial role in the novel. The party's slogan clearly states, "He who controls the past controls the future; he who controls the present controls the past" (37). The party aims to control everything—past, present, and future—in order to eliminate people's thoughts, reasoning, and will. By doing so, the party seeks to make people incapable of understanding the past, forcing them to act in obedience in the present. Thus, the party attempts to erase memory, freedom of speech, and even words themselves by reshaping the past to align it with their own legitimacy in the present and future. As a result, people become increasingly ignorant of what is happening around them and are unable to recognize past mistakes made by leaders or attempt to overthrow the party. The legitimization of the present and the future is therefore a major concern of the party, which rewrites history to enter people's minds and keep them trapped in ignorance while portraying itself as glorious.

In conclusion, as discussed above, the false narrative created by the party by reshaping history can be clearly seen in *1984*, written by George Orwell to emphasize governmental issues and to encourage people to resist the false legitimization imposed on society. Moreover, the legacy of the party, which attempts to manipulate the public, is delusional, as it presents the truth of history as fiction in order to control people's minds and keep them ignorant rather than enlightened. Finally, the three aspects of mind control, changing the past, and controlling the past to dominate the present

and the future are central to the party's strategy in *1984*, which ultimately aims to open the eyes of the public to the deceptive nature of authoritarian government.

Work Cited

Orwell, George, the role of the past, in 1984, "*We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull. You must get rid of those nineteenth-century ideas about the laws of Nature. We make the laws of Nature*,"(277). "*In Newspeak, there is no word for Science. "The empirical method of thought, on which all the scientific achievements of the past were founded, is opposed to the most fundamental principles of Ingsoc"*. "*In Newspeak, there is no word for Science. "The empirical method of thought, on which all the scientific achievements of the past were founded, is opposed to the most fundamental principles of Ingsoc"*, O'Brien goes on to say *"We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means, it is an end,"(275–276). June 8, 1949*

-Retrieved from https://robinnemesszeghy.medium.com/an-essay-on-george-orwells-1984-the-role-of-the-past-in-examining-truth-71ab3045e3bd