

## HISTORY LOOKS INTO FUTURE: NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR: FICTION OR REALITY?

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### Abstract

*This paper is an attempt to review the literature on Nineteen Eighty-Four published in the decade of 1980s. The aim is to revisit the novel and its author from the perspective of political developments in 1980s. In 1949, George Orwell made vivid imagination of the future political system of the world in his classic political fiction of the 20th Century Nineteen Eighty-four, a novel that unleashed a debate among academia on its prophecies and interpretation. Its language felt deeply by the masses; its ideas used to define Cold War actors and its impact was visible in popular journalism and in literary writings. Orwell was among the few memorable writers who had made an eternal mark on English Literature. Is Nineteen Eighty-Four a master piece political literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century? What message George Orwell intended to convey to the readers? And who is the addressee of the novel, socialist state or capitalist world? Is it a prophecy of the decade of the 80s? Critiques are preoccupied with these questions to resolve the mystery which still surrounds the novel. The literary response to this novel holds public interest until today that made the novel an all-time best seller. No doubt Orwell has earned name as the most powerful writer and satirist of the twentieth century the author, the environment in which he wrote and the novel are examined by scholars from time to time. The most unique feature of the novel is that it maintains confusion in the minds of its readers that for whom this novel is about. And what circumstances motivated Orwell to produce such a political fiction.*

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Bernard Crick's, authorized biography, George Orwell: A Life, published in 1980 cleared up much of the confusion about Orwell's early career. He is of the opinion that Orwell succeeded in the task he set in the middle of his career and established himself as literary figure. Orwell wrote: 'what I have most wanted to do throughout the past ten years is to make political writing into an art'.<sup>1</sup>

Crick sees Nineteen Eighty-Four as Orwell's success in producing a work of art which also earned a reputation, as powerful political satire. His style was sharp which he slowly forged into weapon of mythical strength. But, of course, style only does not create great works of imaginative art. George Woodcock argues that like so many fine journalists, Orwell lacked the inventiveness and the power to separate characters from himself that are needed to produce a good novel, just as he lacked the image-making faculty that is needed to make a good poet<sup>2</sup>. The theme of the book and his assault on injustice and intolerance made the novel unique in its nature. Throughout the novel, Orwell seemed to ask too much of the masses about this injustice. The activities of the Proles in Oceania are the most appalling aspect of the novel. His anger centered on the intellectuals, precisely because they hold or influenced power and should know better.

Crick argues that Orwell knew little about American history. Had he known more he might have avoided misunderstandings in America about his book. This view also proved the evidence that Orwell himself was very worried when in America his novel was billed in Right-Wing circles as an all-out attack on Socialism, which had never been his intention. Fyvel also enforces the view that Nineteen Eighty-Four was not a savage attack on Socialism; rather it was a warning about possible type of state tyranny<sup>3</sup>.

Many English intellectuals who considered themselves political had, in fact, a divided rationality and restrained standards. They tolerated and practiced a reckless and passionate sincerity and crudeness of judgment in politics. While Orwell was a political thinker of genuine stature who reveals the reality of politics of his time and warned us in a timely manner about the hollow ideologies, he expressed his ideas boldly and gave a significant message in abstract. He is considered as one of the foremost commentators on literature and politics in the twentieth century which is primarily due to the reputation of his writing style as clear, direct and precise. He did not indulge in theorizing his imagination into a political principle. Orwell's decision to write on politics satirically, proved more beneficial in reaching broadly into public. However, it also opens debate in its plausibility and imprecise its explanatory precision.

Crick argues that Orwell's sharp observation of English society and its various classes helps him in developing a common style thinking and writing, resting on the questionable assumption that all knowledge can be reduced to common sense. This is because he adopted a novelistic style and narrative mode of writing to warn against the possibility of something happening. If one reads Nineteen Eighty-Four before any other book of Orwell

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Crick, *George Orwell: A life*, (London: Seeker & Warburg, 1980), p.13

<sup>2</sup> George Woodcock, *Orwell's Message: 1984 and present*, (Vancouver: Harbour publishing, 1984), p.10

<sup>3</sup> Fyvel T.R., *George Orwell a Personal Memoir*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982) p. 165

or is told that it was his last testament then one may well believe that it is a prophecy of the future not simply a fiction.

Crick's claim was also endorsed by Donald McCormick. He discovers through what has happened since 1948 how far the world as a whole has gone in the direction, which Orwell dreaded. George Orwell wrote his fictional portrayal of what the year 1984 might be like. He reflected the disillusionment of the younger generation that had fought the war in the belief that its outcome would make the world a better and safer place to live in. He disagrees with Orwell's critics who regarded Nineteen Eighty-Four as a vicious attack on Communism. In the Soviet Union Nineteen Eighty-Four was dubbed as mirth provoking horror. For example in Pravda, a critic wrote: "Mr. Orwell is in every way similar to Mr. Huxley in Ape and Essence, especially in his contempt for people, in his aim of slandering man---. For, in describing a monstrous future in store for man, he imputes every evil to the people"<sup>4</sup>.

McCormick believes that Orwell would have seen more quickly than most how the wars of napalm-bombing in Vietnam and torture of prisoners on both North and South Vietnam was being waged solely in the interest of two super powers, neither of whom really gave a damn for the oppressed Vietnamese or their neighbors in Cambodia and Laos<sup>5</sup>.

McCormick takes Nineteen Eighty-Four as a plea for individual, not for the population as a whole. The basic philosophy of Orwell's thought is that of the integrity and freedom of individual. He produced an individual character of Winston Smith who was an intelligent and sober member of proletariat with whom Orwell himself identifies. At the stage when Winston Smith, undergoing torture, says, 'Do it to Julia. Don't do it to me', Orwell wanted to show that fundamentally human nature may be so self-centered that it can sacrifice or deviate any ideal for personal benefit.

McCormick vividly disagrees with this point that Nineteen Eighty-Four was a propaganda fiction. In the character of Winston, Orwell wants to show the despairing thoughts of hundreds and thousands of other single souls all over the totalitarian areas of the world. He sees the novel as Orwell's last message and final warning to mankind. In many respects Orwell's forecast was accurate about the trend of military progress. He correctly anticipated the confused thinking of all classes about wars that who was right and who was wrong<sup>6</sup>.

In the novel, Orwell's three slogans: War is peace, Freedom is slavery, Ignorance is strength have their application to communist or neo-fascist organizations, however these could also be interpreted as small wars which inflict harm on our enemies but mean peace for us. When the rulers, against their wishes and desires are to enjoy freedom of action, then the population must be enslaved, and the more ignorant and complacent people would be, the greater the strength and power of their rulers. He further describes Nineteen Eighty-Four as a literary fight against totalitarian state, whether of the right or of the left

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<sup>4</sup> Donald McCormick, *Approaching 1984*, (London: David & Charles, 1980), p.12

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 35

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp 35, 36

and against any insidious manifestation of totalitarian methods in everyday life. He gives an example of India. During a birth control movement a man was forcibly dragged into police van and compelled to undergo sterilization operation under a tree during India's state of emergency<sup>7</sup>.

The Newspeak of Nineteen Eighty-Four had also a great impact not only on the public but also in the bureaucracies of various governments. Mr. Ivor Clemitson, Labour MP for Luton East, complained that "politicians have started talking more gobbledegook than usual. Newspeak is all-of-a-sudden talking in abbreviations and no one outside the politicians and civil servants' circles has the faintest idea of what is going on"<sup>8</sup>.

Orwell knew that his main problem was to make plausible his vision of how certain destructive tendencies of modern society could drive insanely forward, unbraked by sentiments of humanness or prudence. The very idea of totally controlled society in which the elite rules through terror and ideology strikes us as a dim horror. In the few decades since Orwell wrote Nineteen Eighty-Four, the world has gone a long way toward domesticating the idea of the total state, indeed to the point where it now seems just one among a number of options concerning the way men live.

The idea of total state is examined by Miller who highlights an elusive and significant relationship between the novel and its history, between its history and people. He suggests, one must begin by reading Nineteen Eighty-Four according to his/her instinct in order to grasp this relationship, and not in terms of simple political or biographical assumption. He says that Orwell created the sense of nightmare through the medium of unique words, because he thought that the established medium is basically inadequate for such a task. "How do you describe dream?" Orwell wrote around 1940 in an unpublished essay entitled "New Words". Clearly you never describe it, because no words that convey the atmosphere of dreams exist in our language. You can recount a dream's major facts and even explicate its symbols, but the real quality of a dream is outside the world of words". Orwell succeeded in establishing the nightmare of Oceania, a dream world that seems both unreal and inescapable<sup>9</sup>.

There is no denying, the range of influence of Nineteen Eighty-Four is so great that its keywords entered in the daily life of common people. And the year 1984 has become less a date than a symbol, vague and ambivalent as symbols are. It stands for a cluster of political fears. But it also implies resistance.

Aubrey sets novel in its historical context, clarifies the nature of Orwell's intentions, and examines the reception of the book<sup>10</sup>. He examines its impact in the process of political discourse. Though it has unequivocal targets, its range goes beyond capitalism and communism. Orwell himself claims that it was not his intention to criticize socialism in

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 107

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 155

<sup>9</sup> Howe Irving, ed., *1984 Revisited*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), p. 22

<sup>10</sup> Crispin Aubrey and Paul Chiton, eds., *Nineteen Eighty Four: Autonomy, Control & Communication*, around the world. Penguin paperback contributed over three million copies. Translations have taken the story of Winston Smith's struggle against Big Brother into 23 languages apart from English.

general but the text does allow readers to deduce different intentions. Phil Corrogan suggests the same that the novel does not uncover the state operation only, but it also reveals private obsession, depression and neurosis<sup>11</sup>.

Aubrey does not agree with most of Orwell's critics, that the novel is the morbid ravings of a dying man. He argues that the book was carefully conceived well before Orwell's later chronic decline in health<sup>12</sup>, though the idea in Nineteen Eighty-Four might be effected by the political environment of the time. For example, the zone of influence, in the novel, through which the world was divided into Eastasia, Eurasia and Oceania, came from a mixture of the 1943 world-dividing conferences in Tehran and Yalta between Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt. For the internal layout of the Ministry of truth, where the hero works, Orwell is said to have used his own workplace, the BBC<sup>13</sup>. Much of the novel's general physical setting was taken from actual war-torn London<sup>14</sup>.

Widgery, whilst arguing that Orwell underestimated the political violence which was also practiced widely in the capitalist democracies<sup>15</sup>, agrees with Aubrey that Orwell's political ingredients are obviously drawn from wider political source material. The main model is the Soviet Union down to the constantly revised five year plans, the Trotsky-Goldstein figure and the thought police clearly shaped by his first hand experience of the GPU agents' operations against the Spanish left during the civil war<sup>16</sup>.

'Nineteen Eighty-Four succeeded admirably in conveying the sense of urgent danger to freedom which he wished to induce in his readers and it has remained for a whole generation the most striking declaration of the political peers in whose shadow our civilization survives'. These are the views of the Woodcock in his book Orwell's Message. He examines the book from four different perspectives: to trace the literary genres of the novel; reasons for writing; its reception from the time of its publication, and Orwell's vision of the world in the 80s.

He suggests two intentions of Orwell's writing of Nineteen Eighty-Four. First he tells the practical realization of Utopia that a planned total society is not possible, somehow along the way it will get perverted, as any other totalitarian vision does, and the excuse that the directors of Utopia must possess complete power to fulfill their vision will change into the reality of having power for its own sake<sup>17</sup>.

Secondly, he is also making sure we must understand the immediate implications of Nineteen Eighty-Four in the present as well as in the future and a satiric revelation of the

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, see chapter 10.

<sup>12</sup> Few notes found in University College Hospital Contains the outline of the book. The entire document is reprinted in Bernard Crick's *George Orwell: A Life*, 1980.

<sup>13</sup> Aubrey & Chiton, Op. Cit., p.10.

<sup>14</sup> Gardner Averil, *George Orwell*, (Boston: Twayne Publisher, 1987), p. 112

<sup>15</sup> Amnesty International suggested that torture was used widely and routinely in at least 60 modern states. Aubrey & Chiton, Op. Cit., p.10

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.15

<sup>17</sup> Woodcock George, *Orwell's Message: 1984 and Present*, (Vancouver: Harbour publishing, 1984), p.46

perils in the here-and-now as well as warning against being deceived by Utopian promises<sup>18</sup>.

Woodcock is of the opinion that the final triumph of totalitarianism is not inevitable, if people fight for their freedom with knowledge and foresight, and recognize the enemy at home as well as abroad. He mentions resistance in various totalitarian regimes like Burma, Tibet and some Soviet occupied regions in the 80s<sup>19</sup>.

From the Burmese Days one can imagine the impression that Orwell was first of all an individualist who resented one man or culture imposing its values on another. Working as a policeman under imperial administration in Burma, a mixture of guilt and curiosity led him to explore how the British natives lived, to discover whether they treated their own working class as they did the indigenous native inhabitants of the empire. This was his beginning of the characterization of the 'Proles' he was to describe in Nineteen Eighty-Four<sup>20</sup>. He resigned not only from the imperial police but also from his place in English class structure.

In May 1984, a conference on "Orwell and his work" was held at the library of Congress. Its proceedings were published in 1985. A number of papers were presented in this conference which offered fresh views on Orwell and his novel Nineteen Eighty-Four. Professor Donoghue, in his paper, argued that Nineteen Eighty-Four is a political fable because it appears to deal with human life in society. The characters of Winston and Julia seem individuals in the whole story; however they exist mainly in their relation to the political system that controls their destinies<sup>21</sup>. Donoghue indicates the obvious weakness in the novel that Orwell does not explain how the system came into being. The book is not a documentary account of any regime; it is a fable, written in fear by the writer beset with his own illness and chaos of the world. Donoghue opines that Orwell's sense of the political fable as a genre was influenced in various ways by Gulliver's Travels, Jack London's The Iron Heel, Yevgeny Zamyatin's We, Huxley's Brave New World and Koestler's Darkness at Noon. Furthermore the non-fictional work of Burnham, The Managerial Revolution, had considerable impact on Nineteen Eighty-Four. He traces Orwell's materials of the book from his personal experiences. For example, the Ministry of Truth, where Winston Smith works, come from Orwell's experience of the British Ministry of Information during the war, and the lies purveyed in the evening news by the BBC's assurances, following bombing raids on German cities that "all our aircrafts returned home safely". The shifting alliances between the three powers, Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia, are based in the first instance on those between Russia and Germany and on the post war arrangements between the great powers as recorded in famous photograph of Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill at Yalta<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.47

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp 183-184

<sup>20</sup> Audrey Coppard & Bernard Crick, eds., *Orwell Remembered*, ( London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1984), p.12

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.57

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.60

Alfred Kazin claims in his paper that the book is a prophecy or a warning about a future because it rests on fiction and so can not be substantiated. Kazin suggests that Orwell in a very blunt style tells how innocent everyone is about the reality of society, which is based upon social coercion. Orwell expresses how we are forced to live. His argumentative writing intends to change the reader's mind. His way of writing was always more or less reasonably persuasive<sup>23</sup>.

Jeffrey Meyers sees the five basic components of the novel: 1) a conventional Orwellian novel of poverty, frustrated love, and flight to the countryside for solitude and sex; 2) a satire on conditions in postwar England; 3) an anti-Utopian projection of an imaginary political future; 4) an almost detachable didactic argument in Goldstein's testament and appendix on Newspeak; and 5) the least successful and most horrible part, a portrayal of the torture and pain that are used to suppress political freedom clearly based on his knowledge of Nazi extermination camps and his personal experience in Sanitorium during 1947-48<sup>24</sup>.

Meyers agrees with Donoghue that Swift, Dostoyevsky, Zamyatin, and Trotsky has great impact on Orwell's work. He traces the cultural context of the 1930s in Nineteen Eighty-Four. Meyer concedes that Nineteen Eighty-Four is a collective text that abstracts and synthesizes all the regular and recurring elements of the literature appeared in the 30s<sup>25</sup>.

In this conference Bernard Crick, Orwell's biographer, also presented his papers. He examines seven main satirical thrusts: 1) an attack on totalitarianism; 2) also an attack on power hunger in general, even in non-totalitarian countries; 3) an attack on the division of the world by the great powers at Yalta and Potsdam; 4) an attack on the intellectuals as a class for deserting for the relative safety of bureaucratic jobs their task of educating the people; 5) a defense of truth against the rewriting of history as was happening all the time, not just in a future 1984; 6) a defense of plain language and plain speaking against official jargon and terminology; and 7) a savage attack on the mass media as the main device for controlling the proles, not remembered by terror and propaganda but by debasement and trivialization<sup>26</sup>.

He insists that it would be wrong to consider the novel a despairing prophecy not a satire. 'Nineteen Eighty-Four is a test case, a kind of laboratory experiment designed to determine the survival factor to those values on which a liberal democracy rests. It measures the stature of man when he faces in solitude the extinction of the individual possibilities'<sup>27</sup>.

Carter suggests that Orwell's primary concern is with the conflict between the authentic and unauthentic modes of existence. The kind of existentiality found in the novel does, in fact, depend on sociopolitical context, for the specific conflict which we have described as existential arises from the self's response to a situation which is socio-politically

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp 76-78

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.80

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.84

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp 101-102

<sup>27</sup> Michael Carter, *George Orwell and the Problem of Authentic Existence*, (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p.178

derived. Those sociopolitical contexts in the novel which define the terms of individual's conflict between authentic and inauthentic existence represent the powers which encourage man into essentially public; non individual activities.

W. J. West took a different route to explore further about Orwell and his work. West discovered a number of writings of George Orwell from the BBC Written Archives. West opposes the view that Orwell's work in BBC was totally lost time for a writer. The material he discovered from BBC Archives shows that Orwell did not cease writing during this period, nor his creative skill lie unused. This study provides useful clues for studying Orwell's thought. For example, it clearly reveals that the idea of Newspeak might come from the censorship on any other media<sup>28</sup>.

West emphasis on the point that when Orwell started working for the BBC, he could not have known how extensive it was or how authoritarian it could become. The totalitarian atmosphere of Nineteen Eighty-Four – of universal censorship that alters the past as well as the present and even attempts to alter the mind, was the ultimate development of Orwell's experience of censorship<sup>29</sup>.

Similarly the canteen on the ground floor was almost certainly the model for the canteen acting as a centre for gossip and social life, but it would have been new to Orwell who had never worked in an organization of this kind before. Especially if we look at photo number 21 in the West book, of wartime headquarter of Ministry of Information, we will find great resemblance with Ministry of Truth in Nineteen Eighty-Four. These images were also discovered and supported by Rothbard. He says that room 101 in Nineteen Eighty-Four was the same numbered room in which Orwell had worked in London during World War II as a British war propagandist<sup>30</sup>.

In the year 1986 a number of studies have appeared on the subject. German Beauchamp sees the central conflict in Nineteen Eighty-Four, that is the conflict of the individual's rebellion against the state, reenacts the Christian myth of man's first disobedience, Adam's against God. He argues that the rebellion of Winston against state in Nineteen Eighty-Four is a sexual one, the struggle for instinctual freedom against the enforced conformity of the state. Beauchamp also sees the influence of Zamiatin's We on Nineteen Eighty-Four<sup>31</sup>.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is also seen as a fictional narrative. Orwell points out not only the manner in which technology and sophisticated scientific methods can be used against humanity, but also the need of human endeavor to consciously oppose such a world. He

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<sup>28</sup> West W. J., *Orwell: The War Broadcasts*, ( London: Duckworth, 1985), see Appendix A

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. Photo graph no. 14. West reproduces the final script of Orwell's talk on Jack London, showing the two censor's stamps.

<sup>30</sup> Robert Mulvihill, ed., *Reflection of America*, 1984: An Orwell Symposium, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), p. 9

<sup>31</sup> Bernard Oldsey & Joseph Browne, eds., *Critical Essays on George Orwell*, ( Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1986 ), p.73

wrote against the centralized economy and against the conversion of intellectuals to totalitarian ideas<sup>32</sup>.

Orwell stands as a 20<sup>th</sup> century hero with courage to speak the unfashionable, unwelcome truth. It is very much clear from his novels *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that the greatness of his work is moral rather than artistic. Reilley believes that Orwell's position defies any simple categorization. His integrity is more commendable because it is his own faith he interrogates- he sets the example of honesty overcoming ideology. To tell the truth sounds a modest ambition, but in an age enthralled by ideology whether Left or Right, it was a daunting task.

In the post Second World War developments his thought placed him at the heart of the cold war perplexities and we go to his writing to find solutions to existing problems. Orwell's appetite for truth made him one of the pioneers of disillusionment. Reilley finds the non-energizing despair is in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. He sees this despair a deliberate, strategic measure, which is meant to save us. Orwell believed that the crystal ball was in danger and urged its protection. His book is conditional prophecy, a summons to preventive action, and a toxin to arouse his sleeping fellows<sup>33</sup>.

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* has been read with amazingly diverse interpretations. Some scholars viewed it a complete satire. It is indeed a satire, but undefined and ambiguous. Orwell used satire and parody synonymously. Orwell denied that something like this will happen. He says: "I do not believe that the kind of society I describe necessarily will arrive but I believe that something resembling it could arrive"<sup>34</sup>. Crick establishes that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a satire of continuing events, not a prophecy of the future.

Rothbard reaches similar conclusions that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a brilliant and mordant attack on totalitarian trends in modern society. He sees Orwell strongly antagonistic to communism and to the regime of the Soviet Union. But the crucial role of a perpetual Cold War is the entrenchment of totalitarianism in Orwell's "nightmare vision".

During the Cold War, the superpowers were consecutively shifting coalitions and alignments against each other. The war kept by agreement between superpowers, safely on the periphery of the blocs, since war in their heartlands might actually blow up the world and their own rule along with it. In addition to the manufacture of fear and hatred against the primary enemy, there have been numerous Orwellian shifts between "Good Guys" and "Bad Guys". In this shift, friends and foes are not persistent. They are subject to change according to interest<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Jasbir Jain, George Orwell: *Witness of an Age*, (Jaipur: Printwell Publisher, 1986), p.57

<sup>33</sup> Patrick Reilly, *Nineteen Eighty Four: Past Present and Future* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), p.124

<sup>34</sup> Robert Mulvihill, Op. Cit., p.15

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7

Orwell's vision of power politics is also convincing. The transformation of official "allies to enemies has happened almost openly, in the generation since he wrote"<sup>36</sup>.

This idea was also supported by Martine that while Eurasia, Eastasia and Oceania have different boundaries in the real than in the fictional Nineteen Eighty-Four, there have been shifts in the Cold War alliance. More striking is the fact that three superpowers have fought proxy wars in the Mideast, Korea, Vietnam, and arguably elsewhere<sup>37</sup>.

Gardner agrees with Donoghue and Meyers that Orwell's notion of the in ubiquity of totalitarianism derived not only from his awareness of the actual regimes in Italy, Germany, and Russia, but also from his reading of a book very influential in the 1940s, James Burnham's 'The Managerial Revolution'. This fictional reinforcement of Orwell's world view had by that time also been contributed by his reading Zamyatin's novel We. This novel was reviewed by Orwell at the beginning of 1946 in Tribune<sup>38</sup>.

But whatever the degree of influence brought to bear on Nineteen Eighty-Four by Orwell's health, other factors existed that, even without the physical one, could hardly have failed to affect his emotional state when contemplating the future. Orwell's fear about the future may have been theoretical and thus are open to argument but his embodiment of them in character and environment give them an authority hard to escape.

In contrast, Harold Bloom does not see anything intrinsic in the book that could determine its importance. According to him its very genre will be established by political, social and economic events<sup>39</sup>. He suggests that Orwell was a passionate moralist, and an accomplished essayist. The age drove him to the composition of political romance, though he lacked nearly all of the gifts necessary for the writer of narrative fiction. According to him Nineteen Eighty-Four is an honorable failure. He argues that Orwell lived and died an independent socialist, hardly Marxist but really a Spanish Anarchist, or an English dissenter and rebel of the line of Cromwell, Milton and Carlyle. Nineteen Eighty-Four has the singular power, not aesthetic but social, of being the product of an age, and not just of the man who setting it down<sup>40</sup>.

Nineteen Eighty-Four impact has been seen in a Chinese context by Prof. Quei Quo. He sees in Mao a real incarnation of Big Brothers. He argues that events of cultural revolution prove that Orwell's imagination was no exaggeration, it can and did happen. The Big Brother was not only omnipresent but also omnipotent in China. Any comparison of Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and Mao's cultural revolution suggests that control mechanisms designed by human being against their fellow men are the same everywhere. It all entails attacks on human vulnerability along lines of pain and pleasure<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Raymond Williams, *George Orwell* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p.76

<sup>37</sup> Robert Mulvihill, Op. Cit., p.60

<sup>38</sup> Gardner Averil, Op. Cit., p.110

<sup>39</sup> Harold Bloom, ed., *George Orwell* (New York: Chelsea House, 1987) p.1

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p.7

<sup>41</sup> Peter Buitenhuis & Ira B. Nadel, eds., *George Orwell: A Reassessment* (London: McMillan, 1988), p.135

John Rodden explores Orwell literary position from a different perspective. In the politics of Literary Reputation he examines the process of literary reputation which involved the transformation of Eric Blair into George Orwell and the metamorphosis of Orwell into St. George<sup>42</sup>.

Rodden claims that Orwell's polarized reputation is based upon an interpersonal and institution relationship, which establishes his position as literary figure<sup>43</sup>. Orwell's work has been so woven into the texture of the popular imagination. Teenagers have turned out and floated off on the waves of rock star David Bowie's apocalyptic hit *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Big Brother*.

Rodden establishes with examples that the romantic myth about Orwell as a man who literally lived and died for his work was also made by wide circulated speculations<sup>44</sup>. No doubt *Nineteen Eighty-Four* deeply influenced the socio-economic and political aspect of society after the World War II. New York editorial criticized Ronald Regan's "Orwellian argument" for the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983<sup>45</sup>.

The term 'air support' for bombing and for example Polish government's use of 'operation calm' for its crackdown on the solidarity movement also resembles *Newspeak*. A 1983 *Time* cover featured a drawing of Orwell with a peeping eye behind him and under it the headline: 'Big Brother's Father'<sup>46</sup>. Not just intellectuals and editorial writers but also political leaders like Margaret Thatcher, Neil Kinnock, Gerald Kaufman, Walter Mondale, John Glenn, and Jesse Jackson contested or applauded Orwell's warning<sup>47</sup>. In Pakistan, the term *Big Brother* was used widely by the Bengali nationalists during their struggle against the tyranny of Pakistan Army in 1971. Recently the province of Punjab was termed *Big Brother* by the leaders of other smaller provinces.

Rodden's research reaches the conclusion that the heroic reputation can neither emerge nor endure without the heroic response. In Malcolm Muggeridge's phrase about Orwell, 'how the legend of human being is created and how biography and society interrelates'<sup>48</sup>.

Rodden found "the pen sharper than the scalpel, for the defacement of George Orwell by critics and the media has resulted in his surviving in the form of multiple new identities"<sup>49</sup>. But his conclusion fails to explain that why other satiric works could not be so influential in the masses despite considerable literary projections, as *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was?

Literature published in the 80s attempted to examine *Nineteen Eighty-Four* more vigorously from various perspectives. But scholars' main thrust remained attached to examine its apocalyptic nature. Biographies, personal memoir, BBC Written Archives

<sup>42</sup> John Rodden, *The Politics of literary reputation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p xi, xii

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23

<sup>45</sup> *New York Times*, November 10, 1983

<sup>46</sup> *Times*, November 28, 1983

<sup>47</sup> *Globe & Mail*, Toronto, December 31, 1983

<sup>48</sup> Malcolm Muggeridge, *Like It Was: The Diaries of Malcolm Muggeridge* (London: 1976), p. 376

<sup>49</sup> John Rodden, *Op. Cit.*, p.400

and the role of institution in literary reputation seem fairly successful to dissect further the ambiguities attached to Nineteen Eighty-Four.

These studies indicate that scholars have agreed on one point that totalitarianism is the fundamental target of this novel but they have not yet uncovered whether Orwell take totalitarianism as a system. Totalitarianism itself is an undefined phenomenon. Since the term came into existence in 1923, it has been discussed as the most central political issue of the century: the nature of freedom, injustice and revolution. German and American scholars differ on the meaning of totalitarianism<sup>50</sup>.

One important aspect of Nineteen Eighty-Four that escaped scholars' examinations is that which I see as the most important message of the novel. The division of world into three zones Oceania, Eastasia and Eurasia with their self-defined national interest seems to me the nucleus point in the theme of the novel. The issue of "national interest" has become a curse to humanity which Orwell highlighted in the novel. The division of human beings into competing and often hostile nations has had a disastrously distorting effect upon humanity. The concept of National security and aggrandized national interest leaves little room for other nations. Historians Loyoyd C. Gardner comments on American foreign policy after the World War II: 'we need to ask much more about those who were defining national security, to put America inside other skin'. Robert Davine blames internationalists for the genesis of Cold War. He says that 'internationalists were all old-stock Protestant American. Descendants of English and Scottish Settlers, they were Anglophiles who believed that the U.S. had inherited England's role as arbiter of world affairs. As a social class they showed little sympathy for plight of colonial people. They took Latin America for granted and neglected the orient'.

It is true that the American foreign policy was governed by upper class internationalists like Thomas J. Watson of IBM, John Foster Dulles of Sullivan and Cormwell, the leading international Law firm, and Thomas W. Lamout of J.P. Morgan and Company, and many others.

On the other side, Stalin's aggrandizement unleashed a new form of oppression under the name of ideology. The struggle between Soviet Union and the U.S. for Europe was the struggle of influence and the third world was irrelevant in the beginning. Later on the broadly defined National interest engulfed the third world countries. In the game of power politics unlawfulness prevails if there is no law. Orwell wrote: 'What the crimes, if any, has Mussolini committed? In Power politics there are no crimes, because there are no laws. And on the other hand, is there any feature in Mussolini's internal regime that be seriously objected to by any body of the people likely to sit in judgment of him?'<sup>51</sup>. What I noticed during the Cold War politics, the concept of totalitarianism is nothing more than the manifestation of the desire to label certain regimes as bad for the purpose of

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<sup>50</sup> Abbat Gleason, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War* ( New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.12

<sup>51</sup> *The Collected Essays, Journalism and letters of George Orwell: The Age Like This 1920-1940.* (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, Inc.) p.319

simplifying the global politics<sup>52</sup>. However, its features are observable and exhibited within a framework of mass democracy. For example, during Civil Rights movement, the bombing of black [sic] churches, blurred the difference between American democracy and Communist totalitarianism<sup>53</sup>. The greatest sufferers of this baseless ideological confrontation was the people of the third world. 'National interests' were defined at the expense of humanity, which caused unending poverty, corruption and unhygienic living conditions.

It seems to me that the ideologies during the Cold War were purposely patternized. The Cold War contestants were in alliance on so many issues: they would not attack on each other's mainland and in the areas of their allies i.e., NATO and WARSAW countries. They agreed to promote wars and war-like situations in the third world under the slogan of 'free world' and 'social equality' in order to keep their arms industries alive. One can see the upward economic growth of the West throughout the cold war.

The source of Orwell's anxiety in Nineteen Eighty-four is the fate of self, individuality and mind in a political system that reduces them into a species. Orwell focuses upon the survival of human beings and common sense as a public virtue and attempt to preserve ordinary rationality. When we see the present world politics, Orwell's imaginations seem translated into several manifestations in the decade of 80s and after. Russian invasion in Afghanistan, destruction of Iraq on the plea of weapons of mass destruction and American invasion on Afghanistan against its own creation, Taliban are visible examples of the state of affairs which Orwell attempted to portray in the novel. In my view Nation-states and their interests are biggest threats to world peace and humanity. George Orwell forces us to think about the choice between the concept of national sovereignty and the sense of humanity.

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<sup>52</sup> Herbert J. Spiro and Benjamin Barber's article 'Counter-ideological uses of Totalitarianism', in Politics and Society, 1 (1970)

<sup>53</sup> Abbat Gleason, Op. Cit., p.5. See also John Cloud, 'The KGB of Mississippi: A shadow state agency that spied on civil rights workers open its files' appeared in *Time*, March 30, 1998. p. 29