



The Politics of Emotion: Love, the Unconscious and the Preservation of Humanity in Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four

Priya

Research Scholar

Department of English,

Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, Haryana, India

Abstract : Feelings distinguish humans uniquely. Humanity's future hinges upon our capacity for experiencing an expansive range of emotions characterized by love and compassion. Yet amidst today's complex world dominated by technological advancements and swift changes, urgent action is required now. An exemplary case illustrating this concept is provided by George Orwell's depiction of a fictional totalitarian society. The document elucidates how emotions intertwine with the subconscious mind and human resilience in George Orwell's 1984, suggesting that emotional experiences serve not only as weapons against oppression but also as mechanisms for maintaining power under authoritarian regimes. Examining intricacies surrounding emotions like love, dread, and lust, this research uncovers Orwell's depiction of oppressive governments using control tactics such as suppressing personal identity and manipulating emotional states in their efforts against freedom. Synthesizing insights from both psychoanalytic and political theories, this analysis delves into the hidden aspects of emotions by exploring their role in family and love relationships, demonstrating how these connections safeguard individual morality and identity. This document explores how states employ coercive measures aimed at managing emotions while also highlighting individuals' ability to resist these controls via their emotional bonds, thereby underscoring our resilience despite extensive monitoring and ideologically driven repression. In conclusion, this research asserts that George Orwell's perspective highlights how emotions and subconscious elements play crucial roles in preserving humanity's inherent worth and maintaining opportunities for moral and political activism within an overly superficial contemporary society.

IndexTerms – Humanity , suffering , totalitarianism, unconscious, politics.

INTRODUCTION:

The dimension where words and emotions are drastically being politicized for serving the interest and propaganda of power is the world of "*Nineteen Eighty-four*." George Orwell, the agent of humanity in a world of political and social oppression, born Eric Arthur Blair on June 25, 1903, is widely recognized as one of the most pivotal writers of the 20th century. As an English novelist, essayist, journalist, and critic, Orwell's experiences in colonial Burma, his participation in the Spanish Civil War, and his strong opposition to totalitarianism greatly shaped his worldview and writing. These experiences led him to the realization of the oppression and injustices inflicted on the people by totalitarian regimes. His warning to humanity about the dangers of a totalitarian state are clearly exemplified in his most famous novel, "*Nineteen Eighty-Four*". Revolving around the concepts of surveillance, propaganda and mechanisms that strip humans out of their moral and spiritual values, Orwell weaves the map of a world where materialism and mechanization reign. The technological advancements and rapid evolution of scientific values have degraded humans to a level where their thoughts, feelings and mind are utterly being controlled by the governmental agencies. From language and expressions to bonds and connections, everything is being played upon by the totalitarian government mentioned as "The Big Brother" in the novel. Besides this physical control over spaces and places, the agenda of the party resides in the emotional and ideological control where feelings are under surveillance. The natural human tendency of loving and connecting with other people has been mentioned as a criminal offence. Orwell's novel oscillates between the significance of human connection and the Party's constant monitoring and restrictions on emotions. As Hannah Arendt argues in this context, "Totalitarian domination reaches into the private sphere and seeks to eliminate spontaneous human relationships." (Arendt 474) This is how Orwellian imagination paints a dystopian society, Oceania, in which the government mentioned as the Party, controlled by Big Brother maintains absolute authoritative approach over its population.

The Party stays in power by intentionally labelling love and romance as crime in order to do away with the emotional bonds outside the state permissions. The Party wishes to eradicate the risk unrestrained human emotion can create in maintaining the absolute power, hence politicizing inner experience. Love is analyzed with a revolutionary lens because it inspires loyalties, contemplation, and moral autonomy, all of which hamper the Party's need for total submissiveness. Ingsoc's ban on sexual activities is a calculated move aimed at directing sexual energy away from personal relationships towards collective zeal and political devotion. Herbert Marcuse beautifully demonstrates this phenomenon as: "The organization of sexuality is one of the chief supports of political domination." (Marcuse 35) This illustrates itself in the *Two Minutes Hate*, where personal emotions are channelized into a collective reaction. The Party does not erase emotions through such techniques; rather, it filters such sentiments that foster submission such as fear, jealousy, and a distorted worship for Big Brother. In the backdrop of emotional subjugation, Winston Smith's relationship with Julia represents an instinctive and predominantly subconscious rebellion that occurs prior to intellectual manifestation and functions within the domain of tangible longing and authentic emotion. Their bond is a medium of escape and a mutual exchange of pleasure, intimacy, and rebellion, all of which the Party has clearly denounced as offence. Winston's love grants him access to an aspect of himself hidden from governmental control. This aspect of his identity is fused with memories and emotions that political power has not completely taken over. This connection to the unconscious shows traces of humanity still existing within a predominantly mechanistic and controlled societal structure. The rented room above Mr. Charrington's establishment, decorated with artifacts and a coral paperweight, serves as a vulnerable escape for this dead existence. It signifies a closed space with its own aesthetic appeal, and emotional profundity, elements that the Party's rigid outlook disregards. Affection also keeps individuals in touch with the memory and aids them in recalling events, particularly Winston's memories of his mother and brothers. These recollections illustrate a moral framework grounded on sacrifice and love rather than authority and efficiency. This indicates that emotionally recalled memory is a crucial component of moral awareness.

Here in the novel the characters, Winston and Julia are mutually attracted towards each other tied by a common thread of rebellion. It's clear through their interactions that both are infatuated by each other. This is demonstrated by Winston's imagination about Julia and Julia's desire for Winston. Scrutinizing the statement when the narrator accentuates in the novel: "He hated her because she was young and pretty and sexless, because he wanted to go to bed with her...." (Orwell, 2008) Winston's hatred has reached the zenith where he cannot approach Julia. Winston's realization that Julia is "young" and "pretty" when they finally come across and become closer causes a sudden drift from hatred to love in his relationship with her. Likewise, Julia's persona depicts intimacy. As in the novel, when Winston was sitting in the canteen, he noticed Julia sitting next to his table and observing him. (Orwell, 2008) This reveals her excitement about him, through which she developed an emotional bond to Winston. The statement that proves her feelings toward Winston more specifically is: "It was something in your face. I thought I'd take a chance. I'm good at spotting people who don't belong. As soon as I saw you, I knew you were against THEM." (Orwell, 2008) Differentiated in their motives but bonded by their contempt towards the Party, here are established the inseparable bonds directed towards nothing but rebellion. Therefore, it becomes an inspiration to stay connected providing them with a free unconscious space where their emotions are not chained. Besides their emotional bond their passion has been portrayed beautifully. Passion and intimacy not only provide them with comfort but a medium of escape from the dead humanity. It depicts a close space where humans can behave as humans and not machines. The fulfilment as seen here is not just romantic but it is politically grounded. The passion aspect in Orwell's "1984" is clearly seen in Winston and Julia's secret liaison, which is marked by a strong desire to feel open and oneself. The risk in the way of love enhances their desire to merge into each other. For instance, Orwell writes, "He flattened it out. On it was written, in a large unformed handwriting: I love you." (Orwell, 2008) The clear evidence of it can be seen in Julia's endeavors to write a piece of letter to Winston even at the cost of injuring herself. Considered as the violation of rules the Party forbids any kind of writing to limit the horizon of thoughts. But here is seen the play of the unconscious where Julia suffers an inability to escape the suppressed romantic labyrinth. She even admits the frequency of her having sex with the inner party members whenever she felt an urge (Orwell, 2008) Winston's intimate thoughts about Julia also reveal his sexual urge. For example, "He thought of her naked, youthful body, as he had seen it in his dream." (Orwell, 2008) This example from the text clearly verifies the domination of their relationship by their intense physical infatuation and close sexual contact. This becomes the base for rebellious activities. Sara Ahmed portrays it as: "Emotions do things; they align individuals with communities—or against them." (Ahmed 119) The secret meetings, whether in the church's ruins, a secret hideout in the Golden Country, or in Charrington's shop, everything act as weapons on the political power. Their strolling together in the night ignited their passion. The novel describes how the condition quickly took a leap after they shared a kiss- "A rocket bomb must have dropped quite near at hand. Suddenly, he became aware of Julia's face a few centimeters from his own, deathly white, as white as chalk. Even her lips were white. She was dead! He clasped her against him and found that he was kissing a live, warm face. But there was some powdery stuff that got in the way of his lips. Both of their faces were thickly coated with plaster." (Orwell, 2008) This incident clearly portrayed their intense longing for one another, as they challenged the circumstances and displayed a strong determination. This power of passion and determination somehow becomes the agent of humanity in an emotionally sterile world. Hence, the presence of passion and the importance of human connection is clearly reigning in the novel in a hidden manner. It emphasizes that even in a state of complete prohibition and neglect of connections, love possess an ability to overshadow everything else. For instance, the hero statement here is- "Their embrace had been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. (Orwell, 2008) But in this flowery path of love stands the issue of commitment. It refers to that portion of love where a person is supposed to make sacrifices and compromises in their relationship to ensure its longevity. Winston and Julia, in the beginning show their commitment to each other by sticking to each other despite the Party's warnings against it. Not betraying each other in such a restrictive environment was itself a challenge for them. The discovery of them in such an environment leave no space for hope. Nevertheless, Winston contends that the act confession after them being arrested does not constitute the betrayal to which he alludes. On the contrary, emotions would keep them loyal to each other. Winston said that the true act of betrayal would be if they could make him forget his love for her. (Orwell, 2008) The erasure of their inner feelings for each other was impossible. Through this confession they strive to keep their humanity alive. This commitment of them is another humanly act where emotions are being conveyed and not transformed into any political ideology.

The characters like O'Brien stand in complete contrast to this commitment aspect as his pretensions of being a friend are unfolded. As in the text, it is evident, " 'You are prepared, the two of you, to separate and never see one another again?' 'No!' broke in Julia." (Orwell, 2008) This example becomes the threshold of love and humanity when their inner feelings keep holding each other tightly not in each other's arms but in their entangled thoughts. Winston also stays captured in humanity in the instance where he imagines a family life with Julia. He thinks to himself in the text- " He wished that they were a married couple of ten years' standing. He wished that he was walking through the streets with her just as they were doing now but openly and without fear, talking of trivialities and buying odds and ends for the household. " (Orwell, 2008) This is where humanity ensures victory in some centimeters of the mind of these characters.

But what Orwell ultimately conveys is that that this emotional resistance is not enough as the Party's propaganda is not external but the conscious and the unconscious both. The filtration of the internal self, the fragmentation of one's rooted beliefs and the entire loss of human compassion are the ultimate motives which they gain at any cost. The regime does not compel individuals to abandon their beliefs, but their emotional manipulation prove their own beliefs as benefactory. The evidence to this is Winston's anxiety and constant fear of being captured. In the Ministry of Love, suffering has been employed as an educational weapon to destroy human relationships. Room 101 is the center of total annihilation of affection, humanity and commitment. Winston's refusal of love towards Julia demonstrates how even the deepest of emotions can be erased by overwhelming fear, representing the most suitable example of shattered human connections. The zenith of loss of connection in the novel is Winston's acceptance of affection for Big Brother which in turn illustrates the Party's total victory, not only over political dissent but also over the basic essence of human subjectivity and connections. Orwell demonstrates a pessimistic outlook, suggesting that the sustainability of humanity depends on the regularity of emotional experiences, while acknowledging the disturbing effect of such experiences under totalitarian rule. Nineteen Eighty-Four functions as a gravitationally cautionary tale regarding governments that seek to establish a total control over not only behaviors and beliefs but also the human aspects of affection, bonding, recollection, and individuality. As analyzed by John Rodden, "Orwell's ultimate concern was moral—how political systems deform human feeling." (Rodden 92) What stays is the power, what loses is humanity.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh UP, 2004.
- [2] Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1951.
- [3] Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization*. Beacon Press, 1955.
- [4] Rodden, John. *The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of "St. George" Orwell*. Oxford UP, 1989.
- [5] Orwell, George. 1984. Penguin Books, 1949.