

Government Control and Restriction on Society as Reflected in Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell and Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury: an Intertextual Reading

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ABSTRAK

Nineteen Eighty-Four oleh George Orwell dan Fahrenheit 451 oleh Ray Bradbury merupakan karya besar dari dua penulis terkenal. Kedua novel ini menuangkan ide yang luar biasa tentang kontrol dan propaganda pemerintah, yang memperlihatkan cara yang berbeda dalam mengontrol dan menyebarkan propaganda ke masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan hubungan interteks yang ada di kedua novel. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menerapkan kombinasi antara pendekatan intertekstualitas milik Julia Kristeva dengan pendekatan ideologi dan aparatur ideologi negara milik Louis Althusser. Penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa ada banyak kemiripan di antara kedua novel, yaitu dari segi tujuan kontrol pemerintah seperti membuat masyarakat menjadi pasif, membuat masyarakat percaya kepada propaganda pemerintah, dan menghilangkan kemungkinan masyarakat untuk memberontak. Penelitian ini juga membuktikan adanya kemiripan watak tokoh utama di kedua novel. Fahrenheit 451 karya Ray Bradbury terbukti dipengaruhi oleh Nineteen Eighty-Four karya George Orwell. Fahrenheit 451 menjadi sisi lain dari Nineteen Eighty-Four atau bisa disebut sebagai versi Amerika dari Nineteen Eighty-Four

Kata Kunci: intertektualitas, kontrol pemerintah, propaganda, saudara besar, pencekalan buku

ABSTRACT

George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 are masterpieces of both well-known authors. Both novels highlight government's control and propaganda upon society as they reveal different ways of control and propaganda in the stories. This research aims to find the intertextual relation that exist in both novels. In conducting this research, the writer uses the theory of intertextuality by Julia Kristeva, combined with the Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus theory by Louis Althusser. The research proves that

there are so many similarities between both novels in the terms of the government control purposes such as making people become passive, making people believe what government wants them to believe, and eliminating people' chance to rebel. This research also proves that there are similarities in the main characters' development in both novels. Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury is evidently influenced by Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell. Fahrenheit 451 become the other side of Nineteen Eighty-Four; or we can say that it is the American version of Nineteen Eighty-Four.

Keywords: intertextuality, government control, propaganda, big brother, books banning

1. Introduction

Nineteen Eighty-Four and Fahrenheit 451 are masterpieces of two different writers which have received awards and accolades. Both novels have the theme of a dystopian future of mankind when people are dictated by their government. It is a dark future when government politically controls the society, limits people's knowledge by censorship, and bans anything which can make them clever, and punishes anyone who tries to oppose the government or questions the policies. Nineteen Eighty-Four was published in 1949 while Fahrenheit 451 was published in 1953. Both novels have a similar theme and similar structure in story development which indicates intertextuality.

2. Background

Nineteen Eighty-Four and Fahrenheit 451 predict the society in the future as they reveal issues that we might be unaware before about government control, a very important and relevant issue to be discussed and analyzed. The clear contrasts between both novels are the background of the society and the government way to control the society. Althusser stated that government or state is a machine of repression which make ruling class have the powers and tools to dominate and control working class (Althusser 22). He explains that there are two ways to control the people, first is with repressive way he called it Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), and the other is with ideology way called Ideological State Apparatus (ISA).

As we know Nineteen Eighty-Four were first published then followed by Fahrenheit 451 indicates that Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 is inspired by George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-

Four as Kristeva said “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva 66). In this article the writer will focus to analyze the general theme and the characterization of main protagonist of both novels.

3. Reviews of Related Studies

In order to conduct the research, the writer will provide reviews on some previous researches and studies about Nineteen Eighty-Four and Fahrenheit 451, to be used as references and comparison. The first review is on a thesis written by Gindho Rizano entitled Imagery and Symbolism in George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Formalistic Reading (2005). Rizano analyzed how the novel is designed and structured. He explained how the logical structure of the novel works together by analyzing the texture and structure of the novel. He also discussed how the interrelated images and symbols in the novel reinforce the meaning in the novel. Rizano used New Criticism approach to conduct his research.

The second review is on an article written by Jennifer Storey, Catriona Mulholland, William Simpson, and Matthew Hammer entitled Zamzatin and Orwell: A Comparative analysis of We and 1984 (2012). They analyzed the link between the two novels, focusing on sex representation in totalitarianism society. It explains about how exposed totalitarianism society intervenes the regulating and repressing of sexual desire by limiting inter sexual contact. It talks about how totalitarianism society makes human reproduction as a political object in which the society has an obligation to control and exploit it. They also analyzed the sex symbols that appear in both novels.

4. Government Control and Restriction on Society

In this chapter, the writer discusses about the main theme of both novels and proves the intertextual relationship between two novels by explaining the main agendas of the government in controlling and restricting the society. In addition, it also shows how the government propaganda affects the people in the society through the main characters’ life and highlights the intertextual relationship between main characters in the two novels.

4.1. Government Agenda in Controlling and Restricting the Society

There is a similarity in these two novels; both of them highlight the same issue about government control and restriction upon the society. The societies are under the totalitarianism government, the dark future of mankind. However, there is also an interesting fact in these novels; the government in each novel has a different way in controlling and restricting their society. Even though the government in each novel uses a different way in controlling and restricting the society, there is intertextual relation behind it, we can see it from the purposes of government control and restriction. There are three main agendas of both governments in controlling the society. These agendas are: to make people become passive, to make people believe what the government wants them to believe, and to eliminate people's chance to rebel.

a. Making People Become Passive

Passive people are the perfect object of the government control, because they will never argue or question the government policies and propagandas. Then, to protect its domination over the society, the government as the representation of the ruling class must make people become an easy object of control. One of the ways that they use is limiting and filtering people's knowledge, which will make them passive.

Nineteen Eighty-Four tells about the dark future of the late communist society. People in this society are isolated; they have no right to express their thoughts and to think about something that contradicts the government policies. They are monitored by the government and they have no chance to rebel or even to think about rebellion. The government makes strict rules about rebellion; it makes a special department which arrests the people who do rebellious act, or even people who think about rebelling.

Government's policies about rebellious thought, which Orwell called as "thoughtcrimes", are very strict: people who try to defy it will be arrested by the government. "Thoughtcrime does not entail death: thoughtcrime IS death" (Orwell 29). It shows how horrifying thoughtcrime is. The government makes a special institution called "Thought Police" in order to control and arrest people who commit thoughtcrime. This way of controlling people is called repressive state apparatus; the government uses force and violence to keep people in the line.

Just like Nineteen Eighty-Four, Fahrenheit 451 talks about the dark future of mankind, but it is in a capitalist society. People in this society also have no chance to think for themselves. The government controls and restricts them just like the government in Nineteen Eighty-Four. In

Fahrenheit 451, the books are the government's archenemy. If anyone tries to read or even to keep the book, he will be arrested by the government and his home will be burned. To keep people in control, the government needs to make them dull, so they will never question and criticize the government's policies. Just like Nineteen Eighty-Four. The way that government uses to secure its domination is by banning the books, thus it makes people become dull and have no capability to think by themselves.

People will lose their potential to criticize the government because they have limited source of knowledge and information. If no one can criticize the government, then it will have absolute power to control the people. "If you don't want a man unhappy politically, don't give him two sides to a question to worry him, give him one. Better yet, give him none. Let him forget there is such a thing as war. . . . Don't give them any slippery stuff like philosophy or sociology to tie things up with" (Bradbury 58). Knowledge will make people think, discuss, and debate which will make them clever. Thus, if people only have one kind of perspective, they will never have to discuss and debate about anything.

The government filters the knowledge by banning the books, so people will only know what the government wants them to know. Then, by doing this, people also lose their capability to express their own thoughts. It is similar with Nineteen Eighty-Four when the government limits the people by spying and threatening them. Both of the ways make people become passive and helpless. This kind of control that government in Fahrenheit 451 uses is called RSA; it uses people's fears of violence to make them stay on track and it secures the government's position as the ruling class.

b. Making People Believe in what Government Wants to Believe

In order to keep its power of domination over the people, the government must make people believe in something that it wants them to believe. In other words, the government must make people believe in its propaganda. "No class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses" (Althusser 146).

In Nineteen Eighty-Four the government spreads their ideology by making a godlike leader icon called the Big Brother. They make this icon to unite the people so people will have

an icon of the protector, the one who will protect them from the terrors of wars. Then, to drag people faith in Big Brother they make a public enemy icon named Emanuel Goldstein. Goldstein is described as the most dangerous man in the country. The government will set new ideology in people's mind to store their hatred in one icon and store their faith in another. People have irrational fears and malice to Emanuel Goldstein stated from the novel "As usual, the face of Emmanuel Goldstein, the Enemy of the People, had flashed onto the screen. There were hisses here and there among audience" (Orwell 12). This ideology will make people stay on track, to believe in Big Brother, the one who is protecting them from the wars, and hate Emmanuel Goldstein, the most dangerous man in the country.

When the governments succeeded to make people strongly believe in Big Brother, they can freely spread every discourse and ideologies to the people without anyone will ever doubting. The government also limits the people's knowledge by controlling the media, it is called the communication ISA, and they filter the media before publishing it to the people. They will eliminate any information that contradicted with their current purpose, and change or manipulate it to make it conformable with their interest.

Just like the society in Nineteen Eighty-Four, people in Fahrenheit 451 are also controlled by government ideologies; they have an irrational fear and malice to the books. Knowledge does not fit with the government long term agenda, so they manipulate people's mind to hate the books. They make people think that the books are very dangerous, reading or even keeping the books is a sin for them. "A book is a loaded gun in the house next door. Burn it. Take the shot from the weapon. Breach man's mind" (Bradbury 77).

Just like Big Brother in Nineteen Eighty-Four, the government in Fahrenheit 451 is also makes a protector icon to protect the people from the danger of the books, and they are the fireman. The fireman is pictured as the hero icon for the people, the one who will destroy the books and protects the people from it and the dangerous people who read and keep the books. The government in Fahrenheit 451 is also controls the media; they spread fake news in order to make people feel safe.

In order to keep people trust, the government fakes the news so they can keep maintains their dominance because they know that if people lost their trust of the government, they will face a very big problem.

The government in both novels uses discourse and propaganda in order to make people believe what they want them to believe, this kind of control is called ISA. The government just spreads propaganda to gain people's trust and makes them obedient. They force an ideology to make people think that the government is the good side, the one who will protect the people and keep them away from the bad things.

c. Eliminating People' Chance to Rebel

When the government successfully makes the people become passive and believe what they want them to believe; they need to eliminate the people's chance to rebel so their domination will last long forever. By eliminating the people's chance to rebel, the government will have the opportunity to control the society without the risk of rebellion.

In Nineteen Eighty-Four, to prevent current people and the next generation from rebellion act, the government remakes the language, and they called it newspeak. The government eliminates every single word that leads people to the thoughtcrime, and it also eliminates the opposition of those words so people will never know that such words ever exist. "Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thought crime literally impossible" (Orwell 53). When there is no any words can express the rebellious thought, people will have no idea about how to express their rebel against the government.

The government even prohibits the people keeping the records of their past, such as photographs and documents so people have no proof about their existence in the past. "For how could you establish even the most obvious fact when there existed no record outside your own memory?" (Orwell 36).

In other hand, the government in Fahrenheit 451 prevents people from rebellion act by forcing them to keep busy. The government gives people nonstop entertainment from radio and television. It makes people think that their life is good enough just by listening or watching the entertainment all day long, so they will not have time to think about anything else. "What do we want in this country, above all? People want to be happy, isn't that right? Haven't you heard it all your life? I want to be happy, people say. Well, aren't they? Don't we keep them moving, don't we give them fun?" (Bradbury 58). The government builds an ideology to make people think that all they need is happiness, and they do not need to think about something complicated because it

is not a happy thing. People fall into this government discourse because they think that is really makes sense, all they need is happiness and they don't need to think about anything else.

4.2. Hero and Anti-Hero Icon, Hopes versus Despairs

Winston Smith from Nineteen Eighty-Four and Guy Montag from Fahrenheit 451, they are the main protagonist of the stories. They have a very important role in leading the story line. Both of them are the subject of government control, they have similar characteristics like a job background and personal issues that happen because of the government control and restriction but they have different way to deal with their issues.

First of all, both of them work for important institutions which owned by the government. At the beginning they really like and love their job until they realize the sad truth of the society. Winston works as a clerk in the records department of truth, his job is to filter and rewrite all of historical documents and match it with party interest. Winston really enjoys his job "Winston's greatest pleasure in life was in his work". (Orwell 45). The purpose of his job is to manipulate the media and history. Just like Winston, Guy works as a fireman in the fire department and also enjoys his job; we can see it from the very first sentence of the novel "It was a pleasure to burn" (Bradbury 1). The Guy's job is to burn every single book in the country, because books are the government's archenemy. Both of them work for the government and they have important roles in government propaganda.

At the beginning of these stories, both of the main characters seem like they are under the government's control just like most people in the society are. Yet as the story unfolds, they starting to realize it and begin their rebellion, which brings them more problems. Winston and Guy have the same issue: both of them mistrust the government and become a rebel. After Winston realizes about the truth of the society he becomes a rebel and fight for freedom, even he knows that what he doing was lunatic and very risky "He was already dead, he reflected.... The consequences of every act are included in the act itself". (Orwell 29). The very first time that Winston realizes when he commits his crime and his mistrust to government is when he writes "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" in his diary unconsciously.

Just like Winston, at the beginning of the story, Guy is the government's loyal puppet and after he knows about the truth of the society he started to rebel. He also knows that what he doing is very dangerous, but he still keeps struggling for something that he thinks is right. "So it

was the hand that started it all . . . His hands had been infected, and soon it would be his arms . . . His hands were ravenous” (Bradbury 38). Then just like Winston, the very first time Guy commits his crime and mistrust the government is when he consciously and unconsciously steals a book.

Both of them are restricted by the government, unconsciously rebel to the government, and try to fight against the government even though that will risk their life. Behind these similarities, there is one big contrast between both characters. That is the way they deal with their problem. The ending of Nineteen Eighty-Four is so gloomy, at the end of the story Winston eventually gives up after the Thought Police arrested and tortured him. He even betrays the only person that he believes Julia “Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don’t care what you do to her. Tear her face off, strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!” (Orwell 297). Winston gives up to the system and chooses to follow the government. It’s because from the beginning he even not sure about his rebellion, he just gives him false hope and he does the rebellion mostly just for himself. He is a kind of selfish and passive character and it gives the anti-hero impression to the readers.

On the other hand, the ending of Fahrenheit 451 was more hopeful. Guy does his rebellion not just for himself but also for the people. He does the real action to fight for the freedom which shows his courage; also his personality keeps changing and evolving from time to time. Later he kills the main antagonist and sacrifices everything he had. He escapes and meets the rebel group, and plans a revolution. It gives Guy the hero impression, the one who will never give up and sacrifices everything for the sake of people. It makes Guy Montag become like the hero version of Winston Smith.

5. Conclusion

Considering the similarities of the two novels in the term of the themes and characters, it can be concluded that Fahrenheit 451 is like the American version of Nineteen Eighty-Four. It is like Bradbury rewrites Nineteen Eighty-Four and makes it fits with the condition of American society. Fahrenheit 451 has a more optimistic tone which might be influenced by the idea of American dreams. They are so similar in many aspects, but Bradbury succeeded delivers the idea in a different way. He makes the main protagonist more heroic and has a hope for a better society. He also invents new ideas about how government controls and

restricts the society in capitalist society. So we prove that Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 are positively influenced by George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four.

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