

## The Rules of Big Brother and Their Parallels with Stalin's Soviet Union: A Comparative Analysis

Muh Firsawirawan

Universitas Sam Ratulangi, Manado, Indonesia  
firsawirawan@unsrat.ac.id

Article History: Submitted November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025; Accepted December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025; Published December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Abstract.** Literature is an artistic expression that often mirrors the social and political realities of its era. It does not exist in isolation but arises from the interaction between human consciousness and historical experience. The central problem of this research lies in the lack of comparative academic studies that examine how George Orwell's portrayal of dictatorship in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* reflects and parallels the real-world totalitarian system of Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union. Both leaders—fictional and historical—constructed societies based on fear, surveillance, and ideological manipulation. This study therefore, aims to analyze the similarities and differences between Big Brother's authoritarian control and Stalin's political domination, revealing how literature can function as a mirror of power and oppression. This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design under the framework of Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism. The primary data are drawn from Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, while the secondary data include scholarly articles, historical documents, and critical essays on Stalinism and totalitarian regimes. The method involves textual interpretation, comparative analysis, and sociological contextualization to uncover the ideological structure embedded in Orwell's narrative. The findings reveal that both Big Brother and Stalin maintained absolute control through propaganda, censorship, historical revisionism, and psychological coercion. *Big Brother's Two Minutes Hate*, *Thought Police*, and *Room 101* reflect Stalin's repressive tactics such as political purges, the NKVD's surveillance, and forced confessions. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* serves not only as a dystopian fiction but also as a literary reflection of historical totalitarianism.

**Keywords:** Big Brother; comparative analysis; Joseph Stalin; genetic structuralism; totalitarianism

**Abstrak.** Sastra merupakan ekspresi artistik yang sering kali mencerminkan realitas sosial dan politik pada zamannya. Ia tidak hadir secara terpisah, melainkan lahir dari interaksi antara kesadaran manusia dan pengalaman historis. Permasalahan utama dalam penelitian ini terletak pada kurangnya kajian akademik komparatif yang meneliti bagaimana penggambaran kediktatoran oleh George Orwell dalam 1984 mencerminkan dan memparalelkan sistem totalitarian yang nyata dalam Uni Soviet di bawah pemerintahan Joseph Stalin. Kedua tokoh—baik fiktif maupun historis—membangun masyarakat yang berlandaskan pada ketakutan, pengawasan, dan manipulasi ideologi. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis persamaan dan perbedaan antara kontrol otoriter Big Brother dan dominasi politik Stalin, sekaligus mengungkap bagaimana karya sastra dapat berfungsi sebagai cermin kekuasaan dan penindasan. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dengan kerangka teori strukturalisme genetik Lucien Goldmann. Data primer diperoleh dari novel 1984 karya Orwell, sedangkan data sekunder mencakup artikel ilmiah, dokumen sejarah, dan esai kritis tentang Stalinisme serta rezim totalitarian. Metode penelitian meliputi interpretasi tekstual, analisis komparatif, dan kontekstualisasi sosiologis untuk mengungkap struktur ideologis yang terkandung dalam narasi Orwell. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa baik Big Brother maupun Stalin mempertahankan kendali absolut melalui propaganda, sensor, revisi sejarah, dan pemaksaan psikologis. Konsep *Two Minutes Hate*, *Thought Police*, dan *Room 101* dalam 1984 mencerminkan taktik represif Stalin seperti pembersihan politik, pengawasan oleh NKVD, dan pengakuan paksa. Sebagai

*kesimpulan, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa 1984 karya Orwell tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai fiksi distopia, tetapi juga sebagai refleksi sastra terhadap totalitarianisme historis.*

**Kata kunci:** analisis komparatif; *Big Brother*; Joseph Stalin; strukturalisme genetic; totalitarianisme

## INTRODUCTION

Literature is a medium through which authors express their perceptions and feelings regarding specific social circumstances. Orwell presents a meaningful narrative that reflects a significant historical and political moment. In the author's view, this novel introduces a world in which dictatorship represents the predominant form of leadership. The nation we recognize as England is transformed into Oceania, while its capital, London, is renamed Airstrip One. The leader of Oceania, known as Big Brother, never appears in public but exercises total control through a series of rigid and oppressive rules.

Big Brother serves as a dictator in Oceania, wielding absolute authority over his people. He enforces numerous restrictions that suppress individual freedom. Ironically, citizens idolize Big Brother, perceiving him as a hero and protector. In reality, he manipulates and deceives them through systematic propaganda and authoritarian regulations. One of the most striking examples of his control is the rewriting of history, designed to maintain his image as an infallible leader. This manipulation extends to newspapers, educational materials, and history books, all rewritten to conform to Party ideology.

Meanwhile, Joseph Stalin as the historical counterpart of Big Brother, was born on December 18th, 1878, in Gori, Georgia (Hingley, 2025). Despite his impoverished background, Stalin demonstrated academic excellence and strong determination. Following Lenin's rule, he became the leader of the Soviet Union and developed the political ideology known as Stalinism—a distorted evolution of Marxism. During his reign, Stalin imposed numerous totalitarian policies, and it is this atmosphere of oppression that inspired Orwell to craft a literary critique of the Communist regime.

This could be interesting because of the similarities, raising the question of whether this work was written to recount something that actually happened but expressed through literary means, or whether it is purely Orwell's own literary work. Based on this comparison, there are several studies conducted by previous researchers that reveal the similarities between Big Brother and Joseph Stalin.

Several studies have also analyzed George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In a study conducted by Thorp (1984), a journal article entitled "The Dynamics of Terror in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*" discusses various forms of terror depicted in Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* using descriptive qualitative methods. Thorp explains the mechanisms of totalitarian control depicted in Orwell's last major work, emphasizing how these methods reflect the state's widespread domination. This study aims to reveal the representations of Big Brother and Joseph Stalin in terms of leadership and the rules created for the people.

In a study about this novel conducted by Arif et al. (2018) in their study entitled "*Unraveling the Panopticon Regime: A Study of Orwell's 1984*," they use Michel Foucault's concept of the panopticon to analyze the dynamics of surveillance and discipline depicted in Orwell's dystopian narrative. Their research highlights that mechanisms of fear, observation, and psychological control function as fundamental tools through which totalitarian power is built and maintained. This study aims to broadly discuss the structural and ideological similarities between Big Brother's control system and

Joseph Stalin's Soviet regime through the rules they created for their people. Through the application of comparative analysis, this study seeks to uncover the fundamental “rules” that govern the fictional and historical manifestations of totalitarian domination.

Another study was conducted by Stal (2013) in a journal article entitled “*The Psychopathology of Joseph Stalin*.” Stal attempted to explain Stalin's psychopathology by analyzing his childhood using descriptive qualitative methods, supported by the diagnostic framework of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR). This analysis describes how psychopathological traits emerged in Stalin's personality and behavior. The current study aims to map the similarities between Joseph Stalin and Big Brother in George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in terms of the rules imposed on the people and how this could affect the social life of the community, using comparative analysis.

Mukherjee (2014) in a journal article entitled “*The Development of Socio-Cultural Society in Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four*” explores the political context depicted by Orwell through an archival study method. The author provides a detailed explanation of how the political power of the ruling leader influences citizens to live under a dictatorial regime. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the citizens are constantly monitored and conditioned through coercive means, living under a perpetual sense of fear that prevents them from questioning the Party's motives and principles. This study aims to reveal how political rules shape society and control the human mind.

A. Rahman (2025) in a journal article entitled “*Mechanics of Manipulation: A Comparative Analysis of Orwell's 1984 and Chomsky's Propaganda Model*” investigates the intersections between Orwell's narrative strategies and Chomsky's theory of propaganda to examine how information is systematically manipulated in both fictional and real-world contexts. Employing a comparative theoretical framework, Rahman demonstrates that Orwell's insights into media control, censorship, and ideological manipulation remain profoundly relevant to contemporary structures of propaganda. Building upon this perspective, the present study extends the comparative analysis toward a historical dimension by exploring the parallels between the mechanisms of control in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the authoritarian policies implemented under Joseph Stalin's regime. Through this approach, the research aims to uncover how Orwell's fictional representation of power reflects, critiques, and symbolically reconstructs the operational logic of Stalinist totalitarianism.

While Xhinaku & Pema (2015) in their study entitled “*The Myth of the Totalitarian Leader in George Orwell's 1984 and Ismail Kadare's The Palace of Dreams*,” explore how totalitarian leaders are mythologized within literary representations of authoritarian societies. Their research interprets Big Brother not merely as an individual character but as a symbolic construct embodying the collective power and ideological omnipresence of the totalitarian state. By analyzing mythic and symbolic dimensions of leadership, Xhinaku and Pema demonstrate how literature transforms political authority into a form of cultural mythology that perpetuates submission and obedience. Building upon this theoretical foundation, the present study seeks to further examine the manifestations of totalitarianism both in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and in the historical reality of Joseph Stalin's regime, specifically by analyzing how the “rules” of Big Brother mirror the mechanisms of control and domination employed under Stalin's Soviet Union. This study employs genetic structuralism differently from Xhinaku, using it primarily to link social structures with the internal structures of the literary work

Another study concerning Stalin—particularly the economic conditions reflected in the novel—was conducted by Gregory & Harrison (2005) in their journal article entitled “*Allocation Under*

*Dictatorship: Research in Stalin's Archives.*” This research explores Joseph Stalin's archives through an archival study method. The authors revealed the state of the Soviet Union's economy during Stalin's reign, stating that “the archives show a powerful but fallible dictatorship comprised of Stalin and his Politburo immersed in the detail of economic decisions.” (Gregory & Harrison, 2005). Gregory and Harrison argued that there was a structural inequality between Stalin and the Politburo that influenced the decision-making process. The current study examines Big Brother and Stalin's rules as reflected in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* through the genetic structuralism approach.

Meanwhile, Rushdi & Sabha (2015) In a journal article entitled “The Relationship among the Past, the Present, and the Future Scenario: A Critical Study of George Orwell's 1984,” examined the theme of totalitarianism in the novel through a critical lens. Totalitarianism was one of the most significant political issues of the twentieth century. The distinction between Sabha's research and the present study lies in the focus: while Sabha analyzed totalitarianism as a central theme, the current researcher seeks to reveal the rules of Joseph Stalin as represented by Big Brother in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, employing the genetic structuralism approach for comparative analysis.

This study employs Lucien Goldmann's theory of Genetic Structuralism as its principal analytical framework to bridge the relationship between literary structure and social reality. Goldmann (1977) proposed that a literary work is not an isolated product of an individual consciousness but a manifestation of the “world vision” (*vision du monde*) shared by a particular social group. According to this perspective, literature embodies the collective ideology and historical experiences of the class or community to which the author belongs. As Wellek (1970) and Faruk (2012) explain, Genetic Structuralism aims to reveal how the internal coherence of a text reflects the external social and historical structures that shaped it. In applying this framework, the current research examines how Orwell's 1984 expresses the socio-political tensions of his time, particularly the rise of totalitarianism under Joseph Stalin. The approach enables an analysis that connects textual structure (the fictional mechanisms of control represented by Big Brother) with historical structure (the real mechanisms of domination in Stalin's Soviet Union). Through this method, the study not only interprets Orwell's novel as a narrative of power and oppression but also as a dialectical reflection of the collective consciousness and historical contradictions of the twentieth century.

Comparative analysis is a method used to examine similarities and differences between two entities. The present study seeks to highlight the parallelism between Big Brother and Joseph Stalin as dictatorial figures in their respective domains. Pickvance stated that “*comparative analysis requires the things being compared to be commensurable but not necessarily identical.*” (Pickvance, 2001).

The primary aim of this research is to raise awareness about totalitarianism in governance and to identify the similarities between Big Brother and Joseph Stalin. While democratic systems are often perceived as safe from such dangers, this study serves as a reminder of how authoritarian tendencies may emerge within any political structure. The researcher hopes that this work will positively contribute to literary discourse and enhance public understanding of how dictatorial power manifests through inhumane policies.

## METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. The descriptive approach aims to provide a detailed description of all aspects related to the topic. Primary data was obtained from George Orwell's novel 1984 based on the following quotations: “*One does not establish a dictatorship to safeguard a*

*revolution; one makes the revolution to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power.*" (Orwell, 1949). Secondary data was obtained from academic journals and historical studies about Joseph Stalin based on his historical traces as evidenced by several policies outlined in his country's regulations, such as political repression, purges, secret police, forced labor camps (Gulag), and a pervasive cult of personality.

Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism asserts that a literary work is a structured whole reflecting the worldview (*vision du monde*) of a particular social group. According to Goldmann, literature is not an isolated creation but a product of social consciousness, emerging from the relationship between the individual creator and the collective ideology of their time. Applying this theory to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell's depiction of Oceania represents not only an imagined dystopia but also a symbolic reflection of real historical totalitarianism, especially the Soviet system under Stalin. Through genetic structuralism, the novel can be understood as a homology between Orwell's narrative world and the social structures of the mid-twentieth century.

The data collection procedure consisted of several stages. First, the researcher read the novel and relevant references to comprehend Big Brother's authoritarian principles and Stalin's governance in reality. Second, the researcher identified and classified the data from both the novel and secondary sources. Third, the data were categorized according to thematic relevance. Fourth, the researcher interpreted the findings to formulate conclusions. Finally, these conclusions were synthesized into a comprehensive comparative framework.

The analysis applied the genetic structuralism approach to explore the connection between Big Brother and Joseph Stalin. The steps of analysis included: (1) selecting and organizing primary and secondary data, (2) identifying key information on both leaders, (3) consulting relevant books and scholarly articles, (4) examining their leadership strategies, and (5) mapping comparative patterns between Stalin and Big Brother in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Procedures:

1. Reading and identifying textual evidence from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* related to power, surveillance, and ideological control.
2. Identified and classified data and scholarly works on Joseph Stalin's leadership and Big Brother in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.
3. Classifying similarities and differences between Big Brother's regime and Stalin's Soviet Union.
4. Interpreting findings through Goldmann's genetic structuralism and comparative framework to establish sociological parallels.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This novel provides abundant material for analysis. The researcher classified the data and identified several recurring principles used by Big Brother to sustain his power and manipulate society. These findings are detailed as follows:

### Big Brother's Rules

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell meticulously designs a totalitarian system centered on the figure of Big Brother, who functions both as a political leader and as an omnipresent symbol of authority. The rules and rituals imposed by the Party are not arbitrary acts of control but deliberate



strategies aimed at dismantling individuality, suppressing independent thought, and constructing a reality where loyalty to Big Brother becomes synonymous with survival.

Each institutional mechanism—ranging from daily propaganda rituals to the rewriting of history—reflects a calculated process of ideological engineering. Orwell exposes how totalitarian systems create emotional dependency through fear and love, manipulating both intellect and emotion to maintain absolute obedience. The following sub-sections discuss the major mechanisms of control that underpin the Party's authority, revealing the psychological sophistication embedded in Orwell's political imagination.

## **1. Two Minutes Hate**

The "Two Minutes Hate" is one of the most striking depictions of psychological manipulation within the novel. This daily ritual requires every Party member to express unrestrained hatred toward Emmanuel Goldstein, the alleged traitor and enemy of the state. What appears to be an act of spontaneous emotion is, in fact, a carefully orchestrated performance designed to redirect individual frustration into collective fury. Through this ritual, the regime transforms negative emotion into a political weapon—one that consolidates the Party's unity and distracts citizens from their oppression.

The scene illustrates how totalitarian authority thrives not merely on obedience but on emotional conditioning. By compelling citizens to hate a fabricated enemy, the Party ensures that anger and dissatisfaction are never directed toward the regime itself. The people's psychological energy is absorbed by an external scapegoat, preventing rebellion and preserving a sense of communal identity, as stated in the novel:

"The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but, on the contrary, that it was impossible to avoid joining in. Within thirty seconds, any pretence was always unnecessary. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge-hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic." (Orwell, 1949)

Orwell's depiction of this event reveals the Party's mastery of mass psychology: hatred becomes catharsis, and catharsis becomes control.

Furthermore, the ritual reinforces the illusion of moral superiority. Citizens perceive themselves as defenders of truth and virtue against fabricated threats, which deepens their loyalty to Big Brother. This mechanism exemplifies Orwell's critique of propaganda and emotional manipulation as tools of totalitarian governance—where the destruction of truth is achieved not through argument, but through collective passion.

## **2. Rewriting History**

The rewriting of history forms the ideological backbone of the Party's control over reality. Within the Ministry of Truth, Winston Smith and his colleagues are tasked with altering past records to ensure that all evidence aligns with current Party doctrine. By doing so, the regime eliminates any possibility of objective memory or factual continuity. Every statistic, news article, or speech is constantly revised so that Big Brother is always portrayed as omniscient and infallible.

"Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And the process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right." (Orwell, 1949)

Orwell uses this process to dramatize the terrifying implications of epistemological control—the idea that whoever controls the past controls the present, and whoever controls the present controls the future. When citizens lose access to authentic history, they lose their ability to evaluate truth. Consequently, collective memory becomes a malleable tool in the hands of the state, and citizens are rendered intellectually dependent on official narratives.

This perpetual rewriting of history also demonstrates the psychological consequences of living in a world without stable facts. Winston's growing despair arises from his awareness that reality itself has been replaced by illusion. In such a world, language ceases to be a medium of truth and becomes an instrument of power. Orwell thereby exposes the deeper dimension of totalitarianism: not only does it enslave bodies, but it also colonizes minds by erasing the possibility of independent thought.

### **3. Thought Police**

The most disturbing element of Orwell's imagined society is the presence of the Thought Police, the invisible enforcers of ideological purity. Unlike traditional police forces that punish external crimes, the Thought Police monitor inner thoughts, ensuring that even private dissent is eradicated. Through the omnipresent telescreens and a vast network of informants, the Party eliminates any distinction between public and private life. The very act of thinking independently becomes a criminal offense, known as "thoughtcrime."

"The thought police would get him just the same. He had committed – would have committed, even if he had never set pen to paper – the essential crime that contained all others in itself. Thoughtcrime, they called it. Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed forever. You might dodge successfully for a while, even for years, but sooner or later, they were bound to get you." (Orwell, 1949)

This mechanism demonstrates Orwell's profound understanding of psychological totalitarianism. Fear becomes internalized to the extent that citizens police their own minds, censoring their emotions and language to avoid suspicion. The absence of privacy destroys individuality, and the omnipresence of surveillance transforms conformity into a survival instinct. Those accused of disloyalty are not only executed but "vaporized"—erased from all records as though they never existed.

The concept of the Thought Police thus functions as both a literal and metaphorical representation of total control. It symbolizes how authoritarian systems perpetuate obedience not only through external force but through internal submission. Orwell's portrayal serves as a prophetic warning of societies where technological surveillance and ideological control converge to eliminate the last refuge of human freedom—the mind itself.

### **4. Room 101**

Room 101 represents the final and most horrifying stage of the Party's system of domination. It is the site where political prisoners undergo ultimate psychological torture, confronted with their most personal and paralyzing fears. The purpose of Room 101 is not merely to punish physical rebellion

but to annihilate the capacity for emotional resistance. Each faces a uniquely tailored ordeal that targets their deepest vulnerability, forcing them to betray their convictions and loved ones.

Winston Smith's experience in Room 101 epitomizes this process of psychological deconstruction. When O'Brien subjects him to the terror of hungry rats, Winston's final act of betrayal—pleading for the torture to be inflicted on Julia instead—marks the complete triumph of the Party. As Gottlieb observes, Winston's transformation into “a will-less, obedient instrument in the hands of the Party” (Gottlieb, E. 2008) illustrates how totalitarian power extends beyond physical coercion to achieve spiritual conquest.

“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, 1949)

Symbolically, Room 101 encapsulates Orwell's ultimate warning: that tyranny seeks not only obedience but love. After his re-education, Winston does not merely submit—he loves Big Brother. This transformation signifies the total eradication of selfhood and the replacement of human consciousness with state ideology. Thus, Room 101 stands as the final emblem of dehumanization in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a chilling reminder that the most effective form of oppression is that which compels the victim to embrace their oppressor.

### **Joseph Stalin's Mechanisms of Control**

Historical evidence shows that Joseph Stalin employed similar structures of domination to those described in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. His government systematically controlled the collective consciousness of Soviet citizens through mechanisms of propaganda, censorship, surveillance, and ideological manipulation. Stalin's totalitarian system was not sustained merely by brute force but by the comprehensive re-engineering of thought, emotion, and perception. Through state institutions, he constructed an environment in which obedience was not only demanded but internalized as a moral duty.

Stalin positioned himself as the ultimate source of truth and authority. His control penetrated every sphere of life—from education and the press to personal correspondence—creating a social structure where private autonomy was impossible. The Soviet population was molded into a collective body that feared deviation and revered conformity. This fusion of psychological coercion and political domination demonstrates how historical totalitarianism anticipated the dystopian logic of Orwell's narrative.

#### **1. Two Minutes Hate**

Stalin frequently altered or falsified historical records to glorify his leadership and remove political rivals from public memory. The rewriting of Soviet history was a deliberate and systematic tool to sustain the myth of Stalin's infallibility (Davies & Harris, 2005). By manipulating official documents, textbooks, and photographs, Stalin created an artificial version of the past that supported his ideological supremacy. Figures such as Leon Trotsky, Grigory Zinoviev, and Nikolai Bukharin—once central to the Bolshevik Revolution—were erased from archives and rewritten as traitors or nonentities.

This manipulation of history reflects Orwell's concept of the Ministry of Truth, where Winston Smith's task is to rewrite past records so that Big Brother is never wrong. In both cases, the distortion of historical truth becomes a means of controlling the present. By reshaping memory, Stalin deprived



citizens of an independent understanding of the past, ensuring that no alternative narrative could challenge his authority. The erasure of dissenters from collective memory exemplifies how totalitarianism depends on epistemological control—the domination of knowledge, history, and truth itself.

Moreover, this practice reveals a deeper psychological dimension. When the past is constantly rewritten, citizens lose confidence in their own perceptions of reality. They become dependent on the state to define what is true or false, right or wrong. In this way, Stalin's historical revisionism did not merely change historical facts—it reconstructed the very consciousness of the Soviet people.

## **2. Propaganda and Doublethink**

The Soviet regime created illusions of prosperity and unity while concealing widespread famine, oppression, and fear. Through its extensive propaganda machine, the state projected an image of national strength and ideological harmony, masking the suffering of millions under forced collectivization and political terror. This form of state-controlled communication functioned similarly to Orwell's "doublethink," enabling citizens to accept contradictory realities (Bailey, 2004); (Fitzpatrick, 1999).

The principle of doublethink—the ability to hold two mutually exclusive beliefs simultaneously—was not merely theoretical in Stalin's Russia; it became a survival mechanism. Citizens learned to repeat slogans such as "Stalin is the voice of the people" even while witnessing arbitrary arrests and executions. The coexistence of truth and falsehood within the same mind reflected the profound psychological manipulation that underpinned Stalin's rule.

Propaganda served to deify Stalin, presenting him as the "Father of Nations" and the embodiment of socialist virtue. His portraits adorned schools, offices, and homes, while the press exalted his wisdom and compassion. This cult of personality mirrors Big Brother's omnipresent image in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which functions as both a symbol of love and fear. Just as Party members are compelled to love Big Brother, Soviet citizens were trained to revere Stalin with quasi-religious devotion. In both systems, propaganda operates not only as a tool of persuasion but as a mechanism for manufacturing emotional dependency—an essential component of totalitarian control.

## **3. Secret Police (Cheka/NKVD)**

Stalin relied on the Cheka, later known as the NKVD, to monitor, arrest, and execute dissenters. These organizations institutionalized terror and enforced obedience through mass surveillance and purges (Waller, 2004); (Anne Applebaum, 2003). The secret police operated with absolute authority, empowered to eliminate anyone suspected of "anti-Soviet" tendencies. Their presence permeated every aspect of daily life, creating an atmosphere of perpetual fear and suspicion.

The Great Purge of the 1930s exemplified the reach of Stalin's terror, as millions of citizens—including Party members, intellectuals, and ordinary workers—were imprisoned, exiled, or executed. The logic of these purges extended beyond political necessity; they were designed to destroy the very possibility of dissent. Under such conditions, silence became a survival strategy, and trust among individuals disintegrated.

This reality parallels Orwell's depiction of the Thought Police, who monitor citizens not only for overt acts of rebellion but for mere deviations in thought. The telescreen in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* serves as a technological extension of the NKVD's omnipresent gaze. Both systems relied on

surveillance to eliminate privacy and internalize fear. In Stalin's Soviet Union, as in Orwell's Oceania, people learned that their safety depended on conformity—and that even unspoken thoughts could become fatal.

The effectiveness of Stalin's secret police lay not only in their brutality but in their invisibility. Citizens never knew who might be watching, which ensured constant self-censorship. This transformation of fear into obedience represents the deepest form of control, where repression becomes self-imposed—a theme central to both Stalinism and Orwellian dystopia.

#### **4. Suppression of Opposition (Trotsky Case)**

One of Stalin's most notorious acts was the elimination of his ideological rival, Leon Trotsky, first through exile and later assassination. This act demonstrates the regime's absolute intolerance toward ideological diversity and political dissent (Celis, 2019); (Conquest, 2008). Trotsky's exile in 1929 and his subsequent assassination in Mexico in 1940 symbolized the final erasure of any alternative revolutionary vision. His writings were banned, his image deleted from photographs, and his very memory condemned as heretical.

Stalin's persecution of Trotsky thus reflects the totalitarian imperative to destroy not only the opponent but the idea of opposition itself. Trotsky's physical death was accompanied by his symbolic annihilation—his name became synonymous with treachery, and his contributions to the Revolution were erased from official history. This mirrors Orwell's "vaporization" in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where individuals deemed enemies of the Party are erased from all records and memory.

The Trotsky case illustrates how totalitarian systems rely on both political violence and semiotic control: by eliminating the language of dissent, they eliminate the possibility of dissenting thought. In Orwell's terms, this is the ultimate expression of "thoughtcrime," where ideological deviation is treated as existential treason. Both Stalin's purges and Big Brother's executions serve the same purpose—to preserve the illusion of unity by obliterating all traces of individuality.

These mechanisms reveal that Stalin's totalitarian system was built upon psychological coercion and historical manipulation, reinforcing Orwell's depiction of Big Brother's Oceania as a literary reflection of twentieth-century dictatorship

Before analyzing the comparison between Big Brother and Joseph Stalin, it is essential to understand the destructive consequences of totalitarianism. Both Oceania and the Soviet Union may be categorized as forms of "social disaster," caused not by natural phenomena but by human actions that generate oppression, conflict, and misery. As Rahman (2019) explains, social disasters arise from systemic human failures—political, ideological, or institutional—that inflict suffering on a population.

George Orwell's narrative reflects these realities. The protagonist, Winston Smith, struggles internally between submission and rebellion. He initially believes that O'Brien shares his revolutionary ideals, only to discover that O'Brien is a Thought Police officer who manipulates and tortures him in Room 101. This dynamic mirrors the betrayal and psychological terror prevalent under Stalin's rule.

Similarly, Stalin's regime relied on ideological manipulation, propaganda, and surveillance to maintain absolute authority. According to Davies & Harris (2005), Stalin remains one of history's

most infamous dictators, characterized by cruelty and psychological control over the Soviet populace. The parallel between Big Brother and Stalin is evident: both employed censorship, propaganda, and fear to erase individuality and enforce obedience. The Party's Thought Police in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* correspond to the Soviet secret police—Cheka and NKVD—responsible for surveillance, arrests, and executions. Many victims of these institutions disappeared without a record, symbolically “vaporized,” just as Orwell describes in his novel.

Through the lens of genetic structuralism, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* serves as a literary embodiment of historical consciousness. Orwell transformed the sociopolitical anxieties of his era into a fictional structure that critiques totalitarianism. By mirroring Stalinist oppression, the novel exposes the mechanisms of dehumanization, ideological indoctrination, and state control.

### Comparative Analysis

These parallels demonstrate George Orwell's critical engagement with Stalinist totalitarianism. Through the lens of genetic structuralism, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be interpreted as a literary manifestation of the collective historical consciousness that emerged during the early Cold War period—a period marked by global anxiety over ideological domination, censorship, and surveillance. The novel does not simply imitate historical events but reconstructs them into a symbolic structure that expresses a universal concern about the fate of human freedom in the age of political absolutism.

According to Lucien Goldmann's concept of genetic structuralism, a literary work is both a product of individual creativity and a reflection of the collective worldview (vision du monde) of its social group. In this context, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* reflects the intellectual and moral crisis of post-war Europe, where democratic ideals clashed with the rise of totalitarian regimes such as Stalin's Soviet Union. The social structure of the 1930s and 1940s—characterized by purges, propaganda, and political conformity—served as the genetic foundation for the novel's fictional structure. Orwell's representation of Oceania thus becomes an ideological mirror of the Soviet system under Stalin, shaped by the author's lived experience and the collective trauma of his generation.

Orwell's representation of Oceania is not a detached invention but rather an ideological reconstruction of the social structures and psychological mechanisms that characterized Stalinist totalitarianism. The pervasive fear, the manipulation of truth, and the systematic erosion of individuality in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* parallel the real historical experiences of citizens under Stalin's rule, where obedience was enforced through censorship, political purges, and the rewriting of history. By depicting these elements within a fictional framework, Orwell transforms collective historical trauma into a symbolic structure that reflects the crisis of his generation—a generation that witnessed the collapse of political ideals under the weight of authoritarian control.

Through the lens of genetic structuralism, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* thus becomes more than a dystopian critique; it functions as a literary embodiment of social consciousness. Orwell's individual creativity is inseparable from the historical contradictions that informed it, and the novel's narrative structure mirrors the tensions between freedom and control, truth and manipulation, individual will and collective ideology. In this sense, Orwell's work exemplifies Goldmann's assertion that literature serves as a bridge between the inner world of human experience and the outer world of social structures. It reflects not only the author's personal revolt against tyranny but also the collective moral anxiety of a society struggling to preserve its humanity amid the forces of ideological domination. Consequently, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* stands as a crystallization of the twentieth century's collective

consciousness—a text in which history, ideology, and artistic expression converge to reveal the psychological and moral dimensions of political oppression.

Orwell's fictional mechanisms of control—such as historical revisionism, propaganda, surveillance, and psychological coercion—correspond directly to Stalin's historical methods of domination. Both systems rely on the manipulation of truth as a tool of power. In Stalin's USSR, historical revisionism erased inconvenient facts to uphold the illusion of the leader's infallibility. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the Ministry of Truth performs the same function, rewriting records so that Big Brother “is never wrong.” Similarly, the concept of doublethink in the novel encapsulates the same mental discipline imposed on Soviet citizens, who were compelled to believe official lies while suppressing their private doubts.

Furthermore, both Orwell's and Stalin's systems convert fear into loyalty. The Cheka and NKVD, through surveillance and purges, created a climate of terror where self-censorship became instinctive. In Orwell's Oceania, the Thought Police and Room 101 perform an identical psychological function: fear transforms into submission, and submission becomes love for the oppressor. This transformation is what Goldmann describes as a “structural homology” between historical reality and fictional representation—the same relational patterns of power, emotion, and belief operating in two distinct but parallel worlds.

From a structural perspective, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* functions as a critique of the dialectic between ideology and individual consciousness. The totalitarian system in the novel, like Stalin's regime, destroys the capacity for independent thought by reshaping language, history, and emotion. The Party's invention of Newspeak mirrors the Soviet control of discourse, where ideological language determined the limits of permissible thought. In both cases, linguistic control becomes cognitive control—confirming the Marxist insight, shared by Goldmann, that consciousness is conditioned by material and social structures.

By representing Stalinist mechanisms in allegorical form, Orwell universalizes the historical experience of totalitarianism. The novel transcends its immediate context to address a broader philosophical question: how can truth survive in a world where power defines reality? This question captures the essence of the Cold War consciousness, in which fear of total surveillance and ideological conformity permeated not only politics but also art, education, and private life.

In this sense, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does not merely depict Stalinism—it transforms it into a literary structure that reveals the deeper logic of modern domination. The genetic relation between Orwell's world and Stalin's historical context is not one of imitation but of structural correspondence: both express the same human predicament under conditions of ideological absolutism. The text thus embodies what Goldmann terms a “homology between the structure of the work and the structure of social reality.”

Ultimately, the comparative analysis demonstrates that Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* serves as both a historical commentary and a philosophical warning. By exposing the psychological, linguistic, and institutional parallels between Big Brother and Joseph Stalin, Orwell articulates the collective fear of his age—the fear that the modern state, armed with propaganda and technology, could annihilate individuality and truth itself. Through genetic structuralism, 1984 stands as a cultural document of resistance: a representation of humanity's enduring struggle to preserve moral integrity in the face of absolute power.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a powerful literary reflection of totalitarianism during the period in which it was published, particularly reflecting the political and ideological structure of Stalin's Soviet regime. Using Lucien Goldmann's structuralist genetics, this novel has been proven to represent not only political criticism but also the collective historical consciousness of its time, transforming social fears and moral crises into symbolic narratives of resistance.

A comparison between Big Brother and Joseph Stalin reveals a model of absolute power maintained through propaganda, surveillance, censorship, and psychological control. Systems in Oceania, such as Two Minutes Hate, the Thought Police, and historical revision, reflect Stalinist practices such as language distortion, state terror, and falsification. This structural similarity reinforces Goldmann's concept of homology, showing how Orwell's fictional world mirrors the social logic of real authoritarian regimes.

The study also found that the novel's critique transcends its immediate historical context. By transforming specific Stalinist strategies into universal symbols of domination, Orwell reveals how any political system can manipulate truth and reshape human consciousness. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* thus serves as a warning and a reminder of the eternal threat posed by ideological manipulation.

In summary, this study shows that Orwell's narrative and Stalin's regime operate within the same ideological framework—one artistic, one historical—in which control over language and history becomes control over identity. The use of genetic structuralism highlights the role of literature in preserving social memory and challenging systems of oppression. This study suggests that future research explore how modern digital propaganda, surveillance, and information control continue the totalitarian patterns identified in Orwell's work.

## REFERENCES

- Anne Applebaum. (2003). *Gulag: A history*. Anchor Books.
- Arif, M., Ahmed, H., & Rahman, B. (2018). Dismantling panopticonic regime: Study of Orwell's 1984. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 2(1), 11–20. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/2.1.2>
- Bailey, A. L. (2004). *Soviet policy and doublethink in Politics under the influence*.
- Celis, E. (2019). The death of Leon Trotsky. *Neurosurgery*, 67(2), 417–422.
- Conquest, Robert. (2008). *The great terror: A reassessment*. Oxford University Press.
- Davies, S., & Harris, J. (2005). Joseph Stalin: Power and ideas. In *Stalin* (pp. 1–17). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511614897.004>
- Faruk. (2012). *Strukturalisme genetik dan teori sastra Lucien Goldmann*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.



- Fitzpatrick, S. (1999). *Everyday Stalinism ordinary life in extraordinary times Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. Oxford University Press. <http://www.masterandmargarita.eu>
- Goldmann, L. (1977). *Towards a sociology of the novel*. London. London : Tavistock Publications.
- Gregory, P., & Harrison, M. (2005). Allocation under dictatorship: Research in Stalin's archives. *Journal of Economic Literature: Vol. XLIII*. [www.warwick.ac.uk/go/sovietarchives/before](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/sovietarchives/before)
- Hingley, R. F. (2025). *Joseph Stalin*. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/joseph-stalin>
- Mukherjee, U. (2014). The development of socio-cultural society in Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty Four." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 19(1), 12–16.
- Orwell, G. (1949). 1984. <https://www.clarkchargers.org/ourpages/auto/2015/3/10/50720556/1984.pdf>
- Pickvance, C. G. (2001). Four varieties of comparative analysis. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 16(1), 7–28. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1011533211521>
- Rahman, A. (2025). Mechanics of manipulation: A comparative analysis of Orwell's 1984 and Chomsky's propaganda model. *Journal of Research and Multidisciplinary*, 8(1), 960–973.
- Rahman, F. (2019). Save the world versus man-made disaster: A cultural perspective. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 235, 012071. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/235/1/012071>
- Rushdi, M., & Sabha, N. (2015). The Relationship among the Past, the Present and the Future Scenario: A Critical Study of George Orwell's 1984. In *Online* (Vol. 5, Issue 24). www.iiste.org
- Stal, M. (2013). Psychopathology of Joseph Stalin. *Psychology*, 04(09), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2013.49A1001>
- Thorp, M. R. (1984). The dynamics of terror in Orwell's "1984". *Brigham Young University Studies*, 24(1), 3–17.
- Waller, J. (2004). Russia: Death and resurrection of the KGB. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 12(3), 333–355. <https://doi.org/10.3200/DEMO.12.3.333-355>
- Wellek, R. (n.d.). *Concepts of criticism*.
- Xhinaku, E., & Pema, O. (2015). The myth of the totalitarian leader in George Orwell's 1984 and Ismail Kadare's The Palace of Dreams. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n6s2p150>