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LANGUAGE AS A TOOL, DESIGNED BY THE TOTALITARIAN STATE –AN ANALYSIS OF
GEORGE ORWELL'S DYSTOPIAN NOVEL '1984'

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ABSTRACT

In the modern history of twentieth century, we encounter with the political leaders like Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler who run their states autocratically. Even in the present times, we find North Korea being governed by a totalitarian leader. The sawyers ruin the lives of citizens by their dominating ideologies. The right to freedom of expression and speech is totally diminished by severe penalties. The language is employed as a way to run their respective states in the desirable manner. The tempering with historical documents, the introduction of new horrible vocabulary terms and the addressing masses by the leaders, in a vague and jargon language. This article examines the different use of language in the state of Oceania in the George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty Four .

Key words :totalitarian, doublethink ,thought crime ,language and consciousness

INTRODUCTION

A language is "what makes us human"(Guy Deutscher)

An Israeli linguist, Guy Deutscher defines language in his book, *The Unfolding of Language*, as a gift that bestow us human characterization. With the evolution of language and humanity, the relation of human beings with language has changed. Some has used it for humanitarian purposes and some has used it for their political advantages. In the history, we find that the various totalitarian countries has employed language to run the state in their own terms. 'A totalitarian state is a government that subordinates the individual to the state and strictly controls all aspects of life by coercive measures'(NP). It destroys the individuality of the natives and seeks the individual to work in accordance with state rules and policies. The modern instances of the totalitarian states include North Korea under Kim Jong-un, Soviet Union, governed by Joseph Stalin, Nazi Germany, ruled by Adolf Hitler. A fictional dystopian totalitarian state can be seen in the novel, '1984' where Big-Brother is reigning over the state of Oceania with the aid of three abusive devices: media-the tele screens, the alteration of past documents and the use of new limited vocabulary language.

The third tool, Language, will be discussed in this paper and it will be analyzed that how it works to meet the demands of totalitarian regime of Oceania.

Discussion

Language is exercised by politicians for their political interests. They make use of dying metaphors, pretentious diction and jargon to make their speech inaccessible to the citizens. In the state of Oceania, the proles or nescient working class is unable to figure out that what Big Brother is talking about. Even the

educated middle class cannot rationalize, what is being shown to them on telescreens; they are just affirming to the statements what the leaders convey. George Orwell, in his essay 'Politics and English Language' reveals the fact of vagueness and incomprehensibility created by political leaders with help of following lines :

Defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out in the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned , the huts set on fire with bullets : This is called 'Pacification'.

People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: This is called 'elimination of unreliable elements'.

This kind of phraseology 'Pacification' and 'Elimination of unreliable elements' does not call up mental images of things. That is to say, it is utterly vague expressions that makes sensitive issues like bombardment and imprisonment without trials, into common and insensitive ones.

A lexicon of new language 'Newspeak' has been introduced in this totalitarian state that has limited words. The words have no connotative meaning and new words have been coined. We will discuss some of the pairs of words that sound weird and unusual as follow:

The use of the word 'bad sex' and 'good sex': these antonyms appear ironical and uncommon. The word 'bad sex' or 'sex-crime' denotes the sex that is outside marriage or before marriage; a body relation for sexual gratification. This term and law has been created by the authority of the state which prohibits the citizens to have sexual relationship. The guilty who trespasses this law, is severely penalized. On the other hand, the term 'good sex' refers to the sex within marriage; a body relation for procreation only. The new generation that is reproduced through procreation, also serves the authority by becoming spies at very early childhood. Thus, the 'good sex' serves the government of the state.

The other pair of opposite words, is 'crime think' and 'good think'. The term 'crime think' or 'thought-crime' signifies the individual free-thought process that represents the right to freedom of speech and expression that is wholly proscribed in the land of Oceania. If the natives are allowed to present their opinion, this autocratic country will be surrounded by chaos and it will eventually be disrupted. Contrarily, the term 'good think' refers to the thought process within the demarcation of Inner party's ideology. The natives, exercising 'good thinking', feed their minds by the knowledge provided by Big-Brother through telescreens and microphones and by the altered historical documents. Hence, by practicing 'good thinking' the natives have been conditioned to think in compliance with the terms of the government.

There are few other words, coined by the authority that make the citizens of Oceania, subservient to the inhumane policies of Big-Brother. They are discussed as follow:

'Doublethink' is the process of thinking the two contradictory statements at the same time and affirming them at once. Hence, the aim of the authority is fulfilled, to make the citizens, thinking in illogical and irrational way. This is defined in the novel as : " To know and not to know , to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out , knowing them to be contradictory and believing both in them , to use logic against logic , to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy, to forget , whatever it was forget, whatever it was necessary to forget , then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, then promptly to forget it again, and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself...(35)" Due to this process, the native of Oceania is confused and cannot be decisive and introspective.

The term 'Bellyfeel' is another humorous word which denotes the enthusiastic-thoughtless acceptance of an idea or fact. In the state of Oceania, a hate week, an event is organized every month, in which people show their hate towards the adversary to the party. Whatever is shown on the large telescreens, the masses and functionaries testify their 'bellyfeel' by reacting in a enthusiastic manner. Whoever does not show their hatred towards the enemy to the party, is expected to be vaporized by coming under the hidden surveillance of the thought police. So, the people behave in a very uniform way while showing their bellyfeel.

A new word is coined for the killing of a person by the authority, is 'unperson' .The person that is killed, is further cut out from historical documents. That person is also wiped out from the memory of citizens by the process of double thinking. The pictures in which that person appeared; the forms in which his

signature was mentioned; the bills in which his name was written, all has now been deleted. The name of the person is no longer on the lips of the natives of Oceania.

The philologist 'Syme' tells that 'the whole aim of the Newspeak, is to narrow the range of thought. In the end, we shall make thought-crime literally impossible ' (52). The newly introduced language 'Newspeak' does not have the words like rebel, revolt, freedom and other vocabulary that may ruin the system of Oceania. Even the words' connotative or symbolic meanings have been removed. The essence of the antonyms has been taken away i.e. the word 'good' opposite is 'bad' but now the word 'bad' has been superseded by 'ungood'. Since, the thought-formation is rooted in the language, thus the richness of language regulates the thought process. George Orwell, in his essay 'Politics and English Language', states,

" If the thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought"

This above statement proclaims that the thoughts are formed by the language and if the language is poor that has limited inessential words, can corrupt thought as well. The corruption of thought is apparent in the state of Oceania that is noticed with the employment of the tongue 'Newspeak' by the natives and it has narrowed the range of thought and the 'thoughtcrime' impossible. The old language 'Oldspeak' was free from the corrupt thoughts because the language was in its natural evolutionary mode and thus, it was the foundation of free independent thinking.

The rich undefiled language bestows the human being with consciousness. However, due to the practice of new language 'Newspeak', the consciousness among the natives, has lost. The lexicographer, Syme, tells the condition of the language and consciousness among the natives of Oceania :

"Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller."

As the statement describes that every year the old language words are being cut short or replaced. Consequently, the Inner party has been able to run the regime in desirable way by narrowing the consciousness of the citizens.

The above statement also reflects the connection between language and consciousness. According to Harry Haroutian Haladjian, Ph.D., a present-day psychologist tells about the theory of consciousness in relation to language :

"Rational capacities also increase with language, since language allows us to make our thoughts explicit. In addition, language makes possible the practice of overtly asking for reasons and justifications – a foundation for obtaining knowledge".

However, the state of Oceania, is conditioning natives to run or act as machines with the regular schedules of eating, bathing, working and loving and speaking in favor of Big-Brother. They have become dull and thoughtless creatures and they cannot get the Pierian Spring because the source of spring has become dry now.

The new language is well-designed. It conceals the truth and create an illusion that it seems that Oceania is the best country of the world. George Orwell, in his essay, Politics and English Language, says, "Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind." The citizens of Oceania are forced to watch and listen to the messages being broadcasted on the telescreens. The officials that appear on the telescreens, they make use of jargons, metaphors and other kind of words that make the untruthful statements appear real to the natives.

Conclusion

The language is indeed a weapon by the totalitarian state of Oceania that make use of new language 'Newspeak' with coining new terminology of diverse practices i.e. unperson, doublethink, thought crime, bellyfeel and so on. A language without sufficient vocabulary, creates a dull and irrational human being. The real demand of this totalitarian state is to have these kind of citizens who are unquestioning, supportive and obtuse followers to the party. Along with the devices of media and altered historical documents, the language has played its role in formation of a successful totalitarian state.

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