

Will Totalitarian Movement Rise Again in the Future?

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Abstract: This paper aims to discuss the elements, technology, and entertainment that totalitarians may utilize in the future. Technology is an essential method of controlling the populace. Nowadays, more advanced technology like street cameras, smart home devices, and even smartphones can be convenient ways to monitor one's private life, which can help dictators reach total control and manipulate the populace. Despite this Orwellian vision of totalitarianism, other ideas of totalitarianism offered by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World* may also be realized in the future because of the emergence of television entertainment.

Keywords: technology, entertainment, totalitarianism

1. Introduction

The paper's purpose is to list two elements of technology and entertainment that totalitarians may utilize in the future. Regarding technology, two aspects, the recent and the old technology, are concerned. In current technology, smart home devices and smartphones are emphasized and viewed as a potential risk for the monitor. Totalitarians often use traditional technologies like mass communication, the press, and movies as propaganda tools. The second central part is about the emergence of television entertainment, a method to marginalize most ordinary people and reach a totalitarian dictatorship. There are three minor points in this session. The first little point gave a brief conclusion of the era before television was invented the television when people loved reading and listening to speeches. During this process, Postman thought it was an excellent way to train the ability to critically thinking [1]. The second minor point is to introduce an idea quoted from Neil Postman's work *Amusing Ourselves to Death*: people lose interest in political life because of the loss of thinking ability [1]. Some weak points of television entertainment include numerous pieces of information and fragmentization of each part, which will leave no time for people to think carefully [1]. Losing enthusiasm for political life, they will voluntarily hand over their essential power to elites they consider trustworthy. The last minor point refers to a concept, Tittytainment, blended by two words proposed by the former U.S. National Security Advisor Brzezinski, and a rough introduction is provided to help the reader understand this notion involving what context will Tittytainment exists and how elites under this circumstance fool or manipulate the ordinary people [2]. All these parts may indicate that totalitarianism may reappear in the future.

2. Research Question

The terror caused by an old totalitarian regime faded as time passed. However, people will likely be allured into another trap that totalitarian dictators elaborately forge. It is crucial to figure out whether

a totalitarian regime will emerge. What kinds of forms will they present? Is it a form of Orwellian vision in which totalitarians maintain dictatorship by pervasive terror? Is the other contrast form which people live in a world without terror but void? What elements will totalitarians take advantage of to manipulate people? What makes people willing to give up their rights? What will they exchange power for?

3. Literature Review

In the Twentieth century, the idea of totalitarianism came from the fascist Nazi Party and the Bolshevik Party. Scholars pay more attention to the totalitarian regime of the Orwellian style, in which dictators maintained stability and authority through violent oppression and pervasive terror. *1984*, the work of George Orwell, published in 1949, and *The Origins of Totalitarianism* finished by Hanna Arendt are the mainstream in totalitarian research.

3.1. 1984

1984 is a dystopian novel with a rebellious solid color. It can be divided into three parts. In 1984, according to George Orwell, Airstrip One was led by the Party, an autocratic superpower that uses ideology to control and the thought police to purge anyone who disobeys its regime [3]. Winston Smith, a member of the Outer Party, works at the Ministry of Truth, where he rewrites historical documents to conform to the constantly evolving version of state history. He secretly opposes party rule and attempts to rebel. Unfortunately, he had been recognized by Mr. Charrington as a thought criminal at the very beginning, but he did not know that he had been exposed. In the second part, Winston and Julia, a girl from the lower class of the region like Winston, begin a secret affair with Winston recalling his family separation and the conflict between him and his ex-wife Katharine. The two also read parts of Goldstein's book explaining how the Party maintains power. In part three, Winston and Julia are captured by Mr. Charrington, a Thought Police agent, and imprisoned at the Ministry of Love. To align his beliefs with the party's needs, Winston is tortured and finally released, accepting his love for "Big Brother."

3.2. The Origins of Totalitarianism

One of the focuses of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is the reign of terror, akin to *1984*. Arendt's writings explore the rise of anti-Semitism, the New Imperialism, and the emergence of racism as an ideology. She argues that totalitarianism was a novel form of government that used terror to subjugate mass populations rather than just political adversaries [4]. Arendt begins the book with an analysis of the rise of antisemitism in Europe and explains how Nazi Germany exploited this antisemitism to disintegrate the nation-state system and advance the totalitarian project. She traces the roots of modern imperialism to the accumulation of excess capital in European nation-states during the 19th century. Then she examines "movements" substituting themselves for the political parties that institutionalize anti-Semitism and other racism [4]. In the book's final section, she discusses the mechanics of totalitarian movements, including the transformation of classes into masses, propaganda, and terror [4]. To sum up, Arendt talks about how totalitarian movements conceal their extreme aims through fake government institutions and arcane theories [4].

3.3. Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy

Carl Joachim Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski are scholars specific to the field of Totalitarianism. In their work *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, they complete the theory of totalitarianism. Instead of explaining what led to the emergence of totalitarianism as Hannah Arendt,

this book aims to give a general, descriptive view of totalitarian regimes, a novel form of government. The contents of the book include seven parts. In part one, the authors give a general characteristic of totalitarian dictatorship: an ideology, a single party led by one man, a system of terror, a communications monopoly, a weapons monopoly, and a centrally directed economy [5]. The second part starts with the dictator and party. The authors analyze how the region and its dictator reach the climax of power. The third part discusses the totalitarian ideology mainly based on its symbols and myths, the historical roots of totalitarian ideology, and the change and corruption of doctrine and its Law. In the fourth part, propaganda and terror are introduced as a means to reach the part's total control. Then the particular type of economy, the directed economy, is provided and illustrated by the authors. The sixth part is about the islands of separateness which is also one of the means to maintain the total control of the dictator. In the last part of the book, the future of totalitarianism is the main task to discuss.

3.4. Brave New World

However, published early than 1984 and *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, *Brave New World*, written by Aldous Huxley, received less attention than the two mentioned above until the coming of the twenty-first century. What Huxley depicted is a world contrast to the world in 1984, despite its essence—totalitarianism. According to Huxley, totalitarianism in the future will be camouflaged so that people will never know the fact that they are suppressed [6][7]. *Brave New World* can be concluded with the following six main parts. Firstly, Bernard Marx, a psychologist, a psychologist, in the World State city of London, a sharp critique of how their societies were peaceful, including their regular use of a calming, pleasure-producing drug called Soma. In the second part, Bernard takes a holiday with Lenina outside the World State to a Savage Reservation in New Mexico, where he observes natural-born people, disease, the aging process, other languages, and religious lifestyles for the first time. He also meets Linda, a woman originally from the World State. In part three, Bernard, as the "custodian" of John, is fawned over by the highest members of society and revels in the attention but becomes envious that John only really bonds with the literary-minded Helmholtz. Linda spends all her time using soma, and John refuses to attend social events organized by Bernard. In the fourth part, Mustapha Mond, the "Resident World Controller for Western Europe," sends Bernard and Helmholtz to the Falkland Islands for antisocial activity and tells John that exile is a reward for being an individual. John disagreed with Mond and begged himself to go to the islands. In the fifth part, Jaded with his new life, John moves to an abandoned hilltop lighthouse, where he practices self-flagellation. A documentary maker secretly films John's self-flagellation, and when released, it causes an international sensation. In the end, The story of last night's orgy spread all over the major newspapers, and John was found dead.

3.5. Amusing Ourselves to Death

With the rapid technological development, the world changed and seemed to become more similar to the World State city described by Huxley. As a result, some scholars pay attention to other totalitarian regimes where people are willing to be oppressed. Neil Postman is one of the scholars who noticed this trend. In *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, the work of Postman, the theme is distinguished between Orwell's vision of the future and Aldous Huxley's vision of *Brave New World*, in which people surrender to happiness and voluntarily sacrifice their own. Right. In the first part, Postman argues primarily that television is a form of entertainment that cannot be taken seriously because it is saddled with a wide range of entertainment needs. In the second part, he argues that TV introduced the phrase "now that," implying a complete lack of connection between the various themes. Postman commented that television is changing what it means to be "told" by creating what can rightly be called

disinformation. He points out that television does not qualify for honest intellectual engagement and rational reasoning. He added that the 18th century was the pinnacle of logical reasoning, and today's presidents are known for their pictures rather than words.

3.6. Inverted Totalitarianism in (Post) Postnormal Accelerated Dystopia: The Arrival of Brave New World and 1984 in the Twenty-first Century

Nowadays, Huxley's prediction has drawn as much attention as Orwell's. Dennis Ray Morgan, author of *Inverted totalitarianism in (post) postnormal accelerated dystopia: the arrival of Brave New World and 1984 in the twenty-first century*, conducts his research. It aims to depict the state of inverted totalitarianism in post-postnormal times and show how it shares many features of the dictatorship depicted in the novels *Brave New World* and *1984*. It also shows how a paradigmatic reorientation of "well-being" and "happiness" is possible.

4. Research Study and Analysis

Some sociologists consider that Orwellian vision belongs to the past time which will never emerge again. Neil Postman, a specialist in media and cultural criticism and education and one of the sociologists mentioned above predicted that the natural form of totalitarianism would be the depiction of Huxley's. While Dennis Ray Morgan, in his work *Inverted totalitarianism in (post) postnormal accelerated dystopia: the arrival of Brave New World and 1984 in the twenty-first century*, added that "inverted totalitarianism" nowadays is the combination of Orwellian and Huxley's [8]. From my perspective, the second comment is more reasonable.

4.1. Technology

The technology used as a way to reach total control can frequently be seen in Huxleyan prophecy as well as in Orwellian vision. In the novel *1984*, technology such as screens that acts like the eyes of "the big brother" to supervise everyone's lives is similar to today's smart home devices and smartphones. Recently, the news reported in China that cameras installed inside the smart home can be opened without the owner's permission, which totalitarians can take advantage of. Another threat, exposed by a new program directed by China Central Television (CCTV), presented that the camera of many digital devices can be opened without owners' permission and their notices. This indicates that citizens' daily lives can be easily monitored by authorities [9]. This kind of Orwellian way, by Hannah Arendt in *The Origin of Totalitarianism*, is likely to emerge in the orient countries like India and China, where autocracy is rooted and more tolerable by the local people [4]. In *Brave New World*, technology is highly dependent and mainly used as a way to manipulate human genes to produce humans for different use and status to maintain social and hierarchical stability. In the twenty-first century, people depend highly on technology like robots and artificial intelligence, but luckily, humans have not produced like goods these days. The traditional technology during World War II contained mass communication, the press, motion picture, and so on. Such means can also be applied as the means to monopoly control. The application of these means has been used for a very long time even though World War Two ended.

4.2. The Emergence of Television's Entertainment

In Huxley's world, most people voluntarily sacrifice their rights and have no interest in political life. A similar phenomenon happened in America, pointed out by Neil Postman in his book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. From his perspective, the fact that America became indifferent to politics is attributed to the fade of the "print-based" culture and the emergence of television entertainment [1].

In his book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil analyzed that before the coming of the era of television, most American trained themselves as reasonable citizens by reading and listening to speeches given by candidates, writers, or even women [1]. However, after the coming of televisions, people lost the ability to think. A large amount of information pours out from the screen, leaving no time for people to ponder it. The fragment speeches without logic also discourage the development of thinking ability. Under such a situation, people are incapable of participating in political life and feel less interest in political life, which they are unfamiliar with. As a result, the more they are indifferent to their political life, the more chance a totalitarian regime will form since the dictators can make whatever decision they want. In addition to harming the thinking ability, television entertainment also serve as a drug that makes people addicted to it because the contents of the television program are elaborately designed for most people who are marginalized. Here, a famous notion of Tittytainment should be mentioned. It is a concept proposed by former U.S. National Security Advisor Brzezinski. The world of Tittytainment is blended into two-part Titty and entertainment, which Brzezinski defines as the pacifying effect of watching TV, similar to that of a child sucking on its mother's breast [2]. In the future, 80 percent of the world's population will be marginalized with the rising population and increased competition [2]. They do not have to or cannot participate in producing goods and services since they are deprived of opportunities to receive better education and find a decent job because of the enormous social gap between the rich and the poor. On the other hand, the 20 percent left are elitists who occupy 80 percent of the wealth [2]. To avoid class conflicts and comfort the outcast, a strategy is put out to handle this problem: Media companies are encouraged to produce addictive pastimes and sensory stimuli (e.g., Internet, television, short videos) to fill people's lives, divert their attention, and dissatisfaction so that they are immersed in "happiness" unconsciously lose the ability to think about real problems. Depriving even the fundamental right, 80 percent of the world's population will probably fail victim to a subtle totalitarian regime grouped by elites.

5. Conclusion

Since the advent of technology in the last few decades, not only has it invaded the privacy of many people, but it has also destroyed the ability of most of us to think critically and rationally, which in turn has destroyed our rational capacity. Two factors may lead to the rise of totalitarian movements in the future due to the loss of individual privacy and the incapacity to think independently; therefore, the absence of these two factors may weigh on the emergence of totalitarian movements in the future.

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