

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Edward Ross, a famous American sociologist and a major figure in the early conception of criminology, defines social control as a system of devices through which society brings its members into conformity with the accepted standards of behaviour. As a result, social control is often associated with the maintenance of order and stability in society (Kumar). To achieve any kind of social order, members of society are expected to behave in accordance to a set of rules, both formal and informal, which are in effect in that particular society. In other words, the objective of applying methods of social control in society is to achieve social order.

According to George H. Mead in his article, "The Genesis of the Self and Social Control", social control depends on how well the individuals in society can imitate the attitudes of other people with whom they frequently socialise in life, because a uniform society is easier to control. In *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this aspect of social control is brought to such an extreme that it gives very little room for individual freedom. However, the methods of social

control used in these novels are very different, since they were written by two different authors for two different reasons.

Aldous Huxley, the author of *Brave New World*, was a member of the famous Huxley family who boasted a number of brilliant intellectuals. In the first half of the twentieth century, Huxley was already considered “one of the great intellects of the era, as he produced a wide range of novels, travel books, histories, poems, plays, and essays on philosophy, arts, religion and psychology” (McMillan, “An old-school ideas man heralds a new age”). The credit to his lasting fame, however, mainly rests on one of his novels, *Brave New World*, which has spawned two films and a radio program. Although often credited as a science fiction, it is actually a political satire and has been regarded as “one of the most long-lived and profoundly disturbing works of fiction written in recent time” (Lightcap).

*Brave New World* set standards “not only for science fiction, but for literature’s popular ‘dystopia’ genre in the 1940s and 1950s as well” (Mical). Dystopia is “an imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one” (“Dystopia”). The novel is considered different from many other dystopian novels because it depicts, at least on the surface, a utopian world. Utopia is “an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect” (“Utopia”), which is the opposite of dystopia. In *Brave New World*, the society is engineered and maintained in such a way that everyone is happy and healthy, regardless of their class and profession. “There is no poverty, little disease, no social unrest, no discontent” (McMillan, “More than a catchphrase”), and yet, several characters in the novel, along with the readers, cannot help but feel that there is something wrong in this seemingly perfect society.

George Orwell, on the other hand, took the definition of dystopia to its most extreme and presented a society of fear and oppression in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This novel, together with his other hugely successful political fable, *Animal Farm* (1954), is “the twentieth century’s biggest sellers for a contemporary author” (McMillan, “The paradoxes of a political writer’s life”). Orwell’s reputation rests “not only on his political shrewdness and his sharp satires but also on his marvellously clear style and on his superb essays, which rank with the best ever written” (Ritter). His many works, including essays, documentaries, and criticisms, have long since established him as one of the most important and influential voices of the century.

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is one of the best-known novels of the twentieth century. Most people, even those who have never read it, know that the book tells us about a totalitarian state under the rule of a ‘Party’ and its figurehead, the Big Brother. Not only that it has inspired numerous television and film adaptations, it also has “contributed numerous concepts, words, and phrases to present day language including *Newspeak*, *doublethink* . . . *thoughtcrime*” (“George Orwell”), and many others. In fact, the fame of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is such that the word “Orwellian” is still commonly used nowadays to describe totalitarian societies (McMillan, “The paradoxes of a political writer’s life”).

Both *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are set in totalitarian societies. Totalitarian means “of or relating to a political regime based on subordination of the individual to the state and strict control of all aspects of the life and productive capacity of the nation especially by coercive measures” (“Totalitarianism”). This definition clearly shows that a totalitarian state seeks to control its people completely, which also means that these people will have very little freedom as long as they still live under the regime. The state achieves this by employing various methods of social control, as both *Brave New World* and

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* show. The types of social control used in these two novels, however, are different, which is why I will endeavour to analyse the theme of the novels from this angle.

Theme in literature is “a salient abstract idea that emerges from a literary work's treatment of its subject-matter” (“Theme”). I will reveal the theme through the portrayal of the major characters, or characters who play significant roles in the novel. Character, on the other hand, is “any representation of an individual being presented in a dramatic or narrative work through extended dramatic or verbal representation” (“Character”).

I choose sociological approach, specifically social control, to help analyse the portrayal of the major characters. Characters, as human beings, are members of their respective societies and therefore subject to methods of social control enforced in them. “According to Maclver and Page society is a system of usages and procedures of authority and mutual aid of many groupings and divisions, of controls of human behaviour and liberties” (“Definitions of Society”). This definition clearly shows that as a system, society influences the behaviours of its members, which in turn define the characteristics of its members.

### **Statement of the problem**

1. What is the theme of the novel?
2. How is the theme revealed through the portrayal of the protagonists in connection with social control?

### **Purpose of the Study**

Based on the problems stated above, the purposes of this thesis are:

1. To show the themes of the two novels.

2. To show how the themes are revealed through the portrayal of the protagonists in connection with social control.

### **Method of Research**

The method of research that I use is library research. I begin my research by reading George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, followed by several books which might be relevant to the topic that I am going to discuss. After that, I analyse the primary text using some theories from relevant textbooks and some references and materials from the Internet that can support the analysis and can help me in writing a good thesis. Finally, I draw conclusions from the analysis.

### **Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters, preceded by the Cover, the Table of Contents, and the Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains theories of social control which are relevant to the analysis in the later chapters. In Chapter Three, I analyse the theme of social control in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* through the Portrayal of the Protagonist. In Chapter Four, I analyse the theme of social control in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* through the Portrayal of the Protagonist. Chapter Five is the Conclusion. This thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, consisting of the Synopsis of Novel and the Biography of Author.