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THE COLONIZED MENTALITY SUFFERING IN SILENCE: HOW TO FORM A NEW DESTINY?

(A Comparative Study of George Orwell's Novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and French Colonialism in Algeria Represented in Mohammad Dib's novel *Al-Hariq*)

Dr. GHADA FAYEZ REFAAT ABU-ENEIN

Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts/ UNRWA University

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ABSTRACT

This research compares *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) by George Orwell and Mohammad Dib's novel *Al-Hariq* (1956). This paper will prove the possibilities to read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from colonial point of view. Depending on the French philosopher Frantz Fanon's book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) which contains the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized from psychological point of view. Furthermore, the comparison between these two novels lies mainly in these aspects: the role of violence, psychological complexes, and the role of hope. Based on two researches "*Nineteen Eighty-Four as critique of British colonialism*" by Niclas Olsson (2018) and Ryan D. Steele's research "*Violence in Algeria: From Colony to Independent Nation*" (2017). Leading to conclude that the government's methods of rule in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are functioning as a simultaneous operation with French Empire's methods in *Al-Hariq*, the analogy between the two are nonetheless apparent.

Keywords: Orwell, liberation, French, Fanon, Algeria, Dib.

Introduction

George Orwell was a novelist, essayist and critic best known for his novels *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). He died in 1950, which is after one year of the publication of his novel. He was a man of strong opinions who addressed some of the major political movements of his times, including imperialism. He worked as a police officer in Burma that was still a British colony at the time. Orwell hated his job and thought imperialism was "an evil thing" (Biography.com Editors, pars1-4). The second novel I will compare with *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is *AL-Hariq*, which was written by Mohammad Dib. Mohammad Dib is an Algerian author who wrote three famous novels

about Algerian's liberation. These novels are; *The Big House* (1952), *Al-Hariq* (1954) and *Al-Noal* (1957). The first novel shows the suffering of Algerian people who lives in Dar-Sbitar from famine. The second novel which is the part of my comparative study is *Al-Hariq* which portrays the peasants in Tlemcen who suffer from poverty and how French seized their lands. The third novel depicts the pain of Algerian workers in a factory (Ghazoul pr9). The summery of the plot in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Al-Hariq* are alike in the existence of the abuser who causes a big misery to the abused.

The set of Orwell's masterpiece *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in Britain that currently is a provincial

state in the country of "Oceania". Through the novel, Orwell portrays his rejection of Totalitarianism. Totalitarianism is the government's dominance of the individual's life. Totalitarian regimes have many shapes in the novel such as Big Brother, Newspeak, Thought-criminal, Two Minute Hate, Doublethink.¹ The main character in the novel is Winston Smith works for Oceania in ministry of truth, which is far away about any right truth. Winston's work is fabricating the fact such as changing the past, and creating fake character for the sake of Big Brother. He hates the Party and he hides the dream of revolution. Winston believes that he will be captured and punished by the Party as soon as he writes "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" in his diary, which is considered as a thought crime. In the end of the novel, O'Brien who is a member of the Party tortures Winston. Winston trusted him and discovered that he was not a member of the Brotherhood, the secret anti-government group, so Winston's rebellion failed by the physical and emotional violence. Finally, he is forced to love Big Brother. Through Winston's sound, readers can feel and see the darkness and villainy of the Party.

Al-Hariq fires the liberation in the farmers' hearts by Hamid Saraj, a militant who evokes peasants to strike against the French military. Saraj wakes the awareness in the mind of the protagonist who is Omar, a 12-year-old boy, who is an orphan. Omar realises that behind the misery of the peasants are the French colonialists. Dib portrays the French colonizer who seizes the lands as worst as he can through the farmers' eyes. The French Empire is involved in many imperialist and colonial operations, not only in Asia, but also in Africa, more specifically, in Algeria.

¹ Big Brother: a figure of party's power (a man with a big mustache is watching every person), Newspeak: new language which was invented by the Party to decrease the Thought criminal, Thought-criminal: any idea against the Party, two minute hate: event aims to increase the hatred towards the enemy of the Party, Doublethink: believing in contradictions such as "War Is Peace; Freedom Is Slavery; Ignorance Is Strength".

Algeria, located to the east of Morocco, north of the Sahara and west of Egypt. The country faced two civil wars after it gained independence from colonial rule. Algeria had a different history because of its location amidst Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia (legacy 32). The French empire lasted in Algeria about one hundred and thirty two years. According to Ben Kiernan The war had killed approximately 825,000 indigenous Algerians since 1830 (Steele 10). Sartre who introduced Fanon's book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) said in describing the violence of French colonization in Algeria "It is enough today for two French people to meet together for there to be a dead man between them." (30). I will depend on Fanon's book which showed the psyche of the colonized and colonizers. Dr. Fanon wrote his book after he had participated with Algerian revolution against French colonialism. Then he died from Leukaemia 1961.

Comparing between the rise of the government in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the colonial French regime in *Al-Hariq* novel will be from many aspects. I will compare Winston's suffering as colonised and the Algerian peasants' suffering in French colonialism. Concerning the feeling of violence (emotional, physical), psychological complexes (superiority, inferiority) and the role of hope in the two novels. Depending on Steele's research "*Violence in Algeria: From Colony to Independent Nation*" and Olsson's research "*Nineteen Eighty-Four as a critique of British colonialism*". In conclusion, this paper asserts that oppression applied by different colonizers on different times or places is still the same

Historical text

Nineteen Eighty-Four, written in 1949 after the end of World War I and the French colonialism in Algeria began in 1930 until 1962, taking the consideration the period of which *Al-Hariq* novel was written in 1956. Nearly these two novels have expose the same period of time, which is after the World War II (1939-1945). After the World War II, people were depressed and hopeless as well as the effects of the wars begin to appear on language, culture, psychology, economy. This setting

surrounded the two novels that my comparative research will explain.

Theory

I will base my research on Post-colonial theory, an academic field that came about in the 19th century and focuses on the cultural legacy of previous imperial and colonial exploitation and control of a land's inhabitants (Olsson 6). I support my thesis by two definitions of colonialism to assert that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* could be read from colonial point of view. The first definition as Fanon says that the problem of colonialism "includes not only the interrelations of objective historical conditions but also the human attitudes towards these conditions" (Rukundwa and Aarde 15). Fanon confirms that colonialism does affect on human's acts that includes human's psychology. Ashis Nandy in his book *"The Intimate Enemy"* gives an example of India under the British control to prove that colonialism never ends with political freedom and is not only suppressing the colonized countries economically, but also affects the psyche of the colonized people (1). Moreover, Ashis Nandy adds that colonialism is not always controlling the lands and economy of another country. It is also controlling the minds of colonized even after the decolonization (Sharmin 14).

According to the first definition of colonialism and the quotation below, Orwell provokes a new idea about new kind of war by the sentence "War is Peace":

War, it will be seen, is now a purely internal affair. In the past, the ruling groups of all countries, although they might recognize their common interest and therefore limit the destructiveness of war, did fight against one another, and the victor always plundered the vanquished. In our own day they are not fighting against one another at all. The war is waged by each ruling group against its own subjects, and the object of the war is not to make or prevent conquests of territory, but to keep the structure of society intact (Orwell 116-117)

Orwell, by keeping the structure of the society intact is keeping the society shattered, oppressed and scared which makes the Party's authority lasts. Orwell creates an internal war between the government and the nation. It is not a civil war between two races or different nations. It is a war between the nation and the government instead of being external with another country. Colonialism differs in the novel to be internal war between the government and the inhabitants. The whole rockets, which fall in Oceania, are from the government itself to make people live in panic. Meanwhile, War is Peace means the illusion of war leads the peace to the Party who can control the people and save its power eternally. Orwell's idea of War is Peace matches Fanon and Nandy's argument that the colonialism is a mental war has psychological effects. Regardless of conflict's sides, colonialism has the ability to control the minds.

The second definition of colonialism involves the subjugation of one people to another. When Orwell tries to pursue the reader, colonialism is not just, "a foreign government administers a territory" (Kohn and Reddy pr1). I disagree with this definition that it should be a foreign government. It also could be the nation's government, which administers a terror. These two definitions of colonialism; the control of minds by the psychological effects as well as the submission of one people to another do correspond reading *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from colonial's point of view.



BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU

Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell 1949

"I am talking about millions of men in whom fear has been cunningly instilled, who have been taught

to have an inferiority complex, to tremble, kneel, despair, and behave like flunkies." Aimé Césaire

1. Violence

a. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is: "any act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth." (Tracy pr2)

Through analyzing the novel, I will concentrate on Winston's character, so reader will feel of the awful Victory Gin, which tastes like Sodium Acid, and the fear from the Telescreens, a tool that the Party used to watch every person visually in his house that forces him to make optimistic facial expressions to be out of suspicion. For instance, Winston says in his mind "In any case, to wear an improper expression on your face (to look incredulous when a victory was announced, for example) was itself a punishable offence. There was even a word for it in Newspeak: facecrime, it was called" (Orwell 31). This quotation indicates how the colonizer abuses the colonized emotionally even the facial expressions.

Moreover, Where ever you are, Big Brother's eyes are watching you and even your thoughts are censored by the Thought Police. All of this intimidation from the Party, wife, and children surrounds him which boosts the affection of fear and anxiety that reduces the self-worth. Even the children are raised to snitch about their parents if they commit a sin towards the Party. Furthermore, the wife who sleeps with her husband is just a duty for the Party. This quotation depicts the fear which the abused feels when thinking of rebellion "He could not help feeling a twinge of panic. It was absurd, since the writing of those particular words was not more dangerous than the initial act of opening the diary, but for a moment he was tempted to tear out the spoiled pages and abandon the enterprise altogether." (Orwell 21)

b. Physical abuse

Physical abuse is any physical force which can hurt and injures your body. For example:

kicking, slapping, using harmful tools in the body (knife, pins, saw...). Physical abuse has a significant role in the end of the novel. The room 101 and $2+2=5$ are symbols that indicate the physical abuse. The room 101 is a room symbolizes the harsh use of fear towards the convict. Knowing the scariest thing, he/she frightens from in the world. As Winston experiences his Phobia when he says: "Out of all the horrors in the world- RAT!" (Orwell 151). The colonizer does these kinds of suffering due to control the minds of the colonized as O'Brien asked Winston when he is in the room 101:

How does one man assert his power over another? 'Winston thought. 'By making him suffer, he said, Exactly by SUFFERING. Obedience is not enough. Unless he is suffering, how can you be sure that he is obeying your will and not his own? Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation. Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing.... A world of fear and treachery is torment, a world of trampling and being trampled upon, a world which will grow not less but more merciless . . . Progressing our world will be progress towards more pain (Orwell 154)

The second symbol is $2+2=5$. In the beginning Winston refuses to admit that two plus two equals five then he tries to believe but he cannot. At the end he sees it is five as real, it is five through the torture! This is an example of how much the Party is powerful to change the reality. It indicates how the power has not just had the ability to change someone's mind but also to change what you really believe in!

2. The Superiority Complex and the Inferiority Complex

The superiority complex is an exaggerated opinion of one's abilities and accomplishments. In contrast, the inferiority complex that is a basic feeling of inadequacy and insecurity, deriving from actual or imagined physical or psychological deficiency (APA dictionary psychology).

Through the novel, a reader feels the powerful and invincible control of the Party. O'Brien is a member of the Party shows the

superiority complex that any abuser must have. This quotation depicts the Party's endless power on the mind of Winston as well as the inferiority complex as Fanon said colonizers saw the colonized as animals and discourse them with the features of animals (81). That is clear when O'Brien smiled and said to Winston:

You are a FLAW in the pattern, Winston. You are a stain that must be wiped out. Did I not tell you just now that we are different from the persecutors of the past? We are not content with negative obedience, nor even with the most abject submission. When finally you surrender to us, it must be of your own free will. We do not destroy the heretic . . . We convert him, we capture his inner mind, we reshape him . . . The command of the old despotisms was "Thou shalt not". The command of the totalitarians was "**Thou shalt**". (Orwell 147)

Another quotation depicts the Party as God who is omniscient and omnipotent. When Winston asked O'Brien how the Party control the matter when it cannot control the gravity or the climate. He silenced him and said:

We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull. You will learn by degrees, Winston. There is nothing that we could not do. Invisibility, levitation anything. I could float off this floor like a soap bubble if I wish to. I do not wish to, because the Party does not wish it. You must get rid of those nineteenth century ideas about the laws of Nature. We make the laws of Nature (Orwell 153).

As stated by Niclas Olsson, Fanon describes how the colonized people whose soul and inferiority complex has been created by the death of the culture and language finds itself face to face with the new language of the civilized nation (13). In the novel, the Party is the civilized nation, which looks to the inhabitants as inferior. Language has been changed to be Newspeak and the past is changed according to the Party's benefits.

Al-Hariq by Mohammad Dib 1956

"The types of violence that North Africa suffered from physical violence which is observed and psychological violence" (Sparks 35).

1. Violence

a. Emotional abuse

In every colonial setting, humiliation and intimidation are found. In Al-Hariq novel, it is obvious in two places. The first place when Dib evokes the reader to sympathy with a peasant who was working in the French's field "Monsieur Marcus". While this peasant is working, the tractor eats his bones and his blood spreads all over the wheat spikes field. This view does not make the rest of the peasants show their anger but they wait for Monsieur Marcus who commands them to continue working. After farmers passing, every farmer greets Monsieur Marcus with a respectful greeting by putting his hand on his heart. (Dib 179) This situation shows the highest humiliation and intimidation can be occurred in the hearts of the indigenous of the lands. Farmers absolutely feel of wrath hatred and pain but they did nothing. The second place when Omar is called from a French man to carry his stuffs for franc. When the man asked Omar about his life with sympathetic look and telling his child to give Omar his book, his child refused then Omar replied that he does not need this book. Thus, the man has no intention to give Omar the book in any circumstances (Dib 260). The conversation that utters between Omar and the man is enough to assert the feeling of deprivation and diminishing of Omar's dignity. As twelve-years old, Omar is abused emotionally because he is an orphan uneducated and poor child.

b. Physical abuse

William Galois's book mentioned, "that the French were obsessed with violence – in their thoughts, acts and records"(Steele 11)

In the novel, Dib does not details what happened for the large amount to the prisoners of peasants who were arrested. He gives one example of torturing the prisoner Hamid Saraj who plants the awareness of the peasants' minds to liberate.

The French police slap kick and torture him in every way to confess about the peasants who were with him but he refused. (Dib 206-210)



In addition, the most famous tool French used is "Tactic Razzia", brutal raids used by the French military against tribes in Algeria in the 1840s; is shown in the photo bellow:

The French historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet discovered that French's use of torture was originally hidden from the outside world in Algeria during the French Algerian war (Steele 26). French used different kinds of torturing techniques to make Algerian suffer physically and psychology. Indeed, Fanon mentioned in the last chapter the mental disorders which happened to the natives showing how was Algerian's agony after the liberation war. He wrote "colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: "In reality, who am I?" (250)

2. The Superiority Complex and Inferiority Complex

The French government evaluated Algerian institutions, culture, and social structure and deemed them to be less civilized than French society and culture. Jennifer Sessions describes how "barbaric" the French viewed the citizens of their new colony (Steele 7). This superiority complex that the colonizers suffer makes the inferiority complex in the colonized to believe colonizer's point of view about themselves. Fanon says how many psychiatrists describe Algerian people, "That isn't normal. The Algerian's cortex must be underdeveloped. . . is it not rather the case that, since we cannot crush the natives, violence comes back on its tracks, cumulates in the very depths of our nature and seeks a way out? The union of the

Algerian people causes the disunion of the French people "(28). This quotation indicates the superiority complex of the colonizer.

The French government was established to help set up the colonizers superiority. The French government also set up policies that weakened and restricted the right of the colonized on their lands. These three policies are: "free land" policy , French offered free land to any Europeans which belongs to the farmers. This suffering is shown in the novel when farmers lose the land which they inherited from generation to another. The second policy is the right to French to rip the land if the farmer does not have the contract of owning this land. Unfortunately, the majority of peasants do not have these contracts (Steele 15). These two policies laid out the superiority complex of colonizer to have what he already has not owned. In addition, the inferiority complex of the peasants laid out during these polices. Those unjust and oppressive policies cause to lose the peasants' lands immediately. After the lands were like their mothers and homes, now they work in their lands as foreigners, as they describe themselves.

3. The hope is different

Winston's first attempt of rebellion is a thought to have a notebook and pin. It was the source of Winston's terrifying that he would be punished. At the beginning of the novel, Orwell draws a little light of hope when Winston lays his hope in the proles, the lower class. Then Winston shows his hope to dispose his dull life by thinking of the possibility to find people who hate the Party as Julia who is Winston's girlfriend and O'Brien (thinking that O'Brien with them because of dream, but he was wrong). In the end of the story, Winston thinks of freedom is to die while you hate the Party that indicates the hopelessness of surviving as a human being when the narrator says "He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother"(Orwell 173) which means no way of freedom. The liberation is impossible to be successful.

On the other hand, *Al-Hariq* gives the hope to Algerian citizens for freedom. The symbol that Dib uses in the novel is the "fire" that happens

suddenly which burns the cabins of the farmers .This fire is the symbolic figure of the furious fire in farmers` hearts which indicates the anger and the breath of revolution. Dib's predication for the victory becomes true. After several years from publishing this novel, the revolution begins picking its fruits for liberation. The Algerian war began and Algeria finally gains the independence in 1962.

The development of the characters between Winston and Omar has begun from ignorance and dull life to be aware of the basic problem, which is the existence of the colonizer. Furthermore, getting rid from the nation's anger has the same shape in the two novels. Two minutes hate, is the way Party uses to make the nation breathe their anger through these two minutes by screaming and shouting. In Algeria, the abused were breathing their anger through exhausting their energy in political parties which only make peaceful decisions that the nation should has the right to decide its destiny (Fanon 57)

The difference in the two novels is the role of hope. Winston's hope to get rid of the colonizer failed. In contrast, Omar's hope is achieved. Otherwise, Omar and the other characters who lived in Dar-Sebtar were their only purpose is finding a piece of bread. This purpose has been changed when Saraj turns on their minds to think about the reason behind this famine and poverty.

In my opinion, the difference between both endings in these two novels refers to two reasons. The first reason is the type of Orwell's novel is dystopia; society has a great suffering or injustice. Thus, the time of Orwell's novel after two years of the World War II, people were still disappointed and pessimistic. However, Dib's novel is written to give the hope for Algeria during the colonialism. The second reason is the messing of the right role of children. Children are one of the prominent reasons to BLOW OUT the liberation. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, children are spies against their parents and Winston has no children .In addition, there is no obvious role of a child except of being spies. On the other hand, *Al-Hariq* has a protagonist child who recognises that the colonialism should be expelled to restore their properties.

Conclusion

"This is the way the world ends, Not with a bang but a whimper." T.S Eliot

In conclusion, colonialism is found in every place and time, maybe it has different faces nevertheless it inflicts the same suffering. The main purpose of colonialism in these two novels *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Al-Hariq* is gaining the power. The power comes from controlling the thoughts. Controlling the minds has many shapes in these two novels. Nowadays, Facebook is one of the social media sites, which has the same purpose. Knowing everything about you is not enough for them. Facebook tends to know the thoughts in your minds to gain the infinite power all over the world. We are censored as Winston, but in different way without our attention. Jennifer Sessions's argument helps illustrate that the French had no reason to colonize the land other than their desire to *dominant over others* (Steele 7). Alike the Party, which its main purpose is the power, when O'Brien says "The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. . . we are interested solely in power. . . Power is not a means, it is an end . . . The object of power is power"(Orwell 152). For a long time, since now colonizers have the same purposes.

The colonizer (the Party and the French empire) uses the violence (physical and emotional), superiority complex and inferiority complex to submit the colonized although hope takes a different place in each novel. Orwell's novel ends with no hope for liberation. Unlike Dib's novel which ends with the hope of the liberation, which comes from the force of the inhabitants. In my opinion, I agree with Mohammad Dib's opinion that the liberation will come someday if there is a will and awareness. In addition, I believe that the end of colonialism cannot be without force as Frantz Fanon said, "Colonialism only loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat" (Hilton 1). Even if the injustice lasts for a long time as Algerian suffered for one hundred and thirty- two years, at last Algeria got its independence.

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