

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A.1 Background of the Study

Social relations, cooperation and justice are important for creating a harmonious society (Hume, 1740). Social life encourages interaction between individuals as an important element in the human experience while enabling the establishment of broader relationships within society. Although social interaction brings benefits in forming relationships, it cannot be ignored that it can also create differences in person's social status. This is because social interactions often involve comparisons, judgments, and the reinforcement of social norms, which naturally lead to distinctions in how individuals are perceived and valued within a group. In this context, differences in social status create complex dynamics. Social interactions not only create relationships and connectivity, but also illustrate inequalities that can influence power dynamics and access to resources.

Social stratification is a system of distinguishing individuals or groups in society, which places them in different social classes in a hierarchical manner and provides different rights and obligations between individuals in one layer and another (Muin, 2004). Social class can become reflection of these inequalities, having an impact on individual opportunities and rights in various aspects of life. Inequality in social classes can cause tension and injustice in society. Individuals with higher social classes have easier access to education, health facilities, and jobs

in higher positions, while lower social classes face obstacles and limitations in the opportunities that have been obtained by the upper classes (Irawati, 2016). Therefore, social life can become a stage for class struggle in an effort to overcome social inequality.

For example, the ruling class or upper class often has greater access to power, resources, and political rights. Economic and political policies can reinforce social inequality. This can be attributed to a totalitarian system. This system tends to form a social class structure, which is reflected in political, economic, and social policies (Wang et al., 2019). This system involves government control of wealth, access to education, employment opportunities, and political power. The totalitarian government's complete control over the economic sector often has an impact on the formation of social classes. The ruling class, which often consists of political and economic elites who support the regime, can exercise control over resources and wealth. On the other hand, lower classes, such as workers and farmers that may face restrictions on access to wealth and detrimental economic policies.

It is very difficult for people to rise in social class under totalitarian rule. The ruling class keeps surveillance, disseminates misinformation, and punishes anyone who dared oppose them in order to hold onto power. Those who attempt to resist will face tragic consequences. Misinformation is another tool used by governments to create a sense of entitlement among the populace. By doing thus,

they limit the majority of people from obtaining the opportunities and privileges they are due and reinforce the influence of the fortunate few. In short, totalitarian regimes deliberately impede the distribution of social justice and individual freedom by controlling society and punishing those who oppose them.

According to Dr. Nurhadi (2022) a novel is a form of literary work that has social, cultural, moral, and educational values. This means that a novelist can convey the message implied in the novel created in accordance with the social, cultural and educational aspects contained in it to the reader so that the novel can be accepted and absorbed properly. So that the novel can be used as a source of reflection and learning for its readers and even the author himself.

One example of a novel based on someone's life experience and the history of their time is George Orwell's *1984*. When in 1949 he was in the post-World War II period and witnessed the war firsthand (Tyner, 2004). It was also a time of tension between ideological blocs such as the Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc, especially the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War period.

This novel is considered a masterpiece because the author, George Orwell, has a writing style that is straightforward, imaginative, and captivates readers (Tyner, 2004). He was also able to paint a picture of the future of life like a gloomy hell. In this legendary *1984* work, Arthur Blair, also known as George Orwell, creates a dystopian world filled with the dreadful effects of all-powerful control in all areas of life. The novel tells the story of a future world where the leader is a

dictator, or in other terms, rules tyrannically and oppresses his people. George Orwell is also able to create Winston as a complex and contradictory main character to the theme of power found in *1984*. George Orwell portrays Winston's character as someone who is constrained in the context of lack of freedom as an individual. This makes the reader, especially the researcher, feel the tightness of life in *1984*, which is limited in every movement and all aspects of life are regulated by the government.

This long novel by George Orwell is a depiction of totalitarianism that controls all forms of media for the sake of power. Using Winston's character, George Orwell portrayed the novel as a form of resistance against totalitarianism, the lies of the state, and the fear of living under tyrannical rule (Zhang, 2024). It cleverly depicts how a one-party state can shape its individuals in such a way as to poke their noses in and direct them to behave as they wish. The government in the novel uses surveillance tools to monitor all aspects of people's lives, namely *telescreen*.

Totalitarian systems tend to form social class structures, which are reflected in political, economic and social policies. In addition, totalitarian systems in novel *1984* often utilize propaganda to shape people's perceptions. Through the media and official narratives, the regime can manipulate perceptions of the role and status of various groups in society.

Similar to *1984*, Margaret Atwood's 'The Handmaid's Tale' also depicts the same dystopian backdrop. Dwi Linda Kusuma in her research in 2022 revealed the hegemonic power of the ruling class in the novel using Gramsci's concept of hegemony. The research also shows that the ruling class in the novel uses consent as the main strategy in maintaining its power and coercion as a shield for its hegemonic power. Consent is mostly depicted through the use of manipulative discourse. In this case, the ruling class and its agents insert its values into their own discourse to make the subaltern act in accordance with the interests of the ruling class. It also shows that the ruling class maintains its authority by using privileges, awards, movies, mass media, songs, scriptures, symbolic clothing, and a uniform language. Meanwhile, the coercion in this novel is depicted by violence.

In addition to the similarity in the theme of the novel which tells about a dystopian background that are full of chaos. Another similarity between Kusuma's research and this research is in the topic. If Kusuma's research in 2022 talks about hegemonic power of the ruling class presented in *The Handmaid's Tale* novel, the researcher here is interested in analyzing the form of resistance from the lower class against class hegemony and control in the novel *1984* because by deepening the analysis of these themes, researchers or even the public can have critical thinking and be more aware of the political system in society. This research is different from the existing ones because it focuses on forms of lower-class resistance in the face of upper-class hegemony, which often receive less attention in the previous studies. While many studies have focused on analyzing the

hegemony or dominance of the upper class, this research explores how individuals from the lower class, albeit in limited conditions, try to respond and resist the totalitarian control in the novel *1984*. With this approach, the research seeks to provide a new understanding of resistance in a repressed society. Therefore, the researcher titled this study, "The Lower-Class' Resistance Against Upper-Class' Hegemony in George Orwell's *1984*".

### **A.2 Problems of the Research**

The problems in this study can be defined as follows:

1. How do individuals like Winston attempt to resist totalitarian control in *1984*, and to what extent do they succeed or fail?
2. What are the consequences that lower-class representatives like Winston face from living in a totalitarian society?

### **A.3 Objectives of the Research**

Based on the research problem above, the objectives of this research are as follows.

1. To analyze Winston's attempts to resist totalitarian control in *1984* and examining the extent to which they succeed or fail.
2. To describe the consequences that lower-class representatives like Winston face from living in a totalitarian society.

#### **A.4 Significance of the Research**

A study is supposed to contribute significantly in both theoretical and practical ways in order to establish the standard of research that is carried out by researcher. The following are some advantages that this research may produce.

1. Theoretically

The researcher hopes that research that discusses the novel 1984 from a socio-political point of view, can be a source of reference for further researches that wants to examine a socio-political.

2. Practically

This research is expected to provide an understanding of the phenomenon of upper-class or ruling-class power in everyday life. In addition, this research is also expected to provide an understanding of totalitarianism through literature, as depicted in the novel studied. As for researcher, this research is anticipated to provide new knowledge of sociology in the form of power control and political knowledge about totalitarianism.

#### **A.5 Scope of the Research**

In this study, the researcher focuses on the issue of how the resistance tactics of lower-class representatives to the hegemony and control exercised by the upper-class. Using the framework of hegemony and power theory, the researcher also explores how the upper class maintains its power through cultural

and political domination, so that there are strong reasons that encourage representatives of the lower class to respond to this domination by carrying out resistance tactics. In this context, the characters Winston is used as representatives who resist the upper-class domination.

#### **A.6 Definition of Key Terms**

a. Dystopia

Dystopia itself is the worst picture of humanity's future, where society or life seems scary and full of destruction. In essence, dystopia is not a "good place" in contrast to the definition of utopia which is an ideal fantasy about the future.

b. Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism is a type of political system in which the government has complete control over every aspect of people's lives.

c. Telescreen

A device known as a telescreen function as a microphone, security, camera, and television all at once. The ruling Party in the fictional totalitarian nation of Oceania uses telescreens in the novel *1984* to keep its citizens under continual surveillance and prevent any chance of covert plots against Oceania.

## **A.7 Organization of the Research Report**

This research consists of five chapters. The first chapter consists of an explanation regarding the background of the research study, the problem of the research, objective of the research, the significances of the research, limitation of the research, the definition of the key terms, and the organization of the research report. The second chapter contains a theoretical framework that explains the hegemony theory approach based on Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault, also a literature review that is used as a relevant reference to this research. The third chapter consists of research methods in which there are types of research, object of the study, sources of data, technique of data collection, and technique of data analysis. The fourth chapter contains an explanation of the discussion and results. Fifth chapter contains conclusions and suggestions.