

Avidya under Visibility: Winston Smith's Buddhist Ignorance through Sexual Misconduct in Orwell's 1984

“อวิชชา” ภายใต้การจับจ้อง: ความเขลาทางพุทธปรัชญาของวินสตัน สมิธ
ผ่านการประพฤติผิดทางเพศใน 1984 ของออร์เวลล์

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Abstract

Background and Objectives: This study examines the spiritual ignorance of Winston Smith in George Orwell's 1984 through his sexual relationship or sexual assault against Julia, an Outer Party member whose surname is never revealed. The research has two objectives: 1) to analyze how Winston's sexual relationship reflects spiritual ignorance, and 2) to identify the consequences of that ignorance. While Orwell was not influenced by Buddhist philosophy, the concept of *Avidya*, a Buddhist term for spiritual ignorance, is applied as a complementary interpretive framework. In terms of philosophical analysis, *Avidya* adds an ethical dimension that supplements the widely discussed political analyses of the novel and enriches its moral implications.

Methods: The study draws on nineteen excerpts from the primary text, Orwell's 1984, chosen for their relevance to Winston's sexual misconduct (actions related to illicit desire), moral reasoning (judgments on right or wrong that deviate from the Party's mandates), and psychological conflict (internal struggle between self-assertion and fear), along with secondary philosophical sources that frame the analysis. These excerpts are examined through descriptive qualitative analysis using the framework of *Avidya* (spiritual ignorance of self and reality causes suffering) to explore how misunderstanding and unawareness lead to Winston's actions and decisions, affecting both his private desires and broader sense of right and wrong.

Results: The findings show that Winston initially perceives the affair as a private act of rebellion, secure from Party surveillance. His spiritual ignorance deepens as Julia becomes a necessity and right; their rented room, imagined as a "paradise," is marked by decay and covert monitoring, eventually becoming a crime scene upon discovery. This process reveals how unexamined desire overrides discernment, fostering craving, attachment, and self-deception. Winston's sexual misconduct functions as both personal defiance and self-sabotage, shaped by the Party's manipulation of desire, morality, and secrecy.

His unhesitating acceptance of Julia's secret message develops into obsession and ultimately culminates in betrayal under torture and spiritual submission to Big Brother. Interpreted through *Avidya*, this downfall is not only political but spiritual, as he fails to recognize the impermanence of pleasure, the illusion of control, and the deceptive nature of self in attachment.

Application of this study: Integrating *Avidya* into the analysis, this research expands critical perspectives on 1984, showing how totalitarian regimes invade and control intimate human bonds to enforce submission. This study reflects the value of cross-cultural interpretation in literary analysis and provides a framework that addresses both public mechanisms of control and private areas of ethicality, intimacy, vulnerability, and attachment.

Conclusions: Winston's spiritual ignorance—manifested through sexual misconduct, possessive entitlement, and moral confusion—illustrates how a totalitarian regime exerts domination by intruding into the most personal aspects of human life. Situating Orwell's narrative within political and ethical-philosophical contexts, the research concludes that Winston's *Avidya* ultimately leads to the total disintegration of his autonomous self and moral agency, emphasizing that true resistance requires spiritual detachment—an insight the Party is powerless to destroy.

บทคัดย่อ

ที่มาและวัตถุประสงค์: การศึกษานี้ตรวจสอบความเขลาทางจิตวิญญาณของวินสตัน สมิธ ในนวนิยายเรื่อง 1984 ของ จอร์จ ออร์เวลล์ ผ่านความสัมพันธ์เชิงคู่สาวหรือการกระทำผิดทางเพศกับจูเลีย สมาชิกพรรคชั้นนอกซึ่งไม่มีการเปิดเผยนามสกุล โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์สองประการ คือ 1) วิเคราะห์ว่าความสัมพันธ์ดังกล่าวสะท้อนความเขลาทางจิตวิญญาณของ วินสตันอย่างไร และ 2) ระบุผลที่ตามมาของความเขลานั้น ในขณะที่ออร์เวลล์ไม่ได้รับอิทธิพลจากปรัชญาพุทธศาสนา แต่แนวคิดของ “อวิชชา” ซึ่งเป็นคำในทางพุทธศาสนาที่หมายถึง ความเขลาทางจิตวิญญาณ ได้ถูกนำมาประยุกต์ใช้เป็นกรอบการตีความ ในเชิงปรัชญา “อวิชชา” เพิ่มมิติทางจริยธรรมที่ช่วยเสริมการวิเคราะห์ทางการเมืองของนวนิยายซึ่งเป็นที่กล่าวถึงอย่างกว้างขวาง และเสริมนัยยะทางศีลธรรมให้ลึกซึ้งยิ่งขึ้น

วิธีการศึกษา: การศึกษานี้ใช้ข้อความสำคัญจำนวน 19 ข้อความจากแหล่งข้อมูลปฐมภูมิ คือนวนิยาย เรื่อง 1984 ของ ออร์เวลล์ ซึ่งคัดเลือกจากความเกี่ยวข้องกับการกระทำผิดทางเพศ (การกระทำที่เกี่ยวข้องกับความปรารถนาต้องห้าม) การใช้เหตุผลเชิงศีลธรรม (การตัดสินใจหรือผิดที่เบี่ยงเบนจากข้อบังคับของพรรค) และความขัดแย้งทางจิตใจ (การต่อสู้ภายในระหว่างการยืนยันตัวตนและความกลัว) ของวินสตัน พร้อมทั้งใช้งานด้านปรัชญาจากแหล่งข้อมูลทุติยภูมิเป็นกรอบประกอบการวิเคราะห์ ข้อความจากนวนิยายที่ถูกคัดเลือกเหล่านี้ถูกศึกษาผ่านวิธีการวิเคราะห์เชิงพรรณนาเชิงคุณภาพ โดยใช้กรอบแนวคิดของ “อวิชชา” (ความเขลาทางจิตวิญญาณของตนเองและความจริงที่เป็นเหตุแห่งความทุกข์) เพื่อสำรวจว่าความเข้าใจผิดและการไม่ตระหนักรู้นำไปสู่การกระทำและการตัดสินใจของวินสตันอย่างไร ซึ่งส่งผลต่อทั้งความปรารถนาส่วนตัวและวิถีทางของความถูกต้องหรือผิดในวงกว้างของเขา

ผลการศึกษา: ผลการศึกษาพบว่าวินสตันมองความสัมพันธ์กับจูเลียในระยะแรกว่าเป็นการกบฏส่วนตัวที่ปลอดภัยจากการสอดส่องของพรรค ความเขลาทางจิตวิญญาณของเขาได้ทวีขึ้นเมื่อจูเลียกลายเป็นสิ่งจำเป็นและเป็นสิทธิที่เขาเชื่อว่าพึงมี ห้องเช่าที่เขาจินตนาการว่าเป็น “สวรรค์” แท้จริงกลับมีร่องรอยความเสื่อมโทรมและการถูกสอดส่องอย่างลับๆ ห้ายี่สิบที่อุดมไปด้วยการกดขี่และควบคุมเมื่อถูกค้นพบ กระบวนการนี้เผยให้เห็นว่าความปรารถนาที่ปราศจากการไตร่ตรองบดบังวิจารณญาณ ก่อให้เกิดความอยาก ความยึดติด และการหลอกตัวเอง ความประพฤติดังกล่าวของ วินสตันทำหน้าที่เป็นทั้งการขัดแย้งของตนเองและการบ่อนทำลายตนเอง ซึ่งถูกกำหนดโดยการบงการของพรรคในด้านความปรารถนา ศีลธรรม และความลับ การยอมรับข้อความลับของจูเลียอย่างไม่รีรอของเขาพัฒนาไปสู่ความหมกมุ่น และจบลงด้วยการทรยศภายใต้การทรมานและการยอมจำนนทางจิตวิญญาณต่อบิ๊กบราเธอร์ เมื่อตีความผ่าน “อวิชชา” การล่มสลายนี้ไม่ได้เป็นเพียงทางการเมืองเท่านั้น แต่เป็นการล่มสลายทางจิตวิญญาณด้วย เนื่องจากเขาไม่สามารถตระหนักถึงความไม่เที่ยงแท้ของความสุข ภาพลวงตาของการควบคุม และธรรมชาติอันลวงตาของตัวตนในห้วงของความยึดมั่นถือมั่น

การประยุกต์ใช้: การใช้ “อวิชชา” เป็นกรอบการตีความของการศึกษานี้ขยายขอบเขตการวิจารณ์นวนิยายเรื่อง 1984 โดยเน้นให้เห็นว่าระบอบเผด็จการสามารถลวงล้าและควบคุมสายสัมพันธ์ใกล้ชิดของมนุษย์เพื่อบังคับให้ยอมจำนน การศึกษาเช่นนี้สะท้อนคุณค่าของการตีความข้ามวัฒนธรรมของการวิเคราะห์วรรณกรรม และแสดงให้เห็นกรอบการตีความที่ครอบคลุมทั้งกลไกในพื้นที่สาธารณะและพื้นที่ส่วนตัวที่ละเอียดอ่อนทางจริยธรรม ความสัมพันธ์เชิงคู่สาว ความเปราะบาง และความยึดมั่นถือมั่น

บทสรุป: ความเขลาทางจิตวิญญาณของวินสตันที่ปรากฏผ่านการประพฤติดังกล่าว การยึดถือสิทธิครอบครอง และความสับสนทางศีลธรรม แสดงให้เห็นการบงการของระบอบเผด็จการ ซึ่งแทรกซึมสู่พื้นที่ส่วนตัวที่สุดของชีวิตมนุษย์ จากการวางโครงเรื่องของออร์เวลล์ในบริบททางการเมืองและบริบททางจริยธรรมเชิงปรัชญา งานวิจัยนี้สรุปว่า “อวิชชา” ของ วินสตันนำไปสู่การแตกสลายโดยรวมของความเป็นตัวของตัวเองและวิจารณญาณทางศีลธรรม โดยเน้นว่าการขัดแย้งอย่างแท้จริงต้องการการไม่ยึดมั่นถือมั่นทางจิตวิญญาณ ซึ่งเป็นการหยั่งรู้ที่แม้แต่อำนาจของพรรคก็ไม่สามารถทำลายได้

Introduction

George Orwell's novel 1984 (1949) serves as a crucial cautionary story against totalitarianism and oppression, standing out as a cultural symbol of modern apprehension about the post-totalitarian state (Blakemore, 1984 : 349). While the novel is extensively studied through political and psychological lenses, this study emphasizes Buddhist spiritual ignorance as a driving force in Winston Smith's actions. The Party's manipulation of truth, memory, and language fosters not only external control but internal delusion, prompting a collapse of moral clarity in its citizens. Winston's sexual relationship with Julia, although often interpreted as an act of political rebellion, exposes this deeper personal confusion.

To explore this internal ethical dimension, the Buddhist concept of *Avidya* (spiritual ignorance) is applied as a philosophical framework. *Avidya* is considered the root cause of suffering in Buddhist ethics (Keown, 2004 : 27), referring

to a fundamental misperception of reality and self rather than a lack of information. In this study, *Avidya* or spiritual ignorance in terms of Buddhism is defined as a fundamental misperception of reality and self, which serves as the root of suffering and harmful action. Without claiming that Orwell was directly influenced by Buddhist teachings, this study introduces *Avidya*, a comparative philosophical lens, to analyse Winston's self-deception and moral failure and also argues that it is the appropriate framework for explaining how his ethical and spiritual failure precipitates his political downfall. Approaching the text cross-culturally, this analysis expands the critique beyond purely political and psychological terms to affirm broader ethical reflection, remaining anchored in the novel's narrative development.

Literature Review

George Orwell (1903–1950), born Eric Arthur Blair, was a British author, journalist, and political essayist renowned for his critiques of totalitarianism and social injustice. Although born in Bengal, India, Orwell was raised in England and educated at Eton College. He later served as an imperial policeman in Burma (now Myanmar). His early novels, *Burmese Days* (1934) and *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1935), reflect his disillusionment with colonialism. Orwell's experiences as a soldier in the Spanish Civil War further fuelled his anti-totalitarian views. Consequently, this ideological shift informed works like *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying* (1936) and *Coming Up for Air* (1939), which explore themes of social inequality and individual struggle.

During the Second World War, Orwell worked as a journalist, observing the transformative leadership of Winston Churchill. His exposure to wartime propaganda and authoritarianism informed his seminal novels, *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1949), both cautionary tales about power and oppression. In addition to his novels, Orwell's notable non-fiction works, including *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), and *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), delve into his personal experiences and socialist ideals. In his essay *Why I Write*, Orwell (2021 : 10) reveals the "political purpose" guiding his work: a dedication to exposing social and political injustices, which remains central to his literary legacy.

Among Orwell's works, *1984* stands out for its profound societal impact. Blakemore (1984 : 349) noted that since its publication, the year 1984 became a lasting cultural symbol for thirty-six years, signifying our general apprehension about the post-totalitarian political trajectory and the attack on historical knowledge ("oldspeak"). Moreover, scholars like Hitchens (2008 : 36) contend that Orwell's *1984* should be understood as a reflection of its cultural context rather than solely the creation of a single author. Campbell (2001 : 931) aligns with this view, seeing the story as a struggle between the individual and authority:

The Party's power depends on its ability to keep people ignorant of history, current affairs, and Party operations—that is, ignorant of the truth. Without knowledge, people lack the information necessary to make choices in their lives. *1984* shows the destructive consequences of individuals surrendering responsibility for their decisions, opinions, and ideas to an outside group like the Party, which controls citizens through media programming and a powerful police network.

Apart from these interpretations, Orwell's own words reveal his intent: "I write it [a book] because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing" (2021 : 8). His statement underlines *1984* as a critique of falsehoods and political manipulation, with exploitations and violence as central

themes. Seventy years after its publication, *1984* continues to resonate politically. The novel has been frequently reissued, with editions available on Amazon, including *1984: (Authorized Orwell Edition): A Mariner Books Classic* (2013), *1984 (English Edition)* (2024), and *1984* (2024). It has also inspired two film adaptations, released in 1984 and 2023.

As the main character, Winston Smith, the 39-year-old protagonist of Orwell's *1984*, lives in a decaying London within the future province of Oceania. His first name evokes Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister who served from 1940–1945 and again from 1951–1955. This leader not only held political power but had a deep love for writing and earned the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1953. Like Churchill, Winston Smith also finds solace in writing, secretly maintaining a diary. However, the meanings behind their surnames reflect stark contrasts. "Churchill" signifies an exalted, powerful figure, whereas "Smith," a common occupational surname for a worker skilled in iron, implies ordinariness. With his surname, Winston embodies the role of the "everyman," a common individual within the masses. Unlike Churchill's leadership, Winston Smith serves as an employee of the Ministry of Truth and a member of the Outer Party, disillusioned by the Party's oppressive rule yet fearful of the consequences of open rebellion, as Campbell (2001 : 930) noted, Winston "hopes for a better future whenever the Party can be overthrown."

While *1984* has been studied extensively through political, psychological, and ethical lenses, in this study, the theme of Buddhist ignorance as a driving force in Winston Smith's actions. The Party's manipulation of truth, memory, and language fosters not only external control but internal delusion. To explore this internal dimension, the Buddhist concept of *Avidya* (spiritual ignorance) is applied as a theoretical framework for analysing Winston's moral disorientation and the consequences of his unexamined desire. Without replacing political, psychological, and materialist interpretations, this paper provides a fresh analysis of *1984* by integrating the concept of *Avidya* as a comparative philosophical lens, positioned alongside them. Neither Orwell nor his characters explicitly identify with Buddhism, but this philosophical framework offers a universal lens for interpreting ethical and spiritual deficits arising from delusion and unawareness.

This approach introduces a broader interpretive frame that distinguishes itself from existing scholarship, which often foregrounds political resistance as the primary reading of the novel. For instance, while the relationship between Winston and Julia is frequently interpreted as a successful act of defiance, this study analyzes their bond in parallel with that reading, focusing instead on how internal spiritual ignorance contributes to their emotional and ethical blindness and eventual collapse. Winston's sexual behavior, shaped by repression and misunderstanding, reveals a deeper moral confusion consistent with the notion of spiritual blindness. This dynamic suggests that Orwell's vision of control extends into intimate domains, complicating purely political analysis. As a result, this cross-cultural approach allows for a deeper understanding of the novel's moral landscape beyond its political dimensions and affirms discussion on the enduring motif of misconduct and its moral consequences.

Winston's personal life is not only ordinary but marked by turmoil. *1984* portrays him as a flawed, middle-aged man: "I'm thirty-nine years old. I've got a wife that I can't get rid of. I've got varicose veins. I've got five false teeth" (Orwell, 2024 : 55). His physical discomfort, particularly his varicose veins, distances him further from happiness. His marriage to the cold, unfeeling Katherine is childless, and they end up living apart. However, the legal bond between them prevents either from starting a new family. It seems he has never truly experienced love until he encounters Julia. Before he knows her name, she slips him a secret folded note bearing three forbidden words—*I love you*—a daring act wrapped in mystery and danger. Their relationship immediately develops into an affair, with the two meeting in secret over several months.

In the novel *1984*, political, psychological, and philosophical themes are the primary scholarly focus. Hassan & Elaref (2022 : 277–78) contended that Orwell utilized symbolism in *1984* to represent historical Communist figures, establishing Big Brother as a symbol for Josef Stalin and Emmanuel Goldstein as a symbol for Leon Trotsky, a method that enhances the overall credibility of the narrative. Yun-fei (2016 : 179) observed that Orwell is primarily focused on

Winston's thoughts about the past and future of humankind rather than his love for Julia. This line of thought often intersects with Foucault's theoretical insights as Tyner (2007 : 129) investigated how the production of knowledge through the act of writing can forge spaces of resistance within disciplined environments, contributing to the scholarly fields of resistance and fictive writing.

Despite the focus on political and intellectual resistance, the depiction of sexual relations is essential in dramatizing the mechanisms of rebellion and repression. The Party actively suppresses erotic urges in its citizens, as sexual desire is perceived to be incompatible with absolute loyalty to Big Brother; this suppressed energy is instead redirected into political fervor and the worship of the leader (Petrovic, 2022 : 148). Consequently, scholars assert that "Sex in 1984 plays a pivotal role in making Winston revolt against the oppressive party stance" (Rahman & Zaman, 2019 : 190). As a result, viewed as an act of resistance, Winston and Julia's sexual engagements and his attempts to defy restrictions represent genuine efforts to assert this agency and go against the ruler. Despite these attempts, they are ultimately unable to secure their agency and are instead relegated to the role of the patient—the passive receiver of all of Big Brother's commands and orders (Paudel, 2021 : 100).

Similarly, this resistance parallels broader political and social opposition to totalitarian establishments (Al-Subaihi & Ismail, 2020 : 293). Khmiri (2021 : 110) argued that the Party's ideology is defined by a "double pursuit": it is faithful to the irrational will of the Inner Party but reverses into a punitive force when dissent occurs. The author compares this punitive reversal to the way liberal democracy transforms into a chastising force, rendering subjects will-less through manipulation and ruthless consumerism. Finally, Winston's effort to resist (even in intimate matters) represents "humanity's enduring pursuit of light in the face of darkness" and "a timeless warning for contemporary society" (Ma, 2025 : 62). These perspectives collectively show that sexuality in the fiction 1984 extends beyond the personal aspect, becoming a battleground for control, desire, and the fading possibility of freedom. Most of all, they demonstrate a need for a new analytical lens that accounts for the ultimate moral and mental breakdown of the characters.

Secret sexual relationships often suggest moral impropriety or legal violations. In Buddhist ethics, illicit sexual behaviour is explicitly condemned as a major offense; it constitutes the third of the ten unwholesome deeds, which includes abstaining from illicit sex (Keown, 2004 : 132). The Buddhist framework sees Winston's misconduct as a symptom of *Avidya* (internal spiritual ignorance). On the other hand, Foucault's analysis focused on the external mechanisms of societal power influencing human beings (2012 : 83). Therefore, the Foucauldian view explains *how* the Party (the external power) establishes the illicit binary that makes Winston's sexual act a politically defined crime and a form of rebellion. In a localized view, Phothisuwan (2017) further described secret sexual acts using terms such as misconduct, casual sex, and premarital sex, all of which imply transgression. While these frameworks emphasize the moral, legal, and political implications of sexuality, a different interpretive lens is proposed by this study. Winston's relationship with Julia goes beyond rebellion or moral misconduct. It serves as a manifestation of *Avidya*, or spiritual ignorance, as defined in Buddhist philosophy. Situating the analysis within this ethical and philosophical framework, the study interprets Winston's actions rooted in a deeper misperception of self and misplaced moral responsibility.

Grounded in this interpretive lens, the present study develops its analysis further. Few existing studies focus on the protagonist's sexual relationship, an area where the broader concept of ignorance vividly plays out. This relational dimension, often overshadowed by Orwell's political critique, becomes essential in understanding how ignorance operates at a personal and ethical level. Throughout the novel, ignorance is a recurring theme, prominently featured in the well-known Oceania slogan: "War Is Peace, Freedom Is Slavery, and Ignorance Is Strength" (Orwell, 2024 : 2, 7, 12, 48, 86, 92). While this slogan affirms Orwell's political insights, this study explores ignorance as a more nuanced concept than what is conveyed in the mottos. Generally, ignorance denotes a lack of knowledge or information, but its implications for

human behaviour and life choices make it a complex and sophisticated term. Therefore, the concept of *Avidya* is not meant to replace Orwell's political vision but to expand it by focusing on the inner causes of self-deception and misguided choices that occur even within acts of apparent resistance.

In Buddhism, for example, ignorance, or *Avidya*, is considered the root cause of suffering and the cycle of rebirth, as Wayman (1957 : 21) explained, *Avidya* should be understood not simply as lacking knowledge but as an active form of misunderstanding. Keown (2004 : 27) explained: "*Avidya* is the root cause of continued involvement in *samsara*¹ and the experience of suffering, through which one remains confused about the true nature of reality." Similarly, Hanh (2009 : 29) discussed ignorance in terms of Buddhism, as a foundational link in the chain of *Dependent Co-arising*, a doctrine that describes how all phenomena arise in interdependence. In this chain, each link conditions the next, and the process begins with ignorance: "The Buddha speaks about the twelve links of Dependent Co-arising. The first link is ignorance (*avidya*), which informs all the other links. *Vidya* means seeing, understanding, or light, whereas *avidya* means blindness, lack of understanding, or lack of light." According to Johnson (2011 : 112), Socrates believed the overwhelming majority of people intend to do good, but that wrongful actions are generally the consequence of ignorance or false education. While these views on spiritual ignorance span philosophical, political, and societal domains, this study focuses specifically on the Buddhist understanding of ignorance (*Avijja* or *Avidya*). Under these definitions, this study defines *Avidya* or spiritual ignorance in terms of Buddhism as a fundamental misperception of reality and self, which serves as the root of suffering and harmful action. In analyzing Winston's sexual conduct and spiritual failure in *1984*, this interpretation of *Avidya* provides a framework for understanding how his actions are shaped by a deeper existential blindness that sustains his suffering.

Research Objectives

In this study, *Avidya* or spiritual ignorance serves as the basis for examining Winston Smith, the protagonist, through his sexual misconduct with Julia, the supporting character. The study hypothesizes that Winston embodies *Avidya* or ignorance, which manifests in his sexual relationship. The research objectives are thus:

1. To analyse how Winston Smith's sexual relationship reflects *Avidya* (spiritual ignorance).
2. To identify the consequences of such ignorance.

Research Methods

The Buddhist concept of *Avidya* (spiritual ignorance), which refers to a fundamental misperception of reality, self, and moral consequence, offers a conceptual foundation for interpreting Winston Smith's sexual relationships and moral disorientation in *1984*. According to Keown (2004), Hanh (2009), and other philosophical sources, this framework reframes Winston's repeated misjudgments as manifestations of deeper spiritual confusion. Through this lens, the study is situated within an ethical and philosophical inquiry, diverging from dominant political or materialist critiques. Applying *Avidya* to Winston's misconduct, the analysis reveals that his downfall is rooted in more than just authoritarian control. Moreover, it stems from a condition of spiritual disorientation, wherein craving replaces clarity and attachment overrides discernment. To support this analysis, both primary and secondary sources are used. The primary source is Orwell's *1984* (2024 Kindle

¹ The cycle of birth and death of humans according to good and bad deeds in Buddhist religion

edition) with emphasis on Winston's sexual encounters, which serve as pivotal indicators of his Buddhist ignorance. Key dialogues between Winston and Julia, along with his personal reflections and selected interactions, are examined to reveal his motivations and internal contradictions.

Secondary sources include philosophical texts on *Avidya* and scholarly works on *1984* and its protagonist. A qualitative method grounded in conceptual analysis is employed. First, scholarly materials on Winston and *Avidya* were synthesized to form a working definition of ignorance suitable for literary interpretation. Second, nineteen excerpts from the novel, focusing on sexual conduct and psychological conflict, were selected for close analysis and thematic analysis. Third, each excerpt was interpreted through *Avidya*, highlighting how Winston's misperceptions about intimacy and self-worth reflect spiritual ignorance. Finally, the findings are thematically organized and followed by a broader discussion linking the results to philosophical and literary contexts. The study aims to demonstrate how Winston's failure to reach ethical clarity or deeper self-awareness reflects the enduring relevance of *Avidya* in modern dystopian literature. This theoretical lens is employed to explore the argument that Winston's downfall is not merely political but a consequence of spiritual ignorance, as revealed through his sexual misconduct and moral disorientation.

Research Results

Avidya or spiritual ignorance, a lack of specific knowledge, misunderstanding, and an absence of awareness or insight, is revealed by this study. Specifically, it is embodied by Winston Smith in Orwell's *1984* as observed through his secret sexual relationship with Julia. The Party's imposed view on sex is made explicit in the line: "Sexual intercourse was to be looked on as a slightly disgusting minor operation, like having an enema" (Orwell, 2024 : 30). This metaphorical framing reflects the regime's effort to sterilize human intimacy and reduce it to a mechanical, clinical act. In other words, the Party treats acts of intimacy as signs of inferiority, or even worse, as forms of criminal act. The phrase *slightly disgusting* evokes a sense of shame or aversion while *minor operation* suggests something routine, impersonal, and devoid of emotional connection. Winston's failure lies in his partial internalization of this view; he remains largely unaware of how deeply the Party's conditioning has shaped his perceptions of sex, intimacy, and moral consequence. As the novel explains, "The sex impulse was dangerous to the Party, and the Party had turned it into account" (Orwell, 2024 : 61). This demonstrates that the Party suppresses sexuality while strategically channeling and distorting it for its own ends. Winston's ignorance reflects both personal limitations and structural conditioning. If the Party had not deliberately distorted sexual impulses, Winston's confusion might not have taken root so deeply.

Winston's belief that the affair is hidden from the Party reveals the first dimension of his spiritual ignorance, his failure to perceive the reality of Party surveillance. While some might interpret Winston's actions as a conscious act of defiance, his behavior is viewed in this study as an example of sexual misconduct shaped more by instinct than by reflection. The belief that the affair is safely hidden appears to blind both him and Julia to its emotional and political consequences. Winston's lack of awareness extends to the practical and emotional difficulties of secret sexual relationships. The clandestine nature of his meetings with Julia, necessitated by the Party's absolute prohibition, requires effort to find hidden locations, limits the time they can spend together, and prevents the relationship from developing into marriage. Moreover, secret sexual intimacy carries moral and legal risks. Despite these challenges, Winston embraces the relationship without fully considering its consequences, revealing his ignorance through a dismissive attitude toward the idea of "wrong sex."

Winston's ignorance is further observed through his reaction to Julia's initial declaration of love, presented in the form of a secret note. The text narrates: "He flattened it [the paper] out. On it was written, in a large unformed handwriting: I love you. For several seconds he was too stunned even to throw the incriminating thing into the memory hole" (Orwell, 2024 : 49). Love typically develops over time through shared experiences and mutual understanding. In contrast, Julia's abrupt confession of love seems improbable because neither character knows the other well. This sudden romantic attachment is further complicated by their differences in appearance, habits, and age. Despite these oddities, Winston's acceptance of the note indicates his readiness to embrace this unconventional relationship. His failure to discard the incriminating message, in spite of having *several seconds* to do so, suggests an unspoken willingness to engage with Julia even in the face of danger. The phrase *a large unformed handwriting* highlights Julia's indirect and unpolished way of expressing affection. This reinforces the secrecy and impulsiveness of her action. The phrase *incriminating thing* emphasizes the danger embedded in the message itself, which Winston fails to assess rationally. Significantly, the clause *throw the incriminating thing into the memory hole* further suggests that Winston had the opportunity to eliminate the evidence but chose not to act. Winston preserves the note instead of destroying it, unknowingly setting the stage for the secret relationship that follows.

While Winston's pursuit of Julia is often viewed as his singular act of political rebellion, this study argues that the relationship functions simultaneously as sexual misconduct in the ethical sense and, more importantly, a symptom of *Avidya*, the spiritual ignorance in terms of Buddhism. The political resistance is genuine. However, it is not only misguided but rooted in his delusion of spiritual autonomy rather than true political insight. As the Party's control undeniably makes sexual intimacy a dangerous and politically immoral act as the premise of the novel, this specific action further underlines Winston's ignorance of the emotional and practical consequences of his decision to proceed without moral reasons. As a result, the failure of the affair is not merely a political defeat or an external consequence of the regime's control. However, this failure becomes the inevitable outcome of actions driven by delusion or *Avidya* in terms of Buddhist view.

After acknowledging love through written language, Winston and Julia begin to let their bodies come closer. Physical intimacy is a natural progression for lovers, but in *1984*, their closeness requires careful planning to evade the Party's constant surveillance via telescreens and microphones. Before their first physical contact, they must ensure they are free from the Party's 24-hour watch. To keep their initial encounter hidden, Julia chooses a crowded location. The narrative describes:

With hands locked together, invisible among the press of bodies, they stared steadily in front of them, and instead of the eyes of the girl, the eyes of the aged prisoner gazed mournfully at Winston out of nests of hair. (Orwell, 2024 : 53)

The word *invisible* suggests that Winston and Julia believe they are undetected by the Party's telescreens, while *press* emphasizes the density of the crowd shielding them. In this moment, they feel hidden among the throng of people with the confidence that their secret remains intact. Their hands *locked together* symbolize not only their connection but their belief in the strength of their love and bond. The fixed position of their hands reflects their unawareness of being observed. If they were aware, the fear of punishment would compel them to separate. However, the description of *the eyes of the aged prisoner* gazing at them reveals that their supposed secrecy is an illusion. This is caused by the Party's rules requiring them to avoid looking at each other. Moreover, it prevents them from noticing they are being observed. Their mutual and spiritual ignorance is evident in their misunderstanding of the situation. They believe their first act of physical connection is hidden, but it has already been witnessed. As a result, this moment of misunderstanding underscores the

theme of ignorance in their relationship. Their initial physical contact, driven by the romantic allure of forbidden love, not only leads to their first sexual intimacy but also sets in motion the disastrous consequences they fail to foresee.

Without awareness of the disastrous consequences, Winston uses his own characteristics, including his age and marital status, to justify and assure the first sexual encounter. Winston is described: "I'm thirty-nine years old. I've got a wife that I can't get rid of. I've got varicose veins. I've got five false teeth" (Orwell, 2024 : 55). His mention of age can be seen as a warning to Julia, significantly emphasizing that he is an older man while she is much younger. In addition, his medical issues, such as varicose veins and false teeth, highlight his physical flaws, portraying parts of his body as unattractive. Furthermore, by stating that he is married to a wife he cannot divorce, Winston underlines the impossibility of forming a legitimate relationship with Julia.

These revelations suggest that Winston and Julia are fundamentally incompatible and that their intimacy might never progress. On the other hand, Winston's impulsive oversharing of these self-deprecating details, including his miserable marriage and his homicidal thoughts toward his wife as discussed in the previous paragraph—is an impulsive consequence of his *Avidya*, regarding his safety and the political reality of Oceania. Driven by a profound desire for security and permanence in their bond, his reckless disclosure highlights his delusion that intimacy can somehow shield them from the Party's reach. Julia's swift response, "I couldn't care less" (Orwell, 2024 : 55), immediately indicates her indifference to Winston's flaws and marital status. Moreover, this reaction reassures Winston that Julia is fully willing to engage in the first sexual encounter and to continue their secret relationship without hesitation or reservation.

Reflecting how his emotional dependency deepens his ignorance, Winston's view of Julia shifts from fascination to fixation. Julia's reaction reassures Winston; however, his perspective on love is peculiar. He declares, "Listen. The more men you've had, the more I love you. Do you understand that?' 'Yes, perfectly.' I hate purity, I hate goodness! I don't want any virtue to exist anywhere" (Orwell, 2024 : 58). Typically, monogamy is defined as the practice of having one spouse at a time, a common system in many cultures worldwide. It reflects stability in relationships that involve a limited number of sexual partners throughout life. Moreover, in the animal kingdom, certain species, such as birds, exhibit monogamy. Monogamy, whether among humans or animals, symbolizes a partnership built on exclusivity, mutual commitment, and continuity. Winston and Julia do not anticipate marriage; their disregard for traditional values is indeed an act of political resistance against the Party's iron heels. However, in terms of *Avidya*, this deviation from societal norms simultaneously underlines the depth of Winston's internal ignorance, because his impulsive rebellion for the freedom he hopes for confuses the feeling of liberation with actual insight. Instead, this rebellious act blinds him to the upcoming serious consequences and his own profound delusion.

Feeling confident in their privacy, Winston and Julia consummate their relationship. Orwell narrates: "That was above all what he wanted to hear. Not merely the love of one person but the animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that would tear the Party to pieces" (2024 : 58). Their intimacy is shaped more by physical urgency than by emotional connection or shared values. The phrase *animal instinct* signals a raw desire that bypasses the norms of socially sanctioned intimacy. Their act serves as a reaction to repression, a moment of physical assertion. While Winston believes this act carries a profound political implication seen in the phrase—*the force that would tear the Party to pieces*, his reflection appears misguided. Instead, the act primarily lacks the insight to perceive its true spiritual and practical consequences. It reveals an absence of mutual affection or moral intention. The clause *that would tear the Party to pieces* implies that they claim their actions defy the Party. Most of all, the word *pieces* can be interpreted as representing an imagined outcome in which the Party is challenged to the point of complete dismantlement. This reflects their illusion that personal rebellion could lead to systemic collapse. However, their act also reflects a detachment from the social conventions.

After engaging in this secret, animalistic relationship, Winston reassures both himself and Julia of its significance and their commitment to continue. Orwell writes: "No emotion was pure, because everything was mixed up with fear and hatred. Their embrace had been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act" (2024 : 58). The phrase *a blow struck against the Party* emphasizes that their intimacy serves as a form of rebellion. They perceive it as powerful although its scope is narrowly defined. Winston presents the sexual act as a political statement against the Party's control, framing their embrace as a battle and the climax as a victory. However, this form of rebellion remains confined to private intimacy and lacks broader strategic impact. Through the clause *It was a political act*, Winston justifies their secret act as revolutionary. Their belief that the desire alone could challenge the regime reflects a confusion of *Avidya* with true political or spiritual understanding. Their ignorance of the deeper mechanisms of power is revealed through this perspective. Therefore, although emotionally charged, their resistance remains personal and ineffective in challenging the Party's system. From this moment onward, making love becomes the singular act of defiance for Winston and Julia. Despite their initial act of defiance, Winston's feelings toward love-making evolve significantly. His sensuality transforms into a deeper physical and emotional need for Julia. Orwell (2024 : 64) writes:

During the month that he had known her the nature of his desire for her had changed. At the beginning there had been little true sensuality in it. Their first love-making had been simply an act of the will. But after the second time it was different. The smell of her hair, the taste of her mouth, the feeling of her skin seemed to have got inside him, or into the air all around him. She had become a physical necessity, something that he not only wanted but felt that he had a right to.

Over the course of a month, Julia evolves from a stranger into what Orwell describes as a *physical necessity* for Winston—someone he believes he needs to survive. This transformation is grounded in sensory fixation. The phrases *the smell of her hair*, *the taste of her mouth*, and *the feeling of her skin* suggest that Winston's desire has shifted from conscious rebellion to overwhelming physical dependency. To him, she becomes not only desirable but ambient. The phrase *into the air all around him* indicates that Julia now permeates his entire sense of being. Most revealing is the clause *he not only wanted but felt that he had a right to* which reflects a dangerous sense of entitlement. His belief in this right marks a departure from the earlier animalistic behaviour, in which sexual intimacy was spontaneous and indiscriminate. Reflecting *Avidya*, Julia's existence is centred on fulfilling Winston's needs, and he views her as a possession essential to his survival.

At the beginning of their relationship, Winston uses his own physical flaws and manipulative tactics to secure Julia's commitment. He confesses to Julia: "*The more men you've had, the more I love you*" (Orwell, 2024 : 58). This confession reveals a distorted view of love rooted in possession and obsession. The clause *the more men you've had* reflects his fixation on Julia's sexual past with a perverse admiration that contradicts conventional expectations of loyalty or exclusivity. This reaction suggests that Winston does not seek emotional intimacy, but instead uses Julia's history to validate his own rebellion against moral norms. Furthermore, the phrase *I love you* is stripped of emotional sincerity and instead used to justify his desire to claim her, regardless of her history or agency. Conversely, Julia does not manipulate him; she simply allows the relationship to progress. Her youth and sexual attractiveness ensnare Winston in a cycle of intense desire he cannot resist or pause. From the perspective of ignorance, Winston fails to realize how the intimacy is developing beyond his control. He misinterprets their relationship, believing it is his right to own Julia and that sexual

intimacy with her is a necessity. This belief is flawed, as his survival does not depend on Julia. Even more, she is not exclusively his because she herself admits to having had multiple partners.

Winston's perceived necessity and entitlement to Julia soon lead to further complications. Orwell (2024 : 64) narrates: "He wished above all that they had some place where they could be alone together without feeling the obligation to make love every time they met." The need for a private space, seen through the phrase *some place*, becomes paramount; however, this necessity is fraught with challenges. In Oceania, telescreens and microphones monitor citizens constantly. A secret meeting place must be entirely secluded, unlike public hotels or rented apartments. This space must allow unrestricted intimacy, free from time constraints or fear of surveillance. The phrase *without feeling the obligation to make love every time they met* reveals a new contradiction in Winston's perception of intimacy. While he once viewed sexual intimacy as a form of liberation, he now begins to feel burdened by its repetition. This shift suggests that his desire has evolved into expectation and routine. Although finding such a location proves difficult, Winston's sense of entitlement and deep desire for Julia drive him to believe it is achievable. However, the earlier imagery—*the eyes of the aged prisoner gazed mournfully at Winston*—implies that even a seemingly secret place is already discovered the moment it is found.

A private space that becomes paramount for Winston and Julia is the room above Mr. Charrington's shop. The room is described as follows:

The rat had never come back, but the bugs had multiplied hideously in the heat. It did not seem to matter. Dirty or clean, the room was paradise. As soon as they arrived they would sprinkle everything with pepper bought on the black market, tear off their clothes, and make love with sweating bodies, then fall asleep and wake to find that the bugs had rallied and were massing for the counter-attack. (Orwell, 2024 : 69)

Despite the rats, bugs, and the lingering smell of dusty pepper, the room becomes Winston and Julia's "paradise," a place of fleeting pleasure and escapism. The word *paradise* is jarring in this context, as it stands in sharp contrast to the squalor of their surroundings. As a result, it suggests an ironic disconnection between the couple's perception of the room and its actual condition. This contrast reveals their desperate attempt to construct emotional meaning within a space marked by filth, decay, and impermanence. This is the central *Avidya* of the relationship: the delusion that a physical, decaying space can offer spiritual security and lasting refuge against the forces of Oceania. The phrase *pepper bought on the black market* points to the couple's need for illicit means to create even minimal comfort. It symbolizes how every aspect of their intimacy must take place outside the boundaries of lawful society. Moreover, grounded in urgency and bodily need, the phrase *make love with sweating bodies* highlights the raw physicality of their connection. Rodents and insects typically symbolize intrusion and decay in literary conventions. This imagery emphasizes how such creatures disturb both body and mind, reinforcing the squalor surrounding Winston and Julia. The phrase *bugs had rallied and were massing for the counter-attack* uses military imagery to portray the pests as invaders. This imagery mocks the couple's illusion of privacy and victory within the space they believe to be their own. The use of pepper to ward off the bugs, a temporary solution, reflects the transient nature of this paradise because the pests return once its effect fades.

The couple uses the room solely for sexual intimacy, which turns the space into one centered on physical indulgence with no signs of shared domestic life. Their interactions are driven by desire and secrecy, and they make no effort to establish routines that would reflect emotional bonding or everyday companionship. While the pests remain permanently, Winston and Julia drift in and out, marking their intimacy as transient and impermanent.

This paradise, however, is illusory. Winston and Julia are acutely aware that “it was never out of their minds that what was now happening could not last long. There were times when the fact of impending death seemed as palpable as the bed they lay on” (Orwell, 2024 : 70). Specifically, the phrase *what was now happening could not last long* reflects their conscious recognition of the temporary nature of their relationship. Indeed, this awareness suggests that even during their moments of intimacy, they remain conscious of the relationship's inevitable end. The shadow of impermanence lingers and reminds them that their rebellion is unsustainable and ultimately doomed to fail. The simile *as palpable as the bed they lay on* intensifies their emotional awareness of danger. It equates their fear of being caught with the physical reality of the bed, the very object that represents their intimacy. Consequently, this awareness underscores the fragility of their situation; the “paradise” ends the moment their secret is exposed. In Oceania, secret sexual relationships are illegal; their discovery leads to immediate arrest, separation, and punishment. However, this emotional awareness does not translate into a deeper understanding of the moral or psychological consequences of their actions. Blinded by his feelings of love and his perceived entitlement over Julia's body, Winston's focus remains on increasing the frequency of their intimacy. Ultimately, this misplaced sense of necessity traps Winston in the secret room, a space he believes will sustain their forbidden relationship indefinitely.

Winston's misguided choices accumulate into a pattern of stark oppositions. These contrasts highlight how his ignorance directs and deepens his eventual descent. Winston's ignorance results in numerous transformations. The words *I love you*, written once on a piece of paper by a stranger, evolve into countless secret love-makings. The political rebellion initially symbolized by their intimacy transforms into a personal necessity for Winston, who believes he cannot survive without Julia. The story narrates: “The more men you've had, the more I love you” (Orwell, 2024 : 58). It is seen that his earlier acceptance of Julia's past relationships is replaced by his desire to monopolize her affection. Most of all, the dirty room with rodents and bugs becomes a paradise, but this paradise ultimately transforms into a crime scene as the Thought Police arrive.

After their arrest, Winston and Julia are separated. Winston is subjected to extreme torture in Room 101, including repeated electric shocks and exposure to his greatest fear, a fierce rat. Under this unbearable duress, he breaks down and betrays Julia. He screams, “Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don't care what you do to her. Tear her face off, strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!” (Orwell, 2024 : 134). The repetition of *Not me!* underscores his overwhelming fear and self-preservation which overtakes any remnants of loyalty or love. The violent phrases *tear her face off* and *strip her to the bones* reflect a complete psychological rupture. It signifies that Winston not only distances himself from Julia but actively wishes harm upon her to save himself. This moment marks the disintegration of their bond and erases his identity as her lover. Most importantly, his complete transformation is confirmed in the novel's final line: “He loved Big Brother” (Orwell, 2024 : 139). The verb *loved*, once associated with Julia, is now redirected toward the regime he once despised. Throughout the story, Winston opposes Big Brother with all his will. However, by the end, he is stripped of both his free will and his capacity for love, thereby embodying total submission. This ultimate failure, driven by *Avidya* or spiritual ignorance and its symptom of profound attachment, leads to the total disintegration of his self-control and will. Therefore, this outcome points out that the spiritual detachment—the opposite of profound attachment caused by *Avidya* or spiritual ignorance—is one of the alternatives necessary for true internal resistance to prevent the Party's final psychological control. It can, thus, be said that spiritual detachment is the significant element Winston lacks.

These transformations throughout the narrative culminate in a profound contradiction. The destruction of domestic privacy is directly countered by Winston's experience of intimacy: “She had seemed to be not merely with him, but inside him. It was as though she had got into the texture of his skin” (Orwell, 2024 : 130). This quotation portrays a profound emotional and physical fusion that transcends “animal instinct” and, moreover, reflects his intense *Avidya*, driven longing

for spiritual permanence in his bond with Julia. This inherent conflict between his conscious revolutionary ideals and this delusion signifies how his flawed perception distorts meaning and deepens his downfall. Finally, these transformations culminate in Winston's ultimate descent from a government officer to a prisoner, and finally, to a broken man. Although free, Winston is insane and lonely. Shaped by the Party's control, Winston's spiritual ignorance contributes to his eventual loss of identity and will.

Beyond the observable consequences of Winston's ignorance in sexual relationships, his downfall reflects a deeper philosophical blindness that resonates with the Buddhist concept of *Avidya*. Although Orwell's novel is not explicitly Buddhist, *Avidya*, defined as a fundamental misperception of reality, provides a useful lens for understanding the deeper dimensions of Winston's confusion. Keown (2004 : 27) explained that *Avidya* or spiritual ignorance is the fundamental source of the ongoing cycle of rebirth and the resulting experience of human suffering. This precisely describes Winston's condition. His pursuit of intimacy and rebellion reflects not only moral failure but a fundamental misreading of his ethical condition. In Buddhist terms, Winston fails to recognize three key tenets: the impermanence of his fleeting pleasure, the illusion of control over the totalitarian state, and the deception of self in attachment and craving. This enduring cycle of self-deception and repeated misjudgment—culminating in his complete betrayal and submission—can be interpreted as *Samsara* (the cycle of suffering) in the context of *1984*. Paradoxically, in Oceania, *Samsara* signifies the character's eternal entrapment within the Party's psychological and political control, where his quest for liberation ends with the devastating final realization implied in "He loved Big Brother" (Orwell, 2024 : 139). Therefore, Winston's ignorance, examined through *Avidya*, is not just a personal failure but a spiritual collapse where delusion leads to the destruction of his individuality and ethical self.

His conviction that Julia becomes a necessity reflects craving, a symptom of *Avidya*. Hanh (2009 : 29) explained, "*Vidya* means seeing, understanding, or light, whereas *Avidya* means blindness, lack of understanding, or lack of light." Winston's journey is toward increasing blindness. He sees Julia as a symbol of escape, and in doing so, loses his ability to perceive clearly. Moreover, his love becomes a misunderstanding, an act of will, then compulsion, and finally betrayal. According to Johnson (2011 : 112), Socrates views that "wrongdoing was usually the result of ignorance or false teaching." This view resonates here: Winston is deluded. The Party exploits this blindness, ensuring that even his rebellion is absorbed into their control.

Conclusion and Discussion

The novel *1984* has often been interpreted as a cautionary tale against political totalitarianism; on the other hand, Orwell's critique reflects a broader humanistic concern about the erosion of truth, personal freedom, and moral agency. Orwell was deeply influenced by his experiences with imperialism and authoritarian regimes. He consistently portrayed characters caught in ideological systems that demand emotional conformity and spiritual submission. This context situates Winston Smith not only as a political dissident but as a morally disoriented individual navigating forces that suppress both critical thought and authentic human connection. The Buddhist concept of *Avidya* does not originate within Orwell's intellectual tradition. Nevertheless, its application in this study helps illuminate the deeper psychological and ethical failures that accompany Winston's rebellion, bridging Orwell's materialist insights with a broader ethical discourse on human delusion and suffering.

Internal spiritual ignorance is revealed through Winston Smith's sexual misconduct in this study. While Campbell (2001) identified themes such as Winston's sores, telescreens, Big Brother, and the Proles, this study focuses on the

interplay between sexual relationships and spiritual ignorance. Campbell argues that ignorance directly enhances the Party's power: "The Party's power depends on its ability to keep people ignorant of history, of current affairs, and of Party operations—that is, ignorant of the truth. Without knowledge, people lack the information necessary for making choices in their lives" (2001 : 931). Revealing that sexual misconduct and spiritual ignorance are closely intertwined, the current study addresses Winston's forbidden sexual relationship through *Avidya*. This Buddhist ignorance drives Winston to initiate and sustain the relationship, progressing from forbidden love to a perceived necessity and an entitlement over Julia's body.

This study further observes that the effects of Winston's spiritual ignorance unfold through a series of striking transformations. These transformations are expressed through contrasting pairs that reflect his shifting perceptions. The singular phrase "I love you" stands in contrast to numerous secret encounters, and political rebellion gives way to a personal sense of necessity. The pattern continues with the initial political rebellion contrasted against Winston's growing delusion of exclusive ownership reflecting *Avidya*, the filthy room imagined as a paradise, and finally, the paradise turning into a crime scene. These shifts underscore Winston's decline from a trusted government employee to a prisoner, and eventually, to a broken, hollow individual. This final, spiritual submission leaves him mentally fractured, devoid of identity, autonomy, and humanity.

Previous studies have explored *1984* predominantly through political perspectives. Tyner (2007) discussed how Winston's engagement with writing fosters secret acts of resistance against the Party. Hitchens (2008) examined the novel's enduring cultural influence, while Yun-fei (2016) emphasized its commentary on the historical trajectory of humankind. Rahman & Zaman (2019) highlighted the significance of sexual misconduct as an act of rebellion. Al-Subaihi & Ismail (2020) interpreted the events in the novel as forms of political and social resistance against oppressive regimes. Paudel (2021) also focused on the dynamics of agency. The study noted that although Winston and Julia's actions initially challenge authoritarian control, they ultimately succumb to it. Therefore, these contributions situate *1984* within a discourse on political resistance, powerlessness, and social control. Shaped by repression and misunderstanding, Winston's desire leads to ruin. Despite his education and profession as a documentary reviser in the Ministry of Truth, where he routinely manipulates historical records and controls information, his ignorance shows how even potential resisters can be trapped by delusional belief in the security and permanence of his personal bond with Julia.

Eventually, this study suggests that illicit sexual relationships have been part of human experience, irrespective of time or place. When such relationships are exposed, they often bring serious consequences. Ironically, his forbidden relationship becomes one of the factors leading to his personal downfall. Moreover, it enables the Party to overpower him. The findings further indicate that even educated individuals can be drawn into forbidden sexual relationships under secretive circumstances. Such conditions allow spiritual ignorance to persist and shape their actions. Above all, Winston's ignorance represents both a personal failure and a spiritual collapse. From the perspective of *Avidya*, he overestimates the liberating power of sexual desire but fails to recognize the impermanence of pleasure, the illusion of control, and the deception of self. His downfall reflects moral weakness as well as a deeper blindness that leads to the total disintegration of his autonomous self and moral agency. Winston's failure to secure his agency, viewed through *Avidya*, shows that liberation requires more than mere political rebellion; it demands an awakening from the confusion regarding self and reality (Keown, 2004). In this sense, *1984* emerges as both a political warning and a philosophical challenge into how *Avidya* or delusion not only brings about but distorts intimacy, agency, and moral discernment.

This analysis of *Avidya* highlights the spiritual mechanism of Winston's ultimate failure. If *Avidya* is the delusion of reality and self, the liberating force—or Non-*Avidya* (Insight or *Vidya* in philosophical terms)—would be spiritual detachment and a complete recognition of the impermanence of his pleasure and the illusory nature of his autonomous

self. Winston's failure to cultivate this detachment is the ultimate consequence of his *Avidya* (Research Objective 2). By desperately clinging to Julia and the 'paradise' room, he provided the Party with the necessary vulnerability to inflict the spiritual trauma of betrayal. Therefore, the novel suggests that true internal resistance in a totalitarian state requires not only political rebellion but the insight to perceive reality clearly, a detachment that the Party is powerless to destroy.

Winston Smith has been intentionally focused on in this study as the sole subject of analysis to examine how *Avidya*, as defined in Buddhist philosophy, manifests through his sexual misconduct and moral confusion. This methodological choice allows for a concentrated conceptual analysis that prioritizes the internal mechanisms of spiritual delusion over interpersonal dynamics. Future studies should explore Julia's role as an independent figure of spiritual ignorance or resistance, analyzing her sexual agency and emotional detachment through comparative ethical frameworks, such as feminist philosophy or Western existentialism. This would deepen understanding of how desire, resistance, and repression operate across characters in *1984*.

This study offers several implications for literary scholarship and cross-cultural analysis. Initially, integrating the Buddhist concept of *Avidya* alongside political and materialist interpretations broadens the analytical scope of *1984*. The study also demonstrates how spiritual and moral frameworks can coexist with socio-political readings. Such an approach highlights the versatility of Orwell's work. Moreover, it suggests that its themes of ignorance, control, and resistance can be meaningfully examined through non-Western philosophical lenses. Second, the analysis shows that Winston and Julia's relationship, while a site of authentic human connection, also reflects the vulnerabilities of individuals under totalitarian rule. This insight underscores the relevance of examining intimate relationships as political sites where power operates, shaping both personal agency and moral clarity. Finally, situating Orwell's novel within broader literary and cultural motifs, the study opens pathways for comparative research. Such work can bridge political critique, ethical inquiry, and cross-cultural philosophy.

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