

Big brother: a depiction of 1984's dystopic society

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The term Big Brother was initially coined from George Orwell's novel 1984. In 1984, Orwell describes the mechanisms of a dystopic society, Oceania. From the start, there is the very real warning that Big Brother is watching over everything happening in Oceania. Big Brother in Oceania is an all-seeing and omnipotent ruler. The society of Oceania lives in miserable circumstances and yet they willingly consent to this form of living believing their conditions are normal. The citizens believe it is normal for Big Brother to be watching their every move.

Even the thoughts and opinions of Oceania's citizens are constantly being monitored by Thought Police. Two-way screens are also present in all public spaces and living quarters to ensure Big Brother's monitoring of Oceania. George Orwell's 1984 has become renowned until this day for its clear depiction of surveillance and encroachment of individual rights. In the present-day Big Brother, a television series broadcast in numerous countries around the world, a very similar dystopia is portrayed.

Contestants of the reality show enter Big Brother's house willingly. Upon entrance, they allow themselves to be put under the scrutiny and watchful eye not only of Big Brother but also of the public outside. George Orwell's two-way screens have been replaced with cameras that have been placed all over the house. The Thought Police have been replaced by Big Brother and the audience of the show. The limitations of the lives of the people in Oceania are also meted out on the contestants upon entrance to the house.

They are made to follow certain rules and regulations provided by Big Brother. They are also required to follow all Big Brother's orders without

question. Food, money and other amenities are only available to the contestants if Big Brother supplies them with these and only if he allows them access to the supplies he has placed in the house. Big Brother in the reality show possesses many of the qualities of the Big Brother in 1984. He is both all-seeing and all-powerful.

Big Brother not only monitors all of the actions of the contestants but he also dictates the actions by talking to them and ordering them around to perform specific tasks. Rules and regulations are numerous in the house and the contestants themselves are not allowed to secretly communicate with one another. Conversations or written communications that are not audibly heard by the sensors in the house are often met with punishments from Big Brother. Big Brother is indeed a portrayal of dystopia. It does not pretend to be a perfect society gone awry.

From the start, the goals of Big Brother have been clear. It aims to create a living society within Big Brother's house with members that have been stripped of their rights and forced to subject themselves to the watchful eye and unpredictable whims of Big Brother. Dystopia is very much present in the Big Brother house. Outside of its setting as a television show, the goings-on in the house are clearly negative and undesirable to anyone else. No one would want to be subjected to the living circumstances of Big Brother's housemates.

Despite the fact that Big Brother shows the very workings of a dystopic society, the show's ratings clearly attest to its popularity. Dystopia, it seems, has become a popular notion. Big Brother, in fact, is held in much respect and

adoration by the very housemates made to endure the limitations of dystopia. Perhaps this is proof of the show's success in portraying true dystopia. In 1984, dystopia was only able to continue because of the brainwashing done on the citizens of Oceania. They wanted to be under Big Brother's surveillance and even loved him for it. The same "love" for Big Brother is seen in the dystopic reality show.