

George Orwell's novel 1984 essay



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1984 is a novel about totalitarianism and the life of a man who tried to escape from an oppressive political regime. The famous British writer George Orwell wrote his book in 1948. Events take place in London, a province's capital of the state of Oceania in 1984. The world is involved in an endless war, and the political regime called Ingsoc and headed by a mystical Big Brother permanently looks for ways to control the citizens' minds and private lives. The key figure of the book is Winston Smith, an editor in the Ministry of Truth responsible for propaganda. Winston does not approve imposed norms and rules and hates the authorities, the main aim of which is to punish people who think differently from the official propaganda. Consequently, Winston is arrested, and, under torture, he betrays everything he loved and believed in. This book shows complicated relationships between the main characters and displays several crucial issues, such as propaganda, totalitarianism, and loss of independence.

After the end of the Second World War, a civil war began in the United Kingdom. The crisis led to its occupation by a new superpower - Oceania. Many changes have occurred on the political map worldwide. However, some citizens disagree with the existing regime. One is the protagonist, Winston Smith, who works as an editor in the Ministry of Truth. At the same time, he fully understands that he cannot share his opinion with anyone. Orwell (2018) tells readers that "thus he buys an illegal diary in which he pens down his thoughts" (p. 3), which is as dangerous as public disapproval of the ruling political regime. Smith gets acquainted with Julia, and, at first, he thinks that she is following him and wants to reveal his crime. However, after a while, the woman confesses her love for Winston, and they begin to meet

secretly. Smith knows that this love story will not end happily as illegal relations between men and women are strictly forbidden in Oceania.

Smith and Julia turn to an official O'Brien to accept them into "Brotherhood" as they consider him to be one of the members of this opposition movement. However, later, lovers get arrested, and Winston realizes that he was mistaken in O'Brien. Winston is subjected to mental and physical torments, and he is forced to renounce himself and all his beliefs, namely, his love for Julia. Eventually, Smith understands that all this time he was wrong, that now he believes only in the Big Brother and the Party and is loyal to them. This ending demonstrates how the system and totalitarian state can break a person and completely control his or her mind.

He is the main character of the novel, and the author shows readers the whole story through his eyes. Smith is a rational and innermost man with his principles and beliefs. In the beginning, though he hates the authorities, he works at the Ministry of Truth. His primary responsibility is to distort information in the media, according to the demands of Big Brother. Winston starts writing a diary, filling it with his thoughts and memories, but by doing that, he is committing a crime. Illegal relationships between Smith and Julia eventually lead to his imprisonment and irreversible changes in his values and views.

Like Winston, Julia is against the Party and Big Brother. Nevertheless, she differs from him by her pragmatism and cares mostly about the present. She does not think about global problems and tries to harm the Party by committing small crimes. Julia is an active member of the Ministry of Truth.

Another difference from Winston is that her rebellion is more intuitive and direct.

This character is a mysterious person as he has super-intelligence and can guess words and sentences before they are said. O'Brien can be regarded as the symbol of dictatorship and totalitarianism and the loyal regime's servant. He ingratiates himself with Winston, but later, he betrays and arrests him and Julia. After that, O'Brien sends them to jail where inflicts tortures against Smith and destroys his personality.

It is an image of an omnipresent dictator and one of the founders of the Party. However, nobody has seen him, and all the information about this person is hidden (Gilbert & Pitfield, 2019, p. 96). Citizens of Oceania worship him and satisfy all his demands, though they see him only on posters and telescreen, but everyone is sure that "Big Brother Is Watching You" (Sahoo, 2019, p. 447). In fact, Big Brother insists that people love him more than anyone else, even their families.

One of the major issues of 1984 is totalitarianism, which presents the type of government where even the head of state is concealed from people. The Party and Big Brother establish total control over people's relationships, feelings, and even thoughts. The typical patterns of such regime are the overall monitoring and surveillance of citizens through media and specialized institutions as well as spreading mottos, such as "War is Peace" and "Freedom is Slavery."

Propaganda is a weapon of the totalitarian political regime, the officials of which use it to impose appropriate values and views on Oceania's citizens

through the Ministry of Truth. The main character, Winston Smith, is also engaged in this activity, as his job responsibilities are to oust historical facts by distorted information. The propaganda also invents new concepts, such as 'Two Minutes Hate,' 'Big Brother is watching,' and other mottos.

Totalitarian regimes often adopt strategies that make people lose their identities and independence. In 1984, the imposed conformism and uniformity in food, clothes, and thoughts demonstrated that the Party and its head, Big Brother, are aimed at suppressing citizens and limiting their freedom. The ruling regime uses all legal and illegal means, such as propaganda, suppression, and tortures, to achieve its goals and subject people to its will.

Even though George Orwell wrote 1984 more than 70 years ago, it remains incredibly relevant in the 21st century. That is why it impresses readers and makes people think about some crucial issues. Orwell foresaw a society in which the authorities would broadcast propaganda to distract citizens from urgent challenges. Nowadays, people seldom notice the existence of total control. Governments and corporations use the Internet and television to limit personal freedom and impose pressing values. Orwell's 1984 is an earnest and thought-provoking dystopian novel.

Gilbert, F. & Pitfield, M. (2019). Teaching 1984 in the surveillance culture of schools. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, 18(1), 85-99.

Orwell, G. (2018). 1984. Pittsburgh, PA: General Press.

Sahoo, B. (2019). George Orwell and his relevance to the twenty-first century. *Language in India*, 19(2), 440-455.

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