

# [Presence of conformity motive in 1984](https://assignbuster.com/presence-of-conformity-motive-in-1984/)

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According to Merriam Webster’s dictionary, “ Conformity is the action in accordance of prevailing social standards, attitudes, practice, etc.” In the novel 1984, which was written by George Orwell in 1949, conformity was the absolute and it ruled the lives of all the individuals and was valued as the right thing to do. The main character in 1984, Winston, contradicts the wrongs of conformity and reveals how he conformed not because he liked it, but out of necessity for survival.

The opening scene at Winston’s work shows Winston fantasizing that O’Brian was a participant of the secret organization known as the Resistance and he shared the same distaste of the party that which Winston secretly felt. George Orwell stated Winston’s feeling as a fantasy since the idealism of a shared rebellion is nonexistent in the Ministry’s totalitarian control. This gap between mutual interests that are detrimental to the Party’s intentions and natural human behavior stands to be the main antagonist in this negative utopia. Winston’s hope that he was not alone in the world is supported by a modern psychologist Karyl McBride “ We are meant to be in relationships with other people, but, just as surely, we are meant to partake of aloneness.” Winston wanted a relationship with people he had similar interests in, and in opposition, he wanted to be alone concerning romantic relationships.

One way George Orwell portrayed Winston was as a character that conformed to his society and believed that love and relationships was a duty to the public, but not a pleasure. This was exemplified after he stated that his wife “ performed the duty once a week” and they hated it. Only after Winston discovered Julia and he found out that he was attracted to her more than necessity was when he contradicted their society and spent time with someone he liked and was not matched up with. This human desire of chosen love clashed with the Ministry’s standards and created the pathos that George Orwell wanted which drove the protagonist’s actions and his decisions. According to Pamela Haag, “…a marriage of convenience is like dragging the carcass of a necrotic relationship on your back for years. It’s not selfish to want more than that. Some marriages of convenience are nothing short of soul-killing.” Winston more than effectively displayed the lackluster of his soul even in the first few pages of the book where he was seen trudging up the stairs, lifeless and hopeless.

A strategic psychological manipulation of the Ministry was to enforce an unwritten law where the people are to attend rallies and participate in patriotic functions to ensure loyalty in their Party members. Winston despises these situations and only attended these false social settings to appear committed to the Party’s intentions and to not direct attention to himself. At this point of the story, the thought police were on Winston’s mind and influenced his choices and paranoid reactions. “ I think it is essential to think about our actions and our friend’s encouragement (or discouragement) and challenge whether or not it is truly good for us.” is a quote by Vanessa van Petten on the topic of Adult Peer Pressure: Do You Still Feel Peer Pressure? In a world which discouraged challenging of any sort, peer pressure of large groups was highly effective and following the crowd was the only option for survival.

To conclude, the most important section of the novel is when George Orwell classifies Winston’s instinct for un-isolation and rebellion with his choice for conformity and survival. Winston makes the choice when a colleague of his, Wilsher, beckoned Winston to join him at the table. Winston’s actions’ reluctantly joins Wilsher at the table, but Winston imagines himself smashing a pickaxe into Wilsher’s face. His choice to not sit with Julia was because he would have aroused suspicion for sitting with a supposed stranger rather than sitting with a colleague would have led to the Thought Police to catching him sooner. Basically Winston conformed with society to survive and went against his desire to avoid isolation by sitting with Julia. This is why Winston’s most important phrase to Julia, “ I betrayed you” is so crucial. Essentially, Winston’s instinct for survival and choice to conform prevailed over his basic human desire for love.