

"1984" george orwell essay sample



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“ 1984” George Orwell Essay Sample

In the book “ 1984” written by George Orwell in 1948, the proles are presented as an impoverished, powerless and massive group of people.

Nevertheless, they are free, unlike the rest of Oceania. They are not checked by the Party on what they do and think; therefore the proles are the only ones able to take Big Brother down.

First of all, the word ‘ prole’ has to be defined. The word prole derives from the word proletarian which means ‘ a citizen of the lowest class’. The book 1984 describes the proles the same. They are old, unhealthy, working class people. The proles live in an abandoned area which is barely maintained. The neighbourhoods are very filthy and so cause many diseases. Furthermore, the proles that have been mentioned are described as “ swollen, waddling women” and “ old bent creatures shuffling along on splayed feet” (page 86) which makes clear they are old, weak and shabby people. Also it is said that among the proles there are a lot of thieves, bandits and prostitutes. The proles have been described as very pessimistic and negative. Additionally, the Party doesn’t see the proles as human beings, but as unimportant creatures who must be kept under control by everybody; “ the Party taught that the proles were natural inferiors who must be kept in subjection, like animals.” (page 74). The comparison / simile ‘ like animals’ which is used, causes the reader to create a vivid mental image of the proles. It makes the reader imagine the proles as dirty, uncivilized and non-human people. Concluding, the proles are abandoned, wretched and impecunious and seen as non-humans who must be kept in subjection.

Even though the proles are seen as animals, their lives are less affected by the Party than any other class. They have been described as the working class, but besides working they have other affairs too: " Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbours, films, football, beer and , above all, gambling filled up the horizon of their minds." (page 74). There is no such thing as Newspeak or double thinking in their lives, they can still express their feelings, have sex and be involved in relationships. Winston realizes " The proles had stayed human" (page 172). This contradicts what the Party says; they think that the proles are like animals. The biggest differences between humans and animals are that humans have got feelings, emotions and can think. This is exactly what the proles do have, and the higher classes do not. This makes the proles human-like and the higher classes animal-like, since they are not allowed to feel or think freely. The Party makes anything Winston and his congeners do or feel insignificant. It does not matter what you feel or do, in the end you will vanish anyway and any of your actions will be deleted out of history and forgotten completely. The only people who do love and feel are the proles. They are the ones being happy, for example the old, ponderous woman who keeps on singing while doing the household. In short, the proles are way less dominated by the Party than any other class and therefore have got more freedom.

Although the Party sees the proles as unimportant and animal-like, Winston Smith believes that " if there was hope, it lay in the proles." (page 85). This is because the proles have got freedom, which is very scarce in Winston's world. They are unaffected and still have got privacy, e. g. they do not have

telescreens watching them every single minute of every single day. They are not checked by the Party on everything they do. This is why the proles have to stop this totalitarian regime. A wise man called Karl Marx said that revolt has to start from the lowest class. So should the proles in 1984, they could easily take down Big Brother: they include over 80 per cent of the society and so contain way more people than the Party does. Taking down the Party is not only in favour of the other classes, it would stop the occasional bombings, illnesses and poverty of the proles, too. The biggest problem is that they do not realise they can take the Party down, let alone what the Party is doing to society; " The proles, if only they could somehow become conscious of their own strength, would have no need to conspire. They needed only to rise up and shake themselves like a horse shaking off flies." (page 72/73).

This comparison the writer makes, " like a horse shaking off flies" contributes to the attention being given to the proles who need to take action, which Winston thinks is very important. It also forces the reader to create a mental vivid image of the proles rising up and become aware of their own strength just like a horse shaking off flies. The proles do not notice that they are the oppressed. That is exactly what the Party wants, because risking a revolt started by the proles would be way too dangerous for them. The Party gives the proles what they require: freedom, because they do not want the proles to start a revolt. They know they will lose the revolt if the proles would start one. Instead, they leave the proles alone and manipulate the higher classes. The higher classes would revolt against the Party because they are able and willing to stand up to the Party. To prevent this from

happening, the Party keeps the higher classes in their power and watches them do every single movement. If they did not, higher classes would try to demolish Big Brother.

The proles are old, lower class people and seen as animals. The Party acts as if they think they are unimportant because they want to prevent the proles from rebelling. Instead of dominating their lives, they give them freedom and let them be unconscious of what the Party actually is doing. That is why the proles should be the ones taking the Party with its totalitarian regime down. They are the majority of the society, they are the ones who are allowed to think and act freely, they are the ones who are still human.