

Power and authority
in george orwell's
nineteen eighty-four
and frank
darabont's ...



**ASSIGN
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The abuse of power and authority leads to corruption. George Orwell's satire *Nineteen Eighty-four* and Frank Darabont's hellish version of prison life *The Shawshank Redemption* show the effects of the exercise of absolute power. These texts show that if there are no restrictions when it comes to authority it can lead to corruption. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* demonstrates powerful warnings against the dangers of a totalitarian society.

A theme used in Orwell's novel is the party of Big Brother and its absolute power "we shall be utterly without power of any kind" this conveys a very controlling message towards all party members as they are totally evicted from freedom. Orwell uses three phases throughout the novel to give an impression of the sheer power and authority of Big Brother "WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SALVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH" this is an irony used to show power towards the party. One of the motifs of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the control of an individual's thoughts and the governments' surveillance of every party member.

Telescreens are most prominently featured in the novel; they are devices that keep any one of its subjects under constant surveillance therefore eliminating any chance of secret conspiracies against Oceania. "It was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander...within range of a telescreen...the slightest thing could give you away". The Party's surveillance tactics and technology are so advanced that even the smallest expression could give you away. "Thought crime does not entail death, thoughtcrime is death". Orwell has written about thoughtcrime throughout the novel.

It was illegal to hold any negative thought against the party at any time. This gives the reader a picture of how controlled an individual's thoughts were and the surveillance of each and every thought. The Shawshank Redemption directed by Frank Darabont provides a desolate view of a prison where the abuse of power is usual. The figure of the warden, who has the total power of all prisoners, is used to symbolize the corrupting effects of unrestrained power. He reminds each and every new prisoner that they have no protection from his absolute power, used in a frightening warning " your ass belongs to me. His corruption is emphasized through the lightening used by Darabont. Throughout the film he has him emerge from and retreat into darkness. Captain Hadley, the unusually harsh prison guard, routinely and casually breaches prisoners' rights through violence, responding to a request made by a prisoner to make a complaint with " Youll be tellin' the Warden with my baton up your ass". The impact of the frequent beatings is emphasized by the loud sound affects of the blows landing on each hopeless victim. We see the distinctive dangers of a system where power is strong in few but at the expense of many.

The Shawshank Redemption is a film that deals with the institution of prison and the impact of its power on prisoners. " These walls are funny. First you hate them... enough time passes, you get so you depend on them. That's institutionalized. " This creates an image that the prison walls are constraining as it authenticates that the prison has the power over the prisoners simultaneously becoming a false support for all inmates. Through the character Brooks we learn that he believes he cannot stand alone and needs the prison as a support. " Maybe I should rob the FoodWay so they'll

let me back home. This emphasizes the point that Brooks depended so much on the prison and became an institutionalized man. The abuse of power can lead to corruption. We see the abuse of absolute power being used in the novel *Nineteen Eighty-four* and the film *The Shawshank Redemption*. *Nineteen Eighty four* demonstrates this through warnings against the dangers of a totalitarian society and *The Shawshank Redemption* provides us with a desolate view of a prison where the abuse of power is a regular occurrence. These texts show us that when power and authority has no restrictions it can lead to a corrupt populace.