

1984 by george orwell essay

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“ George Orwell once offered this definition of heroism: ordinary people doing whatever they can to change social systems that do not respect human decency, even with the knowledge that they can't possibly succeed. ” In George Orwell's novel, 1984, the protagonist, Winston Smith is described in words of being the ordinary, everyday man to the dystopian society that Orwell envisions to us through Winston's eyes. the life of a Oceanian citizen. However, in the closing of the novel he admits his admiration for Big Brother.

My definition of a hero falls basically along those words but slightly more of a cliché thought to it in the way of the hero is willing to risk their life to abide by true morals in conquering the foundation of the inhumane treatment brought upon the blameless for the justice of everyone. The hero is supposed to be of selfless act and thought. With thorough analysis of Winston and his thoughts and actions throughout the novel, by Orwell's definition, along with my own I do not consider Winston Smith to be a hero. First to address that in a dystopian state there is not a clear manifestation of true heroism.

In a society where the extent of individuality is merely greeting a fellow citizen, even then limited to “ greetings comrade”, there are just rebels. A rebel is what I would identify Winston as, not a hero. The supposed heroic actions Winston commits throughout the novel were not heroic at all, but frankly his personal rebellions rather than a need to rebel against the government in the hopes of altering the social society. Winston's first encounter of rebelling against the Party was the day we wrote a journal entry in secrecy consisting of the phrase “ DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER”.

After writing this he knew immediately that he was well condemned to be caught by the Thought Police and due to this fact Winston began carelessly

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engaging in law breaking actions that put him at even greater risks. This thinking would be seen as careless and selfish, for all forbidden actions were only done to please himself. Actions and thoughts of that manner would not have been in the slightest consideration to commit to a hero who is undoubtedly wanting to change the condition of the government as a whole.

Even though Winston contributed to committing acts against the government that are quite courageous, it was all in a discrete manner. Instead of engaging in an open revolt, Winston's sexual escapades with Julia and journal entries were in secrecy and remote locations that were never repeated twice, also in the room provided by Mr. Charrington. I interpreted Winston's approach to act in confidence from everyone around him out of the fear of the reactions of people during the two minute hate, telescreens, hidden microphones, and brainwashed, spying neighbours outing you at the first open moment to save themselves very cowardice rather than make an open revolt.

The open revolt would have spoken actions of a hero, "ordinary people doing whatever they can to change social systems that do not respect human decency, even with the knowledge that they can't possibly succeed". Basically even if Winston's public revolt to get others to go against rather than conform to the Party's laws and live in fear didn't succeed, it would have been the effort that counts for what a hero would do to better a country, people, or even the world. The fear Winston felt and had thought of in the back of his mind that he mentioned all kept him regretting the actions he took part in.

To further the concept of the substantial influence fear contributed to Winston's choice of actions that defies the meaning of a hero, is the time he was in his Room 101 and his great fear of rats were thrust upon him for torture by O'Brien in the Ministry of Love, and he unhesitatingly shouted to place the torture among Julia, a complete cowardly act. This alone speaks for itself that Winston is no hero, he is an ordinary person who falls under the control of the Party when under pressure of their tactics.

In addition to his cowardly act, he also betrays Julia when he rats her out to the Party and tells of how it was all her, she was the one who influenced the revolt. This contradicts the characteristics of a hero because a hero is determined to stand by what they most care about and never act against their purpose, so for Winston this was not a demonstration of heroism, but a selfish act of fear to put complete blame on Julia, his former lover at the end of the book. To conclude my stance on whether Winston Smith should be considered a hero is he is not a hero at all, just the ordinary citizen living in a dystopian society.