

Good example of
Orwell's 1984:
implications on the
real world we live in
today res...

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



George Orwell's novel 1984 opens with the protagonist, Winston Smith, lounging around his grey depressing apartment in London. He is alone in the first scene, and throughout much of the novel remains that way. Essentially, everyone within the dystopian society within the book is separated from the society they are a part of. Winston lives in a dingy apartment where his government constantly monitors him.

There is essentially no freedom, and ceaseless war. Orwell was not just writing a fictional dystopian thriller, but was making important political statements about where culture could be headed if the people of a society allowed their government to spiral out of control and take their freedom. Today, with recent scandals of Snowden and the NSA, Orwell's novel 1984 is more relevant than ever, with many thinking we have already progressed to a political world that mirrors the fictional world of Orwell's creation. The novel now is less a work of fiction, and more of a roadmap to identify what government overstepping looks like, which mirrors the reality of the present. An overview of the Orwellian world of 1984 will give some context for comparison between what is happening in our world today, how it mirrors the situation in the novel, and the implications that it carries regarding what is happening within our society today. In 1984, The world has progressed and divided itself three superpowers which are constantly at war with one another: Erasia, Eastasia and Oceania. Winston lives in Oceania and because his government is constantly at war, it allows them to control its citizens under very strict regulations and the government keeps its citizens in constant surveillance. For this society, " War is peace. Freedom is slavery" and " Ignorance is strength" (Orwell, 33).

Rebellion is treated with oppression, but Winston is an interesting character for the novel because he begins quiet rebellions against his party by keeping a diary, which is illegal.

Winston also begins an affair with a woman named Julia, and become secret lovers. This love affair coincides with someone from the "Inner Party" catching on to the fact that Winston attempts to subvert the government. The inner party has luxuries that do not exist for the common people, such as the ability to turn off the telescreen that the government uses to monitor its citizens.

O'Brien tells Winston that there is a faction of rebels who are working against the government called the Brotherhood. He gives Winston a book that details how the Inner Party operates so that he can be more effective in subverting it. But before he can put it to use, he and his lover is arrested in a rented room that they had used to hide their affair. O'Brien who gave Winston the book, turned out to be a member of the Thought police and they had set a trap for him.

The Minister of Love, which controls romantic relationships take control of Winston. He is tortured until he decides to adopt the views of the party. Winston always held onto one certainty, that no matter what his government did, they would never be able to convince him to betray his love Julia. In the end though, they torture and brainwashing techniques cause him to do just that.

The novel ends with a stirring line of prose, "Everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother" (Orwell, 279).

The government's moral flaw in the novel in its relation to its people was that The Party believed in it's caused, and so anything they did they believed their ends justified their means. This is not unlike what is happening in The United States and other powerful Western Governments today. They are certainly still a long way off from the level of oppression and control as seen in 1984, but such things happen not at once, but once violation of freedom at a time. A journalist for CNN, Lewis Beale, believes that " We are living in ' 1984' today" (Beale, 1).

Beal draws parallel between the technology that the government had in 1984, our decade long wars, and the way that our government has been involved in surveillance of it's own people, without informing them. He cites that the police now have a device that can read a car's plate to tell if it is stolen, uninsured or unregistered. Also, he cites the fact that the NSA (National Security Agency) is able to see what you have been doing on your personal Facebook page and can look up what you have searched on Google. Nowadays, he says, " almost every store we go into wants your home phone number and ZIP code as part of any transaction" (Beal, 1).

According to Beal, " We live in a world that George Orwell predicted in ' 1984'" (Beal, 1). This fact is highlighted by why recently the 1949 novel has been selling like a new release. At one point, the online retailer Amazon reported that sales of the book were up 9, 000 percent. " Comparisons between Orwell's novel about a tightly controlled totalitarian future ruled by the ubiquitous Big Brother and today," Beal writes, " are, in fact, quite apt. Here are a few of the most obvious ones" (Beal, 1).

Beal puts six key terms and themes from the novel, which exists today. First

there are the telescreens, which in 1949 at the release time of the novel seemed like a futuristic combination between the television and telephone. He sees sites like Facebook as a way to track likes and dislikes and allow the government to tap into our whereabouts and spy on a citizen who is not guilty of or under investigation of for a crime.

Another feature of the novel, which allowed the government to overstep the bounds of human rights, is the fact that the country is involved in an endless war. In decades past, the Cold War kept the government justifying large military budgets and espionage. Today we have the war on terror, which seems to be going on endless; it created a “ generalized societal fear, suspension of certain civil liberties, and an ill-defined enemy who could be anywhere, and anything” (Bealse, 1).

One of the themes in the novel is the concept of Double Think. This allows citizens to accept two beliefs, which are a paradox when considered together as correct. While not existing in the extent of the novel, politicians today seem able to say anything, and have their supporters accept it, whether it is true or not.

Newspeak is a dumbed down language in which the Inner Party conveys news to its citizens. Internet Slang like LMAO, OMG, mirror this dumbed down language.

The Anti-Sex League is an organization set up by the government that was used by the government to take out the pleasure of sex so that it could be used only for its function of procreation.

Political and ethical writer Alasdair Denville agrees that some of the predictions found in 1984 are happening today. Scary is the fact that many

Americans did not even know what the letters NSA stood for until Edward Snowden released information, which painted the full extent of American surveillance. The Guardian has revealed from these documents that the American surveillance machine is vast, much larger than anyone supposed prior to these leaks. The government collects records from large telephone companies such as Verizon daily. (Greenwald, 1).

So the question of whether or not the situation in Orwell's dystopian novel 1984 could happen here in the United States is the wrong question to ask. The real question to ask is how true Orwell's predictions has proved to be and how much more will they continue to prove to be true? While there was a backlash to the NSA leaks, there has been little down politically to change the course of this program. US citizens either did not have the political will or power to do anything about this. The Obama administration justified this like the Inner Party does in the book: because we are at war and these measures are necessary for safety. But at what point is there a line that should not be crossed in the name of protecting freedoms? We are currently all living in a version of 1984. As Lewis Beale puts it, " What this means, unfortunately, is that we are all Winston Smith. And Big Brother is the modern surveillance state" (Beale, 1).

Works Cited

Denvil, Alasdair. " 4 Predictions From Orwell's '1984' That Are Coming True Today." PolicyMic. N. p., n. d. Web. 23 Apr. 2014. .

Beale, Lewis, and The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of Lewis Beale.. " We're living '1984' today." CNN. Cable News Network, 3 Aug. 2013. Web. 23 Apr. 2014. .

<https://assignbuster.com/good-example-of-orwells-1984-implications-on-the-real-world-we-live-in-today-research-paper/>

Greenwald, Glenn. " NSA collecting phone records of millions of Verizon customers daily." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 6 June 2013. Web. 23 Apr. 2014. .

Orwell, George, and Erich Fromm. 1984: a novel. New York, N. Y.: Signet Classic, 19611949. Print.