

1984: the loss of humanity essay sample



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The novel 1984 has left a lasting impact in the literary world. Though the year in which the book takes place has come and gone, the book can still warn of a future that could come. In all reality, the book could be titled 2100 and have the same plot line. But although the warning still has relevance and citizens of the United States should be conscientious of it, the democratic society of the country provides a protection against the loss of individualism. The first step of losing humanity occurs when citizens lose their ability or desire to think independently and know the truth; 1984 depicts the loss of society's human qualities and how this scenario might occur in the future. In 1984, Winston and Julia have individual thoughts and the reader is led to believe that these two people are a true rarity in this society. " She had become a physical necessity, something that he not only wanted but felt that he had a right to" (Orwell 139). The quote shows how Winston's thoughts differed from the Party's. Other citizens would not have felt they had the right to anything. The Party wants individualism to be extinct in the society of Oceania. By the end of the novel, Winston and Julia have become thoughtless beings as well.

This is achieved through torture by the Party. Julia succumbs almost immediately and betrayed Winston with her words and her mind. It took Winston much longer, but he also loses his individualism willingly. The last words of the book, " He loved Big Brother," show this fact (Orwell 297). Winston had no more desire to think unique thoughts. When Winston and Julia lost their ability to think for themselves, they lost their humanity. One of the American values is the human quality of individualism. In Bill Perry's book *A Look Inside America*, individualism tops the list as the number one

cultural value of America (Perry). Yet, though American citizens value individualism, they tend to act with groups and not individually. Any Presidential election shows an example. Almost every American will vote for a candidate from one of the two major political parties: Democrats and Republicans. In the 2012 presidential election, 99% of citizens voted for either the Democrat or Republican candidate (“ Election 2012”).

Americans like to think they are different from everybody else, but this is not always the reality. So, Americans may be losing some of their individualistic thinking, bringing them closer to the minds of the citizens in the society of 1984. In recent years, America has become a world of social media. On September 14, Facebook reached 1 billion users, which is about one seventh of the world’s population (Vance). Though social media allows everyone to share their opinion with whomever they want, it is also used by some as the only avenue to learn information. In 2010, 6. 1 million students were taking at least one online course (Lytle). Many citizens also accept information off the internet as true without validation.

People become “ followers” and can base their opinions on what somebody else says. In the society of 1984, the idea of social media does not exist. However, the act of blind following does exist in 1984’s society. Big Brother is the citizens’ only source of information and they do not question the validity of any claims made by the Party. By giving the people no other options than to believe them, the Party succeeds in taking away the human quality of individualistic thinking. When a citizen such as Winston occurs, the Party does a very thorough job of convincing the person of their insanity. Orwell shows an eye opening view into what society could become.

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Humanity could be lost and with it, individualistic thinking. This warning will never lose its relevance and may actually increase in relevance with the growing dominance of social media in democratic societies like the United States. 1984's impact on the world will not go away; it will only gain importance.

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