

1984 - george orwell



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BUSTER**

Throughout the evolution of man, power and control have been idealized. When power is attained by manipulative dictators, citizens may initially view them as a means to satisfy their need for structure and direction. An author's grim prophecy of mankind in a totalitarian society is depicted in George Orwell's, 1984. Citizens in Oceania are governed by the Party Big Brother, which succeeds in controlling their actions and minds. The concept of oppression is taken to a new level, until there is no sense of humanity within the society. Natural instincts and emotions do not exist for the citizens in Oceania, as they are conditioned since birth to be working bodies, lacking mercy and compassion. " By careful early conditioning, by games and cold water, by the rubbish that was dinned into them at school and in the Spies and the Youth League, by lectures, parades, songs, slogans and martial music, the natural feeling had been driven out of them." (Orwell, p. 71) The main repetitive means of conditioning were the Party slogans which citizens must adhere to; War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength. War is linked with peace and security, rather than horror and grief. Freedom is viewed as being an individual, therefore more susceptible to torture. The individual is defeated and therefore enslaved to the government rather than being apart of the government. In result, there is no freedom of thought, expression, language, religion, etc. Ignorance is bliss since there is no need to criticize the government and therefore, fewer confrontations. The proles (proletariats) in the novel are allowed and appreciate primitive emotions. Sex, scent, expression, and the true sense of freedom embody this in the novel. It is ironic that they reserve a sense of humanity, yet are considered inhumane. Eighty five per cent of Oceania's population is proles, and they are unaware of their potential power. " If there is hope, it lies in the proles.

Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious." (Orwell, p. 52) Although it could lead to a counter-revolution, they are content in the purity of their lives, and see no need for power since they have not yet been exposed to the oppression in Oceania. " The lower strata of the middle class - the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants - all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which modern industry is carried on..." (Feuer) This contrasts the bourgeoisie (i. e. Big Brother, the inner party) who are driven by power, are considered socially superior, and are the ones responsible for the struggle between the classes within their regime. They successfully change the upper class (outer Party members) to fit their image, and it is only a matter of time before they attempt to convert the proles. The inner party dictates to the upper class that speaking to the proles is considered social deviation, therefore these two realms are impermeable. One way of implementing the structure is to keep all physical objects in society comprised of the Party configuration. Their market, their attire, and products are screened, and helicopter police and telescreens are used to surveil every citizen. Big Brother has abolished private industry, and has replaced it with one government, one code of " law" (absolute ruling), and one national class interest. In utilizing these tangible entities, the Party gradually gains control, and each citizen becomes nothing more than an appendage to the machine. A sexual experience of the outer party citizens is viewed as a vile and dirty instinct, and is oppressed by Big Brother. The motive of the Party to prevent these physical bonds, is so that they do not lead to emotional bonds, thus directing all positive emotions

towards Big Brother. " Chastity was deeply ingrained in them as Party loyalty." (p. 71) To control the mentality of their citizens, the Party establishes INGSOC socialist principles. They are categorized into Newspeak, Doublethink, and the Mutability of the Past. Newspeak is a new language, which strips it to basic vocabulary, and provides no means of expression or imagination. Only orthodox words are kept, so that no citizen can express their desire to revolt against the Party. Doublethink is reality control. " The essential act of the Party is to use conscious deception while retaining the firmness of purpose that goes with complete honesty...to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies." (Orwell, p. 37) They achieve this by denying all that is real or was real at some point in time. A prime example of this, is how they are involved in a infinite war with two other countries; Eurasia and Eastasia. However, when they are at war with one, they claim to have never been at war with the other, and the citizens do not question this. In this case, the party uses the war with Eastasia or Eurasia as a tool for citizens to want to abide by the rules the party has set out. Citizens begin to fear for their life and inevitably side with the government in their time of need" (Howe) The Party achieves Doublethink by Mutilating the Past. All records are wiped out, there is no sense of time, no historical accuracy, anything that is not tangible ceases to exist and is claimed to never have existed. People " disappear", which is known as vaporizing, their existence erased and the citizens are conditioned to believe that they'd never seen/heard of them " Who controls the past, contols the future: who controls the present controls the past." (Orwell, p. 37) There is now no validity in experience, no existence of external reality, the very thought of Big Brother frightens people enough to doubt their own

concept of truth because it manipulates the perceived reality. Along the way, these incentives are designed to strip citizens of their individuality and force them to become a collectively minded society with no individual thoughts. " The party teaches that madness is an attribute of the individual mind that will not merge itself into the collective view of reality." (Burgess, p37) This theory correlates with critic Anthony Burgess and his belief of the anti-solipsistic society presented in Orwell's novel. Nothing in Oceania's external world is allowed to have internal existence, citizens believe their own senses are subject to error; therefore it's easier to succumb to the collective (and accepted) mind of the Party which is anti-solipsistic. This is evident towards the end of the novel when O'Brien brainwashes Winston into believing Party mentality and joining the collective mind. Orwell uses this concept to relate to the oppression in society present during the time in which he wrote the novel. During the 1940's, it was not only WWII, but also the time of the dictators Stalin and Hitler, who used brainwashing techniques to take advantage of their vulnerable societies. The Machiavellian Theorem becomes the sole tactic to survival in Oceania. In order to become a member of the Brotherhood, Winston agrees to commit all the carnage that Big Brother has raged on his people. (Orwell, p. 180) With angst to be rid of his oppression, Winston has lost his sense of humanity. He now believes that his end justifies his means. Although he believes he resists internally to the Party, his mentality has inevitably been brainwashed by acts of sabotage, and all that O'Brien had to do to corrupt him was to direct his hate elsewhere. The Inner Party develops intricate ways of attacking a person at their personal weakest, and using their various instruments, can break down body, mind, and soul. Although this novel is merely Orwell's political speculation, it opens

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the doors to the many possibilities and outcomes of uncontrolled power in vulnerable societies.