

George Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm*

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Please Silence Cell Phones

Learning Objectives

- Analyze the critique of human nature in Orwell's *Animal Farm and 1984*
- Observe parallels to the Cold War and Soviet Union as Totalitarian, Statist government
- Analyze the relevance and importance of *Animal Farm & 1984* as social commentary on America
- Observe modern parallels of propaganda and surveillance to control people

Biography (1903-1950)

- Born in India; scholarship student
- Worked as MP in Burma
- Quit government service to become a writer
- Lived among poor and wrote about it
- Miners; gave up on Capitalism; supported Democratic Socialism
- Covered the Spanish civil war; Watched rise of Fascism and Totalitarian States
- Animal Farm 1945
- *1984*, 1949

Dystopia

- Anti-Utopia
- Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, 1516
- H.G. Wells, *Men Like Gods*, 1923
- Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, 1934

Animal Farm

- Allegory for Soviet Union and failure of communist revolution
- Animals take over the farm
- Old Major: Karl Marx; "Beasts of England"
- Napoleon: Pig like Stalin
- Snowball: Pig like Trotsky; Killed by Napoleon
- Squealer: little pig who spreads Napoleon's propaganda
- Dogs: Enforce dominance of pigs and Napoleon
- **Bottom Line: Ideals of Revolution and Equality corrupted: "All Animals are Equal, but some are More Equal"**

Plot Summary

- Winston Smith: Big Brother, the Party, and Totalitarian Society; Telescreens; Diary
- Ministry of Truth: O'Brien; Girl; Brotherhood and Emmanuel Goldstein
- Proles; Antique Shop; Sees Girl
- Note: "I love you"; Julia; Sex and Love as Taboo; Love affair grows, Hatred of Party; Message from O'Brien

Plot continued

- Visit O'Brien: Join Brotherhood; reads Goldstein's manifesto in the room; Police capture them; Mr. Charrington is Thought Police
- Ministry of Love: O'Brien also a party spy; Brainwashing and Interrogation; Room 101;
- Confront your Worst Fear; Cage around head and Rats; Smith Caves and begs that they do it to Julia not him;
- Giving her up is what they wanted; he is released and sees her but feels nothing; They both betrayed the other; In the end "he had won the victory over himself: He loved Big Brother."

Family and Children

- Junior Spy Group based on Hitler's Youth Group
- Children are spies even against their parents
- In order to exert total control this most basic human connection of parent-child must be severed
- Total infiltration of one's most intimate thoughts if you can't trust even your family
- Purpose of sex is procreation for the State

Newspeak

- Ministry of Truth
- Objective: simplify vocabulary so complex thoughts become impossible
- Eliminate words that could lead to *thoughtcrime*, ie., rebellious thought or original thought
- No negative words: bad = ungood
- Literature, philosophy, critical thought become impossible

Doublethink: part of Newspeak

- The power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them... To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just as long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies – all this is indispensably necessary. Even in using the word doublethink it is necessary to exercise doublethink. For by using the word one admits that one is tampering with reality; by a fresh act of doublethink one erases this knowledge; and so on indefinitely, with the lie always one leap ahead of the truth
- “War is Peace; Freedom is Slavery; Ignorance is Strength”

Newspeak: Rewriting History

- Elimination of words to contain political discourse
- If someone is vaporized then they no longer exist; all records involving them must be edited
- If someone who was a loyal party member becomes a rebel, things they said and did, stories praising them must be rewritten
- Winston is aware of this; but what he wants is some proof of this; He had a document
- The importance of the independence of History and the Protection of the Press

War

- War is endless
- In the middle of a speech the speaker clarifies that Oceania has never been at war with Eurasia but always with Eastasia
- All the records must be changed
- The three powers keep involved in border war to distract populace and maintain status quo for the elite

Prison in Ministry of Love

- While being tortured Winston admits that O'Brien is holding up five fingers although he knows it is only four
- $2 + 2 = 5$
- He comes to love O'Brien for being able to make the pain cease
- Object of brainwashing is to destroy personal love or individualism: replace with Love of Big Brother/State only

Room 101

- W. shouts out Julia's name over and over
- He denies Big Brother and claims to hate the Party
- He is told he must not only accept BB but Love him
- He is taken to room 101
- He must betray the one he loves in order to love the one he hates
- Finally he succumbs to doublethink

1984 in Retrospect

- Most contemporary critics are quick to say that Orwell's vision did not come true; Democratic Capitalism won the Cold War
- Yet, many of the technological means of control in Oceania are even more available today
- Ability to track our Phone Calls; Banking; Shopping; Computer Access; Books and Library Use (Patriot Act)
- National ID Cards or Chips; Satellite Tracking of Prisoners or Children
- Consolidation of Media into a few large Companies
- Government agencies creating News as newsrooms are cut
- Fear of Questioning the Government and the War on Terror in particular
- Old Enemies, new Friends: Iraq and France

Summary

- America is not a totalitarian state
- Totalitarianism is largely on the defensive, but it still looms in countries that we are now allied with like China
- 1984 is an important work as a reminder about the need to be vigilant against Doublethink and Groupthink and Doublespeak
- Maintaining a free, vigorous, and independent Press should be a concern for all Americans
- Privacy is critical to a free society; freedom in personal life, sexuality, love, expression and art are essential.