
1984 As Futuristic Dystopian Novel

The book 1984 by George Orwell is a futuristic dystopian novel. It takes place in a futuristic totalitarian society where the government controls every aspect of its citizens lives. Individualism and the expression of free thought is strictly prohibited. The totalitarian government controls everything, including the language and the history. Citizens get arrested and killed for so much as thinking unacceptable thoughts about the government. Winston, who is the protagonist, works for the government but wants to rebel. He is constantly paranoid that the Thought Police are going to capture him and he is going to disappear, like so many other people who rebelled or thought badly against the government. There are several Cold War/futuristic fears expressed throughout the book. The main theme of the book is the fears and dangers of totalitarianism. Some of these fears that George Orwell expresses throughout the book include the evils of technology and surveillance, and censorship from the government.

The main Cold War fear prevalent throughout the book was the dangers of totalitarianism. Through his book, George Orwell shines light on the dangers of a totalitarian government and depicts the perfect and most extreme totalitarian society conceivable. Orwell had personally witnessed the terrors of communism and the extent that the leaders would go to increase and preserve their power. In the American media, the Soviet Union was viewed as a moral experiment. Many Americans were supportive of communism and were open to it. With the book 1984, Western readers were able to understand what society would be like in the near future if the United States embraced communism and totalitarianism. The fears that stemmed from this book were the evils in technology and surveillance, and censorship from the government.

The first Cold War fear that is frequent throughout the book is technology. Technology was a Cold War and futuristic fear because people were worried the governments had the potential to spy on them. There was also the fear that advances in technology could lead to less privacy and more monitorization from the government. In the book, the government is able to monitor its members through telescreens and microphones across the city. There is no escape from being watched or listened to, even in your own home. This book instilled fear in people that the improvements in technology could lead to increases in government power and surveillance. Since the book was written in 1949, it showed what the future could look like in 35 years if totalitarianism and communism succeeded. This instilled even more fear and paranoia in people.

Another Cold War and futuristic fear that is expressed throughout the book is censorship. Throughout the book, the government is constantly censoring information. The government controls all sources of information and they manage and rewrite the histories and newspapers for their own purposes. When civilians disappear, government workers erase their name from all newspaper articles, as if they never existed. Civilians aren't allowed to keep any records of the past, such as photos or documents. This results in memories becoming unreliable and blurred and the civilians believing anything that the government tells them, ultimately become brainwashed. This allows the government to control the present while exploiting the past. By exploiting and manipulating the past, they can justify what they do in the present. This became a Cold War fear because the communist countries were already censoring their citizens. The Soviet Union censored everything and controlled all the information. After reading this book,

people became very fearful and paranoid of the dangers of totalitarianism and communism if they were to be implemented in the United States.

When this book first came out in 1949, many Americans and people in the western world found this book to be disturbing. This was due to the fact that it brought to light many of the realities and possibilities that could happen under a communist and totalitarian regime. It also made people think about how it could happen in a near thirty-five years. It was also disturbing because of how realistic it could be for a society to develop into that under a totalitarian regime.

It also brought to light how easy it is for a government to manipulate and control civilian's minds, which sabotages the capability for people to be independent in their own thinking. In the book, Winston and Julia agree to never let the government extract their love for each other. Nonetheless, at the end of the story, they are contradicted when they are apprehended and tortured. The government accomplishes their goal of shaping and controlling their minds when Winston professes his adoration for Big Brother and his lack of love for Julia.

The raw and serious ending of the book accomplishes Orwell's final warning of the dangers of a totalitarian government. For example, when Winston is being tortured, O'Brien explained, "The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power" (Orwell 217). This candidly shows how much of human nature revolves around the idea of gaining control and possessing power. It is the power-hungry instinct in people that proves Orwell's point of the possibility of a government seeking and achieving absolute authority over everything and everyone. This portrayal of life in a few decades is what makes this book and the future seem so realistic.

The last brutal point about the reality of totalitarian government is when O'Brien shows what the Party is finally striving for. During Winston's torture, O'Brien says, "Do you begin to see, then, what kind of world we are creating — A world of fear and treachery and torment, a world of trampling and being trampled upon," (Orwell 220). This point implies to the reader what the future of the world could develop into with the continued support for totalitarianism. This book illustrates a vivid image of the possibility of the future and injects fear into the reader. This generates a dissent movement against the idea of letting a government have absolute control over its citizens. This book was a wake-up call to many readers in 1949 to pay attention to the world around them in order to prevent a scenario like this from ever happening in the future.