Analysis Of 1984 Essay, Research Paper

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In 1949, an Englishman named Eric Blair published the novel 1984. Under the pseudonym, George Orwell, this author became one of the most respected and notable political writers for his time. 1984 was Orwell?s prophetic vision of the world to come. This creation of ?Negative Utopia? was thoroughly convincing through Orwell?s use of setting and characterization. The theme conveyed by Orwell is that no matter how strong an individual a communist society would destroy any hope that that soul had of surviving, and that no matter the reasons told to the society, that power that the Party seeks is for no gain except for power.

The story begins in April of 1984, in a grim, industrialized city called London. London was ?chief city of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the provinces of Oceania.” The dwellings that the people live in, called Victory Mansions, are depicted as ??rotting nineteenth-century houses, their sides shored up with balks of timber, their windows patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron?.? The setting creates a mood of devastation and hopelessness, fabricated by the Inner Party to suppress its followers. These people live in a society that is ruled by totalitarianism, and the aim is to give the greatest good to the smaller number. As indicated by ?Cliffs Notes,? on pages 34 and 35, the main character, ?Winston, like others, is expected to do his job efficiently and receive no reward but the opportunity to live austerely for the greater good and self-perpetuation of the Inner Party.?

Told in third person limited, the reader is only allowed in-depth knowledge of the protagonist, Winston. Winston Smith, a thirty-nine year old man with a varicose ulcer, is a member of the Outer Party. He has ?a smallish, frail figure, the meagerness of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the Party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine, his skin roughened by course soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended.? Winston works in the Ministry of Truth, which is concerned with news, entertainment, education, and the fine arts. He is employed in the Records Department, where his tasks consist of writing and rewriting scripts to fit the present and past which unceasingly fluctuate and add to the dominion the Party had over its members, and the history they believe in. Although Winston is a diligent member of the Party, his inner desires, of humanity, individuality, and sexuality are directly insubordinate of the policies of the Party. His physical expressions are deceptive, an attempt to cover-up his true attitude towards his situation from the Thought Police. During the course of the novel, Winston?s views change. ?Cliffs Notes? states that he was annoyed by the limits placed on his individuality and then was made to conform to the world the Party created.

?Cliffs Notes? also suggests that Winston was not just a character in the story, but an idea. Winston is an anachronism. ?His mind and personality are not at first defined by the Party slogans, by the Party?s ideas of what he should be. From his own point of view he is an individual; from the Party?s point of view he is a flaw in the reality it is creating.?

One of the other two major characters is Julia. ?She was a bold-looking girl of about twenty-seven, with thick dark hair, a freckled face, and swift, athletic movements.? She also works in the Ministry of Truth for the Fiction Department. Her tasks include helping write pornographic literature that is sold to proles (?Cliffs Notes? refers to them as an ?excluded class? of people) which is ironic because she wears a red sash around her waist to signify her allegiance to the Junior Anti-Sex League. She is a hedonistic individual whose appetite leads her from one liaison to the next, but her aptness to hide her demeanor is extraordinary. She is actively involved in many community service programs and keeps her appearance by doing so. When she and Winston started their relationship, she had suggested to him to join more services so that he would be less suspicious.

More than a person, Julia is as ?Cliffs Notes? characterizes her on page 30, a foil. Up until Winston associates with her, his acts of rebellion against the Party are minor. They consist of writing in a diary and thoughtcrime. Though over time Winston and Julia fulfill their desires both sexual and rebellious.

The other major character in this novel is a man named O?Brien. Winston is not affiliated with him early on, but feels a sense of familiarity in him. Winston had the inkling that O?Brien, even though part of the Inner Party, is guilty of thoughtcrime, too. ?O?Brien was a large, burly man with a thick neck and a coarse, humorous, brutal face. In spite of his formidable appearance he had a certain charm of manner. ?In some indefinable way, curiously civilized.? Winston ?secretly held belief? that O?Brien?s political orthodoxy was not perfect.? Not much is known about O?Brien until the end of the novel where it is revealed that his being a conspirator of the Party was just a deception. ?Cliffs Notes? proposes (on page 31) that the human qualities that O?Brien shows are part of his duty and they rendered Winston acceptable to the Party and at the same time harmless.

The central conflict of the novel is man-vs-society. Winston constantly struggled for individuality in a society were there is no ?I? there is only ?we? (Cliffs Notes 32). The exposition of the plot discusses the setting, characters, and basic situation of the story. As the story progressed Winston received a note from Julia that led to their affair. He knew that his crimes would one day be detected, and they inevitably were, but his determination for freedom kept him striving. During the development of the story Winston writes in his diary, has suspicions of O?Brien, is guilty of thoughtcrime, makes love to Julia, and secretly has visitations with her. The climax occurred when Julia and Winston where captured in there room above Mr. Charrington?s shop. They learned that Mr. Charrington, the prole that Winston bought his diary from, was actually a member of the Thought Police. He allowed them to rent the room above his shop, and then turned them over to the authorities. The falling action includes Winston?s and Julia?s confinement to the Ministry of Love, ?? a place impossible to enter except on official business, and then only by penetrating through a maze of barb-wired entanglements, steel doors, and hidden machine-gun nests.? This is where they go through there rehabilitation period. There Winston encounters O?Brien, but this time not as a collaborator of a rebellion, but a conspirator of the Party. He takes Winston through the stages of confession, torture, and acceptance. In the resolution Winston loved Big Brother.

The ending of the novel was not an anticipated one. Winston believed that he had won the struggle inside himself, but the reader was left with the feeling of defeat. During his imprisonment in the Ministry of Love, Winston had thoughts that he would be killed, at any given moment. He knew that even if he loved Big Brother that he would be killed anyway. So he concluded that if while he were dying his last thoughts would be of his hatred of Big Brother and that no one could take that away from him, but in the end he gave in.

In 1984, Orwell used setting and characterization to drive his plot and discuss his theme. The world that they lived in was a desolate, metropolis, run by the slaves of the Inner Party. Most were unaware of the fact that the party that they served ruled their lives and thoughts, but those who did paid the price. Winston and Julia both were change people after their release from the Ministry of Love, and neither cared to regain the relationship that they had before they were captured. They had both failed themselves and each other and lost to power of ?Big Brother.?