

# *"Nineteen Eighty-Four"*

## **THEMES OF THE NOVEL**

*"Orwell is a **committed** writer":*

what does **it** mean?



believing strongly in something

**COMMITMENT**

## LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

In 1984, language is of central importance to behavior control. A new language – *Newspeak* – is created in the society described by Orwell: in this language there aren't any words which could be used to express dissent. The control of language is centralized in the state, to eliminate the possibility of rebellion or disobedience.

## THEME OF POWER

*1984* is not just about totalitarianism; it makes us live through totalitarianism. The Party wants power for its own sake. The Party carefully monitors the behavior of all of its constituents. The Party is against all loyalty created in private: the only acceptable loyalty is loyalty to the Party.

## THEME OF REPRESSION

A successful totalitarian state cannot accommodate private loyalties, since private loyalties will often trump loyalty to the Party. Because sex and family create private loyalties, the Party must somehow control these social acts and constructs. Thus, the Party brainwashes children to believe that sex is despicable, unpleasurable, and merely a means to create new Party members (sex is seen as a "duty to the Party").

## THEME OF WARFARE

1984 depicts warfare as a necessary tool of a totalitarian state. Oceania, one of the three superstates of the world, is in constant warfare with one of the other two. This is necessary, as warfare keeps citizens in constant fear – they then willingly submit to the control of the Party. Thanks to this submission the Party can ensure power.

## **THEME OF MEMORY AND THE PAST**

The Party seeks to control everything – past, present, and future. Another effort towards attaining that goal is to control its constituents' memory. Without memory, the people cannot know the past. Without memory, the Party is able to control history.

By controlling the past, the Party also controls the present – because its citizens will accept everything the Party says. In order to control the collective memory of its constituents, the Party forbids its members to keep written records of their lives (photographs and documents must be destroyed).



## THEME OF VIOLENCE

1984 details the effectiveness of torture as a tool to control subversion in a totalitarian state . Torture is not limited to physical suffering, but also includes mind control, brainwashing, and indoctrination. The branch of government that oversees torture at Oceania is ironically named the Ministry of Love. It is, however, effective; through torture, the Ministry is able to transform rebellious minds into loving, accepting ones.

***"New Literary Landscapes"***

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