

## The Truth in 1984: Culture's Revolt Against Freedom

We all take freedom for granted in America. It is treated as a simple fact that we can speak and think for ourselves. But does everyone have these rights? Is it even true that we are as free as we say? Can we rest assured that this won't go away? George Orwell's *1984* paints a brutal tapestry of life when the answers to these questions turn negative. The outlandish dystopia of *1984*, however, is no longer simply a warning, but an image of where our world is headed at this very moment.

The world of *1984* is set in a totalitarian superstate named Oceania. This superstate is under the sole control of a dictator, Big Brother, who is praised for his wondrous deeds day and night. Why is he so glorious? Because it's illegal to think otherwise. The Thought Police will detain you and correct your way of thinking, as a word against the Party is practically blasphemy. According to the Ministry of Truth, that is. Every true citizen follows Big Brother, and those who don't aren't even worthy of being called people.

Orwell wrote this as a warning and satire of what extreme Stalinism could bring, but his ideas are slowly making their way into the way we live today. Being imprisoned for speaking a word the government doesn't agree with, languages purposefully too simple and ambiguous to express yourself with, and committing crimes by thinking independently all look far-fetched at first glance, but they aren't as much of a hyperbole as they may seem. The Thought Police don't exist, but standing out will still incur judgement. Newspeak isn't a real language, but people still abuse ambiguous words. You're allowed to think freely, but many wish you couldn't.

We live in a culture where people seek comfort over anything. Comfort, however, comes at the cost of freedom. New ideas, both good and evil, are always flowing, and it hurts to stand

against the waves. Most choose to conform to the masses, simply moving where they're pushed. Not only does it hurt to be a pillar in the crowd, but it hurts to hit a pillar as the crowd. There is friction between the comfortable and the free, the crowds and the formidable. Those who seek comfort call themselves whatever they please, and let others do what they want. It is a simple way of life; choose your own faulty road and ignore the immorality all around you. Those who speak out against anyone are considered bigots, intolerant fools, towards which the hollow weapons of shame are to be brandished. In reality, those who speak out are the free, the ones who follow what lies outside of culture's "acceptable" beliefs. We as Christians are among the few who are willing to stand on our own, choosing to put our God above all else.

Language is the weapon with which beliefs wage war. When comfort is all people seek, they try to destroy the weapons which threaten them. The easiest way to disarm a language is with ambiguity; don't call it child murder, just call it choice; don't call him sexually perverted, just call him happy. All around us words and symbols are being taken and corrupted. The rainbow is no longer seen by most as the symbol of a covenant, but of a great evil. Those who want life are said to stand against choice. The same people who kill children and commit other abominable acts are the ones who call us bigots; the criminals blame their victims.

"We must all be alike. Not everyone born free and equal, as the Constitution says, but everyone made equal." says Beatty, the fire chief in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Orwell and Bradbury saw a common theme in the direction our culture was headed decades ago: the eradication of freedom. It is far more comfortable and profitable for people to live in a society where nobody fights, but the only way to achieve that is to homogenize every mind. What gain is there from comfort worth more than freedom? Fights happen not simply because people are free, but because free people want to destroy what is evil. Everyone has a nature of sin, so without any

form of rebuke we all will decay into total immorality. Is that what you want? To be a fool, trapped in your sin? As Proverbs 12:15 says, “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.” Everyone needs rebuke somewhere in their life, and if everyone’s minds are the same, none can provide it.

Our culture is slowly pushing us to become the terrible dystopia Orwell imagined in *1984*. Free speech is a ticket to shame and pain, what’s popular is considered true, and certain thoughts can be treated as almost criminal. What Orwell imagined as the epitome of evil, the darkest a nation could become, is what the whole world is beginning to embrace. The one saving grace is that while the Thought Police were armed with deadly weapons, culture is only armed with shame and insults. Words can hurt your feelings, but if you wear the armor of God, they can’t hurt your soul. Be willing to stand for the truth despite what you will be told in return. Never be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Works Cited

Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. 1949. Penguin Classics, 2021.

Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. Ballantine Books, 1978.