

A Lesson Learned through *1984*
(*1984* Review by Meltzer)

Would a world like that of George Orwell's *1984* ever exist? Probably not. But even so, many people have read the classic and have learned from it.

The book *1984* is unlike many others - instead of a utopian world with an abundance of happiness and freedom, the world Orwell portrays is the opposite: a world with no freedom nor privacy; no independent thought nor creativity; and an all-powerful, all knowing government.

But if *1984*'s government is unreal, then why would people read it, never mind listen to or learn from it? As I wrote in my essay "Does Fiction Matter?", writing is a moral act: what you write has a real effect on others, often to a rather surprising extent. Even make-believe content has the power to affect - especially by educating - the readers.

In *1984*, "telescreens" invade the privacy that we enjoy today; their press is controlled by the government and eliminates their freedom of press; they cannot practice religion; and any sort of uprising or petition against the current rule would be suppressed. This is against many of the ideals we live by nowadays, declared in the first five amendments of the Constitution. Nobody from the modern day world would like to live in this manner. But to make it even worse, anybody in that world, especially thoughtful people, would live in fear of being turned into the Thought Police by anyone, including even their closest friends and relatives. Winston Smith faces this problem, and no one in this world would want to feel the same terror that he faces.

Therefore, because Orwell did not show us an ideal world with good people and a good government, he showed us what *not* to do: he showed us through this book how a powerful communist government would affect all its citizens in a negative way. And like I said in the essay "Does Fiction Matter?", *1984* also *protects* us - it protects us from the pain Winston had to go through. Because of this book, people would be thoroughly convinced against having a communist government, where individuality is suppressed.

But not only is Orwell's work educating us by scaring us, it also relates to us, and transports us to that world by describing it in vivid detail. *1984* is an elaborate book, and

therefore gives to us a very good sense of what George Orwell felt - and he felt what regular, intelligent people of today would feel like in their world.

You may not believe this, and you may not feel like you've learned anything from reading *1984*, but it really did affect you. Even if you think as you read *1984*, *Oh, that's fake*, or, *That'll never happen*, that's only because anybody who has already read it would have the sense to avoid a situation like Winston's. It's a great, thoughtful book, and it gives readers realistic reasons against the its type of society.