

Evaluation of George Orwell's 1984.

1984 is a remarkable futuristic novel by George Orwell about how life would be under an oligarchic regime. Northern stage, a local acting group, performed it. George Orwell wrote the stunning play in 1948. He based the play on how he thought life would be like in 1984 and how a strict association would rule it. He thought everyone would be the same, act the same and have to be dressed the same and they were to show no emotion towards each other. Northern stage went to Moscow to produce a film; parts of this film were played on the big screens to make the play more realistic and to give the viewer a better understanding of the play.

Winston is the hero of the group who does not fit the others and you can see the difference from the start. He tries to rebel against Big Brother. Big Brother is the 'thing' that is watching their every movement hence there is no privacy. Winston dreams of better places which is strictly not allowed. He meets a love called Julia and turns her against Big Brother too. They are found out when they try to beat Big Brother and they are tortured until they learn to love big brother and will follow its ways.

2 + 2 = 5 = I love big brother.

2 + 2 = 4 = I hate big brother.

This shows that they are not allowed to think their own thing.

The set of the play was very simple but extremely effective. There were two large white screens, which stayed on the set the whole time. This was very good as it meant that they did not have to hurry and change the set in between scenes. They changed positions for different scenes. They were plain white so your attention wasn't on them but they divided up the stage when needed. (See diagram 1) They also had to be white or a light colour to suit the neutral colouring of the characters clothes and so that the film could be projected on to them.

The characters wore simple clothing; brown overalls and the women wore a red sash around their waists. These clothes showed that they were no one important and the brown was a dismal colour to represent their monotonous lives and lack of identity. They made sharp simple movements to emphasise their strict regime. At some points in the play they remained still e.g. when the film was on in the background. This showed how they listened to the rules and lived by them.

The lighting was plain white lights, which they flashed when there was danger e.g. when Julia and Winston got caught. Again these simple lights showed the simple life style they were leading and how neutral everything was.

Big Brother was not shown as such. It was a notion felt by the characters. The big screens sometimes showed what Big Brother was watching. This was effective and was a good way of saying that 'Big Brother is watching you.'

We were left in doubt as to who was who. Everyone moved in a regimented way apart from Winston, the 'rebel'. He moved how he liked and spoke how he liked which showed that he didn't care about the rules. He used a different tone of voice than the others. The others all spoke in a way that showed they were no one. They sounded like robots, whereas Winston spoke with a carefree attitude to show that he didn't want to live by the rules set. At various points in the play he showed his emotion in the way he spoke. They were not allowed to have any emotions so again this showed how much he hated Big Brother.

The music and sound effects used set the scene in a way. There were sudden bangs when needed and whenever Big Brother came on it had the same music. They also played the same music when any people with authority came on the scene. E.g. O'Brien. This showed their status and that they will always be there. The torture scene was very effective. Mumbled cries and indistinct murmurs were heard while enlarged images of Winston being beaten appeared disturbing. Winston hated rats and so when he was being tortured at the end they played sounds of rats squeaking which added character to the end.