Reflection on the Concept of Freedom: Summative Essay

An anonymous person once stated, “What consumes your life, controls your mind.” In the novel 1984, Winston, a man whom is consumed with lies notices the realities and horrors that happens to the world he lives in. The author warns of the government mentally controlling the citizens creates a negative society because they no longer have freedom, no independent thought and are not aware of the reality happening before them.

The citizens have been stripped away of freedom thus forced to live according to the administration’s policies. In the city of Oceania, there is a motto that the people must follow which is, “War is Peace. Freedom is Slavery. Ignorance is Strength” (pg.11). It presents a society that has decided to have every action, word and thought be the opposite of what it truly is. To be free, is to be able to not be under complete control, to be able to speak and believe what you think. A society where having no access to being yourself and not doing what you want to do, “locks” a person up and makes them feel caged like an animal in the zoo would. The government’s control is powerful to the point that the main character believes, “Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows” (pg.145). Controlling even the smallest things such as numerical equations presents an idea that if smaller thoughts and logic are controlled, than all other things are controlled as well. Everything begins with the smaller events and leads into the larger issues.

Without freedom, citizens are controlled by a government, in which there is no room for having independent thought. According to the thoughts of the main character on the government’s authority, “In the end the Party would announce that two and two made five, and you would have to believe it. It was inevitable that they should make that claim sooner or later: the logic of their position demanded it. Not merely the validity of their experience, but the very existence of external reality was tacitly denied by their philosophy” (pg.144). Being taught something and not knowing the reason or logic behind it, presents how much mind control and unawareness of reality is truly happening. Force and punishment is the only way the government can implement an idea in someone’s mind. It does not matter if the thought of the statement is not logically correct in a sense, it is more about whether or not people are willing to believe in it. The loss of independence produces an open area for a gullible mindset.

Not being able to think for yourself, a person is no longer aware to the reality happening before them due to having to listen to what the administration has to say in what the citizens should believe in. The Party has set Oceania’s persona as a great and powerful city whereas the true characteristics of the city is, “The ideal set up by the Party was something huge, terrible, and glittering...reality was decaying, dingy cities where underfed people shuffled to and fro in leaky shoes, in patched-up nineteenth-century houses that smelt always of cabbage and bad lavatories” (pg.133). In order to be able to effortlessly controls the mindsets of its citizens, the government must deprive most necessities. Humans tend to depend on certain objects for daily routines, although taking away what is needed in order to survive can result in death or a broken mental state. This is what a government that would like its citizens to believe in what it believes, as well would want as a result of the authority’s actions; death or a broken state of mind. Having a broken mindset creates a free space for the government to be able to do whatever they want with it. If citizens did not have a broken state of mind, then the other option

is death because of their rebellious behavior of not following what should have been done.

To sum up, a group of citizens who have put their trust and faith in leaders that have been chosen to care for them and to not be able to fulfill that job, produces a broken society.