

## Comparative Essay Example

### George Orwell's 1984 and Yevgeny Zamyatin's We - Free Sample Comparative Essay

This example comparative essay looks at Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* and George Orwell's *1984* to see how each dystopian society violates basic human rights. Written for a college Science fiction course, it suggests how one society actively oppresses all human activity, while the other subtly undermines freedom. This sample compare and contrast paper uses descriptive body paragraphs to succinctly prove its point. It would be a good reference for students who need a basic example of a comparative style essay.

#### Government by the People, for the People has Perished from the Earth - An Examination of Oceania and One State

In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document that expressed that all people deserve life, liberty and the freedom of thought. It is the responsibility of the government to protect these rights since the individual entrusts themselves to the ruling body. But in Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* and George Orwell's *1984*, the governments of One State and Oceania deny their citizens these basic rights, resulting in totalitarian societies. Since governments are often ranked upon how they uphold basic human rights, it is possible to determine which of these institutions has betrayed their citizens' natural rights more, based upon the UN Document.

Both governments consider their citizens expendable - public executions and secret abductions rob people of their right to life. In the government of One State, those who displease the Benefactor are sentenced to death by vaporization. After being placed into the Machine of the Benefactor, the doomed starts "melting, dissolving with horrifying quickness" (Zamyatin, 44) until they are nothing more than a "puddle of chemically pure water" (44). These public executions are designed to prevent similar acts of dissention among the ciphers. Ciphers understand that their lives are the property of One State's, meaning they exist just by the government's will. This is the case with the Party as well. In *1984*, the Party uses a force known as the Thought Police, which much like the Gestapo or KGB, can break into a person's home and abduct them. The Party then uses its Ministry of Truth to erase all records, ensuring that those who go against the will of Big Brother become "unpersons." The victim's right to life is denied, erased, simply because they exhibited strange behavior, or deviated from the norm in any way. Even a person who wore a "funny kind of shoes" (Orwell, 59) is turned into the Thought Police. When a person's right to life is denied, they cannot live freely - which is exactly what the governments of One State and Oceania want.

While heavily restricted in both societies, One State is more oppressive of an individual's right to liberty. Since ciphers are subjected to the Table of Hours, nearly all parts of the day are regulated by the State, with the exception of the two personal hours. Since they are told where to go and what to do at all times, any unauthorized activity results in death. Even when aboard the Integral, away from One State's influence, ciphers still follow the Table, going to lunch at exactly 1200 hours instead of taking the time to gaze down at Earth. D-503 and the rest of the ciphers are led to believe that the restriction of liberty is necessary to protect the State. As he explains, "freedom and crime are so indissolubly connected," that "when the freedom of a person = 0, he doesn't commit crime" (Zamyatin, 33). In comparison, the Party does not have a Table of Hours, though it does emphasize that a person with their "ownlife" a Newspeak word for "individualism and eccentricity" (Orwell, 84), is dangerous. But Winston is able to disregard the warnings of the Party and is able to find time to sneak off with Julia multiple times. While "in principle, a Party member had no spare time" (Orwell, 84), the fact that

Winston is able to do so means that he can have a shred of autonomy, something not present in One State.

But just because Party members are allowed a modicum of freedom doesn't mean that Oceania is a paradise. In fact, the Orwellian institution is far worse than One State when it comes to an individual's freedom of thought. In One State, ciphers can have conflicting emotions, as D-503 frequently exhibits in his writings - but these are treated more as a sickness in One State than a cause for death. But in Oceania, there are multiple ways that people are denied the freedom of thought. Newspeak, the language of Oceania, is designed to "narrow the range of thought" (Orwell, 53), by limiting the number of words the populace knows. Without being able to put their thoughts into words, it is impossible for one to speak ill of the Party. Also, children are taught from an early age to spy on other people, ensuring the entire population is suspicious of each other. But for those who dare think of such an action, the Party employs another, more sinister force - the Thought Police. Because of these enforcers, people live in terror all their lives, making sure not to commit any kind of thoughtcrime or "facecrime," where a person can be accused of dissent just by having the wrong expression. With telescreens watching every room, Party members must act in accordance to the laws of Big Brother at all times, or risk becoming an "unperson." When one does defy the Party, they are taken to the Ministry of Love, which deliberately uses torture tactics to break one's will and turn them into a submissive member of the party.

Ultimately, Oceania destroys its citizen's rights far more than One State. While the ciphers are restricted by the Table of Hours and encouraged to have their imagination removed, they are living in an illusion of paradise - a glass city run like a machine. But in Oceania, the Party ensures that its citizens constantly live in fear and despair. It even invents "enemies" like Emmanuel Goldstein and the Brotherhood just to draw out dissenters. Oceania is an atrocious society, but its citizens are forced to venerate the very institution that oppresses them.

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