



Photo by Markus Spiske <https://www.pexels.com/photo/poster-of-1984-is-now-paste-on-street-post-3671145/>

1984 IN 2024

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ABSTRACT

The predictions in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four are unfolding in the realms of Feminism—evident in Political Correctness and the Woke. Like Big Brother in the novel, a feminist Big Sister now defines the terms. Perhaps Orwell is suggesting that when it comes to a certain style of controlling and suppressing both truth and sexuality, the feminine may be specially implicated.

Keywords: feminism, gynocentrism, male, misandry, nineteen eighty-four



INTRODUCTION

I've just finished reading the 75th anniversary edition of George Orwell's classic novel 1984—featuring a new afterword by Sandra Newman and a new introduction by Dolen Perkins-Valdez¹. As is the case with dystopian futures in general, Orwell's dystopian future forbids erotic sexual polarity, enforcing a sexless androgyny (not altogether dissimilar to the “genderless society” we're becoming?). It's ironic then that neither Dolen's name nor her biographical blurb reveals her sex. By the time I've finished reading her intro I'm wondering how much of 1984 there is right here in 2024.

Writes Perkins-Valdez, “I am a Black, female reader, and these identifiers are primary points of entry into any text for me.” I'm a White male and these identifiers are important for me as well; but “*primary* points of entry into any text”? “I have learned to do what many readers on the margins have learned to do: *read around the margins*.” Well, okay, I get it. *And*, your task is to introduce a classic piece of literature, yet this task takes second place to your identity politics? I'm already dubious of a 2024 interpretation of 1984.

Dolen enjoys the book until she gets to Orwell's description of his main character, Winston Smith: “He disliked nearly all women, and especially the young and pretty ones.” Whoa, wait a minute, Orwell,” writes Perkins-Valdez, “Winston's views on women are, at first, despicable to the contemporary reader. He is the kind of character who can make me put a book down.” And maybe seek to cancel it?

Many see 1984's prescience in the current surveillance technology (“Big Brother Is Watching”). In addition, I see 1984's predictions unfolding in the realms of Feminism—including Political Correctness and Woke. In 1984 we have “The Thought Police.” In 2024 we have Political Correctness. In 1984 there are mind-control slogans: WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH. In 2024 we have: GENDER IS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT, #BELIEVEWOMEN, THE FUTURE IS FEMALE. In 1984 books are burned and/or “modified” so as never to contradict Big Brother. In 2024 books are “cancelled” and/or modified to appease Big Sister. In 1984 history is “modified” to be consistent with dogma; in 2024 we have “The brave men *and women* who fought and died in Vietnam.” In 1984, the inquisitor holds up four fingers and demands that you see five. In 2024 men suffer comparison with women in virtually every measure of wellbeing, yet Big Sister demands that we see only MalePower and FemaleVictimization *everywhere* we look. It seems to me that in place of Big Brother, in 2024 we have Big Sister.

¹ Orwell, G. (with Perkins-Valdez, D. and Newman, S.). (2024) *1984* (75th anniversary ed.) Signet. (Original work published 1949)



Like Big Brother, Big Sister defines the terms. Both Dolen Perkins-Valdez and Sandra Newman proclaim Winston Smith guilty of MISOGYNY! The term is feminist defined as a stand-alone (few have ever even heard of the word misandry) hostility toward a faction of humanity so flawless that negative judgments of them could only be the product of a kind of mental illness called MISOGYNY. Hmm. Let's take a quick look at Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize winning *The Color Purple*, a book written by a Black woman in which all prominent characters are Black and all noble characters are Black females.

Commenting on the film version, professors Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Young² summarize their issue with *The Color Purple*: "In a nutshell, it was that every male character, without exception, is either a hopelessly stupid buffoon, a fiendishly evil tyrant, or both. And every female character, without exception, is a purely innocent victim, a quietly enduring hero, or both" (p. 13). I very much doubt its extreme misandry would cause Dolen to "put the book down." If I put down every book with a female character who "disliked nearly all *men*," my reading choices would be cut in half.

She's prepared to forgive Winston, concluding that, "Orwell is suggesting misogyny is likely in a totalitarian society." Or, perhaps Orwell is frankly suggesting that when it comes to a certain style of controlling and suppressing both truth and sexuality, the feminine may be specially implicated? Feminism may judge it a mental illness, but I believe it's possible to hold a fair judgment of women even if that judgment isn't flattering. After all, we don't cry misandry every time men are held accountable for their male traits and tendencies. The specific target of Winston's ire is a young woman we will come to know as Julia. She wears a scarlet sash, "emblem of the Junior Anti-Sex League." "It was always the women," says Winston, "and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted adherents of the Party, the swallowers of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers-out of unorthodoxy" (p. 10).

He may have a point. Political Correctness, Safe Spaces, Trigger Warnings, people disgraced and fired for speaking truths Big Sister doesn't want to hear. Just look at what female ideological dominance has done to intellectual freedom on campuses all over the feminist world. I was teaching high school when the false "Gender is purely a social construct" was first taught—as *fact*, not feminist *theory*. In the realms of gender conflict and complaint, gender activism and advocacy, gender ideology, gender defining, gender issues, gender studies, gender politics, gender **anything**, there is feminism on the one hand and on the other hand there is . . . nothing. In 1984, "At all times the Party is in possession of absolute truth" (p. 213). In 2024, at all times, the feminist ideological dictatorship dictates what is "true" and what is "not true" in *all* matters gender related



² Nathanson, P. and K. K. Young (2001). *Spreading misandry. The teaching of contempt for men in popular culture*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

To his horror, Winston becomes aware that Julia is following him, especially wherever his activities are “suspicious.” Upon leaving an antique shop (where he oughtn't to be), “She looked him straight in the face . . . For a few seconds Winston was too paralyzed to move” (p.100). Julia is acting exactly as a member of the Thought Police would act. As the last chapters of the book makes plain, the consequences of being in the hands of the Thought Police are horrific almost beyond imagining (“the groveling on the floor and screaming for mercy, the crack of broken bones, the smashed teeth and bloody clots of hair”) (p. 103). That she was spying on him was clear. So, Winston was *terrified*. “The worst thing was the pain in his belly. For a couple of minutes, he had the feeling that he would die” (p. 101). In his terror and desperation, it occurred to him, “He could keep on her track till they were in some quiet place, and then smash her skull in with a cobblestone” (p. 100). In the moment, it seemed his only hope; but of course, he doesn't do it.

Later, a cast on one arm, Julia falls and hurts herself. Despite his intense fear of her, he's compelled to come to her aid. She offers her free hand; he helps her up; she slips a piece of paper into his palm. The message reads: “I love you.” Julia had indeed been noting his every defiant act, but only to determine if Winston might be de-indoctrinated enough to be trustworthy. So, what does the “MISOGYNIST” Winston Smith do? Being such a “woman-hater” does he throw the paper away with a derisive laugh? Hardly . . . from the moment he reads her note, Julia becomes his primary reason for living. “At the sight of the words ‘I love you’ the desire to stay alive had welled up in him.” Despite the baleful consequences should they be caught, “the thought of refusing her advances never crossed his mind” (p. 109).

Finally, they are alone together. “He did not feel any temptation to tell lies to her. It was even a sort of love offering to start off by telling the worst” (p. 120). Sandra Newman comments: “Winston confesses to Julia that he once thought of raping and murdering her, thinking she was a member of the Thought Police. Julia is not at all alarmed or offended by this news” (p. 317). For Newman, Winston's confession confirms his misogyny and Julia's cavalier reaction confirms her female subjugation within a misogynist world. Early on in the book, “The girl with dark hair [Julia] was coming toward him across the field. With what seemed a single movement she tore off her clothes and flung them disdainfully aside” (p. 31). Well, sorry Sandra, but if a beautiful young woman suddenly drops her clothes and stands naked in front of a man, that man is apt to have impure thoughts (especially if he assumes that this member of the “Anti-Sex League” is only teasing him). In 1984, even a “thoughtcrime” is punishable by death. At its darkest, feminism can seem nearly as ruthless. Of course I get why Newman takes offense. But it should be noted how strange Winston's confession is. There she stands stark naked, “Her body was white and smooth, but it aroused no desire in him; indeed, he barely looked at it.” Is Winston SO determined to confess his sins that he confesses to thoughts he never had? Given that Julia has had her eyes on Winston from the beginning, I think it safe to assume that her striptease was intended to provoke him. So, Julia reacts to Winston's confession with a laugh. Unlike the feminist, Julia can empathize. If Julia believed some unknown man was gathering incriminating evidence, would her mere *thought* of killing him to save herself be misconstrued as MISANDRY?



We read that “Violence against women was often treated lightly in the literature of Orwell’s time, and Orwell was certainly not immune to misogyny himself” (p. 317). Feminists keep the word MISOGYNY in a holster at the hip. Violence against *women* treated lightly? — compared to what? Let’s take a quick trip to the movies in 1948. Westerns, war, noir, gangster movies, we see men shot, stabbed, drown, lynched, beaten, killed by the dozen, but we’re unlikely to see any violence upon a woman. The Truth is, violence against women has always been met with *outrage*, whether in reality or in literature. The Truth is, we never witness Julia harmed in any way, we only witness Winston being tortured (ad nauseam). Remember the feminist thumb screws pressuring tennis great John McEnroe to “admit” that Serena Williams was the best tennis player in the world? Did you know that Political Correctness demands that we replace “pregnant women” with “pregnant *people*”? Archetypally, Love is feminine and Truth is masculine. You know that “war on truth” we’ve been hearing about? It’s the feminine archetype that’s waging it.

Despite the risks, Winston rents a room above the antique store and, finally, Winston and Julia have real privacy. Julia tries on the cosmetics she managed to scrounge. “The improvement in her appearance was startling. With just a few dabs of color in the right places, she had become not only very much prettier, but, above all, far more feminine” (p. 142). Along with perfume, “I’ll wear silk stockings and high-heeled shoes!” says Julia. “In this room I’m going to be a woman, not a Party comrade.” In 1984 gender polarity is disallowed. In 2024 defending the “Binary” (humanity divided into male and female) is a “hate crime” (ask J. K. Rowling).

Says Dolen Perkins-Valdez, “By reconnecting him to his suppressed emotions, Julia teaches him there is a part of himself that the party cannot reach” (p. ix). “In some ways she was far more acute than Winston, and far less susceptible to Party propaganda,” (p. 153) writes Orwell. Moreover, Orwell grants Julia the experience and expertise in these clandestine matters and Winston places himself in her capable hands. Sandra Newman judges Orwell’s characters as mere representations “With the (debatable) exception of Julia, none are portrayed as three-dimensional human beings with an inner life” (p. 316). Both Perkins-Valdez and Newman slap the MISOGYNIST label on him, but Orwell is actually quite generous toward his female lead. Is Alice Walker as generous toward her opposite-sex characters?

After months of unspeakable torture, Winston is broken in every way imaginable. He even sees five fingers when his torturer holds up four. Nothing remains, no will, no free thought, no cling to objective reality. Yet through it all *one* thing perseveres. Isolated in a room, but *always* under surveillance, “Suddenly he started up with a shock of horror. The sweat broke out on his backbone. He had heard himself cry aloud: ‘Julia! Julia! Julia my love! Julia!’” (p. 280). Yes, “woman hating” Winston’s last bit of humanity remains his love for Julia—a love that months of beatings, torture, sleep deprivation, starvation, knocking all his teeth out, and endless psychological cruelty cannot drive out of him. Both Winston and his torturer acknowledge it and both know that even this one bit of defiance Big Brother will *not* allow. For this reason, Winston is taken to “Room 101.”

In Room 101 prisoners are broken by whatever it is they fear most. “There are occasions when a human being will stand out against pain,” says Winston’s torturer. “But for everyone



there is something unendurable—something that cannot be contemplated.” Owing to childhood trauma, for Winston, that something is rats. And it’s a cage of rats that is strapped to Winston’s face. “When I press the lever, the door of the cage will slide up. These starving brutes will shoot out of it like bullets. They will leap onto your face and bore straight into it. Sometimes they attack the eyes first. Sometimes they burrow through the cheeks and devour the tongue.” Well, that’s it for Winston. Finally, knowing what he must do to escape this hideous fate, Winston betrays his love for Julia and thus the last holdout of his humanity is destroyed.

Newman comments, “the climactic screams of ‘Do it to Julia! Not me!’ is not only heartbreaking but savagely comic. All it took was two rats in a cage and a moustache-twirling speech to make Winston Smith, last man in Europe, beg that his one true love be put to torture in his place” (p. 318). Feminists, so quick to see MISOGYNY, are blind to their own misandry. Here Newman displays a woman’s feminist-indoctrinated zero-empathy toward men. Really, is that all it took, two rats in a cage? If the feminist cannot empathize with a tortured man just one lever-pull away from having his face eaten by starving rats, the feminist cannot empathize with any man for ANY reason. Perhaps she missed the part where Winston, a bruised, scarred skeleton of a man with four teeth left in his mouth is forced to look at himself in a full-length mirror.

In the end, Julia confesses she was likewise forced to betray her love. Yet Newman laughs and scoffs at the “farce” of a man’s love, even while admitting in the previous paragraph that, “while Winston’s feelings for Julia develop with psychological realism, Julia’s feelings for Winston feel increasingly implausible” (p. 318). Notes Newman, “when Winston first attempts to have sex with Julia, he fails to get an erection, and needs to be reassured and praised by her at length before he can perform; also that it never crosses his mind that she might find this tedious” (p. 318). Yeah, misogynist male who FAILS to get an erection, doesn’t it cross your mind that your need for sensitivity and reassurance is a tedious *burden* to place on a woman? While the feminist obligates the Real Man’s love to be infinite and indomitable regardless of torture, the least feminine obligation is decried as MISOGYNY.

It is ironic that two representatives of the current ideological dictatorship are chosen to critique Orwell’s cautionary tale warning us of the perils of an ideological dictatorship. Though these two feminine-ists go out of their way to condemn *1984*, its main character, and its author for MISOGYNY, it’s painfully clear to me that whatever misogyny the book’s guilty of; it’s dwarfed by its Woke critics’ boundless MISANDRY.

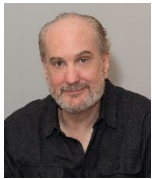
One last point, though men are the targets, they are not the only victims. It’s also sad for the Kool-Aid guzzling feminist. Her indoctrinated self-righteousness, victim mentality, hostile judgment, vengeance seeking, zero-empathy bitterness all leave her spiritually bankrupt. And that’s no way to live.



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