1984 Study Guide

1984 by George Orwell

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Contents

Introduction

Published in 1948 and set thirty-six years in the future, *1984* is George Orwell's dark vision of the future. Written while Orwell was dying and based on the work of the Russian author Yevgeny Zamyatin, it is a chilling depiction of how the power of the state could come to dominate the lives of individuals through cultural conditioning. Perhaps the most powerful science fiction novel of the twentieth century, this apocalyptic satire shows with grim conviction how Winston Smith's individual personality is wiped out and how he is recreated in the Party's image until he does not just obey but even loves Big Brother. Some critics have related Winston Smith's sufferings to those Orwell underwent at preparatory school, experiences he wrote about just before *1984.* Orwell maintained that the book was written with the explicit intention to alter other people's idea of the kind of society they should strive after.

Author Biography

George Orwell was born Eric Arthur Blair in Bengal, India, in 1903, into a middle-class family. The son of a British civil servant, Orwell was brought to England as a toddler. The boy became aware of class distinctions while attending St. Cyprian's preparatory school in Sussex, where he received a fine education but felt out of place. He was teased and looked down upon because he was not from a wealthy family. This experience made him sensitive to the cruelty of social snobbery. As a partial-scholarship student whose parents could not afford to pay his entire tuition, Orwell was also regularly reminded of his lowly economic status by school administrators. Conditions improved at Eton, where he studied next, but instead of continuing with university classes, in 1922 he joined the Indian Imperial Police. Stationed in Burma, his class-consciousness intensified as he served as one of the hated policemen enforcing British control of the native population. Sickened by his role as imperialist, he returned to England in 1927 and resigned his position. He planned to become a writer, a profession in which he had not before shown much interest.

In 1928, perhaps to erase guilt from his colonial experiences, he chose to live amongst the poor of London, and later, Paris. In Paris, he published articles in local newspapers, but his fiction was rejected. His own life finally provided the material for his first book, published in 1933. *Down and Out in Paris and London,* which combined fictional narrative based on his time spent in those two cities with social criticism, was his first work published as George Orwell. The pseudonym was used so his parents would not be shocked by the brutal living conditions described in the book. The next year, Orwell published *Burmese Days,* a novel based on his stay in Burma. Subsequent novels contain autobiographical references and served as vehicles for Orwell to explore his growing political convictions. In 1936, Orwell traveled to Barcelona, Spain, to write about the Spanish Civil War and ended up joining the battle, fighting against Spanish leader Francisco Franco on the side of the Republicans. Wounded, he returned to England. Two nonfiction books, *The Road to Wigan Pier,* a report on deplorable conditions in the mining communities of northern England, and *Homage to Catalonia,* the story of his participation in the Spanish Civil War, allowed Orwell to explicitly defend his political ideas. Dozens of pointed essays also revealed his political viewpoint.

By that time, Orwell clearly saw himself as a political performer whose tool was writing. He wrote in a 1946 essay, "Why I Write," that "every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, *against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic socialism, as I understand it."

Orwell's next book, *Animal Farm,* a fable about the events during and following the Russian Revolution, was well liked by critics and the public. He had had trouble finding a publisher during World War II because the work was a disguised criticism of Russia, England's ally at the time. When it was finally published, just after the war, however, it was a smashing success.

The money Orwell made from *Animal Farm* allowed him, in 1947, to rent a house on Jura, an island off the coast of Scotland, where he began to work on *1984.* His work was interrupted by treatment for tuberculosis, which he had contracted in the 1930s, and upon his release from the hospital in 1948 Orwell returned to Jura to complete the book. Under doctor's orders to work no more than one hour a day, but unable to find a typist to travel to his home, he typed the manuscript himself and collapsed upon completion of the book. For the next two years he was bedridden. Many critics claim that Orwell's failing health may have influenced the tone and outcome of the novel, and Orwell admitted that they were probably right. Orwell did plan to write other books, according to his friends, and married while in the hospital, but three months later in 1950 he finally died of tuberculosis.

Plot Summary

Part One

In George Orwell's *1984* Winston Smith, a member of the Outer Party from Oceania (a fictional state representing both England and America), lives in all visible ways as a good party member, in complete conformance with the wishes of Big Brother - the leader of the Inner Party (Ingsa). He keeps his loathing for the workings of the Party - for the vile food and drink, the terrible housing, the conversion of children into spies, the orchestrated histrionics of the Two Minutes' Hate - deep inside, hidden, for he knows that such feelings are an offense punishable by death, or worse. But, as the year 1984 begins, he has decided, against his better judgment, to keep a diary in which his true feelings are laid bare. He sits back in an alcove in his dingy apartment, just out of view of the telescreen (two-way television screens that are in all buildings and homes, which broadcast propaganda and transmit back the activities of anyone passing in front of the screen) and writes of his hatred for Big Brother.

Winston works at the Ministry of Truth (Minitrue, in Newspeak), the branch of the government responsible for the production and dissemination of all information. Winston's job is to alter or "rectify" all past news articles which have since been "proven" to be false. Only once has he ever held in his hands absolute proof that the Ministry was lying. It concerned three revolutionaries, Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford, who were executed for planning a revolt against the state. Winston found evidence that their confessions were falsified and out of fear he destroyed that evidence.

One day during a Two Minutes' Hate session, Winston catches the eye of O'Brien, a member of the Inner Party who seems to carry the same disillusionment about the Party that Winston harbors. Winston realizes that all the stories told by the Party about Emmanuel Goldstein - the head of an underground conspiracy to overthrow the Party - and the traitorous Brotherhood are at least partly true. Perhaps there is another way, and he begins to see hope in the proletariat. They are the 85% of the population of Oceania that exists outside the Party, kept in a perpetual state of slovenly poverty but mostly unregulated, unobserved.

Winston's wanderings among the proles, desperately searching for that little bit of hope, take him one evening to the junk shop where he purchased his diary. The proprietor, Mr. Charrington, shows him a back room outfitted with a bed, where he and his wife used to live before the Revolution. And there is no telescreen - the proles aren't required to have them.

As he leaves the shop, Winston notices that he is being watched. A dark-haired woman from the fiction department at Minitrue was spying on him. Fearing the worst, Winston contemplates killing her, but instead he quickly heads home.

Part Two

Winston sees the dark-haired girl at the Ministry of Truth. She stumbles, and as he helps her up, she passes a slip of paper into his hand. Winston reads it in secret and discovers that it is a note saying that she loves him. Lonely and intrigued by her, he manages to eat lunch one day with her. They make plans for another such accidental meeting that evening. In the midst of a crowd, she gives him a complex set of directions to a place where they will meet on Sunday afternoon.

Winston and the girl - Julia - meet in the woods, far out in the country, away from the telescreens. There they are actually able to talk and make love. Julia reveals that she is not what she appears; she despises the Party, but pretends to be a good party member.

The couple meets at irregular intervals, and never in the same place, until Winston suggests the idea of renting Mr. Charrington's room. The two meet, sharing the delicacies that Julia gets on the black market (delicacies like sugar, milk, and real coffee) and relishing their moments of freedom. Their bliss is interrupted only once by the presence of a rat. Julia chases it off and prevents it from coming back.

O'Brien, under the guise of having a copy of the newest Newspeak dictionary, approaches Winston at the ministry and invites him to his apartment. Winston believes he has a friend and agrees to go with Julia. When Winston and Julia finally do appear, O'Brien assures them that Goldstein and the conspiracy to overthrow the Party do indeed exist, that he is part of that conspiracy, and he wants them to work for it. O'Brien sends Winston a copy of Goldstein's forbidden book on the secret history of Oceania which Winston and Julia read in the privacy of Mr. Charrington's room.

Shortly after waking up from a long nap, Winston and Julia hear a voice from a hidden telescreen which suddenly commands them to stand in the middle of the room. Mr. Charrington enters with a crew of stormtroopers who beat Winston and Julia, then hurry them separately away.

Part Three

Winston is tortured in jail - known as the Ministry of Love - for an interminable length of time. O'Brien is in charge of the torture. Winston confesses to various crimes, including his years of conspiracy with the ruler of Eastasia - one of the three superpowers that are often at war with Oceania. O'Brien explains to Winston that, among other things, Goldstein's book was in fact a Party creation. It becomes clear, however, that the purpose of Miniluv is not to produce forced confessions and then kill its victims, but to "cure" the confessors, to enable them to see the truth of their confessions and the correctness of the Party's doublethink, in which "War is Peace," "Freedom is Slavery," and "Ignorance is Strength." The Party is not content with negative obedience, but must have the complete and true belief of all members. No one is executed before coming to love Big Brother.

Winston is at length able to persuade himself that the Party is right about everything - that two and two, in fact, make five - but he has not betrayed Julia, whom he still loves. At last the time comes for that step, and O'Brien sends Winston to Room 101, where each individual's darkest fear is catalogued. In Winston's case it is rats. When they threaten him with rats, he betrays Julia. One last hurdle remains: Winston must come to love Big Brother, for the Party wanted no martyrs, no opposition at all. Winston is released a shell of a man, his hair and teeth gone, his body destroyed. He is given a small job on a committee that requires no real work. He spends most of his time in a bar, drinking oily victory gin. He sees and even speaks to Julia one day, who admits matter- of-factly that she betrayed him just as he betrayed her. They have nothing more to say to one another.

At last, it is announced over the telescreen in the bar that Oceania has won an important victory in the war. Suddenly Winston feels himself purged, no longer running with the crowd in the street but instead walking to his execution in the Ministry of Love. He can be shot now, for he at last believes. He loves Big Brother.

Part 1, Chapter 1

Part 1, Chapter 1 Summary

We are introduced to Winston Smith and the world in which he lives. He is a very aged thirty-nine year old man, with a small, thin stature. He works in one of the four Ministries that serve as the entire government of Oceania. The Ministry names and functions are as follows: The Ministry of Truth, which regulates all forms of media, entertainment, and arts; the Ministry of Peace, which presides over all aspects of war; the Ministry of Love, which is a form of judicial system; and the Ministry of Plenty, which governs economic affairs.

The description of life in his world is bleak at best. He lives in a filthy building that smells of boiled cabbage. The elevator is always broken and his flat (apartment) is on the seventh floor. He has a terrible time getting up and down the stairs on account of a constantly oozing and aching varicose ulcer just above his right ankle. When he finally gets home, he is greeted by the same type of environment that he just left at work: constant surveillance by Big Brother, the government. This constant watch is kept on him by a telescreen, which covers the wall and is constantly monitoring not only his every action and word, but also his facial expressions. The slightest notion through gesture or appearance against the Party means death or worse. He must, in every aspect of his being, be a member of the Party, the group that supports Big Brother. The Thought Police are always there to enforce that loyalty.

Every description paints a picture of a cold, dark, empty, colorless existence. The Party Slogans, "WAR IS PEACE FREEDOM IS SLAVERY IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH," are plastered everywhere the eye can see. Along with them, a portrait of Big Brother glaring with the caption, "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU."

The overwhelming and growing discontent that Winston feels is immediately evident. Although it is a risk to his life, he has somehow procured a pen, ink and a journal. There is a small alcove in his flat that just barely escapes the watch of the telescreen. He uses this as his sacred space to be himself and write. All of these actions are punishable by death. Even having a thought against the Party, which is called Thoughtcrime, is labeled as an offense. When he begins to write he realizes that he is not exactly sure of the date, his exact age, or of his own history or that of the world. He thinks that it is April 4, 1984. He cannot really be sure of anything, however, because it is the intention and priority of the Party to systematically erase the past and replace it with whatever they want to create. In the 1950's, a process began to dissolve the past through destruction of all newspapers, books, etc. and subsequently rewrite all of history to suit the Party. Another part of this process includes the creation of a new language called Newspeak and complete dissolution of the current form of language known as Oldspeak. This process was to be complete by 2050. The new language will be exponentially shorter than the old language and void of emotion or imagery. For instance, all synonyms of good and bad, as well as the word bad will cease to exist. In their place will be the

words good and ungood. In order to say very good, one would say doubleplusgood, and to say very bad, doubleplusungood would be used. The new vocabulary is being constructed strictly for political purposes. Words such as honor, morality, democracy and science are cut out of the language completely. The word free has been retained but only in the following type of context: "The floor is free from litter."

The telescreen serves more than just the purpose of monitoring the people; it is also the medium by which political propaganda is programmed into them. Throughout the day flashes of Emmanuel Goldstein, the Enemy of the People, appear on the screen in the form of the Two Minutes Hate. This is a Newspeak term describing a two-minute period during which footage and narration are especially geared towards accessing the depths of fear and anger in the people and turning it loose in support of Big Brother. There is yelling, name-calling, and throwing of objects at Goldstein's' face on the screen, followed by group chanting "B-B" (standing for Big Brother) repeatedly. One has to be careful not to be too calm or uninterested during the demonstrations, as this would serve as a definite clue to the Thought Police who may not be in full support of the Party.

In this section, we were also introduced to O'Brien. When he started writing his journal, he felt like O'Brien might be the only one that could ever help him in the movement to bring down Big Brother. He is sure that O'Brien gave him a certain flash of the eyes that made him know they were both in the same place against the party. We learn that in general Winston dislikes women. He believes that they are the most likely to believe everything the Party says without question. The girl with dark hair is especially frightening to him. She is a member of the Junior Anti-Sex League and has a piercing glance that makes him sure; she is one of the Thought Police.

Part 1, Chapter 1 Analysis

His name is Winston Smith. His first name is ironic because he is anything because he is anything but a winner. It is also symbolic and flows with the theme of winning/Victory that the Party creates. Smith is one of the most common surnames. In this case, Winston represents the common person. The use of paradoxes is glaringly obvious, for example: The party slogans, "WAR IS PEACE FREEDOM IS SLAVERY IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH." Also, take each Ministry name and function into consideration. The Ministry of Peace governs war. The Ministry of Truth heads entertainment, news, education, etc, which are most known in society for being biased and unreliable. The Ministry of Love is responsible for law and order, judgment against another. Love is the opposite of judgment. The Ministry of Plenty directs economic affairs, which is an obvious irony in this situation since under the political circumstances in the book scarcity abounds.

The Party provides Victory cigarettes to its people, the wrappers of which barely keep the tobacco in. Throughout the book, we also read about Victory gin, Victory coffee, Victory Mansions (which are the buildings they live in that are falling apart) etc. The

word Victory is symbolic of the image that Party presents to the people of the state of their lives. This is also ironic because that image is obviously not reality.

Winston states on page nine that nothing is illegal because there were no longer any laws. This is ironic because the people were being judged and punished constantly, but by having no laws, the Party created the image of freedom.

Winston's' character starts to develop very quickly. We see in the first couple of pages that he is just playing the Party game but not believing it and by the end of the first chapter, we know the depths of his hatred against the Party.

Part 1, Chapter 2

Part 1, Chapter 2 Summary

In the midst of scrawling "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" in his journal, Winston is interrupted by a knock at the door. His insides jolt as he is expecting the Thought Police to be waiting to take him in. He is relieved to find that it is his neighbor Mrs. Parsons requesting some help with a clogged drain. In addition to the familiar smell of boiled cabbage shared by the building, Winston finds that the Parsons' flat stinks of sweat. We find out that this smell is the calling card of Mr. Parsons (Tom). He is not there, which is why Winston is being called upon to help with the clog. While freeing the drain he is attacked by the Parsons' children who were wearing the characteristic gray shorts, blue shorts, and red neckerchiefs that made up the official garb of the Spies. Organizations such as the Spies contributed to the unruly nature of most of the children in the Party. The children clamored on calling Winston a traitor and insisting to be taken to see the public hangings. Winston departed having suffered a painful catapult to the neck by the older boy. When he returned to his flat, he continued writing and his thoughts floated again to O'Brien. He remembered a dream in which a voice said to him, "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness." He had figured out that it was O'Brien's but could not place when he had made the connection. He thought again about the eye contact they shared this very morning. He wasn't sure at that moment whether O'Brien was with him or against him but he knew they had connected in some way. He continued writing, and realized that at that moment he was already dead. He wrote, "Thoughtcrime does not entail death: thoughtcrime is death." Once he recognized himself as dead he made it his intention to stay alive as long as he could, and maybe make a difference for the future world.

Part 1, Chapter 2 Analysis

We are greeted with more irony at the start of this chapter. As Winston leaves his journal open to the words, "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER," he is attacked and called a traitor by the Parsons' children as he is unclogging their pipe. The scene is foreshadowing of the future he knows is in store for him.

Orwell describes Mrs. Parsons' as "a colorless, crushed-looking woman," and then describes her as having a "grayish face." Words such as gray, colorless, etc. are used throughout the book to paint a portrait of the typical person living under totalitarian government. What Orwell is trying to convey is that the people under that type of government aren't really living at all. The descriptions of the environment and situations endured by the people under the oppressing government in the book are more indicative of death than life. In this chapter and throughout the book Winston acknowledges himself as already dead.

Part 1, Chapter 3

Part 1, Chapter 3 Summary

Winston is dreaming. The dream started with images of his mother and baby sister then led to the girl with dark hair. He always thought of his family with remorse because he believed that they had been taken in order for him to be spared. He was awakened by the shrill alarm clock provided by the telescreen. He jumped out of bed naked because it was necessary for him to use his meager clothing allowance for work clothes and didn't have enough left for pajamas. Almost every morning the workout forced by the telescreen called the Physical Jerks is preceded by a coughing fit that only calms through a series of body contortions and spitting up of lung fluid.

The instructor coaches loudly and watches carefully through the wall to make sure everyone is pushing hard enough. This morning Winston wasn't exercising to her standards and she let him know it. She then proceeded to coax him into touching his toes with knees unbent. He succeeded at this for the first time in several years.

During the workout, he reflected on his childhood. He remembered a time when there had been peace in the country, even though the telescreen insists that Oceania has always been at war with Eurasia. He distinctly recalled an alliance with Eurasia at some point. However, his memories are useless because according to the Party slogan, "Who controls the past, controls the future- who controls the future controls the past." The Party clearly controlled the past by systematic destruction of all materials that would contradict any point they are currently pushing and re-creation of documentation to support their current claims.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Analysis

Color symbolism comes up again here. The only time Orwell uses a color (other than black, gray, or white) is to describe something during those moments that he feels alive. For example, the happy place in his dreams is called the Golden Country.

The idea of consciousness is another strand that pulls this work together. Orwell is creating an image of a population made unconscious by their ignorance, which put them under government control, which is perpetuated by the governmental control over them. He's showing us that once the world gets to the condition illustrated in the book, there won't be any way to get out of it. It's a catch-22. The people are required to be hypnotized and simultaneously forget that they are being hypnotized.

Part 1, Chapter 4

Part 1, Chapter 4 Summary

Winston trudged through his usual workday at the Ministry of Truth. He starts out by receiving slips of paper through message tubes, which list items in the newspaper, the *Times*, which are to be corrected. He then locates the issues on the telescreen and makes the necessary changes. Once the corrections are made, he has actually rewritten the past. He sends the pieces of paper into what's called the memory hole. The paper then meets its fate in flames and is destroyed forever.

The purpose of his work is always to make sure that any prediction the Party makes is right. He takes great pride in his plagiarism. He marvels at the fact that his acts of forgery were changing things that never really existed anyway. Most of what was in the newspaper were numbers and facts that had no basis in reality. Therefore, his job was to forge forgeries. For instance, if the Ministry of Plenty projected a quarterly output of one hundred forty five million boots and when the numbers come out they read sixty-two million, his job is to change the figure in the records so that Big Brothers' estimate in all recorded history would read sixty-two million. Very likely, there were no boots produced at all.

Part 1, Chapter 4 Analysis

Here is more evidence of paradoxical situations. One of Winston's' assignments at work is to create a person, whom he named Comrade Ogilvy, to serve as an example for the people. Comrade Ogilvy had been a model citizen his whole life. He was a complete abstainer, he didn't smoke, he had no recreation unless it was serving the Party, he took a vow of celibacy, and remained unmarried so that he could focus on duty. He diligently pursued traitors, thought-criminals and the Eurasian enemy, serving Oceania in every capacity possible. Once he was created, evidence for Comrade Ogilvy's' existence would be in all the history books. Conversely, once a person was vaporized, there would be no record that they ever existed.

Part 1, Chapter 5

Part 1, Chapter 5 Summary

Winston heads to lunch. The lunchroom is deep under ground with low ceilings. Today the room is crowded and noisy. Winston runs into Syme, who works in the Research Department. Syme was hoping to get an extra razor blade from Winston since he'd run out. Winston lied and told him he didn't have any. Razor blades were one of the many items that were short in supply by the Party. At any particular time, there was any number of necessary items that Party members went without. There was always the option of attempting a search on the free market but it was usually to no avail.

They sat down together to eat their regulation lunch that consisted of a bowl of pinkish-gray stew, a small piece of bread, a nugget of cheese, and a cup of Victory coffee served without milk but with one saccharine tablet. Syme talked about his work project, the eleventh edition of the Newspeak dictionary. He became enthralled by the discussion of paring down the language to just the necessary basics of communication. He exclaimed, "Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end, we shall make Thoughtcrime impossible, because there will no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed will be expressed by exactly *one* word with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten. Already in the Eleventh Edition we're not far from that point."

There had been a demonstration to thank Big Brother for increasing the chocolate ration. This was very strange since Big Brother had actually decreased the chocolate ration even though they had promised not to.

He looked around the lunchroom with annoyance. His eyes fell on Mr. Parsons, he smirked as he thought, "He would never be vaporized." He catches the girl with dark hair looking at him again and is sure that she has been watching him. He is also sure that she would never be vaporized either.

Part 1, Chapter 5 Analysis

Through Syme's words, Orwell shows us what he believes will happen if governmental controls continue to go unchecked. Control of the population through limitations is shown to the extreme here. At this point, not only is speaking monitored but also the language is being altered so that thinking can be controlled. Winston feels that Syme is too intelligent and that he will definitely be vaporized at some point because of it. In Oceania, even the people that fully believe in and follow the Party are not safe because intelligence is one of the real enemies to Big Brother.

Part 1, Chapter 6

Part 1, Chapter 6 Summary

Winston is marking an entry in his journal, and through his writing, we learn more details about the Party. If a member of the Party were to partake in promiscuity with a prole, it was punishable but not as severely as among Party members, which was deemed unforgivable. All marriages have to be approved by a specially appointed committee. The only reason marriage is allowed is to beget children who are then molded into working for the Party. If there is the slightest bit of attraction between the two, the union is refused. One purpose of the Party involvement in these matters to prevent couples from forming loyalty that Party couldn't influence but the main reason was to dissolve all pleasure from the sexual act.

Part 1, Chapter 6 Analysis

The color theme continues here. Winston is writing in his journal about a woman who he found appealing. He admits that what he most liked about her was the makeup on her face. Orwell uses subtle synesthesia here and throughout the book. The color makes him feel alive. The Party has taken all of the color (life) out of every possible aspect of living.

Part 1, Chapter 7

Part 1, Chapter 7 Summary

Winston writes in his journal, "If there is hope it lies in the proles." "Proles" is short for "proletarians," which is a word for the working class. He reflects on the current situation in Oceania where 85% of the population is proles. He thought about the percentage. The proles could easily take over the Party. An uprising would be unstoppable. The problem, of course, is that it had been easy for the Party to keep control of the masses. The Thought Police moved secretly among them, finding and removing any one who seemed to be a potential threat to the system. By disbanding any potential leaders and groups that started to form, they prevented the force that could instigate rebellion. They allowed them to commit all criminal acts and live in perfect ignorance. "Proles and animals are free," another Party slogan, succinctly describes the management of the majority of the population.

Part 1, Chapter 7 Analysis

Winston observes women fighting over saucepans in the street. The shortage of supply of necessities affected proles and the members of the outer party alike. The party claims to have saved the people from the oppression of the capitalists, but their situation is even worse than before the Party's' rule. They just don't realize it. This point is repeated over and over again throughout the book. It was the ignorance of the people that caused them to be under oppression and it is the governmental upkeep of ignorance that perpetuates the system. The Party is called INGSOC in Newspeak, which is short for English Socialism. Socialism is a theory that advocates government ownership and control of all phases of production and distribution of goods. Orwell warns that while it seems innocent, logical, and efficient to have this type of system, it is impossible for it to work. The people ruling are ruling for the sake of power, which is addictive, and it won't stop until it has blossomed into full totalitarian rule, as in the book.

Part 1, Chapter 8

Part 1, Chapter 8 Summary

Winston walks alone down the street. It is the second evening at the Community Center he'd missed in less than a month. This is a great risk for him to take since they are not to be alone any time except at night in bed. The aroma of real coffee (as opposed to the Victory Coffee provided by the Party) wafted past his nostrils, reminding him of his childhood. As he strolled along a bomb came and obliterated a series of houses nearby. He is pelted by shattering glass from a nearby window. He passed a group of proles with their attention glued to the lottery numbers. There were many that placed their only hope for living on the chance of winning the lottery. The Party paid the large winnings out to people that didn't exist. The words he wrote in his diary echo through his head, "If there was hope it lay in the proles."

The neighborhood is familiar to him. It was where he bought his diary and the pen and ink. He spotted an old man in a pub and excitedly entered with the intention of trying to talk to him. He wanted to engage in conversation with someone in an older generation and ask about the past. He wanted some form of confirmation about history and the present time that he knew to be true. The old man was ornery and drunk. "You must have seen great changes since you were a young man," he asked. The man spun into a reverie of an incident at a boat race when someone knocked him over. Any further attempts Winston made at getting any kind of information out of him were also in vain. Feeling frustrated and helpless, he headed back to the street. He entered the shop where he had bought his diary. He spent a good bit of time there chatting with Mr. Charrington, the proprietor, as he showed Winston all of the few remaining wares in his shop. As he is leaving, the girl with dark hair passes. He freezes with panic. She must be following him. When he gets home, the telescreen is singing the latest song and he sits down with thoughts of the torture he will endure when he is brought in by the Thought Police.

Part 1, Chapter 8 Analysis

Winston purchases a piece of coral suspended in glass. This piece is referred to throughout the rest of the book. It represents life (the color pink) kept in by glass (another grayish color representing the Party and oppression). He is always reflective when he looks at the piece, longing for the life that feels like it is just below his surface.

Part 2, Chapter 1

Part 2, Chapter 1 Summary

Winston is back at work and as he walks through a corridor, the girl with dark hair stumbles to the floor right in front of him. He starts to help her up and she crams a small note in his hand. Time is standing still as he sits in his cubicle waiting for an opportune time to read the note. When he finally reads it, he is shocked. He stares at it again to make sure he read it right, "I love you." Suddenly he is filled with desire. She disappears for a few days and he is unsure whether the Thought Police vaporized her or she killed herself. After her reappearance, he makes a few attempts to get her alone at a lunch table. He finally succeeds and they make arrangements to meet outside of work. At their brief meeting at Victory Square, they arrange another meeting when they can spend more time.

Part 2, Chapter 1 Analysis

As the girl with dark hair approaches Winston, Orwell describes her as "a solitary figure." This is symbolic because before he and Julia make their union that is what they both were. It had been four days since he'd seen her outside of Mr. Charrington's shop. When he saw her last, he had considered her the enemy and had contemplated bludgeoning her to death. Yet, when he saw her fall onto the floor with an already bandaged arm, his first instinct was to help her. He saw the human in her. Feelings welled up in him to which he was not accustomed. In this chapter, the element of love enters the scene. Love is synonymous with hope. Winston's' will to live grows stronger as does his sense of purpose. The first inkling of being alive comes with the idea of love. This is another place in the book where Orwell connects having feelings with being human. As the government strips away the liberty of feelings and then even the capacity to feel they are actually dehumanizing them.

Part 2, Chapter 2

Part 2, Chapter 2 Summary

On the appointed day, Winston made his way to the meeting spot. He arrived first and gathered some bluebells for the girl from the thick mass of them he had to walk through. She approached him from behind and made a motion to stay quiet. When they got a little further, she broke the silence. They exchanged various pieces of introductory information while she shared some chocolate she had gotten from the black market. They walked along and came to a pasture with a path meandering through it and intermittent molehills. He gasped with delight, "The Golden Country…" He had seen this landscape in dreams. They engaged in a romantic interlude and fell asleep.

Part 2, Chapter 2 Analysis

The use of the senses to represent life is obvious here. The color of the bluebells, the gold of the sunlight, the taste of real chocolate, romantic pleasure, hot sunlight on their faces, and the softness of her body and hair all give the feeling that in this scene they are really alive. They feel far away from the cold, gray, mechanical, emotionless, dead world that has become their reality.

Part 2, Chapter 3

Part 2, Chapter 3 Summary

Upon awakening, Julia returned to her businesslike demeanor and gave him instructions for his return home. They had planned to use this hideout one more time but they never returned. They met once in a dilapidated old church but usually only in the streets. Among the crowds, they could talk by installments, which meant they walked separately and would cut in and out of conversation as they passed each other. Sometimes they had to leave a planned meeting spot without speaking because a patrol had just come by or a helicopter was circling.

Part 2, Chapter 3 Analysis

There is a stark contrast from this chapter to the last. They are back in their usual work routine, drones going through the motions. A bomb explodes covering them with white plaster. When they get up from the blast Winston sees Julia with the white plaster covering her skin and thinks she's dead. This is symbolic because as soon as they are back in the Party system, they are dead again.

Part 2, Chapter 4

Part 2, Chapter 4 Summary

Winston's eyes move around the small room upstairs from Mr. Charrington's shop. He was still surprised at himself for having rented it as a romantic rendezvous point for him and Julia. They enjoyed real coffee with real sugar. A rat visits and causes Winston to become pale. He is terrified of rats. They make plans to rat-proof the room as best as possible.

Part 2, Chapter 4 Analysis

The same themes we've seen continue here the smell of real coffee, the taste of real sugar, the colors of face makeup that Julia put on, and all the feelings that go with these things. The ticking clock continues the theme of their time running out. He reflected on the paperweight in yet another way: The paperweight was the room he was in, the coral was his and Julia's lives held in infinity in the center of the crystal.

Part 2, Chapter 5

Part 2, Chapter 5 Summary

Syme had finally been vaporized. Winston knew it would be coming for him eventually and now it had happened. He glanced at a list of the Chess Committee and found that Syme's name had disappeared altogether. This was the usual way when the Thought Police got you; all necessary changes in all records are made to make sure you had never even existed.

Winston and Julia continued to meet at Charrington's shop. Every moment they had together, they knew it wouldn't be much longer before the end. They had to be found out. Meeting in the same place so often meant sure death. They often lay naked discussing the possibility of the existence of Goldstein's' underground army, The Brotherhood. Winston is shocked to find out that Julia believed that Oceania had always been at war with Eurasia. In reality, just four years ago Oceania was at war with Eastasia. She had bought in to what the Party created! She didn't understand why it was such a big deal. He was mortified that she didn't see that the past was being destroyed right in front of their eyes and nobody noticed.

Part 2, Chapter 5 Analysis

Words like windowless, stench, horror, hate, faked, embellishing, funeral and angry all continue the tone of the world condition in *1984*. As preparations for Hate Week culminate, we see the many ways that Orwell believes the government can program us. For instance, movies, parades, slogans, lectures, fake photographs, rumors, reproduction of books, songs, posters, etc.

Part 2, Chapter 6

Part 2, Chapter 6 Summary

The moment he had been dreaming about for so long finally happened! O'Brien made his move to speak to him outside of work. In order to get Winston his address he used the excuse of needing to get the tenth edition of the Newspeak dictionary to him. Under usual circumstances, no one was to know the location of a person's home or see one another outside of work. His mind jumped to the process that had started with the opening of the diary and culminating at this moment with this summons from O'Brien. Even in his excitement, he felt deader than ever.

Part 2, Chapter 6 Analysis

More words such as death, chilly, frightening, shuddering, dampness and grave, continue the mood. The place where O'Brien confronted him was almost the exact spot where Julia slipped him the note, which was in the Ministry of Love. This is ironic because this Ministry is this arm of government that is responsible for law and order. In a very subtle way, Orwell shows us another method used to control, camaraderie. By seeming friendly and on the same page as Winston, O'Brien is more easily able to manipulate him. This is another warning that there is always more than meets the eye when it comes to the government. Feelings of camaraderie can lull a person into a false sense of security, as with Winston here.

Part 2, Chapter 7

Part 2, Chapter 7 Summary

Winston awoke. He had been dreaming of his mother again. He told Julia about the dream and explained many details of the part of his childhood that he remembered. The moment he awoke was the first time he knew that he didn't murder his mother. He had believed that he indirectly was responsible for her death until just then. He remembered war and chaos, rubble in the streets, and always being hungry. When his father had disappeared, his mother didn't show any outward emotion but her demeanor changed. He remembered that she became spiritless. She moved through the motions of life and duties of child rearing quietly and mechanically. He recalled how selfish he was in his youth, how he actually stole food from his baby sister because his hunger was so overwhelming and continuous. This conversation turned into a discussion about what would happen when they were caught. They figured at the minimum there would be physical torture in various forms, drugs, forced sleeplessness, long periods of solitude, machines that monitor nervous responses, and endless questioning. They agreed that they would both confess to things they did and even things they didn't to in an effort to save themselves from any further horror. They agreed with righteous indignation that no matter what they confessed no one could get them to change their feelings for each other. Winston thought about all the methods of torture they would use and decided that it didn't matter because they couldn't ever get inside of the mind.

Part 2, Chapter 7 Analysis

Winston awakes with tears in his eyes and Julia asks him what's wrong. He explains a dream he had been having. It all took place inside the coral and glass paperweight. He keeps seeing himself and his life as the little pink coral trapped inside the glass.

Winston remarks that the proles are humans and they are not. The degree of lifelessness he feels is so deep that he doesn't even feel like one of the species. The Party has taken every aspect of humanity out of the human experience.

Part 2, Chapter 8

Part 2, Chapter 8 Summary

Winston and Julia finally get up the nerve to go to O'Brien's' house. They get to see first hand the luxuries of members of the Inner Party: clean accommodations, real coffee, a servant and even permission to shut off the telescreen for short periods. O'Brien gets right down to business, explaining as much of the details of the Brotherhood as possible. The guests were surprised to find out that even the servant was a member of the secret anti-government coalition. O'Brien outlines the requirements of membership: they must be willing to steal, betray, be involved in things that could cause the death of thousands of innocent people, and anything else that is deemed necessary to the movement. They eagerly agreed to everything except separation from each other. He explained they way in which Winston would receive a copy of Goldstein's' book to study. When they parted, O'Brien started to say, "We shall meet again…" and Winston, remembering his dream finished his sentence, "In the place where there is no darkness?" O'Brien confirmed and Winston and Julia left.

Part 2, Chapter 8 Analysis

Orwell show the inherent hypocrisy of the Inner Party in the description of O'Brien's' quarters, "…the richness of the blue carpet gave one the impression of treading on velvet." There was cream-colored wallpaper and the whole place was perfectly clean. There were cigarettes kept in a silver box wrapped with silky paper that actually kept the tobacco in. They had real wine and the telescreen could be shut off. The scene in comparison to the lives of those outside of the Inner Party was reminiscent of how Big Brother described life in the time of the Capitalists.

Part 2, Chapter 9

Part 2, Chapter 9 Summary

Winston is exhausted from his part of the work in carrying out Hate Week. During the festivities of the sixth day of the celebrated week, the crowd watched with excitement as the speaker explained that they were no longer at war with Eurasia, they were now their allies. The new enemy was Eastasia. The crowd picked up and placed their fury on the new enemy without missing a beat. Nobody asked any questions or even wondered at the apparent contradiction. Now they had always been at war with Eastasia. All of records would soon reflect this change and it would be made permanent. In the midst of the irate insanity Winston was given Goldstein's' book in the way that O'Brien had outlined. The only hope he had left was now in his briefcase.

After hurrying to the sacred space above Mr. Charrington's shop, he lay intently focusing on each word of the text as he read. Therein lay the reality of the world situation according to Goldstein. He pored over the material until Julia arrived, at which point he started back at the beginning and read to her. As he continued to read, he realized that he was receiving more information as to how the system worked but he still didn't have any insight into why.

Part 2, Chapter 9 Analysis

Orwell describes Hate Week: "…when the great orgasm was quivering to its climax and the general hatred of Eurasia had boiled up into such a delirium that if the crowd could have got their hands on the two thousand Eurasian war criminals that were to be publicly hanged…they would have unquestionably torn them to pieces- at just this moment it was announced that Oceania was not after all at war with Eurasia. Oceania was at war with Eastasia. Eurasia was an ally." The fact that Orwell describes this intentional summoning of hate in terms of an orgasm is not a coincidence. It has been a theme throughout the book that the Party by controlling the sex act uses the pent up energy has fuel to perpetuate their system. As soon as the announcement to the public changed the status of the enemy, everyone threw their force into the new proclamation without question.

Part 2, Chapter 10

Part 2, Chapter 10 Summary

Winston and Julia awoke to their destiny. A voice behind the picture they had often talked about while enjoying their private time spoke with an iron voice. It informed them not to move and that the house was surrounded. As Mr. Charrington walked in with a changed demeanor, they knew that they were looking at a member of the Thought Police.

Part 2, Chapter 10 Analysis

The woman downstairs from the apartment they rented from Mr. Charrington was always singing. They could hear her clearly from the open window every time they were there. The words she sang are another strand of the theme of the inevitableness of their capture and the nature of the unavoidable process to follow. She sang, "It was only an 'opeless fancy, It passed like an April dye, But look an' a word an the dreams they stirred, They 'ave stolen my 'eart awye!" It was a hopeless fancy to think that there was ever a chance of getting away with their flagrant disrespect of the Party rules. Their time together was short and passed quickly. The result of the tortuous process of molding them to Party specifications resulted in the Party stealing even their hearts.

When the Thought Police entered, one of them picked up the coral and glass paperweight and threw it, smashing it into pieces. This is symbolic of their hope being destroyed and their fantasy lives being obliterated. As the tiny piece of coral rolled across the floor Winston thought, "How small it always was!" This is symbolic of the smallness of their effort compared to the all-encompassing strength of the Party.

Part 3, Chapter 1

Part 3, Chapter 1 Summary

Winston looks around the white porcelain cell. Hidden lights flooded the room with bright light. He was surrounded by four telescreens. The ceilings were high and there was a low steady hum that could be heard at all times. He thinks he may be in the Ministry of Love but since there were no windows, it's hard to tell. His hunger pains were growing and strengthening. Hoping to find some breadcrumbs, he sticks his hand in his pocket only to be loudly chastised by the telescreens. No movements were allowed. The Party prisoners were always scared and quiet while the regular criminals were insolent and loud. It is impossible to tell how long he had been in there. There is no sunlight coming in from anywhere, so he can't even tell if it is night or day. There was a constant parade of prisoners in and out of the room. During this time, Winston hears about Room 101. From the way people are using any tactic to try to avoid it he knows it is the most horrible place imaginable. He hears boots approaching outside the door. He is shocked to see who enters. It is O'Brien.

Part 3, Chapter 1 Analysis

Winston sees Tom Parsons in jail. Parsons admits that there is only one crime, Thoughtcrime, and he is guilty. This is the ultimate irony because he was the Party poster child. This is showing that no one, no matter how genuinely involved with the Party, is safe from their judgment. Nobody's behavior could ever measure up to the impossible standards set by the Party.

Part 3, Chapter 2

Part 3, Chapter 2 Summary

Winston lay on a bed. O'Brien is standing over him. There is a man with a white coat and a syringe. He reflects on the number of times he had been beaten and the length of each beating. He had confessed everything. He had admitted to things he hadn't even done. He rolled down a hallway shrieking with uproarious laughter and shouting confessions. O'Brien, the man in the white coat, Julia, and some others all rolled and laughed with him. During a moment of wakefulness he hears O'Brien's voice saying, "Don't worry Winston; you are in my keeping. For seven years, I have watched over you. Now the turning point has come. I shall save you, I shall make you perfect." The voice Winston heard was the same that he heard in his dream seven years ago; "I shall meet you in the place where there is no darkness."

Winston is hooked up to a machine that floods his body with pain at O'Brien's' command. O'Brien asks him questions and if they're not answered to his liking, he gives the hand command. The pain is gradually increasing with every hand motion. O'Brien gently asked, "At this moment, what power is Oceania at war with?" He answered Eastasia. O'Brien continued, "…And Oceania has always been at war with Eastasia, has it not?" Winston hesitated. He knew that just a week ago before he was arrested Oceania was at war with Eurasia but he also knew if he didn't give a satisfactory answer the pain would come again. It seemed that during the whole interrogation process O'Brien could read his mind. O'Brien told him to answer *his* truth. Winston did just that. O'Brien explained to him that it was a delusion. He cited other 'delusions' he had over the course of the last few years and then explained what the reality was.

Winston can't understand why the Party would spend so much time and energy getting him to agree with their ways instead of just killing him. O'Brien explains that he is a flaw in the pattern and that they are not content with obedience or submission. He further explains that when Winston finally surrenders to them it must be on his own free will. They would not allow martyrs to go the grave exalting their cause with their death. The painful process continued.

Part 3, Chapter 2 Analysis

An undercurrent of deceit, of things not being what they seem, flows through the book. O'Brien made him think he is representing the movement against the Party and he really *is* the Party. This is another way Orwell is showing us that in life, with government, things aren't what they seem. He is urging us to look deeper. He is warning us not to be ignorant and encouraging us to think for ourselves. He is scaring us into doing our own research and fighting against any movement, no matter how small, towards more governmental control.

Part 3, Chapter 3

Part 3, Chapter 3 Summary

O'Brien explains the three stages of Winston's' reintegration: learning, understanding and acceptance. Room 101 will be his entrance into the second stage.

Winston learns that O'Brien is one of the authors of Goldstein's' book. He explains how it is all nonsense and would never happen. Winston remembers that he understood how the Party's' system worked but he never got a handle on why. O'Brien explained the why very simply, that the Party wants power for its own sake. "The object of power is power."

Part 3, Chapter 3 Analysis

Orwell makes it clear that regardless of whatever reason the government gives for increasing control it is all a cover-up for their addiction to power. Through O'Brien, he explains that a dictatorship that understands that the quest for power is at the root of their system cannot be overthrown. He cites that this was the mistake of other groups like the German Nazis and the Russian Communists. He writes that they took power with the intention of giving up the power once things have been made better for everybody. He differentiates Big Brother from other movements by saying that they seized power and do not intend to give it up.

Part 3, Chapter 4

Part 3, Chapter 4 Summary

He is feeling and looking better everyday. The light and hum were the same but his new cell was more comfortable than the last ones. It had a pillow, mattress and a stool. He was being fed regularly, the food was good and they even gave him some meat. He has been given warm water to wash with and they had given him new clothes. He spent less time sleeping and started doing strength exercises. The Party had succeeded in breaking him down enough to accept everything they said to be true.

He wakes himself up yelling, "Julia, Julia, my love…" He knows his sleeping antics have betrayed him. He wonders how long he has added to his sentence from his outburst of emotion.

As expected, O'Brien shows up in his room. He gives Winston the status of his progress. He is improving, and mentally he is fine, but emotionally his progress is stagnant. He reminds him that he is always able to tell when he is lying and then asks him if he loves Big Brother. Winston answers no, that he hates him. O'Brien tells him he must love Big Brother and sends him to Room 101.

Part 3, Chapter 4 Analysis

They had broken him down so much that he was totally content with just being able to eat and be clean. As a result, by this point, his mind had surrendered and he obeyed the Party. Despite his strict adherence to the he was still hoping to maintain the privacy of his heart. His mid-dream outburst betrayed him. The Party would not rest until complete deterioration of every part of his being had occurred. Orwell believes it would be the same for us if socialism got a foothold and had a chance to erupt into a dictatorship.

Orwell writes that Winston reflects on his naïveté in thinking that he could ever do anything to dissolve any of the power of the Party. His every move that he thought to be secret had been watched by Big Brother. The purchase of the diary and writing implements, the journal entries, the paperweight purchase, and every aspect of his relationship with Julia had all been carried out with meticulous care so as not to be caught. Meanwhile, they had been watching him the whole time like "a beetle under a magnifying glass." The symbolism of the beetle under the magnifying glass represents the smallness of his effort under the greatness of Party. It represents the ease in which they could monitor and squash the small things that they saw, even though the magnitude of his effort felt so valiant to Winston at the time. He understands now that resistance is futile. The Party is God looking down on the tiny beetles that make up the population of Oceania. Nothing could be hidden from the Party not even feelings that the person is not conscious of having.

Part 3, Chapter 5

Part 3, Chapter 5 Summary

Winston is in the worst place imaginable- Room 101. He knew it would be terrible from the reactions of everyone that was to go there. He still couldn't imagine what could be so terrible that he didn't already endure. O'Brien explained to him that in this room is the worst thing in the world. What is considered the worst thing in the world varies from person to person. In his case, O'Brien continued, it is rats. So there it was, the place where one would face their worst fear. Winston filled with terror at the word. He yelled and pleaded. O'Brien ignored him and continued describing a contraption that would allow the rat to be kept in a cage strapped to his head with walls on three sides, the forth side being Winston's' face. O'Brien unsympathetically explained rats' tendencies to chew their way to freedom frantically. The cage was fastened on his head and he could smell the stench of the creature. His vision was blocked so that he could only see one huge old rat, with pink claws reaching up through the metal. As a last minute hope he screamed, "Do it to Julia, not me…" As he spiraled into the darkness of helpless fear he heard a click and knew that it was the cage door closing shut instead of being opened. He had saved himself. He had also betrayed Julia.

Part 3, Chapter 5 Analysis

At every point of Winston's imprisonment, he could feel what level of the building he was in. Room 101 was down as far as one could go. This is symbolic because the Party had to stoop to their absolute lowest, most inhumane level, and the victims were torn down to the very lowest possible state without being dead.

O'Brien explains to Winston that process of using the rats in a facemask was used in Imperial China for punishment. China is a Communist country. Orwell's mention of this is not an accident. He is explaining the similarity between the type of government that INGSOC has become and the type of government that the world had been fighting against. The deleterious effects of Communism on the human condition had been well understood at the time this book was written. The major leaders of the world had united to stop the spread of Communism in order to protect the peace of their nations. They understood that need for power that drove the Communist movement would not stay contained within the borders of the countries with Communist rulers. The need for power would not be satisfied until the whole world had been taken over. The common person in free societies knew this and Orwell was appealing to the fear that was associated with China and the rule of their people.

This chapter shows us the alarming truth that even our emotions, our heart, the very essence of our being, can be programmed given the right kind of access. The type of governmental situation in the book would give that access.

Part 3, Chapter 6

Part 3, Chapter 6 Summary

Winston sat in the Chestnut Tree café listening to the telescreen. As he sat in his usual corner, a waiter continually filled up his glass of Victory gin without being asked. He quietly listened to the war updates while playing chess. He had a job that paid him better than his old one and money was never a problem anymore. Any thoughts he had were short and usually had burned themselves out before they could get anywhere. He had recently seen Julia in the street and he half-heartedly followed her. They got to a private place and began to talk. They calmly confessed to betraying each other. Without emotion, they agreed that after they were forced into the betrayal they couldn't feel the same about each other. It ends with Winston finally losing the war against his self and loving Big Brother.

Part 3, Chapter 6 Analysis

In the end, Winston becomes one of the proles. All along, he had said if there was any hope it lay in the proles. In the state the Party reduced, him to, it is clear that there could be no hope in the proles, meaning that there is no hope at all. He understands why he couldn't get any information out of the old man in the bar, why the man could only talk in nonsensical circles. They had gotten a hold of him, too. He finally understands the song that he had heard at the Chestnut Tree Café, "Under the spreading chestnut tree, I sold you and you sold me…" The Party system had forced him and Julia to betray each other's love. Their love was the only glimmer of hope through most of the book, and with their final betrayal, nothing was left. He remembered that Julia told him they couldn't get inside of him. He knew now that they could.

Orwell is making it clear from the ending that nothing, not hope, not love, not even the human spirit, can win the war against a totalitarian government. This book is a warning to prevent the insidious process of increasing governmental control from having an outcome like this in our world. He's given us a glimpse into a potential future based on the current direction of government that is as relevant today as was when it was written (1949).

Characters

Big Brother

Big Brother, the mysterious all-seeing, allknowing leader of the totalitarian society is a godlike icon to the citizens he rules. He is never seen in person, just staring out of posters and telescreens, looking stern as the caption beneath his image warns "Big Brother Is Watching You." Big Brother demands obedience and devotion of Oceania's citizens; in fact, he insists that they love him more than they love anyone else, even their own families. At the same time, he inspires fear and paranoia. His loyal followers are quick to betray anyone who seems to be disloyal to him. Through technology, Big Brother is even able to monitor the activities of people who are alone in their homes or offices.

Of course, Big Brother doesn't really exist, as is clear from the way O'Brien dodges Winston's questions about him. His image is just used by the people in power to intimidate the citizens of Oceania. Orwell meant for Big Brother to be representative of dictators everywhere, and the character was undoubtedly inspired by Adolf Hitler, Francisco Franco, Joseph Stalin, and Mao Tse-tung, all of whom were fanatically worshipped by many of their followers.

Mr. Charirngton

Mr. Charrington is an acquaintance of Winston's who runs a small antique/junk shop and rents Winston a small room above it. Winston and Julia do not realize he is actually a cold, devious man and a member of the Thought Police. Charrington is responsible for Winston and Julia's eventual arrest.

Emmanuel Goldstein

Emmanuel Goldstein is the great enemy of Big Brother. An older Jewish man with white hair and a goatee, Goldstein is a former Party leader but now the head of an underground conspiracy to overthrow the Party. When his face is flashed on telescreens, people react to him as if he were the devil himself, frightening and evil. He personifies the enemy. Winston fears him yet is fascinated by him as well. He thinks Goldstein's speeches, which are broadcast as a warning against anti-Party thoughts, are transparent and shakes his head at the thought of people less intelligent and more easily led than him being taken in by such revolutionary talk. Yet Winston changes his mind later, and as he reads Goldstein's revolutionary tract, "The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism," he is more impressed than ever by Goldstein's ideas.

Goldstein is reminiscent of Leon Trotsky, the great enemy of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin who led an unsuccessful revolt and was later brutally murdered by Stalin's men. It is no

accident that he is a Jewish intellectual because dictators Stalin and Adolf Hitler deeply feared and hated the Jewish intelligentsia.

Julia

At first Winston doesn't like Julia because she seems like a zealous pro-Party advocate. Moreover, she is also a member of the Anti-Sex League, and deep down Winston resents that he will never be able to have sex with her. However, when he takes her up on her request that they meet privately, Winston discovers that Julia is smart and funny and loves sex, and she doesn't care at all about Big Brother. As for her membership in the Anti-Sex League, she is simply doing what is expected of her in society. A pretty woman with dark hair and freckles, she is basically a simple woman who doesn't worry about the revolutionary implications of her actions; she does what she does because it feels good and right. She cares little about revolution and even falls asleep when Winston is reading from Emmanuel Goldstein's revolutionary tract. Julia is practical as well. For instance, she is discreet in arranging her meetings with Winston and warns him that they will eventually get caught. When they are caught, it is Julia who insists that her love for Winston cannot be destroyed, but she betrays Winston more quickly than he betrays her (at least, according to O'Brien), and when they finally meet again she is indifferent to him.

Katharine

Winston's wife. She was a tall, fair-haired girl, and, according to Winston, remarkably vulgar and stupid. Technically, he is still married to her, though they've lost track of each other. They parted ways about ten or eleven years before, after only fifteen months of marriage, when they realized that she could not get pregnant by him. The Party has declared that the only reason for marriage is procreation, and in fact it is illegal to have sex simply for pleasure. Therefore, there was no reason for Winston and Katharine to stay together. The Party does not believe in divorce, just separation, so Winston and Katharine just sort of drifted apart. Readers only see Katharine through Winston's memory of her, and her main purpose in the novel is to show how the Party destroys love, sex, and loyalty between husband and wife.

O'Brien

O'Brien is a member of the Inner Party. He is a large, burly, and brutal-looking man, and yet Winston thinks he has a certain charm and civility. Winston suspects he is very intelligent and may share his subversive views of society. When O'Brien reveals that he does have revolutionary thoughts, Winston is excited to go with him to a secret underground meeting led by Emmanuel Goldstein. The group aims to overthrow the Party. Winston does not realize that O'Brien is secretly loyal to the Inner Party and that the secret underground group is simply a set-up by the Party to detect potential subversives. O'Brien betrays Winston and becomes his interrogator and torturer. It is he

who reveals to Winston that the true, ugly purpose of the Party is to stay in power for power's sake. Like the Party, O'Brien cares for one thing only: power. He has no personal ambition, however. He only needs and wants to be a part of the Party's power structure.

As a torturer, O'Brien reveals himself to be extremely intelligent and sophisticated. His relationship with Winston is complicated and twisted. O'Brien seems to respect Winston, and he enjoys their conversations because Winston is a challenge. O'Brien and Winston ought to hate each other; after all, it's O'Brien's job to brainwash Winston and thereby destroy him. Still, they are drawn to each other out of respect and mutual understanding.

Old Man

Old man is a prole who lives near Winston. He remembers a lot about the past, but only insignificant snippets of his own life, so he can't answer Winston's pressing questions, such as, "Was life better then than it is now?" Winston describes him as an ant who can't see the bigger picture.

Tom Parson

Winston's neighbor, Tom Parson, is a representative of the proletariat, or working class. His children, like children in Nazi Germany, belong to scout-like organizations sponsored by the government. They wear uniforms and are encouraged to betray their parents to the authorities should they see any signs of disloyalty. His wife, Mrs. Parsons, is about thirty but looks much older because she lives in constant fear of her own children. Tom Parsons, age 35, is sweaty, fat, pink-faced and fairhaired. He is also not very bright, a zealous man who worships the Party. Eventually, his daughter turns him in for Thought crime because he says "Down with the Party" in his sleep. He tells Winston he is grateful he was turned in before his terrible thoughts became conscious.

Prole Woman

A heavyset neighbor of Winston's, he watches her singing to herself as she hangs out the laundry. She is a symbol of the future, representing the spirit of the proletariat that cannot be crushed.

Winston Smith

Orwell named his central character Winston Smith after Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of England during World War II; he also gave him the most common British last name, Smith. A thirty-nine-year-old man who works in the Ministry of Truth, Winston Smith is fairly ordinary. His heroism is heartfelt, not out of false notions of rebellion for the sake of power and glory. Because of the visceral nature of his actions, he acts in a

foolhardy manner. For example, he keeps a diary in order to record events as he experiences them, even though he is very likely to get caught by the Thought Police. Similarly, he rents the room above a junk shop to use as a love nest with Julia despite the obvious risks. Finally, Winston trusts O'Brien, not suspecting that he is a loyal member of the Inner Party who is trying to entrap him.

When he is captured and tortured, Winston continues his defiance as long as possible. He has a strange respect for his torturer, O'Brien, and seems to enjoy their battle of intellect, ideas, and wills. Indeed, he has been thinking about and fascinated by O'Brien for years, even dreaming about him. In a way, he seems happy to be confronting him at last.

Syme

Syme, who works in the Research Department of the Ministry of Truth, is a small man with dark hair and large eyes. He is helping prepare a new dictionary of Newspeak which will eliminate even more words from the language. He is so smart and straightforward that Winston knows Syme is destined to be purged. Syme's lack of savvy and selfprotectiveness irritates Winston because he knows he is loyal to Big Brother.

Winston's Mother

Dead for thirty years, Winston's mother appears only in his dreams of the past. He recalls her as a fair-haired and self-possessed woman. He's not certain what happened to her, but he thinks she was probably murdered in the purges of the 1950s (reminiscent of Joseph Stalin's infamous purges in Russia, in which large numbers of people simply disappeared overnight and were murdered). Winston misses his mother greatly and feels guilty that he survived and she did not. In fact, he has the feeling that somehow she gave her life for his.

Themes

Freedom and Enslavement/Free Will

Orwell's *1984* is set in Oceania, a totalitarian state ruled by a god-like leader named Big Brother who completely controls the citizens down to their very thoughts. Anyone who thinks subversive thoughts can be turned in by spies or by Big Brother, who monitors them through highly sensitive telescreens. If someone does not have the proper facial expression, they are considered guilty of Facecrime, so all emotions must be extremely carefully guarded. It is even possible to commit Thoughtcrime by being overheard talking in one's sleep, which Winston Smith fears will happen to him; it actually happens to his neighbor Tom Parson. Freedom exists only in the proletarian ghetto, where crime and hunger are commonplace. Winston feels he could not live in this ghetto, even though his life is almost as grim as that of the ghetto dwellers.

The punishment for even minor crimes is severe, yet people occasionally choose to break the law. The Party knows that people instinctively want to have sex, form loving bonds, and think for themselves instead of accepting unquestioningly whatever the totalitarian government tells them. As long as people choose to exercise free will, the Party must be ever-vigilant against crime and make their punishments severe in order to remain in control.

Appearance and Reality

In totalitarian Oceania, it seems as if everyone is slavishly devoted to Big Brother and believes everything the government tells them. However, as we can understand from Winston's thoughts, all is not as it seems. Some people secretly feel and believe differently from how they behave; of course, they are extremely careful not to betray themselves. Moreover, the Party is in control of all information and revises history, even yesterday's history, to reflect their current version of events. Winston is very much aware of this, because it is his job in the inaccurately named Ministry of Truth to change the records of history. He cannot ignore what he remembers: Oceania was at war with Eurasia and allied with Eastasia yesterday, and not vice versa. If anyone else remembers differently, they certainly won't say so.

Only the old man, a powerless prole who lives on the street, speaks about what really happened in the past, but in short and irrelevant snippets about his personal experiences. It is Winston's need to reconcile what he knows with the Party's version of reality that leads to his downfall. The Party cannot allow people to have a perception of reality that is different from theirs. As Winston writes in his diary, "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows."

Loyalty and Betrayal

In order to remain all-powerful, the Party destroys loyalty between people: co-workers, friends, even family members. Children are encouraged to betray their parents to the state if they suspect them of Thoughtcrimes (thinking something that goes against the Party line). The Party has outlawed sex for pleasure and reduced marriage to an arrangement between a man and woman that exists only for procreation. Sexual urges must be repressed for fear they will lead to love, human connection, and personal loyalty, all of which threaten the Party. Winston believes that love like the love he and Julia share will eventually destroy the Party, but he underestimates the Party's ability to destroy that love and loyalty. Winston and Julia both give in to torture and betray each other. When they are released, their love and loyalty to each other has been destroyed.

Because the Party can easily detect Thoughtcrimes, people always act as if they are completely loyal to the Party. No one trusts anyone else completely. Winston makes fatal mistakes when he trusts O'Brien and Charrington, both of whom betray him. His misjudgment is almost understandable, given the subtle cues both give him to indicate that they are fellow subversives. But as it turns out, they are deliberately setting a trap for him and Julia. In the end, no one can be trusted.

Utopia and Anti-Utopia

1984 is clearly an anti-utopian book. As O'Brien tells Winston, the world he and his comrades have created is "the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined." Instead of being a society that is a triumph of human spirit and creativity, the society the Party has created is full of fear, torment, and treachery that will worsen over time. O'Brien gives Winston an image of the future: a boot stomping on a human face, forever and ever.

Such a pessimistic vision of the future serves a purpose, as Orwell knew. He wrote *1984* as a warning in order to make people aware that this type of society could exist if trends such as jingoism, oppression of the working class, and the erosion of language that expresses the vastness of human experience continued. Readers are supposed to see that this is only one possible future, one they must work to avoid. Orwell's anti-utopian vision captured the horrors of World War II and the fears of the cold war in the same way that earlier utopian novels, from British author Thomas More's *Utopia* to Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward,* captured the hope and self-confidence after the end of the medieval era.

Patriotism

The blind patriotism that fueled the dictatorships of German leader Adolf Hitler and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in the 1930s and 1940s inspired Orwell to write of Oceania and its leader, Big Brother. Just as the Germans fanatically cheered and revered Hitler, treating him as a beloved father, the citizens of Oceania look up to Big Brother as their

protector, who will watch over them just as a real brother would. The huge pictures of Big Brother that can be found everywhere in Oceania are reminiscent of those of Communist leader Mao Tse-tung displayed by the Chinese. As in real totalitarian regimes, the children of Oceania play a large part in maintaining the loyalty and patriotism of the citizens. Just as German children joined the scout-like and militaristic Hitler Youth organization, the children of Oceania enjoy wearing their Junior Spies costumes, marching around, and singing patriotic songs. Orwell depicts how sinister it is for a government to use children to promote their policies when he portrays the Parsons' children as holy terrors, threatening to denounce their parents to the authorities if they don't give in to their childish demands. In the 1960s, the Chinese under Mao would indoctrinate an entire generation of children to be loyal to the state by taking them away from their parents for long periods in order to insure that the government's message could not be contradicted by the children's parents.

Style

Point of View

Orwell's *1984* is told in the third person, but the point of view is clearly Winston Smith's. Through his eyes, readers are able to see how the totalitarian society functions, in particular how an individual deals with having illegal thoughts that can be detected easily by spies and telescreens that monitor one's every movement. Because readers are in Winston's head, they make the mistakes he makes in judging people. At one point he looks around a room at work and tells himself he knows just who will be vaporized within the next few years and who will be allowed to live. His perceptions of who is a loyal party member and who is not turn out to be inaccurate, however. In this way, Orwell shows that in a paranoid society, where personal relationships with others are at best only tolerated and at worst illegal, no one can really know his fellow man.

Winston is a well-drawn character with clear opinions (clear to the reader, that is; he cannot reveal his opinions to anyone in his society). Often, critics have claimed that these opinions echo George Orwell's. For example, Winston admires the spirit of the proletariat, but looks down on them because they will never have the means or intelligence to change their lives and their government. On the other hand, he admires the sophistication of the wealthy, cultured O'Brien, even though he is an evil character. This may reflect Orwell's own class prejudices, as someone who was far more educated and worldly than most of the people from the economic class in England (the lower middle class).

Setting

Written between 1947 and 1948, *1984*'s original title was 1948, but Orwell changed it so that it would be set in the future, but still be close enough to the present to be frightening. The action takes place in London, which is now part of a country called Oceania. Oceania is one of three world superpowers, and it is continually at war with one of the other two superpowers, Eastasia and Eurasia. Enemies can change overnight and become an ally, although the Party automatically rewrites history when this happens so that no one will remember that circumstances were ever any different. This perpetual state of war consumes most of the state's resources, so city buildings are in a constant state of disrepair. All consumer goods, from food to clothing, are rationed, just as they were in England during World War II. Winston lives in what was once London, now a drab, gray, and decaying urban area.

Language and Meaning

Orwell was very aware of the power of language, so he has the totalitarian government of the future create a new language called Newspeak. Newspeak is used throughout the book by the citizens of Oceania and explained in detail in an appendix. The language is

derived from Standard English and will go through many versions over the years until it reaches its final version in the year 2050. The 1984 version, however, still bears a strong resemblance to English.

The basic idea behind Newspeak is to take all words that refer to ideas the Party disagrees with and strip them of their original meaning or eliminate them entirely. The purpose of Newspeak is to narrow the range of ideas that can be expressed, so as the language develops it contains fewer and fewer words. Word forms and grammar are simplified, as is pronunciation, so that eventually the number of readers can be kept to a minimum. Newspeak also contains words to express new ideas, such as *oldthink,* which means the way people thought before the revolution. Naturally, it has a wicked and decadent connotation.

When Newspeak appeared citizens were unable to read about old ideas and express new ones that were counter to what the Party wanted them to think. An entire passage from the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be selfevident □," can be reduced to one word: crimethink. Simplistic slogans replace more complicated ideas. The Party's most famous slogans are "War Is Peace," "Freedom Is Slavery," and "Ignorance Is Strength."

Through the device of a fictional language, Orwell is able to point out that language can be misused to mislead people. In creating Newspeak, Orwell was influenced both by political rhetoric that takes the place of substantive communication and advertising lingo that makes ridiculous and vague promises.

Structure

1984 is divided into three parts plus an appendix. Part one sets up Winston's world, which readers see through his eyes and his thoughts. They understand his loneliness and why this leads him to take risks that will lead to his downfall. In part two, the lengthiest part of the narrative, Winston becomes connected with people he believes are rebels like himself. He has an affair with Julia and follows O'Brien to an underground meeting of dissidents. Also in part two, Orwell includes lengthy sections from the fictional Emmanuel Goldstein's political tract. It is interesting to note that his publishers originally wanted Orwell to delete this material, because it stops the action of the narrative.

In part three, Winston and Julia have been caught by the Inner Party and separated. Winston undergoes severe torture and brainwashing at the hands of O'Brien. His dialogue and interaction with O'Brien has much dramatic tension because underlying their battle is mutual respect. Unfortunately for Winston, this respect does not translate into O'Brien freeing him. O'Brien successfully brainwashes Winston into loving Big Brother. The book ends with an appendix on the development and structure of the language called "Newspeak." The appendix is written as if it were a scholarly article, and while it serves to clarify the use of Newspeak in the novel it is interesting to note that the publisher originally wanted to cut it, thinking it unnecessary.

Historical Context

Totalitarianism

In 1948, when Orwell's *1984* was published, World War II had just ended. One of England's allies had been Russia, which was ruled by a despotic dictator named Joseph Stalin. Stalin ruled with an iron fist, and was famous for his midnight purges: he would round up hundreds of citizens at a time and murder them in deserted areas, much as Oceania citizens are "vaporized." Stalin's victims were his imagined enemies, such as political dissidents, artists, or Jews. Meanwhile, Adolf Hitler, in Germany, had slaughtered his enemies as well, in the end killing six million Jews plus nine million Slavs, gypsies, political dissidents, homosexuals, and mentally challenged people. Mao Tse-tung in China was fighting for communism against Chinese nationalist forces under Chiang Kai-shek. Mao would finally defeat the nationalists in 1949 and begin a long, oppressive totalitarian regime. Other dictators of the time included Francisco Franco in Spain and Benito Mussolini in Italy. These oppressive rulers controlled citizens through propaganda and violence. This state of affairs prompted Orwell to create Big Brother, the ultimate totalitarian leader who dominates all political, social, and economic activities.

Socialism and Communism

Orwell fought against Franco in the Spanish Civil War in the mid-1930s, supporting the socialist left. He was not a communist, but a dedicated Democratic socialist who believed that the government, not private enterprise, should control the production and distribution of goods, and as such he was greatly concerned about the lives of the poor and working class.

All over the world, throughout the twentieth century, working class people had been fighting for better lives. In America, workers fought a long and hard battle for labor reforms that would eventually include such benefits as job security, safety regulation, overtime and hazardous duty pay, vacation and sick days, health insurance, pensions, disability, and child labor laws, which modern workers sometimes take for granted. Some U.S. and British workers turned to socialism and communism, thinking that perhaps these alternate forms of economic and social structure would solve their problems. In the late nineteenth century, Karl Marx of Germany proposed that to resolve the gross inequality between the workers and the bosses, the working class, or proletariat, would have to revolt and establish a new communist regime in which one authoritarian party would control the political and economic systems. He believed workers ought to own their farms and factories and distribute the profits evenly among workers.

Here in America, the capitalist factory and mine owners eventually conceded to labor's demands and the socialists and communists were marginalized. This act deferred

American workers from revolting against their government. Communist revolutions did occur in Russia and in China, but eventually those countries modified their economic systems.

America's response to communism was extreme during the Cold War era of the 1950s; in fact, many people believed the U.S. government was acting just as oppressively as communist governments were. Under the leadership of Senator Joe McCarthy, the House (of Representatives) Committee on Un-American Activities aggressively attacked public figures who were suspected communists, demanding that they name other communists or be blackballed in their industries. Hollywood writers and filmmakers were especially hard hit by the mania and many careers were destroyed before President Truman and public opinion turned against McCarthy and the witch hunt ended. The paranoia that characterized the McCarthy era was similar to the paranoia in *1984,* as people were pressured to betray their friends, co-workers, and even parents in order to save themselves. Today, communism still has some followers in the United States and England, as does Democratic socialism, which Orwell embraced wholeheartedly.

Television

Aside from being concerned about labor and government, Orwell was very aware of an important invention that was just becoming popular after World War II and would eventually be a dominant force in Western culture: the television. The first BBC broadcast in Britain occurred in 1937, and TV was first demonstrated to the American public in 1939 at the New York World's Fair. Television's popularity grew enormously throughout the 1950s, and today 98% of American households own at least one color television set. Orwell recognized the enormous potential of this communication tool, which would soon be in every home. He imagined that the television could one day not only broadcast propaganda nonstop but that it could transmit back images of action in front of the screen, allowing the broadcaster to spy on its viewers.

Critical Overview

When *1984* was published, critics were impressed by the sheer power of George Orwell's grim and horrifying vision of the future. They praised Orwell's gripping prose, which captured so well the details of life under an oppressive regime, from the tasteless, sodden public meals Winston eats to the gritty dust of the gray streets. In 1949, critic Mark Shorer wrote in his *New York Times Book Review* essay that "No real reader can neglect this experience with impunity□. He will be asked to read through pages of sustained physical and psychological pain that have seldom been equaled and never in such quiet, sober prose." In the same year, British novelist V. S. Pritchett wrote his reaction to the novel in *New Statesman and Nation.* "I do not think," the critic concluded, "I have ever read a novel more frightening and depressing; and yet, such are the originality, the suspense, the speed of writing and withering indignation that it is impossible to put the book down."

Critics also praised Orwell's ability to provoke moral outrage at Oceania, a society that so completely destroys the human values many people hold dear, from love to art.

Because *1984* was published during the reign of Russian leader Joseph Stalin, a former ally of England and the United States who was proving tobe a cruel and violent dictator, critics of the time believed that the novel was about the events in the Soviet Union. Some mistakenly believed that by setting the story in England, Orwell meant to criticize British socialism, particularly since he names the Inner Party Ingsoc ("ENGlish SOCialism"). Orwell strongly denied this. Then again, some critics saw the novel as a satire of the contemporary social and political scene. Certainly, many of Orwell's details bear a resemblance to life in London post-World War II. However, over time critics came to realize that Orwell meant the story to be a universal warning about the dangers of any totalitarian dictatorship.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

In the following essay, Fitzpatrick, an author and doctoral candidate at New York University, maintains that although Orwell's dystopian vision has not been borne out by Soviet-style communism, the author's fears about the ability of the state to control people is still a danger in modern society.

George Orwell's dystopian (a fictional place where people lead dehumanized and fearful lives) vision of the year 1984, as depicted in what many consider to be his greatest novel, has entered the collective consciousness of the English-speaking world more completely than perhaps any other political text, whether fiction or nonfiction. No matter how far our contemporary world may seem from *1984*'s Oceania, any suggestion of government surveillance of its citizens - from the threatened "clipper chip," which would have allowed government officials to monitor all computer activity, to New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani's decision to place security cameras in Central Park - produces cries of "Big Brother is watching." Big Brother, the allseeing manifestation in *1984* of the Party's drive for power for its own sake, has come to stand as a warning of the insidious nature of governmentcentralized power, and the way that personal freedoms, once encroached upon, are easily destroyed altogether.

Critics generally agree that the hero of the novel, Winston Smith, may be recognized by his name as related to both the great British statesman and World War II leader Winston Churchill and a non-descript Everyman. However, the point is not that Winston is a great man, or even that he is one man among many; rather, O'Brien, while torturing Winston, says that if Winston is "a man," as he claims to think of himself, then he is the last man. In fact this echo of the novel's original title, *The Last Man in Europe,* reveals Winston as symbolic of what critic Ian Watt has described as Orwell's conception of a dying humanism. Whether Winston Smith is truly a humanist, in the classical sense of the term, is of no matter; in comparison to the totalitarian regime which destroys him, Winston is, in fact, the last embodiment of the human. In converting Winston to the love of Big Brother, the last man in Europe is destroyed.

Winston maintains, throughout the novel, two avenues of hope for a life outside the confines of the Party and the watchful eyes of Big Brother, a life which may undermine or even overthrow the Party's hold on Oceania. One of these possibilities is conscious, spoken: the proles. Just as Marx foresaw, in the nineteenth century, that the Revolution would come from a spontaneous uprising of the proletariat as they shook off the chains of their oppressors, so Winston writes in his diary that if there is hope, it lies in this 85 percent of Oceania's population that exists outside the confines of the Party. And yet, the impossibility of a proletarian uprising presents itself to him at every turn. Echoing Marx, Winston writes: "Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious." And, unfortunately, he is right; as O'Brien admonishes Winston in the Ministry of Love, "The proletarians will never revolt, not in a thousand years or a million. They cannot." Thus this small bit of hope is crushed.

The second possibility remains mostly unspoken and unconscious: desire. It is this possibility, the momentary destruction of the Party through intimate union with another person, which solidifies Winston's relationship with Julia. Though they are drawn together at first by what seem to be basic animal urges, it is precisely the baseness and the animality of those urges that gives them their liberatory potential. As Winston relates earlier, in contemplating the sterility of his relationship with his wife: "The sexual act, successfully performed, was rebellion. Desire was thoughtcrime." Desire is thoughtcrime in Oceania because it elevates the human, the individual, above the powers of the state to control him. In fact, as Winston and Julia begin to make love for the first time, this piece of repressed knowledge becomes conscious; "the animal instinct," he thinks, "the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that could tear the Party to pieces."

The threat to the Party of the thoughtcrime that desire represents is sufficiently serious that the state must exert formidable control over any such human, instinctual reactions. In his essay "1984: Enigmas of Power," Irving Howe writes, "There can be no 'free space' in the lives of the Outer Party faithful, nothing that remains beyond the command of the state. Sexual energy is to be transformed into political violence and personal hysteria." It is this recognition by the Party that there may be no element of "human nature" which can remain the province of the individual without endangering the Party's hold on its members that represents the great "advance" of Ingsoc (English Socialism, in Oldspeak) over previous totalitarian regimes. There was always room, notes Howe, in these previous regimes, for "'free space,' that margin of personal autonomy which even in the worst moments of Stalinism and Hitlerism some people wanted to protect."

The "advance" represented by Ingsoc, according to Emmanuel Goldstein's *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchal Collectivism,* the book written by a collective of Inner Party members including O'Brien, is the realization by the Party that all previous oppressive regimes were nonetheless "infected" with liberal ideas about the individual:

Part of the reason for this was that in the past no government had the power to keep its citizens under constant surveillance. The invention of print, however, made it easier to manipulate public opinion, and the film and the radio carried the process further. With the development of television, and the technical advance which made it possible to receive and transmit simultaneously on the same instrument, private life came to an end. Every citizen, or at least every citizen important enough to be worth watching, could be kept for twenty-four hours a day under the eyes of the police and in the sound of official propaganda, with all other channels of communication closed. The possibility of enforcing not only complete obedience to the will of the State, but complete uniformity of opinion on all subjects, now existed for the first time.

With that development, the totalization of surveillance of Party members, not only does private life come to an end, but so does the possibility of sexual desire as truly liberating. Julia and Winston do manage to steal their moments together away from the Party. But the Party's enforcers, the Thought Police, are watching even when the lovers are convinced they are safe, and the revenge they exact for this transgression of Party control is enormous. It is significant that the instrument of this totalized surveillance is

the "telescreen," Orwell's projection of the future of television. As Orwell was writing *1984* in 1948, television was just emerging from the developmental hiatus forced upon the broadcasting industry by World War II. Many people were worried, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, about what this new medium would be, how it would function, how much control over its watchers it would create. Orwell's own concerns about the future development of television are reflected in *1984*'s telescreens, which on the one hand, broadcast an endless barrage of Party propaganda, and on the other hand, act as transmitters as well, enabling the Party to exercise the total surveillance it required.

Martin Esslin has claimed in his essay "Television and Telescreen," however, that Orwell's fears about television missed the mark on two counts. First, Orwell was evidently more concerned about the potential for televisions to become cameras, a technological development which has not taken place, overlooking the importance of "what they have actually become, the omnipresent, constant providers of highly colorful visual entertainment for the broad masses." Secondly, Orwell's notion of what these telescreens did transmit was the crudest possible sort of propaganda - martial music and endless lists of production figures - which overlooks the utility of entertainment as a form of mass manipulation. In Esslin's words:

There is, after all, not that much difference between a society that floods the masses with cheap, novelettish romance, raucous and sentimental pop music, and pornography to keep them amused and politically inert and one that does the same thing for commercial gain - but with the identical ultimate political result: apathy, ignorance of real issues, and acquiescence in whatever the politicians are doing. And does not commercial television do just that?

Furthermore, both Esslin and Irving Howe point out another weakness in Orwell's depiction of the telescreen when compared to the development that television has actually taken in the latter half of the twentieth century: the proles - fully 85 percent of the population of Oceania - are not required to have telescreens. If the machine-made novels and songs are being put onto the market in order to keep the masses complacent, wouldn't the telescreen prove much more effective? Moreover, the proles, kept free of the telescreen's powers of surveillance, retain the ability to have a private life which Party members have lost. The Party clearly regards the proletariat as not being worth watching, as being unable to develop the "humanity" which must be guarded against in Party members. As it is stated in *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchal Collectivism,* "What opinions the masses hold, or do not hold, is looked on as a matter of indifference. They can be granted intellectual liberty because they have no intellect."

This division of society into Party members and proles in *1984* was clearly modeled on the division which was coming into focus in the Soviet Union in 1948, in which Party members were closely monitored while proles were less controlled. Both Esslin and Howe, however, point out that Orwell's vision of the powerlessness and inertia of the proles did not bear out, given the evidence of history. In fact, numerous uprisings against the Soviet machine, from the Hungarian Revolution to the student uprisings in France, from the Prague Spring to the rise of Solidarity in Poland, to the eventual fall of

the Berlin Wall, demonstrate that the proletariat, and even party intellectuals, were not completely crushed by Party ideology, and that, in Esslin's words, "the totalitarian manipulation of popular feelings and ideas by the mass media is far less effective than Orwell had imagined." Nonetheless, by the novel's end, Big Brother is ultimately victorious, having won over the last man in Europe. In today's world, Big Brother is still a force, especially to those who worry about the continued possibility of the rise of totalitarianism today. However, there is another face to Big Brother, which is precisely that "manipulation of popular feelings and ideas by the mass media" about which Orwell warned. If people find in government endless new reasons to be vigilant about the incursions into personal liberties which *1984* depicts, they would do well to remember, as Neil Postman claims in the introduction to *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* that there is a very different version of the dystopian universe presented in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World,* in which "no Big Brother is required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity and history. As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think." Big Brother may not be watching; he might be broadcasting.

Source: Kathleen Fitzpatrick, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale, 1999.

Critical Essay #2

In the following essay, Davis argues that, in addition to its literary merits, 1984 *should be kept in the high school curriculum for its look at totalitarianism.*

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* has been challenged on such grounds as profanity, immorality, and obscenity. It has been charged with being Communistic, containing sex references, and being depressing. Some of these charges are absurd, and though some have a grain of truth when items are taken out of context, on the whole the book stands up well and though frequently challenged has a history of rarely being removed from classrooms and libraries. Critics, as well as readers in general, have recognized the book as significant and valuable since its appearance at the end of the 1940s. Some examples: On the dust jacket of the first American edition of *Nineteen Eighty-four* Bertrand Russell and Alfred Kazin are quoted. Russell states, "*Nineteen Eighty-four* depicts the horrors of a well-established totalitarian regime of whatever type with great power and skill and force of imagination." He adds that it is important that we should be aware of these dangers. Alfred Kazin characterizes the book as "an extraordinary experience overwhelming in its keenness and prophetic power." He further comments: "I hardly know which to praise more - Orwell's insight into the fate of man under totalitarianism, or his compassion for him." Reasons for reading and teaching *Nineteen Eighty-four* continue today to be much the same as these critics gave four decades ago. The book does express a mood of near but not complete despair. The mood is despair only if readers do not heed the warning of what will happen if we continue on some of our present courses. But we do not have to become soulless automatons. It is not foreordained. The scenario of *Nineteen Eighty-four* is that atomic wars had started in the 1940s, accelerated ten years later in Russia, Western Europe, and North America. This atomic war led the governments (Eurasia, Oceania, and Eastasia) to conclude that unless atomic wars stopped, organized society would be doomed. Of course, this would also mean the end of governmental power. Thus atomic war stopped, but bombs continued to be stockpiled awaiting the right time to kill a large segment of the world's population without warning in a few seconds. Orwell portrays this continued military preparedness as essential also for the continuation of the economic system and shows the consequences of a society in a constant state of war readiness, always afraid of being attacked.

As Erich Fromm says in the Afterword to the 1961 New American Library paperback, "Orwell's picture is so pertinent because it offers a telling argument against the popular idea that we can save freedom and democracy by continuing the arms race and finding a 'stable' deterrent." With technical progress geometrically progressing, the caves will never be deep enough to protect us. The novel begins on a bright cold day in April, "and the clocks were striking thirteen." From there on a world is presented that is permeated by fear and hate with such slogans as HATE WEEK, WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH. The society has nothing like our first amendment. Everything is censored by the MINISTRY OF TRUTH. It is even a crime to keep a diary and Winston Smith's life is endangered by doing so. Ironically Winston is employed by the MINISTRY OF TRUTH, and his job is to constantly rewrite history.

Government predictions which do not come true (and they never do) are made to disappear. And, of course, people have to be made to disappear too (to become nonpersons) if they commit THOUGHT CRIME, which the THOUGHT POLICE are to control. BIG BROTHER affirms that: "Who controls the past controls the future: Who controls the present controls the past." The following extended quotation from the book demonstrates in some detail how this control of the past was accomplished:

As soon as all the corrections which happened to be necessary in any particular number of the *Times* had been assembled and collated, that number would be reprinted, the original copy destroyed, and the corrected copy placed in the files in its stead. This process of continuous alteration was applied not only to newspapers, but to books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, sound tracks, cartoons, photographs - to every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance. Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date. In this way every prediction made by the Party could be shown by documentary evidence to have been correct; nor was any item of news, or any expression of opinion, which conflicted with the needs of the moment, ever allowed to remain on record. All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary. In no case would it have been possible, once the deed was done, to prove that any falsification had taken place. The largest section of the Records Department, far larger than the one in which Winston worked, consisted simply of persons whose duty it was to track down and collect all copies of books, newspapers, and other documents which had been superseded and were due for destruction.

A few cubicles away from Winston is Ampleforth, who juggles rhymes and meters, producing garbled versions of poems which have become ideologically offensive but for one reason or another are to be retained in anthologies. There is also a whole army of reference clerks who spend all of their time preparing lists of books and magazines to be recalled. There are also huge warehouses where corrected documents are stored and furnaces where original copies are burned.

By controlling all information BIG BROTHER controls responses of citizens, primarily through the giant two-way TV screens in every living space. These permit THOUGHT POLICE to observe all citizens to see that they are responding in a desirable manner - hating enemies and loving BIG BROTHER. Reality control, DOUBLETHINK in NEWSPEAK, means an "unending series of victories over our memory."

In *Nineteen Eighty-four* orthodoxy means not thinking or even needing to think. It is unconsciousness. Orthodoxy is to close the book. One of the U.S. Supreme Court justices in the Island Trees case talks about censorship resulting in a "pall of orthodoxy." One of the functions of literature in a free society is to help protect us from this "pall of orthodoxy." This book is one of the best examples of a work of considerable literary merit worth reading and studying in the classroom as part of a protection program against the orthodoxy pall. It is also a very interesting study of the effects of an orthodoxy that finally convinces Winston Smith, a party member who opposes the system, that four is five. It takes brain-washing and torture by the MINISTRY OF LOVE to accomplish this convincing.

Winston's final orthodoxy is: "Whatever the Party holds to be true is truth. It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party."

In answer to the question of why this particular novel to study the relationship between totalitarianism, technology, psychology, and language instead of a social studies, science, or language text, Roy Orgren, writing in the Fall 1983 *Connecticut English Journal,* says:

Simply because, set forth in a work of fiction, the ideas are more accessible, more interrelated, and more engaging; the sheer horror of totalitarianism is more real. We flinch when the truncheon-wielding guards in the MINISTRY OF LOVE crack Winston's fingers and shatter his elbow; we writhe in our armchairs as O'Brien virtually disembodies Winston with electric shocks; we shudder as moist pads are applied to Winston's temples; and we, like Winston, are dazed by the "devastating explosion," "the blinding flash of light" which so numbs his mind that he consents to seeing - no, actually sees - five fingers when only four are held to him.

We are jolted out of our complacency so that it is likely that we will never slacken our vigil against oppression and human rights violations. Orwell, with his presiding interest in language, shows how BIG BROTHER manipulates society and controls reality by corrupting language. NEWSPEAK is calculated to get rid of individuality by limiting the range of thought through cutting the choice of words to a minimum. As Syme, the NEWSPEAK expert, says, "You think, I dare say, that our chief job is inventing new words. But not a bit of it! We're destroying words - scores of them, hundreds of them, every day. We're cutting the language down to the bone. The Eleventh Edition won't contain a single word that will become obsolete before the year 2050."

Studying the effects of NEWSPEAK can only help us in cherishing our language with all of its rich diversity and ambiguities. Valuable, exciting classroom discussion and writing projects can grow from this, and surely the lesson of the importance of using language that is not vague and misleading but clear and precise can be learned. Another major emphasis of the novel is the use of technology combined with advertising techniques (especially by the government) that are deeply psychological to eliminate individuality and privacy. Many of the same techniques used in *Nineteen Eighty-four* are in use today in our world, and many of them have become much more sophisticated. We surely have full-wall TV screens and the two-way television. Closed circuit security systems are not just for banks anymore. In fact, they are practically everywhere. Heartbeat, respiration, surface tension of the skin, stiffness of hair, and temperatures can be measured remotely by voltage sensors and ultrasensitive microphones. Our government puts out a glut of newspeak. It is significant that National Council of Teachers of English Doublespeak Award has twice been awarded to Ronald Reagan. The number of records, many kept without our knowledge, on each of us stored in computers, retrievable in seconds by almost any person or organization with the knowhow, is frightening. Behavior modification and drug therapy are widely used. Studying about these technologies and techniques, discussing them, exposing them, can make students aware in a way that may serve to make them less vulnerable to these techniques. Perhaps the most interesting and discussable feature of Orwell's novel is its

description of the nature of truth. Is there an objective truth, or is "reality" not external? Does it exist only subjectively and internally? Is it reality that what the Party holds to be truth *is* truth? The Party believes that truth is only in the mind and that by controlling the mind truth is controlled. Controlling minds and truth is ultimate power. Truth is subordinated to the Party. As Erich Fromm says, "It is one of the most characteristic and destructive developments of our own society that man, becoming more and more of an instrument, transforms reality more and more into something relative to his own interests and functions. Truth is proven by the consensus of millions; to the slogan 'how can millions be wrong' is added 'and how can a minority of one be right.'" The "one" must be insane. The "consensus truth" concept can serve as the basis for much valuable discussion about many things such as individuality, minority rights, majority rule, and, of course, values.

It is hard to imagine a modern novel that has more reasons to be read and taught. In addition to its literary merit, it has special implications for our times and the society toward which we may be heading. Its depiction of a well-established totalitarian regime, a nuclear stand-off with a world in constant fear, total censorship, NEWSPEAK, DOUBLETHINK, orthodoxy, and consensus truth offer almost sure-fire topics for discussion and writing in classes - discussions that can serve to foster sincere thinking and maturity. Yes, the book is depressing, but readers can react to that by trying to do positive things to influence the future rather than becoming more depressed and pessimistic. *Nineteen Eighty-four* teaches us, as Erich Fromm says at the end of his essay, "the danger with which all men are confronted today, the danger of a society of automatons who will have lost every trace of individuality, of love, of critical thought, and yet who will not be aware of it because of 'doublethink'. Books like Orwell's are powerful warnings."

Critical language involving reading, thought, and discussion of books like *Nineteen Eighty-four* may help us to avoid Winston's fate of total loss of self, of humanity, as presented in the last paragraph of the novel:

He gazed up at the enormous face. Forty years it had taken him to learn what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark mustache. O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! Two gin-scented tears trickled down the sides of his nose. But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother.

Source: James E. Davis, "Why *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Should Be Read and Taught," in *Censored Books*, Scarecrow Press, 1993, pp. 382-87.

Critical Essay #3

In the following essay, Ranald discusses Orwell's presentation of controlled madness and of a reversed society in his novel.

"I shall save you, Winston, I shall make you perfect." So O'Brien, the Grand Inquisitor of *1984,* has said to the antihero Winston Smith, in one of the dream sequences which strangely go almost unnoticed in that inverted Platonic dialogue which is Orwell's monument. It is as if the lives of the Platonic philosopher-kings were viewed from the point of view of one of the Auxiliaries. But it is not the old style of dialogue, in which there is a certainamount of free interchange of ideas, even between master and disciple. Rather, in this new style of dialogue, one party has the ability to inflict pain on the other party in any degree desired, even while the two proceed to discuss the most abstruse political questions. Dialogue implies the ability to have one's mind changed, but in the condition of "controlled insanity" which is *1984,* communication consists in the imposition of an insane view of reality by the strong few upon the weak many, through overwhelming force. O'Brien must "save" Winston, but this is religious salvation turned backward, and its purpose is to prevent even one "just man" from existing anywhere in the world, by convincing that man that he is insane. "Is it possible that a whole society can be insane?" asked Orwell in one of his essays, speaking of Hitler's Germany.

Orwell's *1984* is about religion reversed, law and government reversed, and above all, language reversed: not simply corrupted, but reversed. In the world of *1984,* the mad world which Orwell sought by his writing to lead men to *avoid* - for he was a political activist not interested in simple prediction - in this world, which I call Orwell's "antiuniverse," because of his conversion of all the positives of Western civilization into their negatives, all of the channels of communication are systematically being closed down, restricted to just the minimums necessary for the technical functioning of society. For Orwell, as for his master, Swift, language and politics are equivalents, and political corruption is always preceded by linguistic corruption, of which the phrases "two plus two equals five" and "black is white" are only the ultimate logical (and mad) projections. Communication will become, if the political tendencies which Orwell saw in the forties continue, not the transmission of meaning, but the attempt to *avoid* meaning in furtherance of a political end which we feel must be mad but are unable to prove, even as Winston Smith cannot prove to his tormentor the madness of the Party's doctrines.

Instead of the Electric Age resulting in a quantum jump in communication, as Professor McLuhan asserts in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,* when he says that "as electrically contracted, the globe is no more than a village," what McLuhan calls both "cool" and "hot" media have been, in the Orwellian view, dampened down as between individual and individual, and distorted terribly as between the individual and the State. I mention McLuhan not only because his book is current but also for what I think is his place in the direct line of descent from Orwell on the general subject of communication, and Orwell would have understood what McLuhan was driving at while not agreeing with most of his doctrine. At any rate, the deliberate, managed breakdown in communication - not extension but breakdown - at the linguistic level and indeed in all

media is one of Orwell's master themes, as it is such a theme in the Theater of the Absurd, the Beat Generation, the use of the lunatic in literature to convey truth, as in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* or the recent hit play, *Marat-Sade,* and, it may be, in the language of current underground cultures, such as that of drug addiction or crime.

If meaningful communication has less and less chance of conveying impressions in the usual communications media, how does Orwell envision communication as taking place in his nightmare world? He does so primarily at the level of the infliction of pain. Torture is communication. Worse, to be tortured is not the worst thing in the world, if only the victim is *understood* by his torturer, as Winston feels he is understood by O'Brien.

In the mad world of *1984,* all human relationships are based on pain, either its infliction or its avoidance. "We are the dead," says Winston of himself and his mistress, Julia, but just as the Platonic dialogue form has been adapted in *1984* in the torture scenes for satiric purposes, so Orwell has modified the Cartesian *cogito* to " 'I suffer pain, therefore I am.'" No communication, nor selfdefinition, nor relation can occur in the Orwellian anti-universe without pain, and in this Orwell follows an important trend in modern literature. If one suffers pain, he is at least certain of being alive.

One is reminded, in the relationship between O'Brien and Winston which is the only human relationship in *1984* - the Winston-Julia relationship being hollow and merely physical by comparison - of relationships between pairs of characters such as Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov, and while we think of *Crime and Punishment ,* one of the prime progenitors of this theme, also Raskolnikov and Porfiry Petrovitch. "Suffering, Rodion Romanovitch, is a great thing," observes Porfiry, as he invites him to confess. There is the climactic, though brief, relationship between Joe Christmas and Percy Grimm - their entire lives having been preparation for this confrontation - in *Light in August,* when the only way in which Grimm can become a man communicating with another is via an automatic pistol, emptying its magazine through a tabletop into his victim and then castrating him and defining him as the hated *Other.* There is the relationship between the former *agent provocateur,* Rubashov, and the commissar Gletkin in Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* which, written a decade before *1984,* shows some of the same but is on a cruder level, especially in terms of the dynamics of the power-pain relationship between O'Brien and Winston Smith. And in Brecht's haunting 1927 play, *Im Dickicht der Städte,* occurs the very sophisticated perception of the ambivalent relationship between Shlink, the Malay lumber dealer residing in the Chicago of 1912, and George Garga. "You observe the inexplicable boxing match between two men □," says Brecht, and he explains it in sexual terms. Shlink explicitly dies the death of Socrates, by poison, sitting upright, even as Winston Smith dies the death of Socrates reversed: spiritually, not physically, by the mastering of his will by that of the Party incarnated in O'Brien. Orwell explains the relationship in ostensibly non-sexual, political dynamics. Brecht uses such communication through pain in many of his plays, especially, I should say, in that between P. Mauler and Joan in *St. Joan of the Stockyards,* and in the enforced metamorphosis of Galy Gay in *A Man's a Man.* This kind of communication only between political or sexual aggressors and victims is that which Orwell was to dwell on. The Brechtian distinction between sexuality and politics is blurred by Orwell, because he saw the two drives as convertible, each an aspect of the

other, in that sexual frustration or hysteria was one of the primary causes of political fanaticism.

That human beings can communicate only by inflicting pain on each other, or at any rate that this will be the state of things soon, is a desperate thesis. Orwell's life was a consistent development toward this frightening perception. But Orwell was, as has been said of Browning, "an ardent and headstrong conventionalist," who was defining a norm by its opposite, a moral universe by an antiuniverse. Orwell saw human life under the primary philosophical category of *relation,* and this may be why he was never able to create a "round" character, even those characters which in the terms of what we know about Orwell's experience were clearly his own personae, aspects of himself at different stages of his life. He is the "I" as a schoolboy and the "I" as a Paris *plongeur* and English tramp in "*Such, Such were the Joys* " and *Down and Out In Paris and London,* respectively. Incidentally, neither of these purportedly autobiographical documents is really the objective truth, as those who knew Orwell have testified; he took his artist's liberty of arranging the time sequence in *Down and Out* in the same way as Thoreau did in *Walden,* compressing two years of clock time into a single seasonal year, for increased concentration of effect. There is the civil servant, Flory, in *Burmese Days:* Orwell, or rather his portrait of the artist as a young imperialist. Flory shoots himself, as one imagines Orwell about to do in Burma before he resigned from the Indian Imperial Police. There is Winston Smith as middle middle-class man of the future, whom I have called a member of the Auxiliaries, the Outer Party, in the inverted Platonic Republic which is *1984.* There is S. Bowling, the very important member of the English lower-middle class who has sharp perceptions about his society as the result of native wit and his educating himself beyond his class because of absurd circumstances in World War I. There is Gordon Comstock, the literary intellectual of the English lower-middle class, who refuses to climb out of his impoverished and unsatisfactory life at first when he has the opportunity; he leads the life of *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner,* refusing the shackles of his society, until he is brought to bay by that most fundamental drive: the procreation of the race. Least believable of his characters is the antiheroine of *A Clergyman's Daughter* - a novel in which we again have the impoverished middle class, seen through the eyes of a neurotic and repressed woman, and in this portrait we see more than a hint of Orwellian antifeminism. For while Orwell deplored what he saw as the modern denigration of love in favor of sheer power, he recognized power as the greater reality.

In each of these characters, essentially the same story - the conflict of an individual with an unsatisfactory, if not mad, society - is told from a somewhat different perspective. But all of them are two-dimensional, and the central focus is not even on society, but on power, the central question of which, as Orwell himself said, was "how to prevent it from being abused." Orwell's basic motivation was to communicate with other social classes, especially with the working class which is as near to a true hero, albeit a collective hero, as he ever developed. And he emphasized the difficulties of such communication: for him, bred to an extreme class-consciousness despite himself, the simple step of walking into a working-class pub, incognito, was as hazardous as visiting a tribe of isolated Australian aborigines, and his equivalent of obtaining First Class Honours in P.P.E. at Oxford, which he never attended, was his being accepted by English coal miners and

Spanish revolutionaries in *The Road to Wigan Pier* and *Homage to Catalonia.* This effort at interclass communication on Orwell's part was to succeed beyond the achievements of any of his English contemporaries. But it led him to pessimistic conclusions. "If there is hope," writes Winston Smith in *1984,* "it lies in the Proles." But the Proles will never become rebellious against their insane surroundings until they become self-aware first, and, as O'Brien assures Winston, they will never become self-aware until they rebel, a rebellion which is impossible.

Lately, one still reads Orwell, and his books are available in most paperback stores, but few write about him. Perhaps this is a blessing, or the highest form of praise of him. One wonders why there is such a lack of interest in the man. Or is it that everything which can be said about him and his portrayal of the Mad World has been said? I doubt it. The biographical and critical studies, such as they are, leave one absolutely unsatisfied. Lionel Trilling expressed best a belief about Orwell, in his introduction to *Homage to Catalonia* fifteen years ago, that Orwell was a very unusual kind of man, almost a saint, and not a genius; one who, uncharacterized by really superior intelligence, *lived* his vision as well as *wrote* it. He is in this view a Mark Twain, Thoreau, Whitman, or possibly Henry James. "He is not a genius - what a relief!" observed Trilling. "He was a virtuous man."

Yet Orwell lived a life of allegory on which his works are the commentary, unobtrusively passing through the very worst phase to date of European and British civilization, noting everything about the actual power realities, successfully communicating in his personal life with a wide range of nationalities and classes both inside and outside of his own country. He told us something very significant about his works when, in his will, he specified that no biography of him was ever to be written. Perhaps his mystery is that he made no mysteries in his writings, though his life I would call mysterious; he may have concluded early that the rarest of all sophisticated literary devices is clarity. As he wrote of a mad antiuniverse in his work, and expressed his despair at the breakdown of valid communication, so his style was exceptionally clear, as though he would prove his point in terms of technique by its opposite, just as he wished to establish a norm by a portrait of its opposite. For him, the only valid communication is nondestructive communication.

In considering *1984* it is well to proceed by way of *Animal Farm,* for it is substantive: the first work, as he himself said later, "In which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole." This avowed political purpose accounts for the absence of real characters in Orwell's writing, other than himself moving through an absurd world. It is, in fact, to his political interest to show non-characters, such as Winston Smith who, passive as he is in the grip of overwhelming force against which he briefly rebels, is the only one in *1984* who is even given a complete name: the most ordinary English family name, and the first name of the most extraordinary Englishman of the century. Winston is passive and not self-aware, though we see something of his stream-of-consciousness through his dreams, his diary, and his reactions to various tortures in the Ministry of Love. He does not act; he is acted upon, even in his revolt against Big Brother. Winston, from the first moment we meet him, never makes a free decision.

We can document the completeness of Winston's slavery by reference to the series of dreams which he has, involving his mother, his sister, O'Brien, Julia, "The place where there is no darkness" - i.e., the torture cellars of the Thought Police - and The Golden Country. This last is the Orwellian archetypal dream, to be set against the nightmare of the Mad World, which perhaps ultimately stems from some boyhood experience.

Whatever it was, it is his pre-Adamic state, and it appears again in *Coming Up for Air,* in the hidden fishing pool with the huge trout. The dreams are a key to the deeper meaning of *1984,* and to the lunacy of this projected world which is even more sinister than has been perceived. The truth is that Winston Smith has been designed as a victim of his society and his Party from childhood; he is marked down years before we meet him at the beginning of the book, on that day when he sets his will against that of the Party and, on April 4, 1984, writes in his diary: DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER!

Seven years prior to that date, Winston had dreamed that he was in a dark room and that someone had said to him: "We shall meet again in the place where there is no darkness." And that someone was O'Brien. It is clear that Orwell intended his readers to perceive that Winston has been under surveillance for at least that long. It may be, in the highly efficient madness of 1984, that O'Brien, one of the society's most important men, has had no other job than to be a sort of "project officer" in charge of Winston's entrapment, torture, and repentance. To be the project officer of Socrates would have been a full-time job in ancient Athens.

It is O'Brien himself who explains to Winston in the torture chamber why such pains are being taken with him. And there is a deep psychological tie between Winston and O'Brien, with sexual overtones transposed into power fantasies. Winston has a guilt neurosis implanted in his subconscious; his parents and his sister have "disappeared," and as he tells Julia, he believes that he was partly responsible for this, though he had been only a child at the time. In defiance of his surroundings, he comes to the intuitive belief that everything about his society is mad. *They* foresaw this, too. Finally, when Winston is arrested by the Thought Police, and O'Brien appears to him in prison, he, Winston, realizes that he has always known that O'Brien was an agent of the State. "You knew this, Winston," said O'Brien. "Don't deceive yourself. You did know it - you have always known it." And Winston reflects, even as the guard moves toward him with a rubber truncheon: "Yes, he saw now, he had always known it."

This, too, follows the classic criminological theory that the criminal commits his crime *because* he is seeking to be caught and punished: seeking, in other words, structure and order, and in Winston's case seeking simply communication. The most ingenious tortures are used on Winston; some of them, for example, based on his fear of rats, could only have been known if he had been the object of minute study. This he has been - a textbook case.

As for Winston's job - the rewriting of history in a minor office of the Ministry of Truth - it is absolute madness by any rational norm, that is, if there were rational norms in 1984 instead of antinorms. History is bunk, and Winston's creation of a Party hero, a Comrade Ogilvy, has its exact, almost uncanny parallel in the published diary of the

Chinese Communist soldier, Lei Feng, passages of which were reprinted in the New York *Times* of April 7, 1963. Lei Feng is "a model for the youth of New China." He exists on the same evidence as Comrade Ogilvy and is more likely than not a fictional creation.

As for law, this instrument for the structuring of society is reversed in 1984. In that antiworld, there is no written law, and everything is, or can be, considered a crime at the pleasure of the State. The legal maxim *nulla poena sine lege* is completely reversed. All crimes are comprehended in one crime: thoughtcrime, which involves the religious offense (converted into political terms) of setting up one's will against that of Big Brother, in "an instant of rebellious pride." Thoughtcrime involves, not forbidden *acts,* but forbidden *thoughts.* The common law, or the civil law, takes no account of thoughts, other than tangentially in the doctrine of *mens rea* in the specific instance of the establishment of degrees of homicide or manslaughter. These regard only acts, while for the Party in a universe whose values are transposed, the act is unimportant; it is the prohibited thought which is the cardinal danger. When Winston confesses to all of the crimes it is possible to commit, including treason and murder, it makes no difference that the confession is objectively false. By willing these acts, he has done them.

If, finally, in *1984,* Orwell was presenting a satiric antiuniverse, with the expressed political intention of alerting democracy to the perils of its only and coming alternative, totalitarianism, what is his norm? It is expressed most straightforwardly in three works: *Down and Out ...* , *The Road to Wigan Pier,* and a little-known short history which he wrote in haste right after World War II and before *1984,* a *History* of the English people. This last is particularly valuable because it was not colored by the wartime propaganda from which even Orwell was not immune (proving his point about the Two Minutes' Hate and its all-enfolding nature in *1984,* if proof were needed). What is the special thing, he asks, which the English can contribute to the Western world? Simply their outstanding and - "by contemporary standards - highly original quality their habit of *not killing one another.*" In other words, he holds up the possibility of communication not by the infliction of pain but by rational discourse.

Orwell's thought, in this same *History,* about the English language adds to what he was to say in *Politics and the English Language* and in the linguistic satire of *1984.* English, he said, is peculiarly subject to jargons. And, as he always did, he made the jump from the quality of language to the morality of politics, concluding that "the temporary decadence of the English language is due, like so much else, to our anachronistic class system." This is, he adds, one of the chief evils resulting "when the educated classes lose touch with the manual workers." And we can foresee, at this juncture, where he will end, for these statements about language touch on his own deep desire to immerse himself in a class other than that "lower upper-middle class" into which he was born. One must have human contact, and the world, if one can no longer communicate through language but only through the infliction of suffering or the enduring of pain, is mad, because embraced pain is madness - or sainthood. For Orwell, it is madness. Orwell desired to communicate without smashing in faces with monkey wrenches, or goosestepping over the prostrate, in a world which he saw as that of an increasing, though at the same time a controlled, madness. It is easy to decry his vision, and, after

all, he was desperately ill while writing *1984,* which may have darkened his outlook. But there he is, an honest man at noonday with a candle, searching for his like, seeking rational discourse, and not finding it.

Source: Ralph A. Ranald, "George Orwell and the Mad World: The Anti-Universe of *'1984,'*" *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Autumn, 1967, pp. 544-53.

Adaptations

1984 (1984), a very fine adaptation of George Orwell's infamous novel, *1984,* by director Michael Kadford, features John Hurt and Richard Burton in his final screen performance.

Topics for Further Study

Explain how history is distorted and hidden from the citizens of Oceania. What is the result?

Discuss how Newspeak works to alter the expression of thoughts in *1984.* Give examples from today's society of institutions and leaders that have used language to distort reality.

Explain Winston's feelings about the proletariat, its past, present, and future.

Compare and Contrast

1948: West Berlin, Germany, is blockaded by the Soviets. The Americans begin an airlift to help the stranded Berliners.

1984: The Berlin wall, built in 1961 to keep East Germans from defecting to the West, remains in place.

Today: East and West Germany are reunified, after the Berlin wall was taken down in 1990.

1948/49: Mao Tse-tung battles Chiang Kai-shek and his nationalist forces, finally defeating them in 1949 and establishing a totalitarian communist regime.

1984: China has survived the severe cultural purging of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. Opened to the West in the 1970s because of President Nixon's visit in 1972, China is now trading with the West and incorporating some small democratic and economic reforms.

Today: In 1989, students demanding greater economic and civil rights reforms protested in Tiananmen Square in Beijing and were gunned down by Chinese troops. China continues to trade with the West, but its democratic movement has been slowed considerably.

1948/49: In September, 1949, President Truman announces that Russia, too, has the atom bomb, having developed the technology on its own.

1984: In 1991 the Cold War continues as the arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States escalates.

Today: On December 8, 1987, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev sign an agreement to dismantle all 1,752 U.S. and 859 Soviet nuclear missiles within a 300 to 3,400-mile range. In 1991 the former Soviet Republic breaks up. American investors are helping the Soviets establish new businesses as the Soviets concentrate their attention on revamping their economy.

1949: There are one million television sets in the United States and two dozen TV stations. There will be ten million TV sets by 1951, fifty million by 1959.

1984: Eighty-five million U.S. households own a television set. Cable television reaches almost half of those households. Computers start to become a household product in the United States with approximately 13% or 516,750 computers owned by consumers.

Today: Ninety-eight percent of U.S. households (95 million homes) own a color television set, 28 percent own three or more televisions, 65 percent have cable access. New TV technology on the horizon includes high-definition television. In 1995, over three million people owned a personal computer. Use of a vast computer network,

called the Internet, which originated in the 1960s and connects users from over 160 countries to each other via electronic mail, exploded during the 1990s with an estimated count of 20 to 30 million users in mid-1995.

What Do I Read Next?

Animal Farm (1945) was George Orwell's 1945 fable about the inevitable course of all revolutions. In it, a group of animals revolt against the farmer who is their master and set up their own form of government. The most intelligent animals, the pigs, are in charge, and hopes are high when the animals write their own bill of animal rights. However, over time, these rights are eroded as the pigs begin changing the rules.

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley (1931) influenced Orwell's own futuristic novel, *1984.* Huxley's totalitarian state, which exists in London six hundred years in the future, is less grim than Orwell's, but its inhabitants are as powerless and oppressed as the citizens of Oceania. Huxley's characterization and prose is less sophisticated than Orwell's, but his novel is funny and fascinating. The inhabitants of his society are controlled from before birth by a handful of elite rulers with sophisticated technology. When a primitive person, the Savage, from outside the society is introduced, he confronts the shallow values of the citizens.

This Perfect Day by Ira Levin (1970) is another futuristic novel about a totalitarian society with very different values from that of contemporary society. As in *Brave New World,* citizens dull their pain and fears through drugs and are genetically very similar. Those who have genetic differences have a greater tendency to be dissatisfied with the pacified society, which is controlled by a huge computer that dispenses the mood-altering drugs.

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood (1985) is the story of a woman named Offred, who lives in the Republic of Gilead, an oppressive society of the future in which women's roles are severely limited.

Harrison Bergeron, a satirical story by Kurt Vonnegut, was inspired by Orwell's *1984* and Huxley's *Brave New World.* Harrison lives in a totalitarian state in the future. He is very intelligent - not an advantage in this society - so to "correct" this "defect" and allow Harrison to be as mediocre and middle-of-the-road as his fellow citizens, doctors plan to perform brain surgery. However, Harrison is whisked away by an elite group that secretly controls all of society and given a choice: join the rulers and disappear from society for good or be lobotomized.

We by Russian writer Yevgeny Zamyatin (1924) influenced George Orwell's *1984.* It, too, is a dystopian novel set in the future, in this case the twenty-sixth century, and features a totalitarian state. This society, called OneState, is ruled by a Big Brother-type dictator called simply Benefactor, who has scheduled the day of every citizen down to the very minute. The narrator, D-503 (all the citizens have numbers, not names), is the designer and builder of a space probe called INTEGRAL and is waiting for the day when he finally has the Great Operation: the lobotomy the government performs to erase the last vestige of each individual's humanity: the imagination.

Further Study

Paul Chilton and Aubrey Crispin, editors, *Nineteen Eighty- Four in 1984,* Comedia Publishing Group, 1983.

Collection of essays focusing on the relevance of Orwell's novel in contemporary political and social life.

College Literature, Vol. XI, No. 1, 1984, pp. 1-113.

Issue devoted to studies of *1984.*

Miriam Gross, editor, *The World of George Orwell,* Simon Collection of critical and biographical essays.

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Kazin discusses the political nature of Orwell's novel.

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Norman Podhoretz, "If Orwell Were Alive Today," in *Harper's,* Vol. 266, No. 1592, January, 1983, pp. 30-2, 34-7.

Podhoretz, using the text of *1984* as evidence, claims Orwell for the neo-conservatives.

Ian Watt, "Winston Smith: The Last Humanist," in *On Nineteen Eighty-Four,* edited by Peter Stansky, W. H. Freeman & Co. 1983, pp. 103-13.

Watt describes Winston Smith as a humanist and his destruction at the hands of the Party as the destruction of the values of humanism.

George Woodcock, *Remembering Orwell,* edited by Stephen Wadhams, Penguin, 1984.

Woodcock disagrees with writers such as Podhoretz who claim Orwell for the neo-conservatives, placing him instead in a line of English literary radicals including Jonathan Swift and Charles Dickens.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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