

1984



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE ORWELL

Eric Blair was born and spent his youth in India. He was educated at Eton in England. From 1922-27 he served in the Indian Imperial Police in Burma. Through his autobiographical work about poverty in London ([Down and Out in Paris and London](#), 1933), his experiences in colonial Burma ([Burmese Days](#), 1934) and in the Spanish Civil War ([Homage to Catalonia](#), 1938), and the plight of unemployed coal miners in England ([The Road to Wigan Pier](#), 1937), Blair (who wrote under the name George Orwell) exposed and critiqued the human tendency to oppress others politically, economically, and physically. He is best known for his satires of totalitarian rule: [Animal Farm](#) (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). Both books were widely considered to be indictments of Communism under Joseph Stalin, but Orwell insisted that they were critiques of totalitarian ideas in general, and warned that the nightmarish conditions he depicted could take place anywhere. In 1947 a lung infection contracted in Burma worsened, and in 1950 Orwell succumbed to tuberculosis at the age of 46.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Orwell was a socialist, the direct result of his service as a militiaman on the Republican side against the Fascist general Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War. Upon his return to England he joined the British Independent Labour Party and began to write against Stalinism and the Nazi regime. Orwell was also influenced by anarchist critiques of Soviet communism and by the Marxist writings of Leon Trotsky, the exiled communist revolutionary and model for Emmanuel Goldstein in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In 1946 Orwell wrote, "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."

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

In 1516, Sir Thomas More published a book called [Utopia](#). Its title meant, in Greek, either "good place" or "no place," and the book described an ideal society in order to criticize More's own society. Utopia was not the first book to imagine a perfect society; Plato's *Republic*, for example, does the same thing. But Utopia did give the genre a name, and numerous writers over the years wrote their own Utopian novels. In addition, a number of writers wrote Dystopian novels, in which they imagined the worst possible society, and used it to criticize

their current world. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a dystopian novel. The primary literary model for *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is considered to be H.G. Wells's anti-Utopian satire *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), but Orwell was also influenced by the writings of the 18th century satirist Jonathan Swift, author of [Gulliver's Travels](#) (1726). Prior to writing *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell wrote and published essays on Aldous Huxley's [Brave New World](#) (1932), Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (1907), and Yevgeny Zamyatin's [We](#) (1924), dystopian novels set in an imaginary future, and James Burnham's nonfiction political tract *The Managerial Revolution* (1941).

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel
- **When Written:** 1945-49; outline written 1943
- **Where Written:** Jura, Scotland
- **When Published:** June 1949
- **Literary Period:** Late Modernism
- **Genre:** Novel / Satire / Parable
- **Setting:** London in the year 1984
- **Climax:** Winston is tortured in Room 101
- **Antagonist:** O'Brien
- **Point of View:** Third-person omniscient

EXTRA CREDIT

Outspoken Anti-Communist. Orwell didn't just write literature that condemned the Communist state of the USSR. He did everything he could, from writing editorials to compiling lists of men he knew were Soviet spies, to combat the willful blindness of many intellectuals in the West to USSR atrocities.

Working Title. Orwell's working title for the novel was *The Last Man in Europe*.



PLOT SUMMARY

In the future world of 1984, the world is divided up into three superstates—Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia—that are deadlocked in a permanent war. The superpowers are so evenly matched that a decisive victory is impossible, but the real reason for the war is to keep their economies productive without adding to the wealth of their citizens, who live (with the exception of a privileged few) in a state of fear and poverty. Oceania, made up of the English-speaking nations, is ruled by a group known simply as the Party, a despotic oligarchical

collective that is ideologically very similar to the regimes in power in the other two superstates, though each claims that their system is superior to the others. The Inner Party, whose members make up 2% of the population, effectively govern, while the Outer Party, who number about 13% of the population, unquestioningly carry out their orders. The remaining 85% of the population are proles, who are largely ignored because they are judged intellectually incapable of organized revolt. In order to maintain its power, the Party keeps its citizens under constant surveillance, monitoring even their thoughts, and arresting and "vaporizing" individuals if they show signs of discontent or nonconformity. The Party's figurehead is Big Brother, whose mustachioed face is displayed on posters and coins, and toward whom every citizen is compelled to feel love and allegiance. Organized hate rallies keep patriotism at a fever pitch, and public executions of prisoners of war increase support for the regime and for the war itself.

Winston Smith, a quiet, frail Outer Party member who lives alone in a one-room flat in a squalid apartment complex called Victory Mansions, is disturbed by the Party's willingness to alter history in order to present its regime as infallible and just. A gifted writer whose job at the Ministry of Truth is to rewrite news articles in order to make them comply with Party ideology, Winston begins keeping a diary, an activity which is not illegal, since there are no laws in Oceania, but which he knows is punishable by death. Since every room is outfitted with a telescreen that can both transmit and receive sounds and images, Winston must be extremely careful to disguise his subversive activities. He imagines he is writing the diary to O'Brien, a charismatic Inner Party bureaucrat whom Winston believes is a member of a fabled underground counterrevolutionary organization known as the Brotherhood. Winston is also writing in order to stay sane, because the Party controls reality to the extent of requiring its subjects to deny the evidence of their own senses, a practice known as *doublethink*, and Winston knows of no one else who shares his feelings of loathing and outrage.

One day at work, a dark-haired girl whom Winston mistakenly suspects of being a spy for the Thought Police, an organization that hunts out and punishes unorthodox thinking (known as *thoughtcrime*), slips him a note that says "I love you." At first, Winston is terrified—in Oceania, individual relationships are prohibited and sexual desire forbidden even to married couples. However, he finds the courage to talk to the girl, whose name is Julia, and they begin an illicit love affair, meeting first in the countryside, then in the crowded streets, and then regularly in a room without a telescreen above the secondhand store where Winston bought his diary. The proprietor, Mr. Charrington, seems trustworthy, and Winston believes that he, too, is an ally because of his apparent respect for the past—a past that the Party has tried hard to eradicate by altering and

destroying historical records in order to make sure that the people of Oceania never realize that they are actually worse off than their ancestors who lived before the Revolution.

Meanwhile, the lovers are being led into a trap. O'Brien, who is actually loyal to the Party, dupes them into believing he is a counterrevolutionary and lends them a book that was supposedly written by the exiled Emmanuel Goldstein, a former Party leader who has been denounced as a traitor, and which O'Brien says will initiate them into the Brotherhood. One night, the lovers are arrested in their hiding place with the incriminating book in their possession, and they learn that Mr. Charrington has all along been a member of the Thought Police.

Winston and Julia are tortured and brainwashed by O'Brien in the Ministry of Love. During the torture in the dreaded room 101, Winston and Julia betray one another, and in the process lose their self-respect, individuality and sexual desire. They are then released, separately, to live out their broken lives as loyal Party members. In the closing scene, Winston, whose experiences have turned him into an alcoholic, gazes adoringly at a portrait of **Big Brother**, whom he has at last learned to love.



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Winston Smith – The protagonist of the novel, a 39-year-old Outer Party functionary who privately rebels against the Party's totalitarian rule. Frail, intellectual, and fatalistic, Winston works in the Records Department of the Ministry of Truth rewriting news articles to conform with the Party's current version of history. Winston perceives that the Party's ultimate goal is to gain absolute mastery over the citizens of Oceania by controlling access to the past and—more diabolically—controlling the minds of its subjects. Orwell uses Winston's habit of introspection and self-analysis to explore the opposition between external and internal reality, and between individualism and collective identity. Convinced that he cannot escape punishment for his disloyalty, Winston nonetheless seeks to understand the motives behind the Party's oppressive policies, and takes considerable personal risks not only to experience forbidden feelings and relationships but to contact others who share his skepticism and desire to rebel against Ingsoc (English Socialism).

Julia/The Dark-Haired Girl – Winston's dark-haired, sexually rebellious 26-year-old lover, who works in the Fiction Department at the Ministry of Truth. Julia is opportunistic, practical, intellectually primitive, vital, and uninterested in politics. She believes that the Party is unconquerable through organized resistance, and that secret disobedience is the only effective form of revolt. She delights in breaking the rules, and

her cunning and courageousness inspires Winston to take greater and greater risks. Julia disguises her illegal activities beneath an appearance of orthodoxy. For instance, she is an active member of the Junior Anti-Sex League.

O'Brien – The antagonist of the novel—a corrupt bureaucrat, member of the Inner Party, and symbol of dehumanizing and dehumanized despotism. O'Brien's charismatic appearance and manners fool Winston into believing that he too is working against the Party, leading Winston to incriminate himself. Even after O'Brien reveals himself to be the Party's instrument of terror, Winston continues to admire his intelligence, and under torture comes paradoxically to worship him as his savior.

Mr. Charrington – The elderly owner of the junk shop where Winston buys the diary, then the paperweight, and eventually rents a private bedroom for his trysts with Julia. Charrington induces Winston to trust him with his apparent reverence for the past, discreet behavior, and mild-mannered exterior. Actually a member of the Thought Police, Charrington ensures that the lovers are arrested.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Big Brother – An invention of the Party whose face appears on coins and posters throughout Oceania. Ostensibly a Party leader, he is a figurehead devised to focus the loyalty of Party members, whose feelings of love are more easily directed toward an individual than an organization.

Emmanuel Goldstein – An exiled former Party leader, who is vilified by the party as the Enemy of the People. He is the subject of the broadcast viewed at the Two Minutes Hate, author of *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*, and the supposed leader of the Brotherhood.

Syme – A politically orthodox linguist and colleague of Winston's whose job is to edit the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak dictionary. Syme's intelligence leads to his arrest and vaporization, as Winston suspects it will. O'Brien's mention of Syme after his disappearance encourages Winston to believe O'Brien is a secret ally.

Parsons – Winston's neighbor at Victory Mansions, a sweaty, pudgy, orthodox man who inadvertently criticizes the Party in his sleep and is reported to the Police by his vigilant daughter, a member of the Spies. Winston despises him for his unquestioning acceptance of Party doctrine.

Mrs. Parsons – Parsons' wife, who asks Winston to repair her sink and nearly discovers the diary.

Tillotson – A secretive and apparently hostile colleague of Winston's in the Records department who is employed on what Winston suspects are exactly the same tasks as himself.

Ampleforth – A colleague of Winston's whose job is to edit poems into compliance with Party ideology. He is eventually arrested for retaining the word "God" in a poem because he can

think of no other rhyme.

The Woman With Sandy Hair – A colleague of Winston's whose job it is to delete the names of persons who are vaporized.

The Man With The Quacking Voice – A bureaucrat who converses with Julia in *duckspeak* in the canteen at the Ministry of Truth.

Katharine – Winston's wife. Orthodox and unimaginative, she considers it their duty to the Party to bear children, and leaves him when their efforts to conceive end in failure. Winston once considered murdering Katharine during a nature walk, but decides not to act on the opportunity.

Martin – O'Brien's servant. Vaguely East Asian in appearance, Martin is privy to the incriminating discussion between O'Brien, Winston, and Julia.

Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford – Formerly prominent Party leaders accused of traitorous activities. Winston observes them when they are released after torture and are drinking gin at the Chestnut Tree Café. He also briefly possesses photographic evidence of their innocence.

The Skull-Faced Man – A starving prisoner at the Ministry of Love who falsely incriminates others in order to avoid being taken to the dreaded Room 101.

Bumstead – A fat, chinless man who offers a crust of bread to the starving skull-faced man and is beaten by guards.

The Old Prole Man – An incoherent, drunken old man whom Winston questions about the quality of life before the Revolution.

Winston's Mother – A saint-like woman who became depressed after her husband's disappearance. Left to care for her two children alone in extreme poverty, she nonetheless was generous with her affection. Winston feels guilty about the selfish way he treated her.

Comrade Withers – A disgraced Party member who is vaporized and becomes an *unperson*. Winston is assigned the task of deleting references to him in a news article.

Comrade Ogilvy – The fictional hero Winston invents to replace Comrade Withers.



THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



TOTALITARIANISM AND COMMUNISM

Orwell published *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in 1949, not as a prediction of actual future events, but to warn the world against what he feared would be the fate of humanity if totalitarian regimes were allowed to seize power as they had done recently in Germany under Hitler and in the Soviet Union under Stalin. In the aftermath of World War II, Anglo-American intellectuals were reluctant to criticize the Soviet regime, despite evidence of Stalin's despotism, because Russia had been an ally against Germany and Japan. Orwell, who witnessed firsthand the Soviet-backed Communists' brutal suppression of rival political groups during the Spanish Civil War, returned from the war an outspoken critic of Communism. For the rest of his life he worked tirelessly to expose the evils of totalitarianism and to promote what he called "democratic socialism." To reviewers who wished to see his book as a critique of Soviet Communism, Orwell maintained that he had set the book in Britain in order to show that totalitarianism could succeed anywhere if it were not fought against. In the novel, INGSOC represents the worst features of both the Nazi and Communist regimes. The Party's ultimate ambition is to control the minds as well as the bodies of its citizenry, and thus control reality itself. Totalitarianism was an outgrowth of Socialism, which arose as a response to industrialization, and sought to create more equitable societies by centralizing production and abolishing private property in favor of collective ownership. Emmanuel Goldstein's book, parts of which Winston reads in Book II, outlines the methods by which a totalitarian regime consolidates and extends its power.



THE INDIVIDUAL VS. COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

One way a totalitarian regime seeks to stay in power is by denying human beings their individuality, eradicating independent thought through the use of propaganda and terror. Throughout *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston tries to assert his individual nature against the collective identity the Party wishes him to adopt. He keeps a private diary, engages in a forbidden sexual relationship, and insists that his version of reality is the truth, as opposed to what the Party says it is. Instead of going to the Community Center or participating in social groups, he wanders the prole neighborhoods alone and seeks solitude in his apartment, engaging in behavior the Party calls *ownlife* and considers dangerous. After Winston is caught, the seven years of torture to which O'Brien subjects him are designed to destroy Winston's ability to think unorthodox thoughts. Before he enters Room 101, Winston is able to see that to die hating the Party is freedom, but by the end of the novel he is no longer capable of this. In order to save himself from O'Brien's rats, Winston does the one thing he can never forgive himself for—he betrays Julia and in doing so relinquishes his own

morality and self-respect.



REALITY CONTROL

The Party controls the citizens of Oceania through a combination of surveillance, terror, and propaganda. Although there are no laws to punish crime, the party can indiscriminately use torture, imprisonment, or vaporization on anyone whose thoughts or actions indicate that they may commit a crime in the future. The presence of telescreens in every room reminds citizens that they are constantly being observed, and all live in fear that their neighbors, coworkers, or even family members will report them to the Thought Police. Another way the Party controls the minds of the people is by destroying historical evidence that contradicts what the Party wishes the people to believe: for instance, when the Party reduces the chocolate ration, it also eliminates any information that would make it possible for anyone to verify that the chocolate ration had once been larger. Winston and his fellow employees in the Records Department are given the task of rewriting news articles and other literature in order to bring the written record into compliance with the version of history supported by the Party, a never ending job, since the Party constantly changes facts in order to support its policies. Books that describe the past in a way that does not conform with Party ideology are destroyed or translated into Newspeak, a form of English designed by the Party to lack words that are considered unnecessary or dangerous, and which thereby prevents revolutionary thoughts.



SEX, LOVE, AND LOYALTY

As Julia observes, the Party polices sexual relationships because it realizes that the hysteria caused by sexual frustration can be harnessed into war fever and leader-worship. Because of this, when Winston and Julia make love they think of it as a political act, "a blow struck against the Party." The sadistic fantasies Winston has about Julia before they begin their affair indicate the strong link between sexual repression and violence. The red sash Julia wears and her voluptuous appearance arouses feelings of hatred and resentment that only dissipate when he learns that he can possess her physically.

Another reason that the Party restricts sexual behavior is that sexual desire competes with loyalty to the State: after Winston makes love with Julia, he realizes that it is "the force that would tear the Party to pieces." In place of heterosexual love, the Party substitutes leader-worship and patriotic feeling: thus, when Winston betrays Julia under torture, he learns to revere O'Brien and worship Big Brother.



CLASS STRUGGLE

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, society is made up of three distinct social classes: the elite Inner Party, the industrious Outer Party, and vast numbers of uneducated proles. When Winston reads Goldstein's book, he learns that the history of humankind has been a cyclical struggle between competing social groups: the High, the Middle, and the Low. This theory was originated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 19th century and became known as Marxism. Marxists believe that the aim of the Middle group is to change places with the High, which they do by enlisting the support of the Low group. After the Middle group seizes power in a revolution, they become the High and thrust the Low back into servitude. Eventually a new Middle group splits off and the cycle begins again. At various points in the narrative, Winston entertains the hope that the proles will become conscious of their oppressed state and initiate a revolution. At other times, he despairs that since the proles cannot rebel until they become conscious, and cannot become conscious until only after they have rebelled, such a development is extremely unlikely.



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



BIG BROTHER

Big Brother represents the totalitarian government of Oceania, which is controlled by the Party and therefore synonymous with it. Winston learns in Goldstein's book that Big Brother is not a real person but an invention of the Party that functions as a focus for the people's feelings of reverence and fear. Worship of Big Brother also provides a substitute for organized religion, which has been outlawed by the Party.



THE GLASS PAPERWEIGHT

The old **glass paperweight** sold to Winston by Mr. Charrington represents the past. The level of craftsmanship required to make it is no longer achievable, since production standards have dropped and the Party has abolished beauty for its own sake. The tiny fragment of coral embedded in the paperweight represents the fragility of human relationships, particularly the bond between Julia and Winston, which is destroyed by O'Brien as easily and remorselessly as the paperweight is smashed by the Thought Police. The paperweight also symbolizes the room in Mr. Charrington's house that becomes a private sanctuary for the lovers, imagined by Winston as a separate world, frozen in time.



THE RED-ARMED PROLE WOMAN

The **prole woman** symbolizes fertility and reproductive capacity, and represents the strong and vital lower classes. She is compared to an animal (a mare), a fruit (a rose-hip), and an overripe turnip. Winston feels a "mystical reverence" toward her. Just before the lovers are arrested, the sight of her hanging laundry in the courtyard convinces Winston that the proles are "immortal" and will someday awaken and rebel against and overthrow the Party.



QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Signet Classics edition of *1984* published in 1961.

Book 1, Chapter 1 Quotes

There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any given individual wire was guesswork. It was conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.

Related Characters: Winston Smith

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 3

Explanation and Analysis

In Winston's apartment—as in homes, businesses, and public squares throughout Oceania, where Winston lives—there's a wall-mounted device called a telescreen. These screens have a dual purpose: they constantly broadcast government propaganda, and they allow the Thought Police (the Oceanic secret police) to surveil everything that English Socialist (Ingsoc) Party members say and do.


1984 is a commentary on the dangers of totalitarian regimes such as those of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, the latter of which Orwell witnessed firsthand during the Spanish Civil War. This passage specifically speaks to how authoritarian dictatorships like the Ingsoc Party withhold information in order to suppress the populace. It's particularly important that the Thought Police's exact procedures and mechanisms are "guesswork" for ordinary

people like Winston. This sets up Oceania as a state in which citizens are left in the dark, totally divorced from the inner workings of their government. The specific details of the system are kept intentionally vague—no one knows how the Police decide who to listen to and when, nor do they know exactly what happens to people once they're arrested. The ubiquitous yet mysterious telescreens are an example of how government-enforced ignorance keeps people confused, terrified, and subservient.

By exerting control not just over the public sphere, but over citizens' most private moments in their own homes, the government ensures that people are too afraid to even think seditious thoughts—let alone to act on them. Orwell's use of the phrase "from habit that became instinct" to describe people's self-policing is key, as it suggests that Outer Party members like Winston have been conditioned to suppress human nature itself. Living this way has robbed them of their humanity—their freedom to think, converse, and behave as they please. By using fear tactics to suppress people's most basic inclinations, the government effectively controls reality: everything one thinks, says, or does must conform to the Party's agenda.

☛ The thing that [Winston] was about to do was to open a diary. This was not illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least by twenty-five years in a forced-labor camp.

Related Characters: Winston Smith

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 6

Explanation and Analysis

Prior to the events of *1984*, Winston purchased a vintage diary from a junk shop in a seedy part of town. Formerly common items like diaries and pens have all but disappeared from Oceania over the past half-century since the Ingsoc Party came into power. This is no accident: one of the ways in which the Party upholds its totalitarian regime is by forbidding free expression through writing, so items like paper and writing utensils have been widely confiscated. This is because any form of individuality or independent thought—even something as innocuous as keeping a private diary—is seen as an avenue for rebellion, a challenge to the Party's collectivist authority.

Winston's purchase, therefore, was nothing short of a revolutionary act, as even possessing the diary (let alone writing in it) is considered seditious. The harsh penalty that he could potentially face for writing in his diary ("twenty-five years in a forced-labor camp") speaks to the extreme measures the government is willing to take to quash any individualism or rebellion among Outer Party members like Winston. That these punishments are doled out despite the fact that "there [are] no longer any laws" indicates that there are no underlying principles or checks on the government's power. There is only the ironically-named Ministry of Love, which forgoes fair trials for the accused and instead imprisons and tortures them for years on end, as Winston acknowledges here. Citizens are thus utterly defenseless, well aware that there is no justice system to protect them if they dare to put pen to paper.

☛ [...] Winston succeeded in transferring his hatred from the face on the screen to the dark-haired girl behind him.

Vivid, beautiful hallucinations flashed through his mind. He would flog her to death with a rubber truncheon. He would tie her naked to a stake and shoot her full of arrows like Saint Sebastian. He would ravish her and cut her throat at the moment of climax. Better than before, moreover, he realized why it was that he hated her. He hated her because she was young and pretty and sexless, because he wanted to go to bed with her and would never do so, because round her sweet supple waist, which seemed to ask you to encircle it with your arm, there was only the odious scarlet sash, aggressive symbol of chastity.

Related Characters: Julia/The Dark-Haired Girl, Winston Smith

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 15

Explanation and Analysis

This quote takes place during the Two Minutes Hate, a daily practice during which Oceania's Outer Party members must watch a film depicting enemies of the state and outwardly express hatred as they do so. Suddenly, while everyone else rails against the political dissidents featured onscreen, Winston finds his hatred shifting to his coworker Julia, the "dark-haired girl" who's sitting behind him.

Winston's fantasies of hurting Julia are notably tinged with sexuality: Julia is naked when he shoots her with arrows, and he's raping Julia when he slits her throat. Orwell

intentionally associates violence with sex here—the confusing and rather unsettling blend of violent hatred and sexual desire sets up the idea that these two emotions, though quite different on the surface, are both rooted in passion. Party members are forbidden to have sex for any reason other than procreation, and this passage helps establish why that is: the Party can harness its members’ pent-up sexual frustration and channel that passion into political fervor and leader-worship.

Winston’s sadistic fantasies are a direct result of his repressed sexual urges—he openly admits that he hates the dark-haired girl simply because “he wanted to go to bed with her and would never do so.” This sets up the idea that Party members are conditioned to resent one another much like they’re brainwashed to loathe enemies of the state via the Two Minutes Hate. By robbing them of sex, one of the primary ways in which people connect and bond, the government ensures that people’s loyalties to the state aren’t undermined by their loyalties to one another.

☞ Nobody heard what Big Brother was saying. It was merely a few words of encouragement, the sort of words that are uttered in the din of battle, not distinguishable individually but restoring confidence by the fact of being spoken. Then the face of Big Brother faded away again, and instead the three slogans of the Party stood out in bold capitals:


WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

Related Characters: Winston Smith

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 16

Explanation and Analysis

As the Two Minutes Hate draws to a close, the film that Winston and his coworkers are watching (which bashes enemies of the state) gives way to a different form of propaganda. Big Brother, the presumed leader of Oceania’s Ingsoc Party, gives a vague message of encouragement, and then the Party’s slogans appear on the screen.

Big Brother symbolizes the mixture of paternalism and fear

that the Oceanic government uses to suppress its citizens. As his name suggests, he’s a brotherly or fatherly figure who “restor[es] confidence,” so brainwashed members of the Outer Party are inclined to trust him. But his face also appears on posters throughout London with the ominous caption “BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU.” Thus, Big Brother is a symbolic reminder that, although the Party claims to have its members’ best interests in mind, in reality its purpose is to intimidate and instill fear. Party members forgo their individual freedoms in favor of obeying the regime that Big Brother represents. That Big Brother’s words are able to pacify the audience, despite not being “distinguishable individually,” suggests that the Party’s actual ideology isn’t important or even evident to Outer members. The mere presence of their leader and the implied threats associated with him are enough to inspire fervent loyalty.

The Party’s three slogans are also telling, as each one is an oxymoron—in reality, war is the opposite of peace, freedom is the opposite of slavery, and ignorance tends to make people vulnerable and weak rather than strong. By presenting these self-evidently false phrases as the irrefutable truth, the Party conditions its members to reject the logic they know to be true and instead to accept whatever the government tells them: that war and slavery benefit society, and that remaining ignorant is in people’s best interests. In doing so, the Party is able to control reality: what’s true becomes false, and what’s false becomes true. And by pairing these phrases with Big Brother’s face, the government sends the subliminal message that whoever dares to reject these logical fallacies and think for themselves will face dire consequences.

Book 1, Chapter 2 Quotes

☞ It was almost normal for people over thirty to be frightened of their own children. And with good reason, for hardly a week passed in which the *Times* did not carry a paragraph describing how some eavesdropping little sneak—“child hero” was the phrase generally used—had overheard some compromising remark and denounced his parents to the Thought Police.

Related Characters: Mrs. Parsons, Parsons, Winston Smith

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 24

Explanation and Analysis

When Winston goes over to his neighbors’ apartment to fix

their kitchen sink, he's disturbed by how the Parsons' son and daughter behave: they're playing a game in which they pretend to be the Thought Police and threaten to torture and execute enemies of the state. The Parsons' children are members of the Spies, an organization that trains kids to monitor their parents and turn them in for "thoughtcrime." (To be accused of thoughtcrime means to merely be suspected of harboring seditious beliefs—a person doesn't have to outwardly express or act on these beliefs to be deemed guilty.) The Spies are meant to parody the Scouts, a long-standing youth organization that instills values like friendship, self-sufficiency, community service, and leadership. Orwell uses this parallel in order to show how far the London of the novel has strayed from the London that his contemporary readers would have been familiar with—its former values have been totally usurped by the Ingsoc Party's agenda.

Winston reflects that it's essentially normal for people to "be frightened of their own children" under these circumstances, as kids like the Parsons' son and daughter relish giving their parents up to be tortured or killed. Indeed, Winston observes that Mrs. Parsons seems to walk on eggshells around her own children, a reversal of the traditional parent-child dynamic of children who respect their parents' authority. Orwell's audience is meant to find this kind of betrayal morally abhorrent, yet Oceanic society treats it as something to aspire to: the press reveres children who turn in their parents, calling them "hero[es]" rather than traitors. Given the normalization of this behavior, it's clear that the Party has effectively undermined personal relationships as a means of quashing dissent and policing people's behavior. By eradicating trust and loyalty, fundamental aspects of family units and society alike, the Party ensures that people will be too afraid to openly express themselves or question the government—even among their closest kin.

Book 1, Chapter 3 Quotes

☝☝ To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy, to forget, whatever it was necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it again, and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself—that was the ultimate subtlety: consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you had just performed. Even to understand the word "doublethink" involved the use of doublethink.

Related Characters: Winston Smith (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 35

Explanation and Analysis

Winston describes the concept of "doublethink," a style of consciousness that the Party demands all citizens adopt. Doublethink involves believing two contradictory things at the same time. One major example of doublethink comes in the form of the slogans of the ministries: "War is Peace," "Freedom is Slavery," and "Ignorance is Strength." Winston's job at the Ministry of Truth also involves doublethink; he must delete any evidence that contradicts the Party's new version of the truth, while at the same time erasing his own awareness that he has changed anything. The "ultimate subtlety" that Winston mentions refers to the fact that, while experiencing doublethink, people must also not be aware of the fact that they are experiencing it.



Doublethink highlights the extent of the Party's control over the population. If doublethink is successful, there is no need for indoctrination, laws, or even punishment; people will simply believe whatever the Party tells them, even if this doesn't make sense, because they have given up the ability to logically interrogate whether things are true or just. This is part of the Party's larger tactic of reality control, a method of oppressing the population through altering the way people see and interpret the world around them.

The concept of doublethink was inspired by real tactics used in totalitarian regimes such as Nazism and Stalinism. In Nazi concentration camps, for example, signs over the entrances read "Arbeit macht frei," meaning "Work sets you

free." In reality, of course, prisoners in the camps were either worked to death or gassed.

☞ The 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 predication 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.

Related Characters: Winston Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 39


Explanation and Analysis

Here Winston describes the tasks he performs at his job at the Ministry of Truth: "rectifying" cultural and historical records so that they don't contradict the Party's current version of truth, which is constantly changing. This role is particularly thankless for a number of reasons. Firstly, because all of the work is done in secret, Winston will never receive any acknowledgment or credit for what he does. Indeed, doing his job well means making it impossible to "prove that any falsification has taken place." Furthermore, he is constantly undoing his own work; every time he changes a record, he knows that perhaps only hours later he will have to change it again.

Finally, because the Party's version of the truth is constantly changing and will continue to do so into the foreseeable future, there is a nightmarish sense of monotony to Winston's work, which will never be complete, but will simply go on and on, its only purpose to strengthen the Party's control over reality. Indeed, this sense of monotony characterizes life in the world of *1984*. Orwell shows that existence under a totalitarian regime is endlessly dull and repetitive, as the Party erases all differentiation between people and their experiences.

☞ "Who controls the past," ran the Party slogan, "controls the future: who controls the present controls the past."

Related Characters: Winston Smith

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis

Here, while Winston does his mandatory morning exercises, he reflects on one of the Ingsoc Party's slogans. Winston knows that Oceania (the "superstate" where he lives) was allied with Eurasia (another superstate) just a few years ago—yet the Party is adamant that this was never the case, and that Oceania has always been at war with Eurasia. This contradiction proves that the Party can control how people perceive reality: by altering the truth of the past, they alter what's true in the present and what will be true in the future, and vice versa.



Even though Outer Party members like Winston are aware, on some level, that the Party's historical narratives are false, they're conditioned to deny their own consciousness and instead to engage in "doublethink"—accepting two contrary ideas at once. By controlling the populace in this way, the Party ensures that even if citizens clearly remember that something occurred, they will deny it for fear of deviating from the accepted narrative. There is also no guarantee that the historical record will reflect what actually happened; the totalitarian Party is the authoritative voice that decides what is fantasy and what is reality.

Through this slogan, Orwell poses the philosophical question of what, exactly, constitutes truth: if everyone in a society willingly deludes themselves into believing the same lie, does that lie become truth? Or does the objective truth remain, even when no one acknowledges it? Winston will struggle with this dilemma throughout the novel, ultimately concluding that the only way to survive under totalitarianism is not merely to engage in doublethink, but to give in to the regime's brainwashing and genuinely *believe* its dogma—fully accepting the Party's version of the past, present, and future.

Book 1, Chapter 4 Quotes

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.

Related Characters: Winston Smith

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 40

Explanation and Analysis

Winston works as a Records Department clerk in the Ministry of Truth, a government agency whose role is to produce propaganda and censor information. His job is to alter old newspaper articles and photographs in accordance with whatever the Ingsoc Party deems factual—in essence, history is “scraped clean” of people whom the Party has “unpersoned” (executed) and “reinscribed” to add or omit details as the government sees fit.

The very fact that Winston’s role exists poses the question of whether or not objective truth still exists in the world of the novel—and, more generally, if objective truth is at all compatible with totalitarian regimes like the Ingsoc Party. If the Party can erase all records of any person or any event, who is to say that those things ever existed? Even if an individual remembers an unpersoned friend or recalls events happening differently than what’s portrayed in the press, there is no way to prove what they know to be true. This is another way in which authoritarian governments like the Party are able to control their populations: denying them the ability to access the truth, even within their own minds. In bringing the past “up to date,” the Party effectively manipulates the past to suit their narrative and thereby shapes people’s memories as well as their current realities.

There was a whole chain of separate departments dealing with proletarian literature, music, drama, and entertainment generally. Here were produced rubbishy newspapers containing almost nothing except sport, crime, and astrology, sensational five-cent novelettes, films oozing with sex, and sentimental songs which were composed entirely by mechanical means on a special kind of kaleidoscope known as a versificator. There was even a whole sub-section—Pornosec, it was called in Newspeak—engaged in producing the lowest kind of pornography, which was sent out in sealed packets and which no Party member, other than those who worked on it, was permitted to look at.

Related Characters: Winston Smith

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 43

Explanation and Analysis

The Ministry of Truth, the government agency where Winston works, is responsible for producing propaganda for the lower classes. “Proletariat” is a Marxist term that refers to the working class, so Orwell’s use of it here indicates that Oceanic society follows the class hierarchy that Karl Marx theorized in his *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. The Inner Ingsoc Party of the novel represents the upper ruling class, the Outer Party represents the bourgeoisie or middle class, and the proletariat (“proles”) represent the working class.

The Party clearly views the proles as simple-minded, since the type of content produced for the proles—such as horoscopes, low-quality literature, and pornography—is rather crude. Winston will eventually learn that if the middle class wants to usurp the upper class, they must unite forces with the lower class (only to thrust the lower class back into subservience once the middle class has achieved their aims). Thus, by pacifying the proles with low-grade entertainment, the Inner Party ensures that working class people are kept distracted, uninformed, and politically apathetic so that the Outer Party can’t enlist their support and overthrow the Inner Party.

Importantly, the proles are allowed—indeed, encouraged—to have sex and consume pornography for pleasure, whereas Outer Party members are generally forbidden from sexual activity that isn’t strictly for procreation. No one other than the proles and the Pornosec employees are permitted to look at pornography. This is because the Inner Party uses sexual desire as a manipulative tool: it denies Outer Party members sex so that they’ll channel their pent-up frustration into leader-worship and so their loyalty to the Party isn’t challenged by their loyalty

to one another. On the other hand, the Party encourages proles to be promiscuous so that this group's energy and attention is directed elsewhere, and the Party can continue to subjugate them. The proles are essentially viewed as beyond contempt—the upper class considers them neither a threat nor an asset to the Party's agenda, so their loyalties are unimportant.

Book 1, Chapter 5 Quotes

☛ “Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be 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. [...] Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller. Even now, of course, there's no reason or excuse for committing thoughtcrime. It's merely a question of self-discipline, reality-control. But in the end there won't be any need even for that. The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect.”

Related Characters: Syme (speaker), Winston Smith

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 52

Explanation and Analysis

During their lunch break at the Ministry of Truth, Winston's coworker Syme waxes on about the purpose of Newspeak—the Ingsoc Party's pared-down version of the English language that restricts vocabulary and thereby limits people's freedom of thought. Syme's job is to compile words for the newest edition of the Newspeak dictionary; he's notably intelligent, so the fact that even he vehemently supports limitations on language speaks to how effective the Party's censorship is. Syme seems to believe that he's performing a beneficial service for society: narrowing people's “range of consciousness” so that “thoughtcrime” (the offense of merely thinking thoughts that contradict the Party) is impossible. However, he fails to see that, in doing so, he's chipping away at one of the most fundamental and beautiful aspects of being human: the ability to communicate richly and poetically through nuanced language. This is yet another tactic that the totalitarian Party uses to dehumanize the population, robbing them of the ability to express or even think any idea that doesn't align with the Party's “reality-control.”

In Orwell's 1946 essay “Politics and the English Language,”

published three years before *1984*, he explores how the debasement of language coincides with the rise of totalitarian regimes (like the Party in *1984*). He essentially argues that political language tends to be kept vague and rather meaningless in order to obscure the truth. Though he doesn't speak Russian, German, or Italian, he guesses that these languages have suffered given the brutal authoritarian governments that ruled Russia, Germany, and Italy in the mid-20th century. Given this context, Syme's adulation of Newspeak reads like a subliminal warning: Orwell believes that when people willingly allow their language to be censored and controlled, they surrender their most basic rights to think and speak the truth.

Book 1, Chapter 6 Quotes

☛ Tacitly the Party was even inclined to encourage prostitution, as an outlet for instincts which could not be altogether suppressed. Mere debauchery did not matter very much, so long as it was furtive and joyless, and only involved the women of a submerged and despised class. The unforgivable crime was promiscuity between Party members.

Related Characters: Katharine, Winston Smith

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 65

Explanation and Analysis

As Winston thinks back on his sexual experiences—his failed marriage to Katharine and his lone visit to a prostitute—he reflects on the Party's outlook on sex. While Outer Party members are openly discouraged from any sexual activity other than intercourse for procreation, it's an unspoken rule that having sex with working-class or poor prostitutes is an acceptable “outlet for instincts which could not altogether be suppressed.” This is further proof that the Party uses sex as a means of manipulation: members are forbidden from having casual sex with one another specifically to prevent them from growing too close and potentially undermining their single-minded loyalty to the Party.



On the other hand, having sex with a prole (a member of the apolitical working class) is permissible if not outwardly condoned. The lower class in Oceania is considered to be so inferior to the middle and upper classes that a Party member couldn't possibly develop a genuine emotional or intellectual connection with a prole. By relegating the proletariat class to the fringes of society, portraying them as people “of a submerged and despised class,” the Inner Party ensures that Outer Party members see proles only as sex


objects rather than potential friends, partners, or political allies.

Book 1, Chapter 7 Quotes

☞ It was as though some huge force were pressing down upon you—something that penetrated inside your skull, battering against your brain, frightening you out of your beliefs, persuading you, almost, to deny the evidence of your senses. In the end the Party would announce that two and two made five, and you would have to believe it. It was inevitable that they should make that claim sooner or later: the logic of their position demanded it. Not merely the validity of experience, but the very existence of external reality was tacitly denied by their philosophy. The heresy of heresies was common sense. And what was terrifying was not that they would kill you for thinking otherwise, but that they might be right. For, after all, how do we know that two and two make four? Or that the force of gravity works? Or that the past is unchangeable? If both the past and the external world exist only in the mind, and if the mind itself is controllable—what then?

Related Characters: Winston Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 80

Explanation and Analysis

Winston has been staring at a picture of Big Brother on the cover of a children's book, reflecting on the way that the Party controls his thoughts. He describes the pressure to conform to Party ideology at the expense of his own logic as a kind of physical force, so powerful that it could lead him to believe that $2+2=5$. Indeed, this statement accurately foreshadows the moment when O'Brien eventually does convince Winston through torture that $2+2=5$ at the end of the novel.

In this passage, Orwell conveys the idea that reality control is even more horrifying than death. Perhaps because he has little to live for, Winston does not fear death; however, his words suggest that the ability to reason is the most important thing in life, and without that, he might as well be dead. With this in mind, Winston's eventual fate at the end of the novel is even more tragic than if he had been killed. At the same time, this passage shows that Winston knows such a fate is "inevitable."

☞ *Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious.*

That, [Winston] reflected, might almost have been a transcription from one of the Party textbooks. The Party claimed, of course, to have liberated the proles from bondage. [...] But simultaneously, true to the principles of doublethink, the Party taught that the proles were natural inferiors who must be kept in subjection, like animals, by the application of a few simple rules.

Related Characters: Winston Smith

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 70



Explanation and Analysis

As Winston writes in his diary, he remembers witnessing two proletarian women fighting in the street over a saucepan. He laments that proles won't fight over more important things, reflecting that they'll never rebel against the status quo until they become conscious of their oppression—yet conversely, they won't rebel until they become conscious. The Ingsoc Party, of which Winston is an Outer member, claims to have freed the proles from slavery. Yet Winston recognizes that this sentiment can't be true—otherwise, the Party wouldn't oppress proles "like animals" or spread the idea that their class is naturally inferior.

Believing these two contradictory notions, as Winston points out, is an example of "doublethink," a process by which Party members are conditioned to hold two opposing ideas simultaneously. This is a crucial way in which the Party brainwashes its members to reject what they know to be true. By influencing people's thoughts in this way, the Party is able to manipulate reality, so that what is illogical becomes logical and what is untrue becomes true. And by characterizing the proletariat as an inherently weak class of people that must be simultaneously saved and subjugated, the Inner Party alienates Outer Party members from the proles. This ensures that these two groups can't relate to each other or unite in solidarity against the Inner Party, which Winston will later realize is the only effective means of overthrowing an oppressive regime.

☞ *Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows.*

Related Characters: Winston Smith

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 81

Explanation and Analysis



Here, Winston is writing in his diary and thinking about the methods that the Ingsoc Party uses to control reality. He believes it's inevitable that the Party will one day announce that two plus two equals five, as this is consistent with the Party's agenda of making itself the arbiter of truth. The Party isn't so much concerned with redefining mathematics as it is with destabilizing the very notion of objective truth. By erasing a fact as basic as two plus two equals four, they ensure that more complex truths (such as historical events or an individual's very existence) cannot be proven, and that perceived lies cannot be refuted.

Thus, Winston writes that the very essence of freedom is contained in the objective fact that two plus two equals four—"if that is granted, all else follows." What he means is that the truth rests in people's ability to openly express it—after all, if objectively true principles only exist in a person's mind and are essentially illegal to express, do those principles still exist? By outlawing facts (facts that Orwell's audience will almost certainly consider to be irrefutable), the Party asserts its authority to shape and redefine not only social norms, but the very essence of reality within people's minds.

Book 1, Chapter 8 Quotes

☝☝ And when memory failed and written records were falsified—when that happened, the claim of the Party to have improved the conditions of human life had got to be accepted, because there did not exist, and never again could exist, any standard against which it could be tested.

Related Characters: The Old Prole Man, Winston Smith

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 93

Explanation and Analysis

As Winston tries to have a conversation with an old proletarian man in a bar, he's frustrated to realize how fleeting and fragile people's memories are compared to the Ingsoc Party's monopolistic control of the historical narrative. The proles are generally apolitical, so theoretically the old man could provide Winston (an Outer


Party member) with an unbiased version of what life was like before the Revolution that catapulted the Party into power. But the man isn't able to tell Winston anything substantive about his past—he only remembers irrelevant details. Winston recognizes that ordinary people tend to remember small things about their personal lives but aren't able to formulate cohesive narratives of the past.

As a Records Department clerk at the Ministry of Truth, it's Winston's job to falsify old newspaper articles and photos so that they conform to whatever narrative the Party deems correct—whether that narrative is objectively true or not. He's therefore painfully aware of how easily the Party will be able to falsify Oceania's entire historical record over time. There is no "standard against which it could be tested," as people's firsthand memories of pre-Revolutionary life are limited. Orwell thus implicitly argues that preserving historical artifacts and accurate records is of the utmost importance, even—and especially—if they contradict a given society's dominant political narrative.

☝☝ What appealed to [Winston] about it was not so much its beauty as the air it seemed to possess of belonging to an age quite different from the present one. The soft, rainwatery glass was not like any glass that he had ever seen. The thing was doubly attractive because of its apparent uselessness, though he could guess that it must once have been intended as a paperweight. It was very heavy in his pocket, but fortunately it did not make much of a bulge. It was a queer thing, even a compromising thing, for a Party member to have in his possession. Anything old, and for that matter anything beautiful, was always vaguely suspect.

Related Characters: Mr. Charrington, Winston Smith

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 95-96

Explanation and Analysis

One evening, Winston is wandering around London when he stumbles on the same junk shop where he bought his diary. The shop, run by an old man named Mr. Charrington, is full of old and largely useless objects—most notably the glass paperweight described here, which Winston buys for a few dollars. The paperweight symbolizes the past, as the type of craftsmanship required to produce it belongs to a bygone era. It doesn't have a practical purpose, given that



hardly anyone in Oceania writes with a pen and paper anymore. For Winston, its value lies in its aesthetic beauty, a quality that the Ingsoc Party has all but eradicated from society. Any old or beautiful object is “always vaguely suspect,” which suggests that items that represent life prior to the Revolution (which brought the Party into power) are considered politically inflammatory.

Just prior to this, Winston was lamenting the fact that pre-Revolutionary life is largely lost to history, given the Party’s extensive censoring and altering of public records in order to promote its own narratives. Purchasing the paperweight, like Winston’s earlier purchase of the diary, is therefore an act of resistance and hope: the object represents the organic beauty and simple pleasures of pre-Revolution life that the Party has sought to eliminate from people’s memories and indeed from existence. Winston’s awareness of the object’s literal weight in his pocket speaks to its figurative weight as well, since it will become an object of great importance to Winston as a symbol of truth—physical proof that beauty isn’t dead and that the Party didn’t always exist.

Book 2, Chapter 2 Quotes

☝☝ In the old days, he thought, a man looked at a girl's body and saw that it was desirable, and that was the end of the story. But you could not have pure love or pure lust nowadays. No emotion was pure, because everything was mixed up with fear and hatred. Their embrace had been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act.

Related Characters: Winston Smith (speaker), Julia/The Dark-Haired Girl

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 126



Explanation and Analysis

Winston and Julia have just had sex, and Winston reflects on his feelings of desire for Julia and how these are inflected with the fear and hatred he constantly feels as a result of living under the Party. Because the Party controls citizens' actions and even emotions, simply the private act of expressing love and desire is subversive. However, although Winston is able to overcome the sadistic, violent urges he at first feels toward Julia, the Party still plays a role in their romantic encounter; indeed, what in a free society would be an ordinary private act becomes a major political

gesture with very serious ramifications.

☝☝ That was above all what [Winston] wanted to hear. Not merely the love of one person, but the animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that would tear the Party to pieces.

Related Characters: Julia/The Dark-Haired Girl, Winston Smith

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 126

Explanation and Analysis

Winston goes to meet Julia in an agreed-upon clearing in the countryside, far away from the Party’s surveillance. Here, Julia strips off her clothes and tells Winston that she abhors purity and goodness and that she loves the act of sex, which is what prompts the above quote.

This passage characterizes Julia as an ally to Winston’s cause of quietly rebelling against the Party. Her attitude here surprises Winston because Julia is a member of the Junior Anti-Sex League, which promotes the Party’s agenda of enforced chastity. The Party uses sex as a tool for manipulation: it forbids sex between Party members (other than for procreation), so that members will channel the resultant frustration and repressed passion into political devotion. Placing limitations on sex and romance also prevents people from forming deep bonds that could compromise their ties to the Party. This is why Julia’s “animal instinct” and “simple undifferentiated desire” for sex please Winston so much, as these characteristics fly in the face of what the Party promotes through the Junior Anti-Sex League. Simply having sex for pleasure is an act of rebellion against the Party.

With this, Orwell suggests that following one’s primal desires is a powerful means of resisting totalitarian regimes like that of the Party. This harkens back to Book 1, Chapter 1, in which the self-censoring of one’s thoughts, speech, and behavior while under surveillance was described as “habit that became instinct.” By instead reconnecting with one’s true “animal instinct[s]”—in this case, by having and enjoying sex—a person can reclaim natural aspects of their humanity that the Party has tried to sanitize and suppress.

Book 2, Chapter 3 Quotes

☞ There was a direct, intimate connection between chastity and political orthodoxy. For how could the fear, the hatred, and the lunatic credulity which the Party needed in its members be kept at the right pitch, except by bottling down some powerful instinct and using it as a driving force? The sex impulse was dangerous to the Party, and the Party had turned it to account.

Related Characters: Winston Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 133



Explanation and Analysis


Julia has explained to Winston how the Party utilizes sexual repression as a way of creating and harnessing frustrated energy that can then be directed toward the Party's own political ends. Winston agrees, and muses that if left uncontrolled, sexuality would be a direct threat to the Party. Once again, Orwell shows that characters in the world of *1984* are not able to understand their own thoughts and feelings except in relation to the Party: every act, thought, and emotion is instantly categorized as either orthodox or subversive. This passage is also significant because of its wider implications beyond the issue of totalitarianism. Although the sexual repression depicted in *1984* is extreme, Orwell's point about the ways in which sexual repression can be used to create political obedience is not necessarily limited to totalitarian regimes.

Book 2, Chapter 4 Quotes

☞ He turned over towards the light and lay gazing into the glass paperweight. The inexhaustibly interesting thing was not the fragment of coral but the interior of the glass itself. There was such a depth of it, and yet it was almost as transparent as air. It was as though the surface of the glass had been the arch of the sky, enclosing a tiny world with its atmosphere complete. He had the feeling that he could get inside it, and that in fact he was inside it, along with the mahogany bed and the gateleg table and the clock and the steel engraving and the paperweight itself. The paperweight was the room he was in, and the coral was Julia's life and his own, fixed in a sort of eternity at the heart of the crystal.

Related Characters: Winston Smith (speaker), Julia/The Dark-Haired Girl

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 147

Explanation and Analysis

Winston and Julia have secretly met in the room above Mr. Charrington's junk shop, enjoying the forbidden pleasures of black market food, spontaneous singing, and time together away from the surveillance of the Party. At the end of this scene, Winston stares at the antique glass paperweight he has bought, marveling at its beauty and complexity. Under the Party, all production has become purely functional, and thus craftsmanship no longer exists and beautiful objects are (literally) relics of the past.


Winston's fascination with the paperweight is moving, and the level of detail in this description betrays the way in which citizens living in free societies might end up taking such small manifestations of beauty and skill for granted. Winston's desire to be inside the paperweight highlights the strength of his longing for privacy and for an internal life beyond the reach of the Party. The phrase "in fact he was inside it" also reflects Orwell's repeated challenging of the binary between external reality and our internal perspective.

Book 2, Chapter 5 Quotes

☞ Now that [Winston and Julia] had a secure hiding place, almost a home, it did not even seem a hardship that they could only meet infrequently and for a couple of hours at a time. What mattered was that the room over the junk shop should exist. To know that it was there, inviolate, was almost the same as being in it. The room was a world, a pocket of the past where extinct animals could walk. Mr. Charrington, thought Winston, was another extinct animal.

Related Characters: Julia/The Dark-Haired Girl, Mr. Charrington, Winston Smith

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number:

Explanation and Analysis

Mr. Charrington, the proprietor of the junk shop where Winston bought his diary and glass paperweight, allows Winston and Julia to rent out a spare bedroom above the shop. Here, Winston and Julia are able to secretly meet and

have sex. Although the room is rundown and pest-ridden, and Winston and Julia can only “meet infrequently,” the mere existence of the junk shop is what matters to Winston. This is to say that the underlying principle that the room represents—privacy and peace of mind away from the Party’s surveillance—is more important than the particulars of the room or of Winston and Julia’s relationship.

Orwell’s description of the room as “a pocket of the past where extinct animals could walk” is important, as this calls back to Book 2, Chapter 2 when Julia’s love of sex was described as an “animal instinct.” The room’s role as a place where “extinct animals could walk” thus suggests that under the Party’s regime, human instincts and inclinations have been so thoroughly repressed that people are now shells of their natural selves. The room is “a pocket of the past” in that it allows Winston and Julia to feel human again by experiencing what’s been lost: the ability to think, speak, and act as they please. Mr. Charrington is “another extinct animal” like them because he, too, seems to appreciate the values of the past—freedom, love, aesthetic beauty—that the Party has largely eradicated.

Additionally, describing the room as a kind of self-contained “world” draws a symbolic parallel to Winston’s glass paperweight, which also represents the past. The paperweight, which is a piece of coral embedded in a lump of glass, belongs to a bygone era—the craftsmanship required to make it, as well as the demand for aesthetically beautiful objects, died off when the Party came into power. The coral encased in the glass is much like Winston and Julia’s relationship: a rare and beautiful remnant of how life used to be, safely encased in a little “world” all its own.

Winston has told Julia that he has spent his entire life feeling guilty for his mother’s death, an emotional revelation that was only made possible through the time he and Julia have spent alone in the rented room. Having made this confession, Winston feels resentful of the way that the Party has made his emotions insignificant, while also robbing him of any structural power within the Party itself. The statement “what you did or refrained from doing, made no difference. Whatever happened you vanished” emphasizes the fact that individual identity is completely dissolved in the world of 1984. It is impossible to have any individual autonomy, as the only possible modes of behavior—obedience or rebellion—both ultimately result in being subsumed back into the Party.

“They were governed by private loyalties which they did not question. What mattered were individual relationships, and a completely helpless gesture, an embrace, a tear, a word spoken to a dying man, could have value in itself. The proles, it suddenly occurred to [Winston], had remained in this condition. They were not loyal to a party or a country or an idea, they were loyal to one another. For the first time in his life he did not despise the proles or think of them merely as an inert force which would one day spring to life and regenerate the world. The proles had stayed human.”

Related Characters: Julia/The Dark-Haired Girl, Winston's Mother, Winston Smith

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 150

Explanation and Analysis

As Winston reflects on his mother’s innate kindness and maternal instincts, he thinks that before the Ingsoc Party came into power, people used to be “governed by private loyalties which they did not question.” He realizes that the proles still live this way: they find meaning in their connections to one another, not in any ideology or political affiliation. Prior to this, Winston bought into the Party’s narrative that the proles are an inferior class—though he held onto a vague hope that they’d one day “spring to life and regenerate the world” by rising up en masse against the Party. Now, however, he realizes that the proles are perhaps the most enlightened people in society—they “stayed human,” meaning they’re the only group in Oceania that has managed to retain the complex emotions and relationships that define humanity.

This epiphany marks a shift in Winston, as he now fully

Book 2, Chapter 7 Quotes

“The terrible thing that the Party had done was to persuade you that mere impulses, mere feelings, were of no account, while at the same time robbing you of all power over the material world. When once you were in the grip of the Party, what you felt or did not feel, what you did or refrained from doing, made literally no difference. Whatever happened you vanished, and neither you nor your actions were ever heard of again.”

Related Characters: Winston Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 164



Explanation and Analysis

understands that forming meaningful “individual relationships” is the most effective way to resist the Party. The Party has destabilized virtually every type of relationship among its members: it sows distrust among strangers to prevent genuine friendships from forming, it encourages family members to betray one another, and it disallows sex that isn't strictly for procreation. As such, Party members' lives are largely meaningless, since they're unable to connect with or express their love for others. Winston, a Party member himself, thus realizes that his budding relationship with Julia is his most powerful avenue for resistance. Nurturing “private loyalties” can revitalize a person's humanity; it's a subversive act against the single-minded political loyalty that the Party expects of its members.

Book 2, Chapter 9 Quotes

☞ The primary aim of modern warfare (in accordance with the principles of doublethink, this aim is simultaneously recognized and not recognized by the directing brains of the Inner Party) is to use up the products of the machine without raising the general standard of living.

Related Characters: Emmanuel Goldstein (speaker)

Related Themes:  


Page Number: 188

Explanation and Analysis

O'Brien has given Winston a copy of Emmanuel Goldstein's (banned) book, *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchal Collectivism*, which Winston reads once he is in private in the rented room. In Chapter 3, “War Is Peace,” Goldstein describes how the perpetual state of war is achieved and why. Although the war is partly a territorial conflict over colonized regions containing resources and people used as slave labor, the main reason for war is to use up goods in order to prevent a rise in the standard of living. The population is kept in poverty, as it is thought that the accumulation of resources would lead to better education and political resistance. The logic of war also gives a veneer of purpose to the Party's control of the population and to policies such as rationing; however, this purpose is undermined by the fact that the war is designed to be perpetual. Once again, *1984* depicts a world in which time no longer unfolds with any kind of direction or purpose, but is rather directionless and monotonous.

☞ The two aims of the Party are to conquer the whole surface of the earth and to extinguish once and for all the possibility of independent thought. There are therefore two great problems which the Party is concerned to solve. One is how to discover, against his will, what another human being is thinking, and the other is how to kill several hundred million people in a few seconds without giving warning beforehand.

Related Characters: Emmanuel Goldstein (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 193

Explanation and Analysis

Here Emmanuel Goldstein details the two obstacles preventing the Party from achieving its aim of global domination. This passage implies that once these two problems are solved, there will be nothing to stop the Party from seizing and maintaining power over the entire world. The two problems are 1) the ability to know what a person is thinking and 2) the ability to kill hundreds of millions of people without warning.

In the main narrative, each of the problems is presented as being partially solved. The constant surveillance of the telescreen means that any subversive behavior, however minor, can be detected by the Party. There are also several points when it is shown to be possible to tell when someone is thinking unpatriotic thoughts just by looking at their face. Meanwhile, remember that *1984* is set in a post-nuclear world; nuclear weapons can kill hundreds of thousands of people at a time, although in the novel the three states have signed a nuclear truce. The fact that the Party has already begun to overcome these obstacles ominously suggests that it will soon be able to achieve its aim of total world domination.

●● The heirs of the French, English, and American revolutions had partly believed in their own phrases about the rights of man, freedom of speech, equality before the law, and the like, and have even allowed their conduct to be influenced by them to some extent. But by the fourth decade of the twentieth century all the main currents of political thought were authoritarian. The earthly paradise had been discredited at exactly the moment when it became realizable. Every new political theory, by whatever name it called itself, led back to hierarchy and regimentation. And in the general hardening of outlook that set in round about 1930, practices which had been long abandoned, in some cases for hundreds of years--imprisonment without trial, the use of war prisoners as slaves, public executions, torture to extract confessions, the use of hostages, and the deportation of whole populations--not only became common again, but were tolerated and even defended by people who considered themselves enlightened and progressive.

Related Characters: Emmanuel Goldstein (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 204-205

Explanation and Analysis


Here Orwell gives an interpretation of the actual history of the world up until the 1940s through the voice of the imagined revolutionary Emmanuel Goldstein. This narrative presents a somewhat cynical view of the French, English, and American revolutions, suggesting that the leaders of these events only partly believed in the egalitarian political ideals on which they were supposedly based. The passage features an even bleaker view of the 1930s and '40s, suggesting that although political theories such as communism, socialism, and fascism may have seemed ideologically different, they all ultimately led to abuse of power and crimes against humanity.

Although this passage is part of Emmanuel Goldstein's book-within-the-book, there is a strong sense of Orwell's voice coming through here. The pessimistic outlook reflects the climate in which *1984* was written. In 1948, the events of the first and second World Wars and the continued power of totalitarian regimes (such as Franco's fascist government in Spain and Stalinism in the USSR) made it difficult to trust that political theories would lead to positive outcomes, or that leaders would not end up corrupted by power. Both in this passage and throughout the book, Orwell suggests that political theories themselves are somewhat meaningless, because they seem to inevitably lead to authoritarianism and oppression. Although the Party

in *1984* claims to be pursuing its aims in the name of equality, peace, love, and freedom, in reality of course the opposite is true.

●● Crimestop means the faculty of stopping short, as though by instinct, at the threshold of any dangerous thought. It includes the power of not grasping analogies, of failing to perceive logical errors, of misunderstanding the simplest arguments if they are inimical to Ingsoc, and of being bored or repelled by any train of thought which is capable of leading in a heretical direction. Crimestop, in short, means protective stupidity.

Related Characters: Emmanuel Goldstein (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 212

Explanation and Analysis

At this point in the book Emmanuel Goldstein describes crimestop, a newspeak word describing a form of orthodox consciousness where subversive thoughts are stopped before they even come into existence. To the party, crimestop represents the ideal state of mind for all citizens. It is not enough to have subversive thoughts occur but then to dismiss them, as this still involves the use of reason, which might then be used to criticize the party. What the Party requires in order to have ultimate control is for people to become so stupid that they lose the ability to imagine criticism or alternatives to Party ideology in the first place.

Here Orwell shows that the suppression of politically subversive or "unpatriotic" thoughts inevitably equates to the suppression of thought in general, and that the ultimate result of this suppression would be a completely numb and idiotic population. This passage shows why Syme was vaporized even though he was completely obedient to the party; despite his orthodoxy, Syme's intelligence meant the Party viewed him as dangerously far from the ideal of crimestop, and thus felt that he represented a threat.

●● The Ministry of Peace concerns itself with war, the Ministry of Truth with lies, the Ministry of Love with torture and the Ministry of Plenty with starvation. These contradictions are not accidental, nor do they result from ordinary hypocrisy; they are deliberate exercises in doublethink. For it is only by reconciling contradictions that power can be retained indefinitely. In no other way could the ancient cycle be broken. If human equality is to be for ever averted—if the High, as we have called them, are to keep their places permanently—then the prevailing mental condition must be controlled insanity.

Related Characters: Emmanuel Goldstein (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 216

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage Emmanuel Goldstein makes an important distinction between doublethink and lying or hypocrisy. Recall that doublethink is not saying one thing and believing another, but rather holding that two contradictory things are true at once. Again, the important thing to note here is that logic is a threat to the Party's power, and thus doublethink is necessary because it is a way of perceiving the world that is by definition illogical—it is completely incompatible with logic and thus, in Goldstein's words, can be considered a form of "controlled insanity."

It is also important to note Goldstein's statement that the aim of the Party is for "human equality... to be for ever averted." Of course this in itself represents doublethink, as the Party simultaneously tells citizens that the regime's purpose is to ensure equality. This reflects the hypocrisy of Stalinism, where communist ideals of a fair, egalitarian society were distorted in such a way that preserved the high status and rewards of government officials while huge sections of the population were starved, imprisoned, or worked to death.

●● The masses never revolt of their own accord, and they never revolt merely because they are oppressed. Indeed, so long as they are not permitted to have standards of comparison, they never even become aware that they are oppressed.

Related Characters: O'Brien, Emmanuel Goldstein, Winston Smith

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 207

Explanation and Analysis

This passage appears in *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*, Emmanuel Goldstein's book that O'Brien arranges for to Winston to read. Goldstein leads the Brotherhood, a dissident anti-Party organization, and his book accordingly outlines and critiques the Party's ideology.

The idea that "masses never revolt of their own accord" dashes Winston's ongoing hope that the proles (the working class that constitutes the "masses" in Oceania) will rise up of their own accord and overthrow the Party. Rather, the Outer Party would have to be the instigating force behind such a rebellion, enlisting the proles' support to overthrow the Inner Party. This is because the proles are tragically ignorant of their own oppression: the Party has an entire governmental department dedicated to churning out propaganda and low-grade entertainment for the proles, which keeps them distracted and politically apathetic.

Goldstein's book makes the important point that the proles "are not permitted to have standards of comparison." This underlines *1984's* ongoing examination of how totalitarian regimes use government-enforced ignorance to subjugate the population and quash dissent. With no historical or political knowledge to contextualize their own lives, the proles are unable to even recognize that they're oppressed—let alone to rise up against that oppression. And given that most Outer Party members are too afraid of being tortured and killed to even think about staging a coup, the scenario of the Outer Party and proles joining forces is nothing more than a fantasy.

●● The blissful feeling of being alone with the forbidden book, in a room with no telescreen, had not worn off. [...] The book fascinated [Winston], or more exactly it reassured him. In a sense it told him nothing that was new, but that was part of the attraction. It said what he would have said, if it had been possible for him to set his scattered thoughts in order. It was the product of a mind similar to his own, but enormously more powerful, more systematic, less fear-ridden. The best books, he perceived, are those that tell you what you know already.

Related Characters: Mr. Charrington, Emmanuel Goldstein, Winston Smith

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 199



Explanation and Analysis

This quote occurs as Winston reads Emmanuel Goldstein's book in his rented room above Mr. Charrington's junk shop. The observation of how "blissful" it feels to "be alone with the forbidden book, in a room with no telescreen" is metafictional (which means that it references its own fictional quality), in that Orwell's audience is reading a book that contains Winston reading his own book. When *1984* was first published, Orwell's readership would have been primarily British and North American and thus would have enjoyed the right to read virtually any literature they wanted. His audience is thus meant to identify with Winston and to reflect on their own ability to read *1984* without fear of censorship or punishment. By calling on his readers to appreciate this freedom, Orwell subtly implies that they, too, could end up like Winston—forced to read in secret—if they allow totalitarian regimes (like the Party of the novel) to take hold in their own countries.

Winston's appreciation of Goldstein's book (which breaks down the Party's rise to power and ideology) lies in its ability to "tell you what you know already." This calls attention to the importance of convening with likeminded people, whether through conversation, education, or independent reading like Winston is doing here. One of the ways in which the Party upholds its power is by impeding the free exchange of ideas—reading anything but government propaganda or low-brow entertainment is strictly forbidden. Reading a book that confirms his private musings is a powerful experience for Winston, as up until now he's felt alone in his skepticism toward the Party. Goldstein's book is the next-best thing he has to a confidant: it grants him the otherwise inaccessible camaraderie and intellectual stimulation of "a mind similar to his own."

💡 *Doublethink* means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them.

Related Characters: Emmanuel Goldstein, Winston Smith

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 214

Explanation and Analysis

As Winston is reading Goldstein's book, he comes across this definition of the Newspeak word "doublethink." In essence, engaging in doublethink means that Party members must commit actions that they know are dishonest or illogical (such as altering the historical record, as Winston is required to do at work) while simultaneously convincing themselves that those actions did not occur. Just after this, Goldstein points out that successful doublethink means that Party members must actually "remember the events in the desired manner." In other words, it isn't enough to hold contradictory thoughts—rather, it's necessary to truly believe in the Party's false narratives. This speaks to the Party's power to manipulate reality, as it conditions its members to condition themselves to believe the Party's lies.

When doublethink is undertaken in this way, not even a person's mind is safe from the Party's influence. This idea connects to Winston's realization at the end of the novel that the only way to survive under a totalitarian regime is to completely and utterly surrender to its narrative. The only option (other than death) is relinquishing one's individuality and truly *believing* in the Party's agenda—not merely *obeying* it.

Book 2, Chapter 10 Quotes

💡 If there was hope, it lay in the proles! Without having read to the end of the book, he knew that that must be Goldstein's final message. The future belonged to the proles. And could he be sure that when their time came the world they constructed would not be just as alien to him, Winston Smith, as the world of the Party? Yes, because at the least it would be a world of sanity. Where there is equality there can be sanity. Sooner or later it would happen, strength would change into consciousness. The proles were immortal; you could not doubt it when you looked at that valiant figure in the yard. In the end their awakening would come. And until that happened, though it might be a thousand years, they would stay alive against all the odds, like birds, passing on from body to body the vitality which the Party did not share and could not kill.

Related Characters: Winston Smith (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 220

Explanation and Analysis

Winston and Julia have admitted they are doomed, and meanwhile have been watching the red-armed prole woman singing; it is in this moment that Winston realizes that in contrast to himself, Julia, and other members of the Outer Party, the proles still have enough energy and freedom to overthrow the regime. He considers that the proles might not realize this for a long time—perhaps even a thousand years—and that even when it does eventually happen, it would create a world that he might not personally feel comfortable in. However, he decides it would be worth it because there would at last be true equality and "sanity"—a world where freedom of thought and common sense were allowed to exist.


This passage stands in contrast to the rest of the novel, which stresses the inevitability of the Party's total power over the population. Winston's belief that hope "lay in the proles" reflects Karl Marx's theory that revolution would be achieved through a temporary "dictatorship of the proletariat," meaning a period of time when working-class wage laborers took control of political power, overthrowing the bourgeoisie. In *1984* it is debatable whether Orwell endorses or dismisses this view; while he does depict the "proles" (proletariat) as possessing energy and freedom, the narrative ends on a decidedly hopeless note, with no sign of a coming revolution.

Note also the rather elitist way in which Orwell describes the proles. In this passage his statement that they are "like birds" suggests that he considers them closer to animals than humans.

☛ There was another crash. Someone had picked up the glass paperweight from the table and smashed it to pieces on the hearthstone. The fragment of coral, a tiny crinkle of pink like a sugar rosebud from a cake, rolled across the mat. How small, thought Winston, how small it always was!

Related Characters: Julia/The Dark-Haired Girl, Mr. Charrington, Winston Smith

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 223

Explanation and Analysis

As the Thought Police raid Winston and Julia's room above Mr. Charrington's shop, one of the officers smashes Winston's glass paperweight. Throughout the novel, the

paperweight has symbolized Winston and Julia's relationship: like the beautiful piece of coral encased in glass, Winston's and Julia's bond has been safely concealed in their rented room—until now. Winston marvels at "how small [the coral] always was," which is to say that the glass distorted his perception of it. This parallels his view of himself and Julia: up until this point, he viewed their relationship as a more formidable act of resistance against the Party than it really was. Now, just as easily as the Thought Police smashed the paperweight and cast aside the piece of coral, so too do they easily rip Winston and Julia apart—ruining their relationship forever.

The glass paperweight has also served as a small-scale representation of the room itself: both are preserved relics of the past, representations of values—like privacy, freedom of thought, and aesthetic beauty—that ceased to exist once the Party came into power. Owning the paperweight and visiting the room were both small acts of rebellion that allowed Winston to feel like he had a modicum of privacy and control over his own life—things that were normal prior to the Revolution but became impossible under the Party's regime. The paperweight shattering thus coincides with the Party's ability to shatter the room's façade of safety in an instant, severing Winston and Julia's connection to each other and to their little slice of the past.

Book 3, Chapter 2 Quotes

☛ "We shall crush you down to the point from which there is no coming back. Things will happen to you from which you could not recover, if you lived a thousand years. Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves."

Related Characters: O'Brien (speaker), Winston Smith

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 256

Explanation and Analysis

Winston has been imprisoned for an indeterminate amount of time—perhaps years—at the Ministry of Love, where he's been relentlessly beaten and tortured. Just prior to this, O'Brien (who's directing the punishment) explained to Winston that the Ministry tortures prisoners not so they'll reluctantly submit or obey, but so the prisoners undergo such a thorough physical and psychological change that

they truly “convert” to the Party’s ideology. Here, O’Brien takes this a step further and tells Winston that he will be irrevocably dehumanized by what’s going to happen to him—never again will he be able to experience any of human life’s most profound joys.

His statement that “we shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves” encapsulates the Party’s ultimate goal: to eradicate any and all individuality within the population, and to control reality within people’s very minds. By deadening the populace so that they can no longer form relationships or experience emotions, the Party ensures that everything people do, say, and think is orientated toward political servitude. This, Orwell implies, is the hallmark of all totalitarian regimes: dehumanization so thorough that life itself becomes unrecognizable, a “hollow” shell that serves no one but the political elite.

Book 3, Chapter 3 Quotes

“... The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power. What pure power means you will understand presently. We are different from all the oligarchies of the past, in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled ourselves, were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives. They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just round the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power.”

Related Characters: O'Brien (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 263

Explanation and Analysis

Winston, who has succumbed to torture in the Ministry of Love and is doing everything he can to get O'Brien to ease the pain, has told O'Brien that he believes the Party seeks

absolute power because this is ultimately the best for the majority of the population. However, O'Brien's gives a surprising response to this; he explains to Winston that the Party seeks power for no other reason than to have it. This shift in ideology shows that, now that Winston has been tortured into accepting doublethink, brainwashing and lies are no longer necessary.

Note O'Brien's distinction between this aspect of Party ideology and the legacies of Nazism and Stalinism. O'Brien suggests that these regimes fell short of the ultimate form of totalitarianism symbolized by the Party, because they maintained that there was a reason for their authoritarian power (such as increasing equality or efficiency, or conquering other nations) other than the goal of achieving power itself. The Party thus symbolizes the logical conclusion of totalitarianism, where leaders are not *corrupted* by power, but instead justify everything through the aim of having power over others.

“[Winston] knew in advance what O'Brien would say: that the Party did not seek power for its own ends, but only for the good of the majority. That it sought power because men in the mass were frail, cowardly creatures who could not endure liberty or face the truth, and must be ruled over and systematically deceived by others who were stronger than themselves. That the choice for mankind lay between freedom and happiness, and that, for the great bulk of mankind, happiness was better. That the Party was the eternal guardian of the weak, a dedicated sect doing evil that good might come, sacrificing its own happiness to that of others.”

Related Characters: Winston Smith, O'Brien

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 262

Explanation and Analysis



While Winston is being tortured in the Ministry of Love, O'Brien asks him if he knows how and why the Party maintains power. Given the propaganda that Winston has been exposed to as an Outer Party member, he believes that the above quote is the answer O'Brien is looking for. The Inner Party (the upper ruling class) puts forth the narrative that they seek power “for the good of the majority” by portraying the Outer Party (the middle class) and especially the proles (the working class) as inherently inferior—“frail, cowardly creatures” who need a strong ruler. By characterizing itself as “the eternal guardian of the weak,”

the Inner Party is able to exert unchecked control over the lower classes, all the while brainwashing them to believe that their freedom is worth sacrificing for their supposed happiness.

This is merely a front, however: just after this, O'Brien tells Winston that the Party "seeks power entirely for its own sake." The Inner Party wants power simply for the satisfaction of having it, not to enjoy the wealth, longevity, or happiness that power could theoretically enable. When members inevitably surrender their individuality and give themselves up to the collective of the Party, O'Brien believes they can transcend the inherent weaknesses of humanity. They will become "all-powerful and immortal" by eliminating the separation between the self and the Party. This admission exposes what Orwell believes is the underlying tenet of totalitarian regimes: that power is the end in itself rather than a means to an end.

☛ "But always—do not forget this, Winston—always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is helpless. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever."

Related Characters: O'Brien (speaker), Winston Smith

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 267

Explanation and Analysis

As O'Brien continues to expose the Party's ideology to Winston, he tells him that exerting power requires making others suffer—not merely making them obey. O'Brien openly admits that the Party is trying to create a dystopia (the opposite of a utopia, or ideal society) in which foundational aspects of the human experience—love, curiosity, joy—will be eradicated. This furthers Orwell's indictment of totalitarian governments like the Party as regimes that are entirely motivated by "the intoxication of power" rather than what that power could enable. They are concerned only with gaining and maintaining unchallenged tyranny over others, not with using their rule for any particular purpose.


The metaphor of "a boot stamping on a human face—forever" to describe the Party's vision of the future is particularly disturbing, as it drives home the point that totalitarianism seeks to forcibly stamp out the individual. By


physically and psychologically beating the population into submission, the Party gives people no choice but to conform to its agenda. The picture of the future that O'Brien gives to Winston is one in which the lives of individuals are treated as worthless—only the collective life force of the Party matters.

Book 3, Chapter 4 Quotes

☛ To die hating them, that was freedom.

Related Characters: Winston Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 281

Explanation and Analysis

After months of torture, Winston has accepted the Party's control over reality and over his own mind. However, he still dreams of the past, of his mother, and of Julia, and has awoken realizing that despite the fact that he has accepted doublethink, he still loves Julia and thus his emotions are still free from the Party's control. He realizes that he wants to die hating the Party and Big Brother, because even if the Party controls every other aspect of his life, this hatred will prove that he died a person with at least a tiny modicum of dignity and agency.

This sentence tragically foreshadows the remainder of the narrative, where Winston loses his emotional freedom, including his love of Julia and hatred of the Party. This is reflected in the final sentence of the novel, which is "He loved Big Brother."



Book 3, Chapter 5 Quotes

☛ And then—no, it was not relief, only hope, a tiny fragment of hope. Too late, perhaps too late. But he had suddenly understood that in the whole world there was just one person to whom he could transfer his punishment—one body that he could thrust between himself and the rats. And he was shouting frantically, over and over.

"Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don't care what you do to her. Tear her face off, strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!"

Related Characters: O'Brien, Julia/The Dark-Haired Girl,

Winston Smith

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 286

Explanation and Analysis

In Room 101, the most notoriously terrifying torture chamber in the Ministry of Love, O'Brien threatens to unleash hungry rats (Winston's greatest fear) onto Winston's face. Just before O'Brien releases the rats, Winston realizes that "there was just one person to whom he could transfer his punishment": Julia. After Winston betrays Julia, begging O'Brien to torture her instead of Winston himself, O'Brien shuts the cage rather than opening it—indicating that Winston has "passed" the exercise. This outcome, it seems, is the point of the Room 101. The goal wasn't merely to torture Winston, but to drive Winston to betray his highest values: love and loyalty. The Party views meaningful relationships as the foremost threat to its power, as people's strong bonds with one another could interfere with their devotion to the Party.

In Book 2, Chapter 7, Winston reflected that the proles have been able to "stay human" because "they were not loyal to a party or a country or an idea, they were loyal to one another." In other words, individual relationships are what define the human experience—and relinquishing or betraying those bonds amounts to forfeiting one's humanity. Betraying Julia, then, seems to be the outcome that O'Brien intended for Winston, whether or not the Party is actually going to torture her in Winston's place. By essentially forcing Winston to wish harm on the person he values most, the Party destroys the essence of his humanity—doing as much damage to Winston's mind and soul as the rats would have done to his face.

Book 3, Chapter 6 Quotes

☞ "They can't get inside you," she had said. But they could get inside you. "What happens to you here is *forever*," O'Brien had said. That was a true word. There were things, your own acts, from which you could never recover. Something was killed in your breast; burnt out, cauterized out.

Related Characters: Julia/The Dark-Haired Girl, O'Brien, Winston Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 290

Explanation and Analysis

Winston has been released from the Ministry of Love, having successfully been tortured into accepting and obeying the Party. He is now an alcoholic and is drinking gin in the Chestnut Tree Cafe, recalling a moment when Julia had told him that no matter what the Party did, "they can't get inside you." Of course, Winston's time being tortured in the Ministry of Love disproves this fact, something he now understands. The horror of Room 101 lies in the fact that, when faced with their greatest fear, a person will betray everything that is meaningful to them, thereby losing their sense of self. Winston knows he will never be able to "recover" from the moment when he betrayed Julia, and because of this will never have enough agency to be able to resist the Party again.

☞ "Sometimes," she said, "they threaten you with something—something you can't stand up to, can't even think about. And then you say, 'Don't do it to me, do it to somebody else, do it to so-and-so.' And perhaps you might pretend, afterwards, that it was only a trick and that you just said it to make them stop and didn't really mean it. But that isn't true. At the time when it happens you do mean it. You think there's no other way of saving yourself, and you're quite ready to save yourself that way. You *want* it to happen to the other person. You don't give a damn what they suffer. All you care about is yourself."

"All you care about is yourself," he echoed.

"And after that, you don't feel the same towards the other person any longer." — "No," he said, "you don't feel the same."

Related Characters: Winston Smith, Julia/The Dark-Haired Girl (speaker)

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 292

Explanation and Analysis

Winston has run into Julia, and they have both confessed that they betrayed each other while being tortured in Room 101. Julia admits that this moment of betrayal represents a total loss of one's sense of self, reflecting Winston's earlier thoughts in the Chestnut Tree Cafe.


Even though this betrayal is induced by the worst form of torture, it is not possible for either Julia or Winston to forgive themselves. They are haunted by the memory of their own selfishness in the face of torture, a selfishness

that then results in total obedience to the Party. This highlights a paradox within the consequences of torture; the moment when "all you care about is yourself" becomes the moment when you lose your sense of self forever. Orwell thus implies that what gives people a sense of personal identity is in fact the ability to care about other things (such as people and principles) more than themselves.

●● He gazed up at the enormous face. Forty years it had taken him to learn what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache. 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.

Related Characters: Winston Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 



Page Number: 298


Explanation and Analysis

In the final paragraph of the main narrative, Winston is drunk from gin at the Chestnut Tree Cafe and gazes lovingly at a picture of Big Brother. He regrets all the time he spent struggling against the Party, and feels relieved that he now accepts the Party and loves Big Brother. The two exclamations beginning with "O" use over-the-top poetic language to convey Winston's drunkenness, and this impression, along with his total surrender to the Party, highlight the fact that he is not the same person as he was at the beginning of the novel. His ability to think and feel autonomously has totally disappeared, and he is now simply a vehicle of obedience to the Party.

Appendix Quotes

●● The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible. It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought—that is, a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc—should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words.

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

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Explanation and Analysis

In the appendix to the novel, Newspeak is explained in detail, including the plan to replace Oldspeak entirely with Newspeak by 2050. The aim of this transition is crimestop, a concept introduced in Emmanuel Goldstein's book, which means preventing the possibility of subversive thought. This passage shows that just the existence of Oldspeak (the English language we know) is a threat to the total dominance of the Party, as it is possible to express an infinite variety of thoughts and feelings in Oldspeak, most of which do not confirm to Party ideology.

Given this information, if the novel were set in 2050 instead of 1984 almost none of the events that take place in the narrative would be possible. Winston's critical thoughts about the Party, his writing in the diary, and Julia's note that says "I love you" would not be able to be expressed in Newspeak. However, the final phrase "at least so far as thought is dependent on words" might suggest a note of ambiguity about the possibility of future resistance. Recall that, even after Winston has been tortured into abandoning reason, he is still able to love Julia through his dreams and to maintain the feeling of hating Big Brother. While subversive thought might cease to exist after the adoption of Newspeak, perhaps subversive emotions could survive because emotions are not necessarily dependent on language.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 1

As the clocks strike thirteen on a day in April, Winston Smith, a low-ranking member of the Outer Party, climbs the stairs to his flat in Victory Mansions. He has left his work at the Records Department early in order to write in a diary he has bought in a junk shop in a proletarian slum in London, the capital of Airstrip One in the superstate of Oceania.

Because the electricity that powers the elevator has been turned off in preparation for Hate Week, Winston, who is 39 years old, frail, fair-haired and wearing a blue Party uniform, slowly climbs seven dingy flights of stairs to his flat. He limps because of a varicose ulcer on his right ankle. On each landing of the stairs hangs a poster depicting the enormous face of a man with a black mustache, with a caption that reads, **BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU**.

As he enters the flat, Winston hears a voice reading a list of figures about the production of pig iron. It is coming from a telescreen, which is embedded in the wall and can't be shut off, though the sound can be turned down. As Winston looks out the window at the cold, colorless city, he sees posters of **Big Brother** plastered on every corner and the word "INGSOC" written on a wall. A police helicopter hovers near the windows of a distant building, spying on people, which reminds Winston that the Thought Police can see and hear him through the telescreen, so he keeps his back turned to it.

Gazing through his window at the rows of rotting and bombed-out buildings, Winston can't remember whether London has always looked this way. He is distracted by the sight of four gigantic glittering white pyramids: his workplace, the Ministry of Truth (in Newspeak, Minitrue), which controls the media and education; the Ministry of Peace (Minipax), which conducts war; the terrifying Ministry of Love (Miniluv), which maintains law and order; and the Ministry of Plenty (Miniplenty) which manages economic affairs.

Controlling his facial expression, Winston faces the telescreen. By leaving work early he has missed his opportunity to eat in the canteen, and though he is hungry he must save the only food in the house, a piece of dark-colored bread, for breakfast the next day. He drinks a teacup of oily-smelling Victory Gin and takes out a Victory cigarette.

The opening paragraphs, which set the scene in a fictional future world, present numerous details about life under Party rule that will be more fully explained later. Ominously, the clocks strike thirteen, a traditionally unlucky number.



Orwell uses the word "Party" to suggest that the fictional regime in 1984 is based on the actual Communist regime then in place in the Soviet Union under the dictatorship of Joseph Stalin. The details emphasize the grayness and scarcity characteristic of life under totalitarian rule.



The monotonousness of the broadcast on the telescreen emphasizes its irritating and oppressive presence. The details that follow continue the theme of surveillance, which Winston is particularly conscious of because he is about to engage in an act of thoughtcrime. The posters of Big Brother symbolize the constant vigilance of the State over its subjects. "INGSOC" stands for English Socialism.



This landscape bears a strong resemblance to London in the 1940s, which was repeatedly bombed by Germany during World War II. Orwell intends the reader to see a parallel between the decaying world of 1984 and the devastation wreaked by the Nazis, led by Adolf Hitler. The symmetry of the Ministries emphasizes the conformity idealized and enforced by the Party.



More details indicating that living conditions under Party rule are defined by scarcity and a lower standard of production. The citizens of Oceania have no power to demand better quality and must be satisfied with generic, State-issued commodities.



Sitting in an alcove out of sight of the telescreen, Winston takes out a penholder and nib, a bottle of ink, and a blank book. Since there are no laws in Oceania, it's not illegal to keep a diary, but Winston knows that if he's discovered the punishment will be death or 25 years in a forced-labor camp. He writes what he believes to be the date—April 4th, 1984—in the diary, but this is only a guess, as dates can no longer be known with certainty.

The diary fascinates Winston because it is an artifact from the past, an obsolete and forbidden object. The solitude that Winston seeks is regarded as subversive by the Party, which refers to it as ownlife. Winston's inability to pinpoint the date suggests the degree of control the Party exerts over reality and the historical record.



Feeling nervous, Winston begins writing in the diary about a film he had seen the previous evening in which a ship full of refugees was bombed by a helicopter. He describes a scene in which a middle-aged Jewish woman ineffectually covers a child with her body in order to protect him from bullets and notes the audience's delighted reaction to their deaths and a lone prole woman's outraged protest. He then remembers the incident that caused him to leave work and begin the diary.

The run-on quality of Winston's description of this propagandistic film conveys both his fear of discovery and also his primitive early understanding of the Party's motives—at this point in the novel, his revulsion is emotional, not intellectual. The objections of the prole woman are a sign that any hope of a revolution lies with the proles.



That morning, at a routine political rally called the Two Minutes Hate, O'Brien, a charismatic Inner Party member whose body language suggests to Winston that he secretly hates the Party, had entered the Records Department with an attractive dark-haired girl from the Fiction Department whom Winston suspects is an agent of the Thought Police.

Winston's instincts are questionable: he is strangely drawn to O'Brien, assuming that he knows what the man's body language is implying despite not knowing anything about him beyond his Inner Party status. He also makes the leap that the dark-haired girl is secretly a Thought Police agent, despite not even knowing her name.



During the Two Minutes Hate, the telescreen broadcasted a story about Emmanuel Goldstein, a former Party leader and now its scapegoat. Winston experienced conflicting feelings of hate toward Goldstein on one hand and the Party on the other. He also felt hatred toward the dark-haired girl, and imagined beating, raping, and slitting her throat. He realized that he hated her because she was young and desirable, and was wearing a scarlet sash that identified her as a member of the Junior Anti-Sex League, an organization that promotes chastity.

Winston's flashback illustrates his confused emotional state and the contagious nature of propaganda-fueled hatred. Winston needs to write in the diary in order to sort out his feelings, and he imagines he is addressing his thoughts to O'Brien, an authority figure whom he believes will rescue him from the isolation of his subversive thoughts.



As the crowd reached a frenzied hatred of Goldstein, **Big Brother** appeared on the telescreen along with the Party slogans: WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH. Winston's eyes met O'Brien's, and it seemed to Winston that O'Brien was sending him a silent message of understanding. Wondering if O'Brien was a member of the fabled Brotherhood, a counterrevolutionary group, Winston decided to go home to write in his diary.

Winston is impressed by O'Brien's air of courteous urbanity, which reminds him of the civilized manner of an eighteenth-century nobleman. He is also drawn to his intelligence, and feels that O'Brien is the person who will confirm that he is not insane because he prefers the evidence of his senses over ideological propaganda.



In the apartment, Winston finds he has been writing "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" repeatedly in the diary. He realizes that whether he writes them down or not, his disloyal thoughts constitute thoughtcrime, and that he will eventually be discovered, arrested by the Thought Police, and vaporized. Just then, he hears a knock on the door.

Winston has had not been able to discuss his objections to the Party with anyone and has not read Goldstein's book. His diary writing is an ineffectual, but nonetheless meaningful private gesture of individual dissent.



BOOK 1, CHAPTER 2

Carelessly leaving the diary open on the table, Winston opens the door. It is a neighbor, Mrs. Parsons, who wants Winston to help unblock her sink. While Winston is fixing the sink the Parsons children appear, wearing the uniform of the Spies, a youth organization that encourages children to spy on their parents and report behavior disloyal to the Party. The boy points a toy gun at Winston, accuses him of thoughtcrime, then begs to go to see a public execution. As Winston leaves the Parsons' apartment, he is struck in the neck by an object the boy has launched at him with a slingshot.

Back in his flat, Winston remembers a dream he once had in which someone in a dark room said to him, "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness." He identifies the voice as O'Brien's. The telescreen reports a victory over the Eurasian army and announces that the chocolate ration will be reduced.

Winston wonders why he's keeping the diary, since it's doubtful that it will survive him when, inevitably, he is vaporized. He decides that he's keeping it in order to stay sane, not to communicate with the future. Realizing that he's a dead man, but determined to stay alive as long as possible, he puts the diary away and returns to work.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 3

Winston wakes from a dream of his mother, who was vaporized when he was a boy, not long after his father disappeared. He sees his mother, holding his baby sister in her arms, on a sinking ship, looking up at him through the water. He knows that his mother sacrificed her life for him and he regrets that there is no longer any privacy, love, friendship, or complex emotions—only fear, hatred, and pain.

Still dreaming, he finds himself in a pasture in the countryside that he thinks of as the "Golden Country." The girl with dark hair comes toward him, taking off her clothes with a careless gesture that Winston admires. He awakens with the word "Shakespeare" on his lips to an ear-splitting whistle from the telescreen, the daily wake-up call for office workers.

The behavior of the Parsons boy shows the degree of surveillance Party members are subject to and the breakdown of loyalty between family members: the only loyalty that is important in 1984 is loyalty to the State. The Spies resembles the Hitler Youth movement, which indoctrinated children into the Nazi Party and turned them into ruthless and remorseless killers.



The reduction of the chocolate ration illustrates to Winston how willing the public is to engage in doublethink: to forget facts when it is ideologically convenient. His dream ambiguously foreshadows the future.



Winston understands that in order to combat the reality control practiced by the State, he must record his private thoughts, even if he cannot share them with another person. Winston's struggle to hold onto his beliefs is the ultimate subject of the novel.



Winston experiences considerable guilt over his treatment of his mother prior to her disappearance. His mother represents the old world, when emotional ties, particularly between family members, were valued and respected.



The ease with which Julia defies the Party's rules impresses Winston, who finds it harder to repudiate them because he must do so on an intellectual level.



Struggling through compulsory morning exercises, Winston tries to remember a time when Oceania hasn't been at war, and fails. Instead, he remembers sheltering as a child with his family in a Tube station during an air raid with a drunken old man who kept repeating that they "didn't ought to 'ave trusted the buggers." Because the written record is perpetually changing, and people are not allowed to speak of any version of events other than the official one, it is impossible to keep track, but Winston seems to remember that though the country has always been at war, the enemy has changed. According to the Party, however, Oceania has always been at war with Eurasia and allied with Eastasia. Winston knows that to remember differently constitutes thoughtcrime.

Winston decides that the Party's ability to change the past by controlling not only the media, but also the minds of citizens, is its most frightening power. He focuses on the concept of doublethink, a Newspeak word meaning "reality control," the ability to believe simultaneously in contradictory opinions when it's ideologically convenient. Winston tries to remember the year he first heard of **Big Brother** and realizes that the past has been destroyed, not merely altered. He does not even remember when he first heard the word INGSOC—Newspeak for the movement formerly known as English Socialism.

At that moment the telescreen screams at him to pay attention, and Winston realizes that his facial expressions are betraying his loathing of the Party.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 4

At work, Winston rewrites news articles so that they reflect the Party's current version of history, a task known as "rectifying." His instructions arrive on rolls of paper through pneumatic tubes, and are disposed of in "memory holes," slits in the walls leading to an incinerator. All media—books, films, photographs, and newspapers—are "rectified" to ensure that the Party looks as if it is always correct.

Winston considers his colleagues, a secretive man named Tillotson, a woman with sandy hair whose job is delete the names of people who have been vaporized, and a poet named Ampleforth who alters poems to make them comply with Party ideology. The Ministry of Truth is a huge organization, swarming with workers whose task it is to produce propaganda, including sensational novels and pornography for the lower classes or proles, in order to distract them from realizing that they are victims of oppression.

The Party controls the citizens of Oceania by altering the historical record so that it reflects whatever views the Party finds it in its interest to promote. Winston constantly struggles to negotiate the discrepancy between the evidence of his senses and what the Party wishes him to believe. The old man represents the people who initially supported the Revolution and who were later betrayed by Party leaders whose desire for power led them to abandon their political ideals.



Reality control was an important feature of 20th century totalitarian regimes such as Nazism and Stalinism. Propaganda was a powerful tool, as was surveillance, and when individuals appeared resistant to ideology they were often "persuaded" through torture. Winston's dreams, memories, and diary entries all challenge the view of history the Party wishes to promote.



Winston is shocked into the realization that he is under constant surveillance, and is therefore in great danger.



Another example of how the Party practices reality control, eradicating independent thought by rewriting history to suit its purposes. Euphemistic terms like "rectifying" were used by actual totalitarian regimes to disguise barbaric practices. Orwell felt that the deterioration of language was connected to the decay of moral values.



Although the proles are not really considered a threat, the Party takes precautions to ensure that they never become conscious of their poverty and powerlessness. According to Marxist historians, the lower classes have traditionally been manipulated through the encouragement of behaviors such as gambling, drinking, and fornication.



Winston sets to work rewriting an article about an Inner Party member who has been vaporized, a Comrade Withers. To replace Withers, Winston invents a Comrade Ogilvy—an exemplary Party member who devotes his life to hunting down thought-criminals—dictating his revisions into a speakwrite. He becomes convinced that Tillotson is working on the same article, but that his own version will be the one that is recorded.

In this passage Winston demonstrates his skill at producing a version of history that will be acceptable to the Party, guided by his knowledge of the principles of INGSOC and what he imagines the Party wishes him to say. The fact that others are employed on the same task indicates that the Party takes it very seriously.



BOOK 1, CHAPTER 5

In the canteen at lunch, Winston talks with Syme, a linguist who is working on the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak dictionary. Winston suspects that Syme, despite his political orthodoxy, will one day be arrested by the Thought Police because he's simply too intelligent. Drinking Victory Gin, they talk about the Eleventh Edition, which will be definitive, and much shorter than previous dictionaries. Syme believes the "destruction of words" is a beautiful thing, saying enthusiastically that thoughtcrime will eventually be impossible because there will be no words with which to express disloyal thoughts. The Revolution, he says, will then be complete.

Syme is an example of an ideologically orthodox individual who is nonetheless considered a threat to the totalitarian regime because his intelligence suggests that he may possibly become dangerous. Orwell viewed the impoverishment of vocabulary as a primary tool of totalitarian regimes. Syme's delight in the "destruction of words" is intended to be appalling.



Winston becomes aware of a man speaking to a girl at a table to his left in a quacking voice. Syme tells him that there is a word in Newspeak, duckspeak, that refers to propagandistic speech uttered almost unconsciously. "Orthodoxy is unconsciousness," Winston thinks.

Duckspeak, the automatic regurgitation of correct opinions, is the Party's ideal, and the goal of its efforts to reduce the expressive range of Oldspeak into ever more abbreviated forms.



Parsons, Winston's pudgy, sweaty neighbor, sits down at their table. Syme studies a column of words on a scrap of paper while Parsons demands a donation for Hate Week from Winston. Parsons proudly relates that his daughter followed and then reported a suspicious man to the patrols.

An enthusiastic supporter of the Party, Parsons is eventually turned in to the Thought Police by his own daughter. Winston despises him because he uncritically accepts Party doctrine.



The telescreen announces that the standard of living in Oceania has gone up by 20 percent, and reports that people are demonstrating in the streets in gratitude to **Big Brother** for having raised the chocolate ration. Winston is appalled that doublethink has made it possible for people to swallow obvious lies: No one has enough to eat, there are shortages of clothing and cigarettes, the buildings are all dilapidated and underheated, and the Party actually *reduced* the chocolate ration just the day before.

Totalitarian regimes require complete obedience to the State and unquestioning support of its doctrines and policies. In order to comply with these requirements, citizens must be able to forget facts when they are in conflict with what the Party desires them to believe. The absurdity of this example reveals Orwell's overall satirical intent.



As the quacking voice of the man at the next table continues, Winston thinks to himself that Mrs. Parsons will one day be denounced by her children and vaporized, and that Syme, himself and even O'Brien will be vaporized, but not Parsons, the quacking man or the dark-haired girl from the Fiction Department. He realizes that it is she who is sitting across from the quacking man and that she is staring at him, Winston. He is terrified and worries that he has committed facecrime, the wearing of an expression that betrays feelings disloyal to the Party. A whistle blows and all return to work.

Winston's fatalistic expectations come true in the case of Mrs. Parsons and Syme. Intelligence, or the ability and desire to question the status quo, seems to Winston to be a guarantee of thoughtcrime and eventual detection and extinction. However, O'Brien's intelligence does not lead to thoughtcrime, Julia's orthodoxy is only apparent, and Parsons' stupidity does not save him.



BOOK 1, CHAPTER 6

Winston writes in his diary about an encounter he had with an aging prole prostitute in a basement kitchen, a minor crime. Disgusted, he considers the Party's attitude towards sex, which is that it should only occur between married people for the purpose of procreation, and should not be pleasurable. He remembers his politically orthodox wife, Katharine, who forced him to have sex with her once a week because it was their "duty to the Party," and then left him when they failed to produce a child.

It is not until Winston gets to know Julia that he learns how the Party has manipulated sexual instincts to serve its political purposes. Winston's own sexual fantasies are overwhelmingly sadistic, showing how repressed sexuality can take the form of violent wishes and taboo behaviors.



Because Party members are not allowed to feel or express desire for each other, encounters with prostitutes are Winston's only sexual outlet. Desire, too, is thoughtcrime. Winston confesses in the diary that the prostitute had been old and toothless, but that he had had sex with her anyway.

Tolerated in Oceania, sex with prostitutes encourages men to despise themselves for being unable to ignore their sexual needs, and to think of the sex act itself as unclean and even immoral.



BOOK 1, CHAPTER 7

Still writing in his diary, Winston records his belief that the Party will be overthrown by the proles, who make up 85 percent of the population of Oceania. The Party makes no attempt to indoctrinate them, and promiscuity among them goes unpunished, because the Party considers them to be too stupid to be dangerous.

Winston's first statement of belief in the possibility of revolution by the proles. He notes the paradox that the proles cannot rebel until they become conscious, and they cannot become conscious until after they have rebelled.



From a children's textbook, Winston copies out a passage describing capitalism. He can't tell how much of the passage is lies, but he suspects that life in Oceania may have been better before the Revolution overthrew the capitalist system, though the Party claims that the standard of living is higher and that people are happier and live longer.

Suspicious of the Party's claim that life under INGSOC is better than before, Winston makes further efforts to learn the truth about the past. The children's book is another example of propaganda.



Winston recalls finding a photograph eleven years earlier of three men—Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford—former leaders of the Revolution who had been exposed as traitors, imprisoned, tortured, released, and eventually rearrested and vaporized. Winston remembers seeing the three at a bar, the Chestnut Tree Café, weeping sentimentally into their gin. The photograph Winston found proved their innocence, and showed that their confessions had in fact been extorted. Winston regrets having destroyed the photograph out of fear.

Winston is mystified by the Party's reasons for continuously falsifying the past, and horrified that what Party ideology amounts to is an outright denial of external reality. To the Party, he realizes, common sense is the ultimate heresy.

Winston becomes aware that he is writing the diary to O'Brien. Though conscious of his own intellectual limitations, he still believes that he is right and that the Party is wrong. The freedom from which all other freedoms follow, he decides, is the freedom to see reality for what it is, to say that two plus two make four.

This memory prefigures the final chapter of the novel in which Winston, broken in torture by O'Brien, weeps sentimentally over his love for Big Brother while drinking gin at the Chestnut Tree Café. At this point neither Winston nor the reader knows why the men are weeping, but the reason will become clear by the end of the novel.



Winston realizes that the Party's goal is absolute control over reality, which it can achieve by controlling the minds of the people through terrorism and propaganda.



Although he believes that the Party is evil, Winston desires confirmation of this from O'Brien, whom he views as his intellectual superior. Ironically, it is O'Brien who forces him to see that 2+2=5.



BOOK 1, CHAPTER 8

Instead of going to the Community Center, Winston wanders through prole neighborhoods. He is fearful because he knows the Party disapproves of ownlife, the desire for solitude. Preoccupied with the fact that he may be stopped by a patrol, he is nearly struck by a rocket bomb. Getting to his feet, he sees a severed hand on the pavement and kicks it into the gutter.

Winston passes by a group of proles who are standing outside a pub and arguing about the Lottery. Winston knows that the prizes are largely imaginary and wonders how the proles can be taken in, but still believes that hope lies in the possibility that they will someday rebel against the Party.

Winston follows an old man into another pub, intending to ask him about life before the Revolution. He buys the man beer and asks him about the past, but the old man is incoherent. Winston realizes that there is no one alive who can tell him whether life was better or worse in the past—that history has been obliterated.

Kicking the hand into the gutter shows how Winston's empathy for other people has atrophied because of the Party's policy of discouraging emotional bonds between individuals.



The lower classes, or proles, are easily distracted from recognizing that they are poor and disenfranchised by activities such as gambling.



The inability of the old prole to satisfy Winston's curiosity about the past is an indicator that the Party has succeeded in its program of mind control. Winston's hope that the proles will rebel seems increasingly futile.



Next, Winston finds himself outside the junk shop where he had bought the diary. The owner, an intelligent prole named Mr. Charrington, shows him a **glass paperweight** with a piece of coral inside, which Winston buys, and a print of an old church in an upstairs bedroom. Winston notices that the bedroom has no telescreen. Charrington then teaches Winston a few lines of an old nursery rhyme, "Oranges and Lemons," about the churches of London.

Winston leaves, planning to return in a month's time to buy the print, learn the rest of the nursery rhyme, and possibly arrange to rent the bedroom, the privacy of which appeals to him. In the street, he sees the dark-haired girl coming toward him, but she does not give any sign of recognition.

Convinced that the girl is spying on him, Winston considers smashing her skull with a cobblestone. Full of dread, he hurries home, drinks some gin, and opens the diary, but cannot stop thinking of what will happen to him when he's inevitably arrested: torture, then death. He thinks again of O'Brien's mysterious comment about meeting in a place where there is no darkness. He takes a coin out of his pocket and looks at it. The face of **Big Brother** stares back at him.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 1

Four days later, at work, as Winston is walking past the dark-haired girl, she suddenly falls. As he is helping her up she slips a note into his hand. Afraid to read it immediately, Winston wonders whether she is a member of the Brotherhood. Back at his cubicle, he reads the note. It says: "I love you."

Later, Winston sees the girl in the lunchroom but can't bring himself to speak to her. Finally, after a week of failure, he manages to sit alone with her for a few minutes during lunch. Speaking quickly and looking down to hide their conversation, they agree to meet at Victory Square after work, where they believe they will be safe because of the crowds.

At the time of their meeting, Victory Square is filled with people pushing and running to see a convoy of Eurasian prisoners. As they stand together watching the event, the girl whispers to Winston directions to a location in the countryside outside of London, near a dead tree. As the last truck in the convoy passes, the girl squeezes Winston's hand. He dares not look at her, but stares ahead into the eyes of a prisoner.

Because he suspects that life has grown worse under Party rule, Winston is fascinated by Mr. Charrington and his possessions from the past. The paperweight, a beautiful relic from a more civilized age, symbolizes the fragility of memory. The paperweight is eventually destroyed by the Thought Police.



The nursery rhyme is another scrap of the past that Winston seizes upon. The print of the church, St. Clement's Dane, is likewise a relic, since the Party has outlawed religion—a possible threat to its power.



Winston's violent thoughts toward Julia may be connected to his frustrated sexual desire. The scene in which Winston gazes at the image of Big Brother on the coin parallels the final scene, in which he gazes at the same image on a poster, but with very different thoughts and feelings.



For one person to tell another that they love them requires subterfuge because the Party sees love as dangerous. Winston wonders if the girl is a rebel. She is, but through love, not violence.



Winston and the girl can only build a relationship, a private life, in secret. Just as Winston sees the proles as the key to revolution against the party, they see the crowds proles as providing them the privacy they need to be themselves.



Winston and the girl's budding love is here compared to the war fever of the crowd. Winston and the girl see nature as a safe haven that gives them privacy from the party, but the fact that they will meet under a dead tree—nature that has died—is not a great omen.



BOOK 2, CHAPTER 2

Winston meets the girl at the agreed-upon place, then follows her to a deserted clearing. They kiss and she tells him her name is Julia. He tells her that before he read her note he had wanted to rape and murder her, because he thought she was a spy for the Thought Police. She laughs and tears off her sash, then shares a block of black market chocolate with Winston. She explains that she disguises her illegal activities by working for the Junior Anti-Sex League. She says that she was attracted to Winston because the expression on his face indicated that he was against the Party.

They walk into the open and Winston recognizes the pasture that he has dreamed of—the Golden Country. A thrush sings in a nearby tree as they kiss passionately. Julia removes her clothing and tells him she has slept with dozens of Party members. Winston tells her that the more men she has had sex with, the more he loves her, because then more people are breaking the laws of the Party. They have sex and fall asleep.

Half an hour later Winston wakes and lies looking at Julia's naked body. He considers the sex they have had to be a conscious political act, a blow struck against the Party.

Winston's violent fantasies indicate how sexual repression leads to violent desires, and suggests how the party therefore purposely interferes with the private sexual lives of its citizens through constant surveillance in order to more easily be able to whip them into war fever. From the first moment of their relationship, Winston and Julia see their relationship as a political act against the party. Even the food they share is illegal.



Winston feels he is in a golden country as he experiences a moment of true private love, on the one hand, and is completely violating the rules and laws of the Party on the other. Even his normal feelings of human jealousy are overwhelmed by his desire to experience sex that is as anti-Party as possible.



The Party has such control over everything, that Winston can think of nothing, even sex, except as it supports or harms the Party.



BOOK 2, CHAPTER 3

Julia and Winston travel back to London separately, by different routes. But before they leave they arrange to meet at a crowded market four days later.

For several weeks Julia and Winston meet at irregular times in the streets of London, but do not return to the clearing. As Winston works 60 hours a week and Julia is busy with the Junior Anti-Sex League, they find it difficult to meet.

One night they have sex in an abandoned church. While in the church, Julia tells Winston about herself. She is 26, lives in a hostel with 30 other girls, and works on novel-writing machines in the Fiction Department. Though she doesn't like to read, she's comfortable with machinery and enjoys her job. She was a troop leader in the Spies and because of her reputation for chastity was selected to work in Pornosec, the all-girl section of the Fiction Department that produces pornography for the proles. Julia doesn't believe in the existence of the Brotherhood. She just hates the Party and likes outwitting it, committing small acts of rebellion without getting caught.

Private life in any location where the Party can watch them is impossible.



Now a couple, Winston and Julia can already feel how the Party represses sexuality: through the sheer volume of work and constant surveillance.



Winston sees his relationship as deeply political. Julia doesn't. Her dislike of reading indicates that, unlike Winston, she's no intellectual. Her dislike of the party is still intense, but not as deep as Winston's. She does not think of overthrowing the party, as Winston does. She just enjoys beating it in the limited way that she can. While the Party keeps its members sexually repressed, it keeps the Proles quiet by actually publishing pornography for them.



Julia also understands the Party's policy on sex better than Winston does. She explains to him that depriving people of sex induces hysteria, which can be transformed by the Party into hatred of the Party's enemies and worship of Big Brother.

Though not as educated as Winston, Julia has a much better understanding of the Party's manipulation of sex..



Winston, in turn, tells Julia about a time when he was on a community hike with Katharine and nearly pushed his wife off a cliff. He tells Julia that whether or not he pushed his wife doesn't matter, because failure in the face of the Party's oppression is inevitable. Winston adds that they will eventually be caught, that they are dead. Julia, who believes only in private rebellion rather than organized revolt against the party, tells him to stop talking about dying, and begins planning their next meeting.

Winston understands that the Party will see their actions as a revolt, and that the Party sees everything. Julia, who is not interested in overthrowing the Party, doesn't understand this. She thinks her rebellion is private and small. But to the Party, any rebellion is a threat, because it could incite others to follow.



BOOK 2, CHAPTER 4

After a month, Winston decides to rent the room above Mr. Charrington's junk shop as a place in which to secretly meet Julia. Mr. Charrington discreetly reassures Winston that he will not betray their secret to the Police. As he impatiently waits for Julia to arrive the first time, Winston watches a **red-armed prole woman** singing and hanging laundry in the courtyard below. Winston knows they are taking a terrible risk, and he involuntarily thinks of the torture rooms at the Ministry of Love.

Winston realizes that in renting the room he is taking a definitive step. He is making his relationship with Julia "official," a thing that occurs in a real space. He knows such an action is something the Party will torture them for should it find out, but for love is willing to do it anyway. The prole woman is here connected to this human-animal-need for love and sex.



Julia arrives with coffee, tea, bread, milk, sugar, and jam that she's bought on the black market. They listen to the **prole woman** singing a popular song, and Winston realizes he has never heard a member of the Party singing alone and spontaneously. Julia applies makeup and perfume, and Winston is overwhelmed by passion for her, though he recognizes the perfume as the scent worn by the prostitute.

Julia and Winston are building a domestic world, and yet the prostitute perfume signals that all is not right here. The prole woman's singing symbolizes the freedom and vitality of the proles to Winston, something that he believes could, if harnessed, lead them to revolt..



They fall asleep in the double bed. When they wake, there is a rat in the room. Winston is terrified of rats, but Julia throws her shoe at it and then stops up the hole with a piece of cloth.

The rat further indicates that their new "home" is not secure.



Afterward, as they look at the picture of the church on the wall, Winston speaks the first line of the nursery rhyme he learned. Julia, to his surprise, provides the next two lines. She says that she will take the picture down and clean behind it another day. As they ready to leave the room, Winston gazes into the glass **paperweight**, imagining that it is the room they are in, and that the coral inside is his life and Julia's, fixed in eternity.

In their private space, Winston and Julia begin to reveal their secrets, their past, to each other. This is the stuff relationships are built on, but something they would never feel free to share if they felt they were being watched by the Party. Winston's wish that this moment could continue forever indicates his understanding that it cannot.



BOOK 2, CHAPTER 5

Syme is vaporized and becomes an unperson. As a heat wave grips the city, the city is consumed by preparations for Hate Week. Winston embellishes articles that are to be quoted in speeches while Julia produces atrocity pamphlets. As Parson and his children hang streamers all over Victory Mansions, they endlessly sing the new Hate Song written for Hate Week. A poster that shows a monstrous Eurasian soldier holding a machine gun is displayed all over the city, outnumbering even the portraits of **Big Brother**.

Winston and Julia continue to meet in the room above Mr. Charrington's shop. Winston stops drinking gin and grows healthier. Mr. Charrington shows Winston other treasures from the past, and teaches him more nursery rhymes. Winston thinks of Charrington as an "extinct animal."

Winston tells Julia about his suspicion that O'Brien is, like them, an enemy of the Party. Julia, though, believes that the Party is unconquerable through organized resistance and that the rumors of the Brotherhood and the war with Eurasia are inventions created by the Party to maintain order. She thinks that secret disobedience such as their lovemaking is the only effective form of rebellion against the Party. Winston, however, continues to dream about joining the Brotherhood and is dismayed at Julia's cynicism. He tells her she is only a rebel from the waist down.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 6

One day, O'Brien stops Winston in the hallway at work and makes a reference to the vanished Syme. Because referring to an unperson constitutes thoughtcrime, Winston realizes that O'Brien is risking his own safety in order to gain Winston's trust. O'Brien then invites Winston to visit him at his home, saying that he will loan him an advance copy of the Tenth Edition of the Newspeak dictionary.

Winston feels that he is on a path that started on the day he had his first rebellious thought against the Party. He assumes that the path will lead him to torture and death at the Ministry of Love, but is nonetheless excited to be going to O'Brien's house.

While in the previous chapter Winston and Julia build their own private world, their own private reality, the beginning of this chapter reaffirms the Party's power to shape reality: making Syme disappear not just from the face of the Earth but from history as well. And it forces Winston and Julia to help it as it manipulates the emotions of its citizens.



Meanwhile, though, Winston and Julia do continue building their private world, and it gives them something to live for. Charrington's nursery rhymes show that he has a memory of both history and innocence.



Winston and Julia rebel against the Party in different ways. Julia merely wants to resist, to do small things that allow her to have a private life and identity. Winston wants to overthrow the party, to have a revolution. Winston's insult that Julia is only a rebel from the waist down denies Julia's intelligence while emphasizing her sexuality. In doing so, he links her to the proles, who he sees as vital but mindless. Which is not to say that Winston is correct to insult Julia in this way.



Suddenly Winston finds himself closer to making contact with a real rebellion than he had ever dreamed.



Even in this moment when Winston feels that he is on the verge of actually joining a true rebellion against the Party, he can't bring himself to believe that he will actually be successful in defeating it, and in fact assumes he will die an awful death. But the dignity of standing and fighting is enough for him, even if it leads to death.



BOOK 2, CHAPTER 7

One morning a while later, Winston wakes up in tears. He is in the room above Mr. Charrington's shop with Julia, who asks him what's wrong. He responds that he had a dream of his mother, and that the dream made him realize that for his entire adult life he has subconsciously believed that he murdered her. In the dream, Winston saw the room where he, his mother, and his younger sister lived after his father disappeared. They were poor and nearly starving. One day, when a chocolate ration was issued, he demanded the whole piece and his mother gave him most of it, and the rest to his sister. He snatched the chocolate out of his crying sister's hand and ran off to eat it. When he returned to the room his mother and sister were gone. He never saw them again.

Winston says he hates the Party because it has persuaded people that their feelings and impulses are unimportant. He believes that the proles alone have stayed human, by holding on to primitive emotions that Winston has only recently re-learned. He remembers with shame how he kicked the severed hand into the gutter.

Winston warns Julia that if she continues to see him she will die. He tells her that at the end they must not betray each other, though whether they do or not will not make any difference in what happens to them. They know they should leave the room and never come back, but can't bring themselves to do it. They agree that they will never stop loving each other, and are comforted by the thought that though the Party can torture or even kill them, it can't get inside their heads and alter their feelings.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 8

Winston and Julia go to O'Brien's luxurious apartment, where O'Brien's servant, Martin, admits them into a room where O'Brien is dictating a message in Newspeak. To Winston's amazement, O'Brien turns off the telescreen, a privilege allowed to Inner Party members.

Winston confesses that he and Julia are enemies of the Party and adulterers. O'Brien serves Julia and Winston wine, which neither of them have ever tasted. Winston proposes a toast to the past.

In the safety of the room above Mr. Charrington's shop, in the private reality that Winston and Julia have built for themselves beyond the Party's surveillance, they begin to more fully regain their identities as individuals by reclaiming their own history and memory. And by sharing his history with Julia, Winston deepens his connection with her. It is only by having privacy that a person can then choose to share details of his or her life with another. The Party, with its surveillance, destroys that ability to share, and therefore destroys people's sense of their own past.



Winston both looks down upon and admires the proles. He sees their emotions as primitive, as lacking any sophistication or self-knowledge, and yet he recognizes that these emotions give them a sense of self that the Party members lack.



Winston and Julia believe that while the Party can disappear people and change public history by doctoring articles and photographs, that it can't interfere with the realities of their own heads. They are willing to face pain and death for their love, and can't give up the individuality that love gives to them.



O'Brien can turn off the surveillance of the Party. He has a degree of self-control over his own life and the Party's access to it.



Winston takes the decisive step of trusting someone other than Julia, of stating his antagonism to the Party, and then demonstrating that antagonism by toasting to the past.



O'Brien tells Winston that the Brotherhood is real and that Emmanuel Goldstein is alive. He then asks Winston a series of questions in order to test his commitment to working against the Party. Winston answers yes to all of them except the last—he is prepared to do anything but separate from Julia.

O'Brien promises to send Winston a book that teaches the true nature of their society and how it can be destroyed. After reading it, O'Brien promises, Winston and Julia will be full members of the Brotherhood. He explains that members of the Brotherhood work alone, for safety reasons, but their orders will come from him. They drink to the past, and Julia leaves.

As he is leaving, Winston asks O'Brien if they will meet again "in the place where there is no darkness." O'Brien nods without surprise. Winston then asks O'Brien if he knows the ending of the rhyme about the London churches. O'Brien completes the rhyme. As he departs, Winston realizes that O'Brien, too, leads a double life, working for the Party's interests even as he seeks to undermine them.

Winston affirms to O'Brien both his hatred of the Party and his love for Julia. Winston knows he's taking a risk in exposing himself this way, but wants, above all, to fight against the party.



O'Brien confirms Winston's greatest hopes about the Brotherhood: that it is real, that it can reveal the workings of the Party, and that it knows how to defeat the Party.



O'Brien's knowledge of the old nursery rhyme further indicates to Winston that O'Brien stands against the Party. How could he possibly know enough about history and truly belong to the Party? The "place where there is no darkness" could be a positive or negative: on the one hand, darkness is usually associated with evil or terror or other bad things. On the other hand, darkness provides privacy, and a place with no darkness is similar, then, to a place under constant surveillance.



BOOK 2, CHAPTER 9

On the sixth day of Hate Week it is announced that Oceania is, and has always been, at war with Eastasia, and that Eurasia is an ally. Winston has to work long hours to rectify all of the now obsolete references to Oceania's war with Eurasia. At one rally, the orator actually had to change his speech in the middle, shifting from a diatribe against Eurasia to one against Eastasia. The people in the crowd blamed their anti-Eurasia signs on sabotage by Emmanuel Goldstein's agents. For five days Winston works around the clock.

At last the workers are given a day off. Winston goes to the room above Mr. Charrington's shop and begins reading the book while he waits for Julia to arrive. Written by Emmanuel Goldstein and titled *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*, the book claims that all societies are divided into High (Inner Party), Middle (Outer Party), and Low classes (proles), whose aims are irreconcilable.

The Party once again demonstrates its power over reality, completely flipping, in a single day, a single instant, its enemy and ally. Yet while such power to manipulate history gives the party power, it also serves as a contrast to the private reality of love that Winston and Julia have created and which they believe the Party can't interfere with.



The private room becomes not just a place for Winston to build a private relationship with Julia, but also a place for Winston to fully, without fear, explore ways to try to overthrow the Party. The book begins by describing class struggle (in much the same terms that Marxism does)



Winston turns to Chapter 3, "War Is Peace," which is a description of the permanent state of war that exists between the three superstates that govern the world: Oceania, created by the absorption of the British Empire by the United States; Eurasia, created when Russia absorbed Europe; and Eastasia, which includes China, Japan, and Mongolia. All three are totalitarian states governed by similar ideological systems (in Oceania, Ingsoc; in Eurasia, Neo-Bolshevism; in Eastasia, Death-worship). Each superstate has all the natural resources it needs, and each is unable to destroy any of the others because they are too evenly matched. But the purpose of the perpetual border war between the three states isn't victory, anyway. Rather, the aim of the war is to create fear that makes it seem logical to concentrate power in the hands of the High class, while also distracting the middle and lower classes and keeping them unaware that conditions are the same everywhere and that the terrible things they have been told about the enemy are lies. Reality control is the method by which these states subdue their subjects, through the techniques of doublethink and the falsification of historical documents.

As Winston is reading, Julia arrives. She is glad that he has the book, but shows little interest in reading it herself. Instead, she throws herself into Winston's arms, while, outside, the **red-armed prole woman** sings in the courtyard.

Winston insists that Julia listen as he reads to her. Returning to Chapter 1, "Ignorance Is Strength," Winston reads that history is a cycle of class struggle. The aim of the High group is to stay in power; the aim of the Middle is to change places with the High; and the aim of the Low is to create a society where everyone is equal. The Middle and Low groups join forces against the High, and when the High group is overthrown the Middle seizes power and thrusts the Low back into servitude. Eventually a new Middle group splits off from one of the other groups, and the struggle begins anew.

The book outlines that all of the totalitarian control, surveillance, and reality control are efforts by the high class to maintain its grip on power. Constant war provides the government in power with a reason to need to maintain power—the government can justify its grip on power as the sole means by which it can protect its citizens. But, in fact, it perpetuates the war without ever trying to win it. In other words, the government doesn't maintain power in order to protect its citizens from enemies. Rather, the government maintains enemies in order to justify holding onto power and repressing its citizens. And it then does everything in its power to make sure that the citizens have no means of understanding what it is doing to them.



Julia remains uninterested in overthrowing the Party. She cares about love and sex – the primitive emotions Winston both admires and looks down upon in the Proles.



The book continues to explain how class struggle leads to intermittent revolution, and how the high and middle classes switch position by using and abusing the low class. Once again, this description of history is reminiscent to that described in Marxism.



When the Party seized power in Oceania, the new High group, or Inner Party, realized that to keep a new Middle group from splitting off and rebelling, it needed to use mind control. They invented a figurehead named Big Brother to serve as a focus for feelings of love, fear, and reverence. The Thought Police were appointed to keep a constant watch over Party members for signs of unorthodox opinions and instincts. Laws to punish crime were eliminated, but anyone deemed a danger to the Party could be tortured or vaporized at the Party's whim. Elaborate mental training for children was developed that teaches them to avoid unorthodox, and therefore dangerous, thoughts (this is called crimestop). To further ensure compliance, the Party controls access to the past in order to keep citizens from realizing that they are not better off than previous generations, and also to prove that the Party's predictions are infallible. Finally, all Party members are trained in doublethink—to simultaneously remember and forget when convenient, and to tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them—for "it is only by reconciling contradictions that power can be retained indefinitely." Unlike Party members, the proles were granted intellectual liberty because they were considered too stupid to rebel.

Winston notices that Julia is sleeping. Although he still has not learned the ultimate secret—he understands how the Party has seized power, but not why—he falls asleep reassured that the book contains the truth and that he is not insane for hating the Party.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 10

Winston wakes to the singing of the **prole woman** in the courtyard. He and Julia watch her and Winston is fascinated by her vitality and fertility, and agree that, though they themselves are doomed, if there is hope for society, it lies in the proles. Winston and Julia together say, "We are the dead."

Suddenly an iron voice speaks to them from behind the picture saying "You are the dead." It orders them not to move, and speaks the last two lines of the nursery rhyme about St. Clements church: "Here comes a candle to light you to bed / Here comes a chopper to chop off your head!" Winston realizes that the picture of the church hides a telescreen. Black-uniformed Thought Police rush into the room. They smash the glass paperweight and Julia is beaten and carried away.

This section of the book details how the Party stops the cycle of revolutions between middle and high classes, and therefore keeps itself in power, through reality control. The Party doesn't just exert power over its citizens, it makes it so that the citizens are unable to think for themselves or recognize that the government is not helping them live better lives. The Party does everything it can to eliminate any reference point against which citizens can measure the quality of their lives, and, further, trains its citizens so that they are bad at recognizing any reference points that do get through the Party's control. The proles, the low class, are ignored because they are not considered to be intelligent enough to recognize their strength or the way that they are being used.



Julia remains uninterested. Her rebellion is private. She doesn't care about overthrowing the Party. Winston is losing his self-doubt and is more confident in his own desire for revolution.



Winston and Julia continue to see the proles as the only true hope for revolution. They also continue to see themselves as doomed, and almost seem proud of being willing to sacrifice themselves for their ideals.



Winston and Julia's illusion of having created a private reality of their own is shattered—they have been under surveillance the entire time. All of their intimate secrets are now known, and the Party mocks them with the bits of historical trivia they have gathered, while also shattering the symbol that indicated the permanence of their love.



Although the clock reads nine, Winston suspects that he and Julia have slept through the night. Mr. Charrington enters the room, and orders the troopers to clean up the shattered paperweight. Winston realizes that the iron voice belonged to him and that he is a member of the Thought Police.

The Party is everywhere, even hiding among the proles. The reality Winston thought he knew is not a true reality. Now he can't even tell what time of day it really is.



BOOK 3, CHAPTER 1

Winston is first taken to a holding pen occupied by common criminals as well as political prisoners. He notices that the common criminals fight back while the Party prisoners are silent and terrified. An enormous, drunken prole woman is carried in and thrown onto Winston's lap. Her name, too, is Smith. She wonders if she could be Winston's mother.

The prole criminals retain their individuality and courage even in prison. The Party members, raised to be fearful and obedient and to understand the true power of the Party, are, in contrast, terrified.



Next Winston is taken to a cell in the Ministry of Love. It is the place where there is no darkness, since the lights are never turned out, and there are no windows. Ravenous with hunger, he wonders if he will see O'Brien, and hopes O'Brien will send him a razor blade.

The place of no darkness is a cell where every illusion of privacy, and therefore individuality, is taken away. Winston hopes for the razor blade because he hopes to kill himself as a final dignified stand against the Party.



Ampleforth the poet arrives, imprisoned because he has retained the word "God" in a poem by Kipling. Shortly afterward he is led off, terrified, to Room 101.

101 is often used to mark introductory lessons—what things will be "taught" in that room?



Next, Parsons is delivered to the cell, guilty of thoughtcrime committed in his sleep and reported to the police by his daughter. He uses the lavatory pan, then is taken away.

Parson's crimes were unconscious! And he was turned in by his daughter! The horror of the Party is driven home.



A man with a skull-like face, whom Winston realizes is dying of starvation, is brought in. A fat, chinless prisoner named Bumstead offers the emaciated man a piece of bread, which the man fearfully refuses. A guard enters and strikes Bumstead. An officer orders the skull-faced man to go to Room 101. The skull-faced man begs the officer to kill his family or to just kill him rather than send him to Room 101. He struggles and is taken away with a broken hand.

Even basic kindness, such as sharing a piece of bread, is not allowed in the Ministry of Love. Room 101 is further established as something that inspires terror, though we don't yet know why. The skull-faced man is willing to betray everything important to him, to give up his life and his love, to avoid learning what is taught in Room 101.



Alone in the cell and delirious with thirst and hunger, Winston thinks of Julia and wonders if she is suffering. O'Brien enters and Winston naïvely exclaims, "They've got you too!" O'Brien tells Winston not to deceive himself, he has always known that O'Brien is on the side of the Party. A guard strikes Winston on the elbow with a truncheon, blinding him with pain. Winston realizes that no one can be a hero when faced with torture because the pain is too much to endure.

Winston's dreams of being a part of the Brotherhood are shattered. He was being tricked all along. O'Brien further implies that Winston always knew he was being tricked, that Winston always knew he was headed to this prison, which is true. Winston also realizes that torture is not something you can heroically resist.,that you will always succumb to it.



BOOK 3, CHAPTER 2

Winston awakes, immobilized and lying on his back, with O'Brien peering down at him. He has no idea how much time has passed, but he remembers being repeatedly beaten and interrogated. Humiliated and terrified, he remembers confessing to crimes he has not committed. Winston senses that O'Brien is directing the beatings, and though he can't be certain, that he has been imprisoned for seven years.

O'Brien turns a dial and Winston receives a painful electric shock. The needle is at 40; O'Brien tells him he will increase the amount of electricity if Winston lies to him. O'Brien asks Winston if the past exists. Winston replies that it does. O'Brien responds that the past exists in the mind of the Party only. To become sane, Winston must see through the eyes of the Party.

O'Brien holds up four fingers and asks Winston how many he sees. Four, says Winston. If the Party says there are five, says O'Brien, how many are there? Winston says there are four. O'Brien shocks Winston, again and again, then provides drugs that ease the pain. Winston comes to love and depend on O'Brien, because O'Brien alone can ease the pain. O'Brien informs Winston that his goal is not to extract a confession or punish him, but to cure him—to convert his thinking to that of the Party.

Finally, after more torture, Winston gives O'Brien the answers he wants: that Oceania has always been at war with Eastasia, that he invented the photograph of the three traitors, and that he sees five fingers instead of four. Winston begins to understand and practice doublethink, to refuse to believe what he knows is true, and to truly believe what he knows is not.

O'Brien gives Winston permission to ask him some questions. Winston asks what has happened to Julia. O'Brien says she betrayed Winston and was quickly converted through torture. Next Winston asks if **Big Brother** exists in the same way that he, Winston, does. O'Brien responds that Winston does not exist. Winston asks if the Brotherhood exists and O'Brien answers that he will never learn the answer to that question. Finally, Winston asks what is in Room 101. O'Brien says that everyone knows what is in Room 101.

Earlier in the novel Winston imagined himself dying in defiance of the Party. But now he is kept alive, tortured constantly, until he will admit to doing things he did not do, to things that are not real, just to make the pain go away.



Winston and Julia had thought that the Party could trick people about history, but could not actually invade or change people's thoughts. O'Brien is saying that changing people's thoughts, that making them see as the Party wants them too, is precisely the Party's goal



O'Brien is training Winston to be able to look at reality and truly believe that he is seeing something other than what is real. To look at four fingers and not just lie that he sees five, but to truly see five fingers.



O'Brien's torture-driven training begins to take hold over Winston. Winston is not pretending that he sees the five fingers. He has been so brutally tortured that is in fact what he sees. The Party is controlling his reality.



O'Brien says that Winston does not exist because he is "training" Winston to see and think as the Party wants him too, to, basically, merge with the Party and lose his individual identity to that collective identity. Room 101 continues to be established as something to be feared.



BOOK 3, CHAPTER 3

After weeks of further torture, O'Brien tells Winston that there are three stages—learning, understanding, and acceptance—and that he is about to enter upon the second stage. He tells Winston that he, O'Brien, is one of several authors of the book he told Winston was written by Emmanuel Goldstein. He says that the Party can never be overthrown and that the idea of a proletarian rebellion is nonsense. He asks Winston if he knows why the Party wants power.

Trying to say what he thinks O'Brien wants to hear, Winston replies that the Party seeks power for the good of the majority. O'Brien shocks him for this answer, and tells him that the Party seeks power for power's sake—absolute power over all individuals, so that they are nothing unless they merge themselves with the Party. Winston responds that the Party can't control physics, such as the movement of the stars. O'Brien retorts that because the Party controls the mind, it controls all reality. "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever."

Winston insists that the spirit of Man will defeat the Party. O'Brien tells Winston that he is the last man and orders him to remove his clothes and look in the mirror. Winston does, and is horrified at his changed appearance—he is emaciated, partially bald, gray with dirt, scarred, and has lost nearly all of his teeth. O'Brien mocks him. Winston begins to weep.

O'Brien says that Winston has been completely beaten, broken, degraded. Winston protests that there is one degradation he has not suffered: he has not betrayed Julia. O'Brien agrees and Winston experiences a feeling of reverence toward O'Brien for admitting this fact. He asks O'Brien when they will shoot him. O'Brien answers that it may be a long time, because he is a difficult case, but not to give up hope—in the end he will be shot.

BOOK 3, CHAPTER 4

Weeks or months pass. Winston is tortured less often and moved to a more comfortable room. He puts on weight and gains strength because he is now given three meals a day. He is allowed to wash, his rotting teeth are replaced with dentures, and he is given clean clothing. He dreams often of Julia, his mother, and the Golden Country. He has been given a slate and pencil and over and over writes the slogans on a slate he has been given. He also writes "two and two make five." He accepts that the laws of nature are nonsense and that reality exists only in the mind, and longs for the day when he will be shot.

"Learning" is the discovery that the Party has absolute power over you. "Understanding" is that there is no hope for anyone. O'Brien eliminates Winston's hopes, revealing that Emmanuel Goldstein and the book Goldstein supposedly wrote are fakes, and mocking the chances of a prole revolution.



Winston thinks that O'Brien sees himself and the Party as forces of good. But O'Brien doesn't care at all about being good—he and the Party just want power, and they want it forever. O'Brien further claims that by controlling people's thoughts and feelings, the Party doesn't just control people's perceptions of reality. It actually controls reality.



Winston continues to believe that mankind will only take so much abuse before their natural dignity causes them to revolt. O'Brien, though, claims that mankind as Winston means it no longer exists, that its spirit has been irrevocably broken.



By not betraying Julia, Winston has himself held on to those pure things, spirit of man, that does make men capable of great things: love and loyalty. He has kept his human dignity, and asks when he will be shot because he knows that by dying without betraying Julia he will in some way have remained himself and defeated the Party.



Winston is allowed to get stronger, to regain a little bit of comfort and therefore hope. While he has accepted the Party's control over the physical world and over his own body, his dreams indicate that he has not yet betrayed Julia, has not yet accepted the Party's control over his mind.



One night, Winston dreams of the Golden Country and wakes up crying out for Julia, loving her more than ever. He realizes then that his inner heart has not been converted, though his mind has surrendered. Inside, he still hates the Party, and he believes he will have his revenge when he dies, still hating it.

O'Brien walks into the cell and says Winston has made intellectual but not emotional progress. He asks Winston what his true feelings are toward **Big Brother**. Winston answers that he hates him. O'Brien says Winston must love **Big Brother**, and orders that Winston be taken to Room 101.

Winston realizes that his heart, his spirit, has not given in. He knows there's no hope of freedom, for him or anyone, but now has embraced Julia's goal of winning a private victory over the Party.



O'Brien also realizes Winston's continuing resistance. Winston, meanwhile, is feeling powerful in his defiance. And it is at this moment of small triumph that Winston will be brought to room 101.



BOOK 3, CHAPTER 5

Room 101 is deep underground. Once inside, Winston is immobilized and strapped to a chair. O'Brien tells him that Room 101 contains "the worst thing in the world," and that this thing varies from person to person. O'Brien lifts up a cage containing two huge, starving rats and a kind of door that can be fitted right up against Winston's face. O'Brien brings the cage nearer and tells Winston that when he puts the cage in place and opens the door, the rats will devour his face. As the cage and rats come closer and closer, Winston is overwhelmed by a black panic. He knows that to save himself he must place a body between himself and the rats—and that that body must be Julia's. He shouts frantically, "Do it to Julia! Not me!" O'Brien, pleased, removes the cage.

Room 101 contains a person's greatest fear (which the Party learns through constant surveillance), but it also contains an even more horrible lesson. The room teaches Winston that in the face of his greatest fear, he would be willing to sacrifice anything—love, dignity, loyalty—in order to escape that fear. Put another way, he is willing to sacrifice everything that makes him himself, his own spirit and heart, to save himself from the thing he fears. Through that fear, O'Brien and Party have taken control of Winston's mind, and he will never die as an individual..



BOOK 3, CHAPTER 6

Winston, now released from prison, has become an alcoholic. He has been given a job editing the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak dictionary, haggling over details with other bureaucrats. The rest of the time he spends drinking gin at the Chestnut Tree Café, worrying about the progress of the war, watching the telescreen, and playing chess alone. On the dusty table, he traces "2 + 2 = 5."

In learning that, when facing the ultimate torture, he would sacrifice even the thing he loves most, Winston loses not just his sense of self-respect but even his sense of self. He fills that hole with alcohol. As O'Brien put it, he has become one with the Party.



He recently ran into Julia, on a cold winter day in the Park. Her body had thickened and stiffened, and the thought of having sex with her filled him with horror. She admitted that she betrayed him under torture, and he admitted that he betrayed her as well. They parted, agreeing to meet again but with no intent to actually do so. Winston, deeply ashamed, returned to the café to drink.

Having lost their self-respect, they have lost the ability to love, or even lust, after each other. They have no private lives to share, nothing to excite them. They know they are owned body and soul by the party.



Winston hears a melody and the lyrics "Under the spreading chestnut tree / I sold you and you sold me," which he remembers hearing when he saw Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford sitting in the same cafe so many years earlier. He begins to cry, and remembers a happy time when he played Snakes and Ladders with his mother. He quickly dismisses this as a false memory that never happened, and returns his attention to the telescreen, which is announcing a great military victory in Africa. Winston is overjoyed at the Party's triumph. He imagines himself back in the Ministry of Love, the hoped-for bullet entering his brain as he walks down a corridor. He looks up at the portrait of **Big Brother** on the wall, which fills him with a sense of happiness and safety. He knows that the struggle is over: at last, he loves **Big Brother**.

The lullaby Winston was remembering is about Room 101, about the betrayal—of those they love and of themselves— that all people will perform in the face of the ultimate torture. Winston practices doublethink to escape any thoughts of his mother or his history, denying himself by denying his past. The Party doesn't have to try to control Winston's reality. He controls it himself, and in doing so keeps himself as one with the Party. He has lost himself. He has given himself to Big Brother.



APPENDIX

The Appendix describes Newspeak in more detail than was possible in the narrative parts of *1984*. Newspeak, the official language of Ingsoc and Oceania, was not commonly spoken or written, except in newspaper articles. It was expected to replace Oldspeak, or Standard English, by 2050, in the perfected version embodied by the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak dictionary. The purpose of Newspeak was to make heretical thought impossible by eliminating undesirable words, and stripping existing words of unorthodox and secondary meanings. Even negative terms such as "bad" have been eliminated, replaced by words like "ungood."

In Newspeak, all parts of speech are interchangeable. A single word can be used as verb, noun, adjective, or adverb. Adjectives and adverbs were formed by adding the suffixes *-ful* and *-wise*, and prefixes such as *un-*, *plus-*, *ante-*, *up-*, *down-*. The prefix *doubleplus-* could be used to further modify or intensify a word.

There are three distinct classes of Newspeak words: the A, B, and C vocabularies. The A vocabulary consisted of simple words intended to express concrete objects or physical actions such as for eating, drinking, and working. All secondary meanings from these words are stripped away, so that they mean only *exactly* what they are meant to mean. The B vocabulary consists of compound words used for political purposes, such as "goodthink," and are designed to create ideological conformity among all Party members. Many B vocabulary names were commonly abbreviated, and a gabbling style of pronunciation called duckspeak encouraged, with the intention of making speech nearly independent of thought. The C vocabulary consisted of scientific and technical terms, and was seldom used in everyday speech.

Newspeak is part of the Party's efforts at reality control. The idea is that language provides the means by which people think, and therefore if the Party can remove from the language all the means by which people can think rebellious or even original thoughts, then it in fact removes people's ability to think those thoughts.



Any uniqueness or individuality in the language is removed. Just as no people in the Party have unique roles, now words have unique roles. Everything is interchangeable.



The vocabulary of Newspeak contains no words that refer to abstract or complicated thoughts or concepts. There is no "honor," "courage," "shame," "dignity," "freedom." There are no words that people can use to think about their feelings. Without those words, the people literally can't think complicated thoughts, can't think about their feelings. They can only think about objects or technical terms. By limiting language, Newspeak limits thought.



The restricted vocabulary of Newspeak made it impossible to express unorthodox opinions or think heretical thoughts. Certain crimes could no longer be committed because they were nameless and therefore unimaginable. For instance, the Declaration of Independence could only be translated using the single word "crimethink." The decision to postpone the full adoption of the language until 2050 was based on the need to first translate a great number of technical volumes into Newspeak.

By limiting thought, Newspeak eliminates the possibility for people to think unique thoughts, to be unique, to express themselves in any way that might allow themselves to see themselves as individuals.





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