

In George Orwell's 1984, the Party, the government of Oceania, has many slogans. One of the sayings is "Big Brother Is Watching You". Despite the fact that the slogan is only mentioned a few times throughout the novel, it embodies the government that Orwell has created.

We first learn of the slogan when the setting is described on the first page of the book. Orwell depicts, in explicit detail, the sights, sounds, and smells of Oceania. When illustrating the hallways of Victory Mansions, Winston Smith's and other members of the Party's apartment complex, Orwell writes:

On each landing, opposite the lift shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. Big Brother Is Watching You, the caption beneath it ran (5).

This poster shows Big Brother as having a face. Big Brother was not an individual person so he did not have a "face". The face, however, gives Big Brother a human quality. By doing so, the government puts itself on the same level of humanity as the citizens that it governs. The people are supposed to feel more comfortable with a ruling party that is just like them. The billboard is also found on every landing and every streetcorner. The overbearing number of posters is a way for the Party to continuously remind its citizens of its presence and ingrain the message into the people's conscience and subconscious minds.

"Big Brother" is another name for the Party. It's an ironic choice of words for the Party's second name. First, the notion of a "big brother" connotes a child's big brother. One thinks of comfort and protection, fun and trouble, and love and other feelings when thinking of a brother. One of the Party's goals is to rid Oceania of these emotions. Second, the brother is part of the family unit. The Party is trying to destroy the family and the feelings associated with it (Kalechofsky 114).

The phrase "Big Brother Is Watching You" is the Party's way of showing its control over the citizens of Oceania. The Party displays its power over both the history of the world and over the citizens of Oceania's everyday life in many different ways.

"Who controls the past," Orwell writes, "controls the future: who controls the present controls the past" (23). The Party shows its authority over humanity by changing the past, present, and future. It changes all documents in order to fit their needs. For instance, if the Party says that something never happened, then it never happened. All evidence of the event is destroyed. Oceania is continuously at war with either Eurasia or Eastasia. When the Party decides to start fighting with Eastasia and be allies with Eurasia, after years of fighting with Eurasia, all signs of a war with Eurasia are wiped out within a week. The documents are all falsified in the Records department. This is where Winston works. It's ironic that all of the nation's records are changed in the Records department and that this department is in the Ministry of Truth. In this department, facts are rearranged, erased, added, and rewritten in order to revise and "correct" history. There are, however, reminders of the past. Some of these reminders are the smell of real coffee, the thought of good beer, real sugar, a children's history textbook, and various objects in Mr. Charrington's "ordinary" shop and room. Winston buys a diary with paper that hasn't been manufactured in nearly forty years and an "archaic" pen. In the secret room, there is a painting of a church. Churches and religion are a thing of the past. There is also an old armchair and a big bed in the room. Their softness prompts Winston to think of the past. Winston is the only person who remembers the past and that there was a

different kind of life in the antiquity. He tries to save it for himself and for the future by writing a diary. It helps clarify and put his thoughts in order. He knows that he will be caught and that future generations will never see the diary. Nevertheless, he still feels the need to write it for that small possibility that they will read it. The Party uses their power so much that the changes that they're making are getting out of hand. As Orwell writes, "The past was dead, the future unimaginable" (25).

Oceania's government controls where everyone lives. The division of the people into three classes, the members of the Inner Party, the members of the Party, and the Proles, is on account of a definite hierarchy in the economic standard of living (Freedman 100). Membership in the Party and in the Inner Party is not hereditary. Members of the Inner Party live in large, luxurious mansions. They have everything that they want and need, including the freedom to turn off their telescreens when and if they want to. Other members of the Party live in the Victory Mansions. They are not taken care of and smell of boiled cabbage and sweat. The Proles live in a run down ghetto type of area. By dictating where everyone lives, the Party also determines what class the person is a member of.

The Party governs everyone's daily schedule. Members of the Party are all woken up at the same time by a voice from the telescreen. An exercise instructor on the screen leads the people in stretches and exercises, called the Physical Jerks. After dressing, etc., the adults go to work while the children go to school. Lunch is in the middle of the day. There are periodic two minute hates to arouse the people's anger and excitement. After work, there are social gatherings at the community centers and then everyone returns home and goes to sleep. Any change in a person's regular routine is viewed as suspicious. For this reason, Winston is nervous about skipping going to the center one evening and meeting Julia instead.

The Party regulates the languages used in Oceania. There are two common dialects used, Oldspeak and Newspeak. Oldspeak is the vernacular that we know and use in the United States today. Newspeak is the language that the Party creates. It is the only idiom with a vocabulary that decreases in size as time goes on. The Party wants to have a language that is so small that it'll be impossible to think poorly of the Party. (This is known as thoughtcrime in Newspeak.) Furthermore, all poetry and songs originate from the Party. There are two significant songs that are repeated throughout the novel. One of them is:

They say that time 'eals all things,
They say you can always forget:
But the smiles an' the tears across the years
They twist my 'eartstrings yet! (117, 180)

It is sung by a "red-armed woman" while "marching to and for between the washtub and the line". The woman is a Prole. The second song is:

Under the spreading chestnut tree
I sold you and you sold me:
There lie they, and here lie we
Under the spreading chestnut tree. (66, 241)

This tune is played over the telescreen. First of all, songs are produced, mainly for the Proles, by a versificator. This is an ironic choice of a word to name this machine. A versificator is a machine. It has no feelings. The name, versificator, comes from the word versicle. A versicle is a verse that is chanted by a priest and responded to by his congregation. This is a prayer with a lot of emotion. Second, the songs, despite being mechanically produced, have an emotional feminine undertone (Weatherly 82). This side is related to the mother figure of the family unit that the Party is trying to destroy.

The government exerts its sovereignty over marriage. All marriages are arranged by either the state or by the parents of those involved. The purpose for marriage is to legalize the union of a man and a woman in order to produce children

to serve the state. From the time that these offspring are very young, they are trained as spies. Many children, such as Parsons' kids, turn their parents in to the Thought Police. Neither the parents nor the children are supposed to have any love for one another. There is no love in the world. "Love" is only used for propaganda. Adultery is forbidden to the people. However, they have never been exposed to its existence. Therefore, they don't even know what it is. As a result, forbidding it is an unnecessary extreme.

The Party has ways of controlling the thoughts of the people. Winston believes that the Party can control everything except for your thoughts. He says that "nothing was your own except the few cubic centimeters inside your skull". In the end of the novel, however, Winston learns that he is wrong. He realizes that the government has the ability to even penetrate your mind. One of the ways it they controls your thoughts is with the two minute hate. Even if at first you know what you're doing, you get caught up in all of the commotion and get excited and angered too. The Thought Police enforce the desired train of thought. Nobody knows who or where they are, what they look like, or when they'll arrest someone. Even children, like Parsons' kids, can be part of the Thought Police without their own parents knowing. The Thought Police use methods such as torture and force to comprehend one's thoughts. They use these same methods to compel one to accept the things that the Party says and writes even if you do not believe in them. No matter how little you give credence to what the Party says in the beginning, you eventually come to accept everything. Winston comes to believe that two plus two equals five. He also learns to consider the following statements as true:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH (7,17, 26, 87, 152, 166)

Everyone is under constant surveillance. There are telescreens in the houses and other buildings of every Party and Inner Party member. The following exert displays some of the telescreens' power:

Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment..... 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 (6-7).

The Proles didn't have telescreens in their houses or edifice

