

STUDY GUIDE

AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL AND GWB ENTERTAINMENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH STATE THEATRE COMPANY SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY PRESENT THE HEADLONG, NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE & ALMEIDA THEATRE PRODUCTION

1984

BY GEORGE ORWELL

A NEW ADAPTATION CREATED BY ROBERT ICKE AND DUNCAN MACMILLAN



***"There is truth and
there are facts.
Freedom is the
freedom to say
that two plus two
makes four."***

Winston

STUDY GUIDE

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Please note: The Pre-Show Briefing Document includes; Introduction to the show, A list of the Cast and Creative Team, Biography on Orwell, Preshow Activities and Links, Theatre Review Preparation and a Note for Students.



Photo Credit – James Hartley

cast



Paul Blackwell – Parsons



Tom Conroy – Winston



Rose Riley – Julia



Terence Crawford – O'Brien



Bill Allert – Martin



Guy O'Grady – Syme



Fiona Press – Mrs Parsons



Simon London – Charrington

Please go to <http://www.1984play.com.au> where the cast and creative's professional

bios are listed.

plot overview

1984 is set in the same year as its name, in a world called Oceania. Oceania is a place where the Inner Party watches its citizens actions and scrutinizes their thoughts. Defying a ban on individuality, the protagonist, Winston, a member of the Outer Party, writes his thoughts in a diary and falls in love with a young headstrong woman named Julia. Robert Icke and Duncan MacMillan's production leads the audience to question if the characters in Winston's book group are only in his head or just as real as him. Winston and Julia are not safe anywhere, except the "secret" bedroom situated in the Antiques Store.

Eventually Julia and Winston confess their desire to resist the party to a formal and well spoken O'Brien, who they believe to be a member of the resistance. O'Brien presents them with a book which is supposedly written by Goldstein, the leader of the Brotherhood. Time passes and Winston finds himself in the Ministry of Love, and it is revealed that O'Brien is in fact the leader of the Inner Party. O'Brien orders the torture of Winston and intends to break his spirit and introduces the concept of doublethink. Winston fights to remain human and a free thinker at all costs. He believes that to be free, humans must be allowed to believe in an objective truth, such as $2+2 = 4$. O'Brien works to brainwash Winston in to believing that $2+2 = 5$.

O'Brien takes Winston to the most feared room in the Ministry of Love... Room 101. Winston endures excruciating and bloody torture on his mouth and fingertips... but still does not relent. It is when he is confronted by his greatest fear: rats, that he finally relents screaming, "Do it to Julia!"

In the end Winston is a changed man. He is broken. His last words are, "Thank you". He no longer knows how to be a free thinker.

Watch a Summary of Orwell's *1984* (novel) here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9JIKngJnCU>

orwell's appendix in *1984* – a framing device

"At the back of Orwell's novel there is an appendix. Which is unusual in a work of fiction. Is this a work of fiction? Is this a historical document? Who wrote the Appendix in *1984*? Icke and Macmillan (Directors) started to ask questions about who was telling the *1984* story and what was the function of the appendix? When reading the novel, readers finish it, having been told that Winston feels thankful and happy as he has finally won the battle over himself and has been brainwashed by the Party. Readers may not go on to read the Appendix and they close the book... But if they read on, they would discover much more about the Party.

Icke and Macmillan have used the Appendix as a framing device for their production. The way audience's enter the world of Oceania and the story of Winston Smith is through a group of people in the future looking back on possibly Winston's Diaries. "

Corey McMahon – Associate Director



Photo Credit – Shane Reid

q&a

Robert Icke & Duncan MacMillan - Co Adaptors and Director

What drew you to *1984* in the first place?

We were interested in looking at big important canonical texts whilst asking the questions:

- * Why are these texts important?
- * Are these texts still important?
- * What have they got to say?

There is a 15 year-old boy in me who gets really bored in period dressed productions of classic plays. Just because everyone says it's a classic doesn't mean anything. If it is boring it's still boring. One of the things we've talked about a lot is wanting to be able to allow young people access. Theatre is in competition with a lot of great stuff. We spend our time watching *Mad Men*, *The Wire*, *The West Wing* and video games. There is a real desire to want to be current in that conversation and to want to be able to say to young people who come that we can deliver them a live experience that is as fizzy and exciting and immediate as they might find their *Grand Theft Auto 5* session. That's the aspiration.

What aspects of the novel did you find most important when adapting it for the stage?

The appendix is the most important bit. Structurally, the appendix is the thing that defines the whole novel. I don't understand how you can adapt this novel if you don't touch the appendix and the footnote which is on page 3, 'Newspeak was the official speak of Oceania. For further information see appendix.'

Orwell put something at the end that a lot of people hilariously and ironically haven't bothered to finish. One of the key moments of the novel itself is Winston not bothering to finish the book that is going to tell him the secret of the world. And one of the things the novel really thinks about is the status of the text and what text means and whether text can have any authority when it's been messed with. Can you trust words to delivery any sort of information?

We wanted to make the show have a psychological pressure that started when the curtain went up and when we spat it back out at the end and the harsh lights came up again you felt like you've been under this tight pressure for the whole thing. This is the reason it doesn't have an interval.

How did you approach the framework and structure of the play?

One of the questions we set ourselves early on was how do you stage doublethink? The novel is very successful at putting forward two contradictory ideas and never resolving which one is the right one. Which many people find frustrating about the novel and we've always found really exciting.

The aspiration was always to be like the appendix and the footnote. Because the footnote comes at the start and the appendix goes at the end. So it is a framed novel. The novel itself exists in a frame that reads it contextually backwards. When you read Goldstein's book, your eyes go with Winston's eyes but from the moment you read, 'It was a bright cold day in April,' you're reading the book with somebody else because that person has footnoted it and written you an appendix. So there is another reader in your experience of the novel at all times. It's a third person novel but it also has odd access to Winston's subjective thoughts which O'Brien also has.

The framing device comes out of a very close reading of the novel. Once we understood what the appendix did we got quite obsessed with the fact that the adaptation had to manage that.

We realise that Goldstein probably doesn't exist as a literal person, neither does Big Brother. In which case if you have actors playing them then you're saying this is a literal universe. That's not accurate to what the book is trying to say. So it was trying to provide a frame where the characters are not necessarily literally there.

You have to set up a space which might be imaginary. There was a post-show discussion about whether Winston in Scene 1 is a guy in a book group imagining his way into George Orwell's novel in 1984 or whether he is Winston Smith imagining an imaginary future or if there are a lot of people in the room who then imagine Winston Smith. The status of who is dreaming and where that ends up seemed to us to be so important to try and capture some of the subjectivity that Orwell achieves in the novel. That you can never quite be sure whether this is real, dreamed or remembered.

Many argue that 1984 is an unstable novel as Orwell's feverish completion of the book in his almost dying days allows holes to creep in. However, in your production, are you arguing that these holes stand up because if you look closely enough the dream state is foreshadowed in even quite minor details?

That's right. The holes are often perceived as being the weaknesses of the play but I think they are the bits you want to stage. I really felt this about the novel. That's the exciting stuff. We looked at the contradictions in the novel. For example, the fact that we are introduced to Julia as thought police and then Winston switches to saying that she's not thought police and we never really get a payoff to whether she is or she isn't. An early provocation that we gave each other is that if the party is going to fall it is because there are people like O'Brien high up in the inner party who are members of the Brotherhood. The party does fall. So does that suggest that O'Brien might actually be Brotherhood after all and Winston is just a terrible radical? He is not radicalised properly. He doesn't finish the book.

There are feelings that 1984 is a prophecy of a self-destructive mission foretold. There are no surprises because the surprises in a sense were there if you spotted them. Would you agree with this notion?

Yes. Which is why O'Brien keeps saying to him, 'You know this already. You've always known about this. You know the answer to that question already.' One of the things we talked about at the start was the theory that the whole novel happens on the duress in Room 101. So you're seeing strange flashbacks to things that have already happened, which explains the fevered quality and the ambiguities.

Someone could retrospectively view the entire play as having taken place in Room 101 in terms of what we do with the staging and design at that point. Also, O'Brien's voiceovers and sound effects we hear in Room 101 are used earlier on in the performance. This also contributes to how you stage doublethink.

It is also important to us that the book that they discuss could be Winston's diary, it could be Orwell's novel, and it could also be Goldstein's book.

How did you approach the adaptation process?

The overriding thing was how do we find a theatrical form for how complicated this is? How do we achieve doublethink? How do we deliver the intellectual argument? We were always talking about the audience. Can we take along a 15 year-old who has never read the book? And can we also satisfy the scholar who has read this book a hundred times and can it stand up to re-reading? I think we have ended up being incredibly faithful to the book.

Your responsibility is to whoever is in the room that day and to the person who wrote it originally and you're trying to connect the audience and the world of now with whatever the text is. If the text is worth looking at there will be a way of bridging that gap whilst remaining honest and being truthful to both parties. I think it is profoundly dishonest to do the blue overalls April the 4th version of 1984 because what it doesn't deliver is so much of the complexity which is what we found so exciting.

Listen to Icke and Macmillan talk Orwell and 1984 (Audio Quality Variable)

<http://www.theatrevoice.com/audio/headlongs-robert-icke-and-duncan-macmillan-talk-orwell-and-1984/>

Corey McMahon - Associate Director

How does the re-staging of an extant production work?

This production of *1984* is a re-staging of the Headlong production that was created by Robert Icke and Duncan MacMillan. So our job was not to create a wholly new version of their adaptation. Our job was to re-stage what they created with a new cast of Australian actors. So we're not reinventing the wheel. Given how brilliantly their adaptation of Orwell's novel works on stage it would be folly to attempt to change it.

As associate director, what was your role in bringing *1984* to the Australian stage?

When you are Associate Director on an existing production, charged with the responsibility of reproducing the work of the show's creators, your task is to be faithful to that original vision. It's not your job to find a new way of telling (in this case) the story of Winston Smith – the creators, Robert Icke and Duncan MacMillan have already done that – my job was to serve their vision, their style and to not radically change that. It's very different from directing a production that is built around your own artistic vision. That work has been done already. You have a responsibility to protect the creator's work but also ensure the new cast have a degree of ownership over what they are doing on stage. Good actors deserve the chance to stake their claim on the work. So in this context it's a balancing act between ensuring we remain faithful to the original production and to also making sure your actors have a voice in the creative process.

Because we're reproducing an extant production, the creative teams, like me, have a brief to honor the design and technical elements created by the original creative and technical teams.

What experience do you hope Australian audiences have in viewing *1984*?

This is a bold and dynamic production. It's a contemporary take on Orwell's literary masterpiece. The good thing is you don't need to have read the book to get caught up in the story of Winston Smith and his fight for truth and freedom. It's at once thrilling but also thought provoking with its continued relevance to the world we live in. So my hope is that people walk away from seeing it thoroughly entertained but also starting to think in a deeper sense about the way our world is evolving.

What was your overall vision?

To present the play in such a way as to ensure the work speaks for itself. This isn't a story that needs tweaking or embellishing so as to make it relevant to contemporary audiences. It always has been (and will continue to be) relevant. So the vision is to honor the work of the show's creators, to honor Orwell's story and to ensure we let the play speak for itself.

What process did you go through to bring *1984* to life?

I worked on the most recent West End production in 2016, shadowing the UK Associate Director, to learn the show and the process of rehearsing it. I was in the UK for 3 months, following the process from auditioning the cast to opening the show on the West End. On returning to Australia, I commenced the audition process for the Australian cast and worked closely with the Australian producing partners in the lead up to the commencement of rehearsals. I have remained in contact with the UK team I worked with in 2016 and they have offered advice and information to help me plan for the Australian production.

Once we commenced rehearsals in Adelaide, it was a case of building the show in the style and form of the original while also giving room for the local cast to place their stamp on the work.

What were some of the main requests you had of your actors?

When you are re-staging an existing production, it's important to take the time to explain to your cast why you need them to do things a certain way. Their job is different in this context. They need to reproduce the work of those who have gone before them but you need to let them find their way to the point they need to be. So you are often fielding questions about why their character says or does something the way you need them to say it. It's about giving as much information to the actors as they need to feel like that can bring truth to the work you are asking them to do.

What challenges did you face recreating 1984?

It's a BIG show. It's a very technical show. It's also a play that, in storytelling terms, is quite unique. There's no linear narrative, no beginning-middle-end. So from a directing and acting perspective, it's often a hard one to get your head around. And it's vital we do get it, otherwise what hope does the audience have? So the challenges on that front have been ongoing. But these challenges are part and parcel of making theatre and the rehearsal process is about exploring every facet of the story and finding ways to communicate it to the audience.

The actor playing Winston Smith is on stage for the entire production. He never leaves the stage so another challenge has been looking after that actor, ensuring he feels secure in the work he is doing and that he has what he needs to get through the play.

What do you think are the key moments in 1984?

There are some unexpected twists and turns in the story that Winston Smith has to navigate which, from an audience perspective will be fun to watch. But at its core it's the fight for truth that Winston takes on that is the key to the story.

Do you have any favourite quotes from 1984? Why did you choose these?

"If there is hope, real hope, it lies in people." Winston Smith
(Because, you've got to have hope, don't you?)

"The people are not going to revolt. They will not look up from their screens long enough to notice what's really happening." O'Brien
(Because, I'm terrified he is right)

What do you think Orwell's message to the world is?

1984 was written as a warning. Orwell was writing in response to the rise of fascism in Europe, the impending expansion of communism in places like the former USSR and Korea and predicting a time where these forces had taken hold. He was asking us to remain vigilant, to constantly question the 'truth' we are being told. He was also warning us that in *1984* totalitarian regimes would exercise control not through brute force but by controlling language and thought. He predicted that the control of language would lead to controlling how we think. And once you control thought, you control the population.

I reckon he's pretty close to the mark when you look at how our politicians speak, how information is framed by people in power to ensure we think and react the way they want us to and how 'alternative facts' has thrown into question what objective truth is.



Photo Credit – Shane Reid

Shannon Rush – Assistant Director

I am the Assistant Director on *1984* and also act as the chaperone for the two child actors in the Adelaide season. As Assistant Director I'm responsible for ensuring continuity and specificity in the many highly choreographed scenes of the play, and supporting the director in any way needed. I'm also responsible for directing and working with the child actors on their scenes. This ties into the chaperone role, which involves being the main contact person between the families and the company, and ensuring safety of the children during rehearsal and performance.

What do you think are the key moments in *1984*?

Winston meeting and falling in love with Julia, Winston being initiated into the Brotherhood and receiving Goldstein's Book, and (spoiler alert!) Winston's capture and interrogation in Room 101. These are the key turning points of the play and lead Winston's journey to its inevitable conclusion.

Is there anything different about this production as compared to the original novel?

Yes. It's impossible to distill all the detail of a novel into a 101 minute live production. The writers have done an incredible job of retaining key information, but a book and a play are very different artistic forms, so concessions and changes have been made.

Do you have any favourite quotes from *1984*? Why did you choose these?

One of my favourite quotes from the play is, 'We are the dead,' which is repeated many times by various characters. It's sort of like Winston's motto! I like this quote because, in the context of the play, it reminds us of Winston's purpose and it also ties into the ever present question of time; past, present and future.



Photo Credit – Shane Reid

technical design

In this production of *1984* the technical design is intensive and highly sophisticated. It includes many clever and lightning fast stage transitions, sometimes taking place in complete blackouts. The designs are precise and technically advanced. The sound, lighting and video elements all work together to allow the audience to feel like they are members of the Party, watching all that goes on; as well as experiencing a taste of the mental torture Winston experiences throughout.

At the Adelaide Subscriber's Briefing the Associate Lighting, Sound and Video designers spoke about the following...

Ian Valkeith, Associate Video Designer: In Big Brother society they want to watch their subjects all the time. We have 8 live cameras “watching” in this show... Julia and Winston think they are safe but we, the audience become Big Brother watching them. We can see everything they do.

Mark Gough, Associate Lighting Designer: There are many challenges lighting this show and it’s particularly difficult as we are lighting for cameras, TV and stage... It was important for us to focus on how the lighting would affect an audience.

We needed to mix the lighting effects so it didn’t look like a live TV broadcast as it’s not of that era, so we mixed a look of old and new to create what the audience sees.

Lighting is there to intensify the piece and make the audience feel uncomfortable. Normally with lighting it is designed to be pleasing to the eye, but in this case, lighting makes the audience feel like they don’t want to sit there and watch anymore. They fight against wanting to leave and wanting to stay. (Uncomfortable in a good way.)

Richard Bell, Associate Sound Designer: As with lighting, sound is also used to intensify the audience experience and leaves them feeling uncomfortable. It supports the actors on stage but gives things an edge, something that’s not right, moments that you are pinned to the back of your seat.

* The heart of the play is not sacrificed with the use of technology. The tech supports the core story.

** The Australian set is from the one used in the West End of London. Many of the costumes were also from this show.

insight from the cast

Fiona Press – Mrs Parson’s

I play an archetypal mother-figure who lends herself to being Winston’s neighbour (Mrs Parsons); Winston’s memory of his mother; a serving-woman in a canteen; a washerwoman who sings outside his window and a latter-day mother attending a book group which is discussing the significance of Winston’s story.

Because the play tells the story of the book from Winston’s point of view, every scene takes us to a different place inside Winston’s head. This means that I am playing various versions of the one character, according to who or what he is remembering at any one time. This also means the relationships in the play are not always played out naturalistically; often we relate to each other in a very stylised or choreographic way, in order to establish the dream-like quality of Winston’s experience.

Because this is a remount of a production that was created some time ago, the rehearsal process was very different from the usual. Initially, our task was to copy the moves, gestures, rhythms and general emotional qualities that had been established by the original creators of

the show and by previous companies of actors. Once we had mastered this framework sufficiently, we were able to personalise our performances and flesh them out with our own motivations and expressions. Also, we are working with various subtle shades of the one English accent, which requires careful research and constant vocal vigilance.

Because of the non-naturalistic 'dream logic' of the play, the usual motivations such as 'super objective' don't really apply for all the characters. As I am playing an archetype, her thematic significance and dramatic function has been a more useful guiding principle. In each scene, I am aware that the 'mother figure' represents anyone who is disadvantaged, who struggles to understand the world; who struggles to articulate her thoughts; who feels more than she thinks; who nurtures others; who sacrifices herself. These big ideas also express themselves in particular and immediate scene objectives. For example, Mrs. Parsons wants to get her child home safely; Winston's mother wants to protect her children from harm.

Sometimes, the process described above felt uncomfortable because it is kind of 'back to front' from the usual way in which an actor works. Normally, when we are creating a role from the ground up, our intuitive responses and imaginative ideas are considered, tested, rejected, incorporated or whatever. In this process, those intuitive responses were only occasionally useful, and often got in the way of an accurate recreation of the performance. A good analogy for this task is the fact that we are wearing costumes made for the previous cast. The clothes may not fit me very well but I must inhabit them with the same sense of ease as if they were made for me. The same goes for the performance.

I really like what my roles represent politically: there is a thread running through them, though the play and through Orwell's story about how a solid, caring, hopeful woman could be the saviour of the human world. She does not have to be advantaged in life, or even be well-educated, to show us an almost animal intuition for goodness and selflessness.

My favorite Mrs Parsons's moment in the script...

As he watches the washerwoman outside his window, and listens to her singing, Winston expresses this same idea: *"She's beautiful ... all over the world, millions, billions of people just like her. Ignorant of one another's existence, held apart by hatred and lies, and yet almost exactly the same. People who have not yet learned to think but who are storing up in their bellies and their muscles the power that will one day overturn the world ... the same solid, unconquerable woman ... a metre wide from childbearing, working, toiling from birth to death ... Still singing."*

Paul Blackwell – Parsons's

I play Parsons and the Father in the book group, which frames the play, as well as one of the torturers and scene changers.

Parsons is one of the Outer Party members we encounter in the three Canteen scenes and then finally in the cell with Winston where he meets his demise.

In a world where the individual is constantly observed and thus paranoid and extremely vulnerable, Parsons tries to be seen to be a strong supporter of the Party and all of its policies.

We meet Mrs Parsons and their daughter in other scenes, though never together, so we build

up a picture of life in their household and the activities of the daughter in the compulsory training young people must participate in: Activities that are strongly supported and encouraged by Mr and Mrs Parsons.

Sources which helped me in approaching this play:

1984, George Orwell

Homage to Catalonia, George Orwell

Orwell Essays, George Orwell

Life and Fate, Vassily Grossman

The Sympathizer, Viet Thanh Nguyen

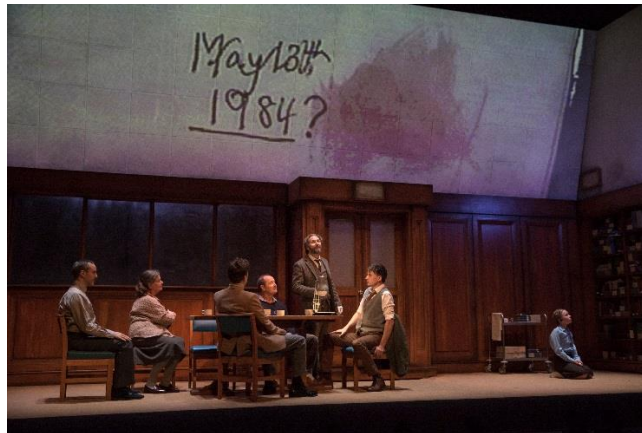
Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Michel Gondry

Unlike most plays, rehearsals have necessarily been extremely technical in order to replicate an unusually tech heavy production.

Remounting an existing production of this nature in the time available does not permit the usual exploration in terms of experimenting with options so this process tends to happen in the latter stages of our rehearsal once the template has been achieved.

To read more interviews with the cast go to... <http://www.1984play.com.au/news/>



Phot Credit – Shane Reid

theatrical style

There's a dream-like narrative that supports the play. It's less a traditional stage drama, but rather the play draws on very contemporary modes of storytelling. It embraces a non-linear timeline, is built around repetition of key moments and dialogue. Scenes often feel filmic in structure. It moves at a cracking pace! It's told through Winston Smith's subjective recollection of events but is constantly asking the audience to question the authenticity of the events being depicted on stage.

This production of *1984* is produced as a type of fantastical realism. The characters and their interactions are very 'real' but the production has a dream-like quality as everything is viewed through Winston's eyes and from his perspective. Winston finds himself transported to different

locations in the blink of an eye, or replaying scenes over and over again. To that end there's a sense of magic in the style of the play. The latter part of the play, also draws on theatre of cruelty principles.

Orwell's novel was written in the genres of **Dystopian Literature, Parody, Science Fiction and Social Criticism**.



Photo Credit – Shane Reid

characters

Winston Smith - The protagonist and a “thinker”, who hides a secret disdain for the Party. On the outside, Winston appears to “tow the line” but embraces his dreams and memories of the past. As the play progresses, Winston’s beliefs become stronger and he develops a relationship with Julia. In the end Winston’s rebellious thoughts are eradicated and loses his humanity.

Julia – Is a young woman who works for the anti-sex league in the fiction department. She develops a relationship with Winston and they discover they both have the desire to be a part of the rebellion. Just like Winston, she is tortured in the Ministry of Love, which we do not see, and when they are reunited, both are physically and mentally broken.

O'Brien – Is a mysterious and all powerful member of the Inner Party. On the one hand he is Winston's enemy and on the other, his ally. He is like a father figure but is full of contradictions. He is responsible for Winston's ultimate indoctrination to the Party. O'Brien is a personification of the Party, and its doctrine is revealed through him.

Mr. Charrington – Is the owner of the antique shop where Winston rents the room. He appears to be a nice, old man but in the end, reveals his disguise and is a member of the Thought Police.

Parsons – Is Winston's next door neighbour and husband to Mrs Parsons. He is the father of the little girl in the play. Parsons is a likeable, yet naïve character, who in the end, has his thoughts encountered and is imprisoned by Big Brother. He finds Winston in the Ministry of Love.

Syme – Is a Newspeak expert who is working on a dictionary. Syme is too smart for his own good and is clumsy. In Orwell's story, Syme goes missing and is vaporized.

Martin – Is O'Brien's right hand man. He leads Julia and Winston to O'Brien and is present during their meeting. He is a mean character, one dimensional and militant. He is a constant presence throughout the play.

Mrs Parsons – Is a character of contrast in this play, where she appears to represent all things good and of nurture. As most of the performance takes place in Winston's head, Mrs Parsons takes on the guise as a washer women, a serving woman and represents Winston's memory of his own mother.

For list of characters and descriptions in Orwell's 1984 go to:
<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/1984/characters.html>

themes

(Including definitions from the Collins English Dictionary)

What is truth? What are facts?

The truth about something is all the facts about it, rather than things that are imagined or invented. The quality of being true, genuine, actual, or factual. A proven or verified principle or statement; fact.

A fact - When you refer to something as a fact or as fact, you mean that you think it is true or correct.

What is freedom?

Freedom is the state of being allowed to do what you want to do.

What is memory?

The ability of the mind to store and recall past sensations, events, actions, thoughts and knowledge.

Nature of power

If someone has power, they have a lot of control over people and activities.

Political, financial, social, etc.: force or influence

Totalitarianism

A system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state.

Power of language

To influence thought and action. ... The words we use to describe things—to ourselves and others—affects how we and they think and act. It's good to remind ourselves that this powerful influence happens in all kinds of situations and most certainly with **language** related to teaching and learning. facultyfocus.com

Political uprising

An organised rebellion, especially against an authority or government — is an **uprising**. The word **uprising** is most often used to describe a **political revolt**, often a violent insurrection against the established rule, but its original **meaning** was very different. vocabulary.com

Other themes explored... violence, control, technology and modernisation, manipulation, repression/oppression, loyalty.

Winston and the members of the rebellion fight for truth, the right to have memories, expression and freedom.

The themes explored in **1984** are relevant and somewhat prevalent in our world today.

symbolism

Repetition is used throughout the show which symbolizes the dream like state of Winston's mind, and also his inability to access memory.

Winston's diary – Represents his desire to be able to think freely and do as he pleases.

Colour of red in the design of the production is subtle yet symbolic. Blood, war, danger, love, passion, chocolate wrapper.

Rats – The rats represent the ultimate of Winston's fears. Rats are the creatures who lead Winston's spirit to break. It shows that he, like all human beings, have a weak spot. Rats also represent depravity.

Dreams – Winston's dreams reveal important facts about this past and predict his future. Big Brother cannot see into Winston's dreams... only his direct thoughts.

Winston's mother – Represents loss and human contact. Alienation and loss shape Winston's existence.

Snow-globe– Representing St Clements... Winston uses it to reconnect with memory and the past.

Telescreens – Omnipresent – (everywhere). Where the screens are... Big Brother can see you.



Photographic Credit – Shane Reid

quotes

War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength.
The Party Slogan

Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.
O'Brien

Trust me Winston, I'm going to make you perfect?
O'Brien

Control your memories... Reality only exists in the mind, inside the skull?
O'Brien

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?
Winston

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.
Julia

How do you know you're not dreaming now?

Julia

The truth matters.

Winston

Oranges and Lemons Poem

*"Oranges and lemons" say the Bells of St. Clement's
"You owe me five farthings" say the Bells of St. Martin's
"When will you pay me?" say the Bells of Old Bailey
"When I grow rich" say the Bells of Shoreditch
"When will that be?" say the Bells of Stepney
"I do not know" say the Great Bells of Bow
"Here comes a Candle to light you to Bed
Here comes a Chopper to Chop off your Head
Chip chop chip chop – the Last Man's Dead."*

An idea is the only thing that has ever changed the world.

"Goldstein"

Being a minority of one does not make you mad.

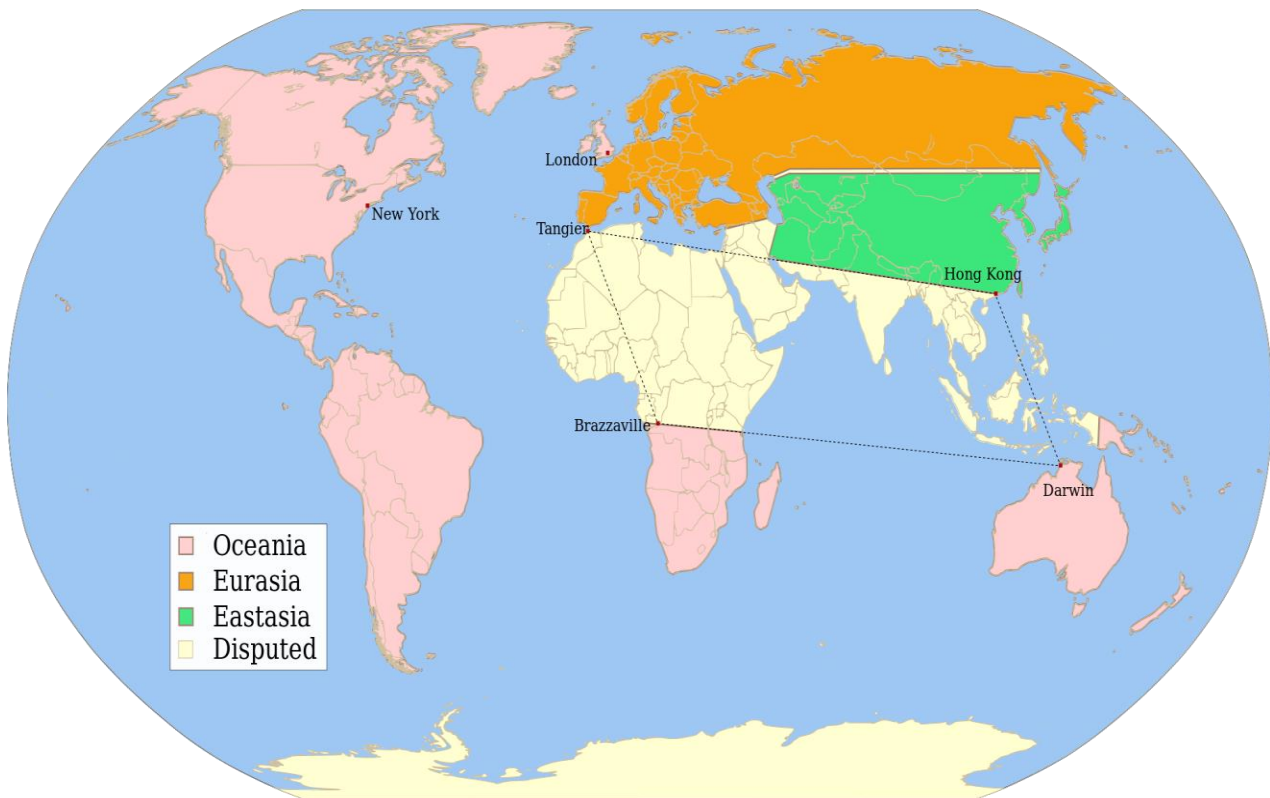
"Goldstein"

Sanity is not statistical.

"Goldstein"

background information

Map of World from Orwell's 1984



SOURCE: MichaelsProgramming-Twisp, Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3752542>

Oceania is the superstate where protagonist Winston Smith dwells. It is believed to be composed of the Americas, the British Isles (called “Airstrip One” in the novel), Iceland, Australia, New Zealand, and southern Africa below the River Congo. It also controls—to different degrees and at various times during the course of its perpetual war with either Eurasia or Eastasia—the polar regions, India, Indonesia and the islands of the Pacific. Oceania lacks a single capital city, although London and apparently New York may be regional capitals. In the novel, Emmanuel Goldstein, Oceania’s declared public enemy number one, describes it in the fictional book *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* as a result of the United States having absorbed the British Empire. Goldstein’s book also states that Oceania’s primary natural defence is the sea surrounding it.

Eurasia – It is stated that Eurasia was formed when the Soviet Union annexed the rest of continental Europe, creating a single polity stretching from Portugal to the Bering Strait. Orwell frequently describes the face of the standard Eurasian as “20ongolic” in the novel. The only soldiers other than Oceanians that appear in the novel are the Eurasians. When a large number of captured soldiers are executed in Victory Square, some Slavs are mentioned, but the stereotype of the Eurasian maintained by the Party is Mongoloid, like O’Brien’s servant, Martin. This implies that the Party uses racism to avert sympathy toward an enemy.

According to Goldstein's book, Eurasia's main natural defence is its vast territorial extent, while the ruling ideology of Eurasia is identified as "Neo-Bolshevism", a variation of the Oceanian "Ingsoc".

Eastasia's borders are not as clearly defined as those of the other two superstates, but it is known that they encompass most of modern-day China, Japan, Taiwan, and Korea. Eastasia repeatedly captures and loses Indonesia, New Guinea, and the various Pacific archipelagos. Its political ideology is, according to the novel, "called by a Chinese name usually translated as Death-worship, but perhaps better rendered as "Obliteration of the Self." Orwell does not appear to have based this on any existing Chinese word or phrase.



Photo Credit – Shane Reid

Memory

Memory is our ability to encode, store, retain and subsequently recall information and past experiences in the human brain. It can be thought of in general terms as the use of past experience to affect or influence current behaviour.

Memory is the sum total of what we remember, and gives us the capability to learn and adapt from previous experiences as well as to build relationships. It is the ability to remember past experiences, and the power or process of recalling to mind previously learned facts, experiences, impressions, skills and habits. It is the store of things learned and retained from our activity or experience, as evidenced by modification of structure or behaviour, or by recall and recognition.

http://www.human-memory.net/intro_what.html

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is a way of indicating or hinting at what will come later.

Foreshadowing can be subtle, like storm clouds on the horizon suggesting that danger is coming, or more direct, such as Romeo and Juliet talking about wanting to die rather than live without each other. Sometimes authors use false clues to mislead a reader. These are called "red herrings," and they often appear in mystery writing. Foreshadowing can also be considered a literary device, but we have treated it as a narrative element because of its association with storytelling.

http://udleditions.cast.org/craft_elm_foreshadowing.html



Photographic Credit – Shane Reid

Orwell's 1984 - Appendix

"The appendix to 1984 is Orwell's explanation of Oceania's official language, Newspeak, of which there are many examples throughout the text, such as doublethink and duckspeak, and discusses the purpose for its conception."

Newspeak consists of the A vocabulary, the B vocabulary, and the C vocabulary. The A vocabulary consists of words needed for everyday life and words that already exist but have been stripped of all shades of meaning.

The B vocabulary consists of words that have been deliberately constructed for political purposes and are a kind of verbal shorthand; all are compound words, such as goodthink.

The C vocabulary consists entirely of scientific and technical words and follows the same grammatical rules as the A and B vocabularies.

Newspeak was designed to diminish thought rather than help expression, as is the goal of other languages. Again unlike other languages, Newspeak regularly loses words instead of gains them.

Newspeak is a brilliant device on Orwell's part and serves his political agenda well: if a government can control language, it can also control thought. If there is no word for the concept of freedom, how can a person think about freedom? By limiting language, the people who speak that language are limited to what concepts exist in words.

Orwell was convinced that language deteriorated under totalitarian rule and that literature was impossible under totalitarian circumstances. As a writer, Orwell was concerned with the state of language in the world and wrote essays on the effect of governments on writers and writing. Newspeak stems naturally out of Orwell's ideas about language and governmental control.

Orwell predicted that Newspeak would be perfected in the year 2050, perhaps because he wanted to keep the fear of totalitarianism alive in his readers past the year 1984. Orwell was a visionary, predicting many things that eventually came to pass. Thankfully Newspeak is not one of them."

Source - <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/n/1984/summary-and-analysis/part-3-appendix>

activities for the classroom

Created by Kate Rayner UK – Adapted by Hannah McCarthy-Oliver AUS

Diary Entries and Monologues

1984 opens with the line 'A diary'. The audience witnesses Winston making a diary entry before a voiceover states...

"A diary, The thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. If detected it would be punished by death. There was no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police watched any particular individual was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. Winston faltered for a second. He did not know with any certainty that this was 1984; it was never possible nowadays to pin down any date within a year or two. Whether he went on with the diary or not made no difference. The thought police would get him just the same. He had

committed, would still have committed, even if he had never set pen to paper, the essential crime that contained all others in itself. Thoughtcrime. Thoughtcrime could not be concealed forever. Sooner or later they were bound to get you.' (1984, 2014)

Part 1- Diary Entry

Write a diary entry as though you were Winston Smith in the moment he first thinks of creating his diary. Talk about how he felt in this moment. This could be done as a homework exercise and then developed in the classroom using the development activity in Part 2.

Part 2 – Development

Using the diary entries in Part 1, think about developing the writing as a monologue for performance. You may find the character questionnaire listed on the next page useful to build a strong identity for your character.

Ask the class to think about the setting for their character:

Where are they when they perform their monologue? How soon after the event is it?

How are they feeling?

What will happen next?

Part 3 – Extension

If you have time you might find hot seating to be a useful technique in developing your character.

Hot seating – You will need a single chair set up in the middle of a semi-circle. The class will have an opportunity to ask questions to a character from the group. The aim is to help the actor think deeply about the character behaviors and motives that they might not have considered yet.

Start by getting into pairs to discuss a list of potential questions for the characters with their partner, they may ask the same to all characters or think about a variety of questions.

This works best with an example from the teacher, so when the questions are prepared take the 'hot-seat' and introduce yourself in character inviting questions from the audience. Be sure to remain in character for the entire time spent in the 'hot-seat'.

Once demonstrated ask for a volunteer who is confident enough to sit in the 'hot-seat' as the character and field further questions. Set a time limit for both the character and the questioners, and if at any point the character wants to stop questioning, they may get up out of the chair.

Questionnaire

Where does your character live?

Who does your character live with?

Where is your character from?

How old is your character?

What is your character's personality?

What are their likes and dislikes?

Which time period is your character from?

What does your character look like?

Who else is in your character's life?

What kind of childhood did he or she have?

What is your character's role in their community?
How does your character deal with conflict and change?
What is your character most afraid of?
What is your character's goal or motivation in this story or scene?

Expand

You may try expanding the character questionnaire to discuss the setting of 1984.
Is the performance set in the future that Winston imagines when he starts to write the diary?
Is the play set in a date in the future e.g. 2050 or 2084 looking back at the text and imagining Winston?
Is the entire performance performed retrospectively from Room 101?

2- Protest: THOUGHT CRIMINAL

It is difficult to imagine what it must be like to not be allowed to speak or even think your mind.

Part 1 – Thought Crime Game

Ask a volunteer to talk about a subject they feel passionately about. Once they have decided on the subject, have the group brainstorm words associated with that subject. Pick your top five and write them on the wall. Now ask the volunteer student to talk for two minutes on their subject without using any of the listed words or even giving the impression they are thinking of those words. If they do, the other students must sound a buzzer or shout 'THOUGHT CRIMINAL!' How did that feel for the volunteer? What was it like to not be able to speak freely? What did it make him/her want to do?

Part 2 – Extension

You could extend this exercise by creating a physical representation of protest. Place a chair at one end of the room. Have the group decide what the protest is about. The chair now represents this. Ask for a volunteer. The aim for this person is to reach the chair, stand on it, and shout aloud what they are protesting about. Now ask the other students (the censors) to create different obstacles to physically stop that person from getting to their destination. No touch allowed. Does the person succeed? What tactics did they use? How did they find this? How did they feel if/when they were eventually heard? Remind the students that protest doesn't have to be in the form of a march – in the play Winston uses the power of writing and free thought as a medium to share his views.

Parts 3 – Further Extension

As an extension, you could have students write an article on a subject that they feel passionately about.

Debate: Ethical Surveillance in Journalism

Ethics in journalism are regularly under the microscope in today's media, with high profile cases under the spotlight.

1 - Discussion

Start as a class by discussing the following terms and cases to ensure understanding. Detailed research into these topics might be set as homework prior to class:

Phone Hacking Scandal – Rupert Murdoch
Accusations of Russia and other countries hacking into Hilary Clinton's emails
Australian Government's Phone Tapping of Jakarta
Celebrity Super-injunctions
Wikileaks

2 – Further Research and Questions

In Australia strict laws restrict covert recordings of telephone conversations.

Read these articles to gain an understanding of Australian Laws on **Electronic Bugging**
https://investigateway.com.au/resources_bugging_in_australia.php

Phone tapping: Australia offers better protection than others
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/07/phone-tapping-australia-included-in-detailed-global-report>

The Australian MEAA Code of Ethics is as follows...

Honesty Fairness Independence Respect for the rights of others

Journalists will educate themselves about ethics and apply the following standards:

1. Report and interpret honestly, striving for accuracy, fairness and disclosure of all essential facts. Do not suppress relevant available facts, or give distorting emphasis. Do your utmost to give a fair opportunity for reply.
2. Do not place unnecessary emphasis on personal characteristics, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, family relationships, religious belief, or physical or intellectual disability.
3. Aim to attribute information to its source. Where a source seeks anonymity, do not agree without first considering the source's motives and any alternative attributable source. Where confidences are accepted, respect them in all circumstances.
4. Do not allow personal interest, or any belief, commitment, payment, gift or benefit, to undermine your accuracy, fairness or independence.
5. Disclose conflicts of interest that affect, or could be seen to affect, the accuracy, fairness or independence of your journalism. Do not improperly use a journalistic position for personal gain.
6. Do not allow advertising or other commercial considerations to undermine accuracy, fairness or independence.
7. Do your utmost to ensure disclosure of any direct or indirect payment made for interviews, pictures, information or stories.
8. Use fair, responsible and honest means to obtain material. Identify yourself and your employer before obtaining any interview for publication or broadcast. Never exploit a person's vulnerability or ignorance of media practice.
9. Present pictures and sound which are true and accurate. Any manipulation likely to mislead should be disclosed.
10. Do not plagiarise.
11. Respect private grief and personal privacy. Journalists have the right to resist compulsion to intrude.
12. Do your utmost to achieve fair correction of errors.

Go to the link <https://www.meaa.org/meaa-media/code-of-ethics/> for more information.

Do you think journalists in Australia always abide by these codes of ethics? Can you think of any examples where publications might “stretch the truth” or possibly encroach on people’s privacy?

3 – Suggested Essay Titles

It is the responsibility of the reader to regulate the press by not buying newspapers that they do not think are ethical. Discuss.

What are the challenges inherent in differentiating between fact and opinion? Are there any areas where the boundaries blur?

Why do I need to know about the private lives of public figures? Is it in the public interest to know the private details of notable public figures such as politicians, footballers and celebrities? Discuss.

Censorship and Surveillance

In Australia, as a democratic country, we take our rights to freedom of speech for granted. In contrast, the play creates a world with extreme censorship and surveillance laws that if broken could present individuals with fatal consequences. *1984* deals with the ideas of censorship and surveillance throughout, mainly through the presence of the party.

The play presents a world in which everyone is constantly under the surveillance of Big Brother. The following exercise, entitled *Paranoia*, aims to engage participants in what it feels like to be watched by many people at one time, and the effect of surveillance on your behaviour.

Practical Exercise: Paranoia

This exercise is a more complex variation of the popular ‘wink murder’, whereby two participants need to find ‘secret code’ to communicate with each other to defeat another ‘detective’.

For this exercise, you will need: paper and a pen. Have enough pieces of paper for each person in the group. Number these pieces of paper (i.e. if there are 14 group members including yourself then numbers 1 all the way up to 14). Fold each sheet or place face down. Each member of the group should take one number. They should memorise this and keep it a secret from everyone else in the group.

1. Ask group members to stand in a circle; ask one volunteer to stand in the middle of the circle and call two numbers out, neither of which can be their own number.
2. The two people who have had their numbers chosen need to secretly find each other and swap places before the person in the middle can jump into their place. If they manage it then the person in the middle has to go again (or you can just ask for another volunteer anyway). The people who haven’t had their numbers chosen can pretend to be about to move or do other actions like distracting the person in the middle to make the person in the middle extra paranoid. After each go get everyone to select a new number, so people get a different number each time.

3. After everyone has had a go in the middle, discuss the following with the group. What was it like being in the middle?
What was it like being on the outside?
What was it like having your number chosen?
What sort of things were you looking out for when you were in the middle? What was it like constantly being watched?
4. You can talk about paranoia, and relate it to surveillance as everyone is being watched, and there are certain signals, people have to do things in secret to avoid being seen, people get paranoid in the middle.

What's the relationship between being watched and being paranoid? Can you think you're being watched when you aren't? What kind of feelings does that give you? When else do we feel like we are constantly being watched? When else do we feel paranoid?

Digital Privacy: Is Big Brother Watching You?

The following activities are aimed to widen students' awareness of the personal information they make available through social media and the use of various digital software. It provides a small insight into how it would feel to live under the control of Big Brother.

These exercises require access to IT facilities and iPhone devices.

Discover online profiling

Visit <https://applymagicsauce.com/demo.html>

Allow each student to log in.

This website contributes to research being carried out at the University of Cambridge into the observation of personality traits and how they correlate to the things people like on Facebook.

The website analyses the things you like on Facebook and then describes your personality type.

Again, this activity should make students aware of the information they make available about themselves on social media.

Location Services

This may be done in or out of the classroom depending on various school policies concerning mobile phones.

Ask the students to take out their iPhones or look at a fellow student's iPhone if they do not have one. The following steps will reveal an aspect of the iPhone that tracks the movements of its owner. This will only work for those who have downloaded the iOS7 software on their iPhone.

Click on Settings

Scroll down and click on Privacy

Click on Location Services (this will be turned on automatically unless the user has actively turned location services off)

Scroll down and click System Services

Scroll down and click Frequent Locations

Allow the students to explore their frequent locations and discover how it feels to be tracked.

Almost as though Big Brother is watching.

responding to 1984

Review Preparation

Summarise the overall experience of *1984* using descriptive language.

What was unique about *1984* compared to other shows?

What was the plot?

What themes were explored in *1984*?

What were the director's intentions? What evidence could you see in the show that reinforced these?

Describe the blocking/stage movement.

What was the playwright's intention?

Describe and evaluate the scene transitions.

What was the historical context and background of *1984*?

Evaluate the cast's performance overall then choose individuals and write about their character portrayals. Describe how they brought their characters to life, their relationships with the audience, energy levels, physical and vocal expression, focus and character interpretation... Did they do all of this successfully?

List any direct quotes from *1984* and who said them?

Describe and evaluate the sets, lighting, video, costumes, projections, music and any other technical elements used in *1984*.

What were some key moments in *1984* and how did the audience react?

What was the overall audience reaction to *1984*?

What might have they been thinking about or considering after leaving the theatre?

Come up with one statement to summarise *1984*.

Design Process

Brainstorm as many adjectives as you can to describe *1984*? Research all you can! Make notes.

What colors come to mind when reflecting on this production?

Make a list of all the themes and symbols.

Who is the audience for this show?

What message(s) did Headlong and State Theatre Company want their audience to receive?

Collect a number of images which incorporate/symbolize all of the above and stick them into a Visual Diary.

Sketch out or list your ideas.

Stick these in.

Work towards a final product and let all of the above inform your designs. Everything included should be there for a reason.

Publicity

Follow the design process above and create your own *1984* poster, billboard or program cover.

Front of House

Following the design process above, can you create your own front of house experience for this performance or another show?

Film

Using the design process listed, design (create a story board) and film a one minute trailer or advertisement for your own production of *1984*.

Set and Costumes

Following the process listed, design your own set and costumes for *1984*.

Writing

Write a 1-2 minute monologue for either Mrs Parsons or Mr Parsons. They could reflect on their experiences and voice their thoughts on the events in the story.

OR Either individually or in pairs, word process or on a separate piece of paper; write the next chapter of the *1984* story... It should be approximately one page in length.



Photographic Credit – Shane Reid

further questions

A quote that is said throughout the show is, "We are the undead." What do you think this means?

“The truth matters” – Goldstein’s Book... Do you agree with this statement? Discuss.

Why is feeling love a “victory” over Big Brother?

1984 concludes with Winston appearing to be happy and thankful. Is it a true happy ending? Discuss.

Can you recall the sound effects used throughout the production? How did these impact on your experience of being taken into the story?

What do you think O’Brien meant when he said, “They will not look up from their screens... to know what is really happening?” How is this relevant to today?

Research Trump’s claims on “Fake News”... What does he mean by this and are his claims founded?

How is Orwell’s story relevant to the world today?

How did this show challenge you? Did it make you think... especially about your core beliefs?

Find out how many close circuit TV’s are there in your city? Why are they there?

How did the technical design of the production enhance the story being told on stage?

Orwell’s *1984* was written around the same time that Absurdism came on the theatrical scene... Both were seemingly in response to the experiences of living through the World Wars... What other similarities can you find between Absurdist writing and Orwell’s stories?

Is Socialism prevalent in our society today? Why/Why not?

Julia and Winston are both members of the resistance. In what ways are their beliefs similar and how are they different? Discuss.

Discuss the role of Big Brother in *1984* in Oceania and in the production.

George Orwell wrote his story as a warning to humanity. What was he warning us about?

Are you Cyber Safe? In what ways can you ensure that you are protected when online or using a phone?

In productions, scene transitions often occur with a simple blackout or a curtain opening and closing. Can you recall how the directors and designers realized the transitions between particular states and scenes in this production of *1984*?

Orwell imagined many inventions and experiences that came to be in the future. What are some of these things and how have they impacted on society?

What are some of the themes, symbols and motifs in this production and how have they been used to aid in the storytelling?

Who is Winston Smith? What do audience members learn from his experiences?
How does Big Brother use technology to control its citizens? Do you think technology controls people today? Discuss.

How is love an act of rebellion in Oceania? Can you think of any other stories where love is the cause of war or creates peace?

If O'Brien wrote Goldstein's Book and is able to convince Winston that his thoughts are wrong, is O'Brien fully brainwashed himself or does he also find amusement in the process?

What is doublethink? How important is this in regards to Winston being brainwashed?

In what way does foreshadowing used in this production?

<http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/triumph/tr-bookburn.htm> In the dark of night on the 10th May, 1933 Nazi's came together in Berlin and burned books with "un-German" ideas. In what ways was Hitler like Big Brother?

That does Trump mean when he says the media delivers "Fake News"? Are his claims founded and do you think the media was prejudice against him during the election?

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/05/15/donald-trump-fake-news-238379>

useful links

Digital Citizenship

<http://www.cybersafekids.com.au/digital-citizens/>

1984 Quiz

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/quiz/2015/jun/08/george-orwell-nineteen-eighty-four-quiz>

To learn about to origins of the Oranges and Lemons Rhyme...

http://www.rhymes.org.uk/oranges_and_lemons.htm

Independent Cinemas in the USA screen 1984 as Trump Protest

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/1984-us-cinemas-screenings-donald-trump-fascism-dictatorship-a7591301.html>

Big Brother, hackers are watching you and your fridge

<http://www.1984play.com.au/big-brother-hackers-are-watching-you-and-your-fridge/>

Notes on Orwell's Novel

<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/1984/facts.html>

Cyber Safety

<http://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/cyber-safety/>

Who was George Orwell

<https://headlong.co.uk/ideas/who-was-george-orwell/>

Information on Headlong's 1984

<https://headlong.co.uk/productions/1984/explore/>

1984 Australian Tour Information

<http://www.1984play.com.au>

eSAFETY

<https://www.esafety.gov.au>

There are also a number of links listed in the Pre-Show Brief Document.

simple plot summary – 1984

Winston Smith

We meet Winston, a citizen of Oceania, who works at the Ministry of Truth

Diary

Winston copes with his misery by writing in a secret journal when the telescreens are not watching.

Julia

Winston becomes attracted to Julia at work. Winston fears she is a member of the Thought Police until she slips him a love note.

Love Nest

Winston and Julia fall in love and meet in secret where they believe they're unwatched.

O'Brien

Winston is drawn to the revolutionary Brotherhood. He then seeks out their leader. O'Brien, who plans to share the Brotherhood's manifesto.

Surveillance

O'Brien turns out to be a member of the Thought Police. Winston and Julia are arrested and find that their room was being watched.

Room 101

O'Brien tortures Winston in Room 101. Faced with his deepest fear, rats, Winston tells O'Brien to torture Julia instead.

Reconditioned

In the end Julia and Winston are transformed into true members of the Party. They now ignore each other as if nothing had happened.

Source: Schmoop University on line.

essays and further information

An Essay on *1984* Beginning at the End

How paying close attention to the appendix in Nineteen Eighty-Four led co-creators Duncan Macmillan and Robert Icke to rip up the theatrical rule book.

It's not enough that Winston Smith knows in his heart of hearts that the world he's living in is monstrous – and that he hates it. He needs to write those thoughts down, give vent to his thoughtcrimes. But who is he writing for? Almost from the moment he puts forbidden pen to precious paper, he senses that his gesture of individualistic defiance, his lonely groping after some kind of sanity, is futile:

In front of him there lay not death but annihilation. The diary would be reduced to ashes and himself to vapour. Only the Thought Police would read what he had written, before they wiped it out of existence and out of memory. How could you make appeal to the future when not a trace of you, not even an anonymous word scribbled on a piece of paper, could physically survive?

He doesn't know it but his words do survive, after a fashion. Orwell is explicit that they do. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* doesn't simply run in the "real-time" of Winston's experience – the birth of his rebellion culminating in his inevitable destruction – it's also a remembered time. As Duncan Macmillan and Robert Icke astutely observe, as soon as you grasp the importance of the appendix, you have to regard the novel in a different light. It's not some disposable organ, it's integral.

Though *The Principles of Newspeak* only runs to some 4,000 words, and has the sheen of something academic, arid and extraneous, it crucially reframes the action. In a sense it at once cancels out and future-proofs the “prophetic” aspect of the story by thrusting it into the past, making it a historical document.

Winston’s vantage point is 1984, or thereabouts, whereas the anonymous author of the postscript could be writing at any point up to or beyond 2050, the moment Oldspeak was to have been superseded by Newspeak. The appendix yields fascinations about a totalitarian state’s control of language – and by extension thought. It also affords final flourishes of grim humour (“Ultimately it was hoped to make articulate speech issue from the larynx without involving the higher brain centres at all. The aim was frankly admitted in the Newspeak word DUCKSPEAK, meaning ‘to quack like a duck’”). Above all, though, its primary achievement is to reduce the reader’s ability to be certain about the narrative.

Recalling his initial approach to the Orwell estate for the stage rights, Icke explains: “I remember saying quite forcefully at the start, ‘I think the appendix is the most important bit. I think it’s structurally the thing that defines the whole... I don’t know how you can adapt this novel if you don’t touch the appendix. I don’t know what it means.’” He continues: “It’s a book that’s about unreliability... and Orwell puts something at the end that a lot of people hilariously and ironically haven’t bothered to finish. One of the things the novel really thinks about is the status of the text, and what text means – and whether text can have any authority when it has been messed with. How you can trust words to deliver any information?”

Who is giving us Winston’s story, and why?

Icke further elaborates: “From the moment you read, ‘It was a bright cold day in April,’ you’re reading the book with somebody else, because that person has footnoted it and written you an appendix, so there’s another reader in your experience of the novel at all times.”

Does this sound like an over complication? Worrying where the book stands in relation to the appendix actually consolidates our appreciation of its sophistication. Icke and Macmillan’s approach – which brings the act of reading centre-stage, so that the story is being pored over, anticipated, responded to and enacted – pulls off a theatrical correlative to doublethink, a state of contrary interpretation. We are rendered as disorientated as the protagonist by the dream-like stage action. As Icke suggests: “This could be the future that Winston imagines when he starts to write the diary. It could be us thinking about Orwell. Or it could be the people who write the appendix... looking back at the primary text of Orwell’s novel or Winston’s diary.”

The final word goes to Macmillan: “I think the overriding thing was: how do we find a theatrical form for the prose form of what Orwell is doing? How do we achieve doublethink, how do we deliver the intellectual argument, and also can we take along a 15-year-old who has never read the book while satisfying the scholar who has read this book 100 times? And once you’ve seen it and go back to the book, is it all still there...?” He asserts with calm confidence: “I think we’ve ended up being incredibly faithful to the book.” Having seen their remarkable, risk-taking, mind-expanding version when it premiered in Nottingham last year, I’d double-vouch for that.

Dominic Cavendish

February 2014

Dominic Cavendish is Lead Theatre Critic for the *Daily Telegraph*, founding editor of theatrevoice.com and a founding member of the Orwell Society. In 2009, to mark the 60th anniversary of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s publication, he created *Orwell: A Celebration* at Trafalgar Studios.

The Principles of Newspeak

An excerpt from the appendix of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell

Newspeak was the official language of Oceania and had been devised to meet the ideological needs of Ingsoc, or English Socialism. In the year 1984 there was not as yet anyone who used Newspeak as his sole means of communication, either in speech or writing. The leading articles in *The Times* were written in it, but this was a tour de force which could only be carried out by a specialist. It was expected that Newspeak would have finally superseded Oldspeak (or Standard English, as we should call it) by about the year 2050. Meanwhile it gained ground steadily, all Party members tending to use Newspeak words and grammatical constructions more and more in their everyday speech. The version in use in 1984, and embodied in the Ninth and Tenth Editions of the Newspeak Dictionary, was a provisional one, and contained many superfluous words and archaic formations which were due to be suppressed later. It is with the final, perfected version, as embodied in the Eleventh Edition of the Dictionary, that we are concerned here.

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. [...] Newspeak was designed not to extend but to diminish the range of thought, and this purpose was indirectly assisted by cutting the choice of words down to a minimum.

Newspeak was founded on the English language as we now know it, though many Newspeak sentences, even when not containing newly-created words, would be barely intelligible to an Englishspeaker of our own day. [...]

The name of every 36characterize, or body of people, or doctrine, or country, or institution, or public building, was invariably cut down into the familiar shape; that is, a single easily pronounced word with the smallest number of syllables that would preserve the original derivation. In the Ministry of Truth, for example, the Records Department, in which Winston Smith worked, was called RECDEP, the Fiction Department was called FICDEP, the Teleprogrammes Department was called TELEDEP, and so on. [...]

From the foregoing account it will be seen that in Newspeak the expression of unorthodox opinions, above a very low level, was well-nigh impossible. [...] When Oldspeak had been once and for all superseded, the last link with the past would have been severed. History had already been rewritten, but fragments of the literature of the past survived here and there, imperfectly censored, and so long as one retained one's knowledge of Oldspeak it was possible to read them. In the future such fragments, even if they chanced to survive, would be unintelligible and untranslatable. [...] Take for example the well-known passage from the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of those ends, it is the right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government...

It would have been quite impossible to render this into Newspeak while keeping to the sense of the original. The nearest one could come to doing so would be to swallow the whole passage up in the single word crimethink. A full translation could only be an ideological translation, whereby Jefferson's words would be changed into a panegyric on absolute government.

A good deal of the literature of the past was, indeed, already being transformed in this way. Considerations of prestige made it desirable to preserve the memory of certain historical figures, while at the same time bringing their achievements into line with the philosophy of Ingsoc. Various writers, such as Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Byron, Dickens, and some others were therefore in process of translation: when the task had been completed, their original writings, with all else that survived of the literature of the past, would be destroyed. These translations were a slow and difficult business, and it was not expected that they would be finished before the first or second decade of the twenty-first century. [...] It was chiefly in order to allow time for the preliminary work of translation that the final adoption of Newspeak had been fixed for so late a date as 2050.

"The Principles of Newspeak."

Appendix: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

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Ideology

Ideology shapes the way that we think and behave as members of society. An ideology is a set of conscious and unconscious ideas and beliefs that a group of people hold about the way that the world works. These ideas shape their sense of what is right and wrong. They shape their sense of what is normal and abnormal character. They define their ambitions and their goals. At a deeper level, they shape their sense of reality.

We are not born with an innate sense of how the world works. Instead, we are taught how the world works as we grow up. The way that we are taught the world works is not neutral or natural but differs from culture to culture, from society to society.

We are taught to see the world in line with the prevailing ideology of the society of which we are part. We learn about the way that the world works in school, through representations of the world in art, in science and in literature. We learn about the world through the eyes of the religion that we practice, through the eyes of our parents and through the eyes of the media. We are told stories about the history of our society and other societies. All these perspectives on the world are coloured by the ideology that prevails in the society in which we live.

Ideology is ultimately about power and control. If you can control the way that people think the world works, then you can control the way that they behave and they think. Being in control of the way that people behave and think puts you in a position of great power.

In Stalinist Russia, children were taught a version of history that glorified the society in which they lived. In their history books, the story of the Russian revolution made Stalin a much more prominent and heroic figure in those events than he actually was. Events that reflected badly on Stalin and his regime were not included in the version of history in school textbooks. There was no mention of the great famine in the Ukraine in the 1930s, in which millions of people starved to death as a result of Stalin's government's economic and agricultural policies. People who criticized the regime were deleted from history. Trotsky, who had played a major role in the Russian revolution alongside Lenin, was removed from the history of those events. Most famously, a picture in which Trotsky stood by Lenin was altered so that Trotsky disappeared from the picture completely.

Artists in Stalinist Russia created art and literature that praised Stalin and his government. Spectacular parades were staged that demonstrated the strength and might of Stalin's communist Russia. The newspapers only ran stories that either congratulated the government on their successes or criticized those who criticized the regime. Censorship meant that any works of art or newspaper articles that contradicted the ideology of Stalin and his government were banned. People did not have any access to any alternative versions of how the world might work. They were only allowed to see the world the way that Stalin and his government wanted them to see it. Stalin's communist government tried to eradicate any institutions that challenged their version of how the world worked. They attempted to shut down the churches in Russia, because they offered the people a different way of thinking about the how world works. The church was a threat to Stalin and his government because it offered a competing ideology.

Ideology is easy to see from the outside. When we look at Stalinist Russia, we can see that Stalin created a version of how the world worked that supported his position of power as head of the Communist government. We would say that Stalin lied to the people of Russia, both about their history and about current events. In 1984, it is clear to us as readers that the government of Oceania is manipulating history in order to make its citizens view the world in a particular way.

It is, however, very difficult to identify an ideology when you are living under it. It is simply the way that you think the world works. In 1984, Julia finds it difficult to see how the government is manipulating her view of the world. Winston tells Julia about having to remove any scrap of evidence that Oceania was at war with Eastasia instead of Eurasia, after the government decides to switch the identity of the enemy that they are fighting against. Julia states that she thought that they had always been at war with Eurasia. She is so caught up in the ideology of her society that she doesn't question the new narrative about the war, even though she should remember from her own experience that things were once different.

In the West, we like to think that we don't live in an ideological society, that all our choices are our own. But if an effective ideology is something you can't see, how would you know if your thoughts and character were being shaped by an ideology rather than being wholly your own?

The best place to start is to ask yourself how you think the world works. What seems to you to be 'common sense' or 'natural' or 'something everyone knows'? Is it 'common sense' to always look out for number one? Are women 'naturally' more emotional than men? Is the fact that a happy life consists of earning lots of money 'something that everyone knows'? Would the answers to any of these questions be different, if you had grown up in a different culture or at a different point in history? By starting to question the things that you take for granted about the way the world works, you might be able to start to see the way that ideology colours your own views and beliefs.

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glossary of newspeak:

ANTI-SEX LEAGUE

Organisation advocating celibacy among Party members and the eradication of the orgasm. In Airstrip One, love and loyalty should exist only toward Big Brother and the Party.

AIRSTRIP ONE

A province of Oceania, known at one time as 'England' or 'Britain'.

BIG BROTHER

The dictatorial leader of the Party, and its cofounder along with Goldstein (see Goldstein, Emmanuel). Life in Oceania is characterized by perpetual surveillance and constant reminders that "Big Brother is watching you."

THE BROTHERHOOD

An underground network founded by Emmanuel Goldstein, an original member of the Inner Party.

Goldstein turned on Big Brother and was one of the few to escape during the revolution (see also Resistance, Emmanuel Goldstein.)

BLACKWHITE

The ability not only to believe that black is white, but to know that black is white and forget that one has ever believed the contrary.

DOUBLEPLUS

An example of how comparative and superlative meanings are communicated in Newspeak. 'Plus' acts as an intensifier, and 'double' even more so. In Newspeak, 'better' becomes 'plusgood' and even better is 'doubleplusgood.'

DOUBLETHINK

The ability to hold two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously and accept both of them.

FACECRIME

Any improper expression that carries the suggestion of abnormality or of something hidden. A nervous tic or unconscious look of anxiety could be a punishable offence.

GOLDSTEIN'S BOOK

Referred to simply as "The Book", Emmanuel Goldstein's record is a compendium of all the heresies, of which Goldstein was the author and which circulated clandestinely here and there.

GOODTHINKER

A person who adheres to the principles of Newspeak.

INNER PARTY

Oceania's political class, who enjoy a higher quality of life than general Party members. They are dedicated entirely to Big Brother and the principles of Party rule.

MINISTRY OF LOVE (ALSO MINILUV)

Oceania's interior ministry, enforcing loyalty and love of Big Brother through fear, oppression and thought modification. As its building has no windows, the interior lights are never turned off.

MINISTRY OF PEACE (ALSO MINIPAX)

The defence arm of Oceania's government, in charge of its military.

MINISTRY OF PLENTY

(ALSO MINIPLENTY)

The management of Oceania's economy lies with this arm of government, which oversees rationing and maintains a state of poverty, scarcity and financial shortage while convincing the population that they are living in perpetual prosperity.

MINISTRY OF TRUTH (ALSO MINITRUE)

The Party's communication apparatus, by which historical records are amended in keeping with its approved version of events.

NEWSPEAK

The official language of Oceania. Designed to make thoughtcrime impossible, its vocabulary gets smaller every year, asserting that thoughtcrime – and therefore any crime – can not be committed if the words to express it do not exist. Implementation of Newspeak is referred to as 'The Project'.

OCEANIA

One of three superstates over which Big Brother exercises totalitarian rule. Its neighbouring territories are Eurasia and Eastasia.

OLDSPEAK

The version of English preceding Newspeak. In Newspeak, words that represent politically incorrect ideas are eliminated.

OLDTHINK

Ideas and patterns of thought that are inconsistent with the Party's principles.

THE PARTY

The general population of Oceania, comprising middle class bureaucrats and other government employees. Comprising approximately 13% of population. There is a huge gap between the standard of living of Inner and Outer Party members. Outer Party members have very few possessions, and almost no access to basic consumer goods. All Outer Party members have a telescreen in every room of their apartment.

RESISTANCE

The revolutionary group said to have been led by Emmanuel Goldstein in an uprising against the Party. Every ill of society is blamed on this group, which may or may not exist.

ROOM 101

A room in the Ministry of Love where thought criminals are taken.

SEXCRIME

Having sex for enjoyment. In Oceania, the only approved purpose of sex is procreation for the Party.

TELESCREEN

Two-way screens installed in the homes of all Party members to broadcast information and ensure constant surveillance. There is no way to control what is broadcast, only its volumes, and the screen cannot be turned off.

THOUGHTCRIME

All crime begins as a thought, therefore all crime is thoughtcrime. A person who has committed thoughtcrime is a thought criminal, even before committing the act itself. Thoughtcrime is "the essential crime that contains all others in itself."

THOUGHT POLICE

Law enforcement department designed to detect mental political transgressions.

TWO MINUTES' HATE

A daily broadcast showing instances of thoughtcrime.

UNGOOD

The opposite of good.

UNPERSON (ALSO UNWRITE)

The process of altering and erasing records in order to eradicate someone from cultural memory. Once unpersoned, an individual's previous existence can be denied.

YOUTH LEAGUE

Group for children in which membership is mandatory. Members' primary task is to monitor the activities of their parents.

Please note: **The Pre-Show Briefing Document** includes: Introduction to the Show, A List of the Cast and Creative Team, Biography on Orwell, Preshow Activities and Links, Theatre Review Preparation and a Note for Students.

<http://statetheatrecompany.com.au/content/uploads/2017/05/PRESHOW-BRIEFING-Notes-1984.pdf>



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The truth matters.
Winston