

# GEORGE ORWELL

## 1984

## HIS LIFE:

- HIS TRUE NAME WAS ERIC BLAIR
- HE WAS BORN IN INDIA IN 1903
- HE LIVED HIS CHILDHOOD IN ENGLAND WITH HIS MOTHER
- HE ATTENDED "ETON" AFTER A BAD EXPERIENCE IN THE ENGLISH PREPARATORY SCHOOL (HE WOULD SAY HE HATED THE ENGLISH SCHOLARSHIP SYSTEM)
- AT THE COLLEGE HE DEVELOPED AN INDEPENDENT MINDED PERSONALITY, AN INDIFFERENCE TO ACCEPT VALUES AND PROFESSED ATHEISM AND SOCIALISM
- AFTER GRADUATING HE CAME BACK TO INDIA AND TOOK PART IN THE INDIAN IMPERIAL POLICE (THE COLONIAL EXPERIENCE INSPIRED THE NOVEL "BURNESE DAYS" 1934 AND THE ESSAYS "SHOOTING AN ELEPHANT" AND "A HANGING")
- BACK AGAIN IN LONDON HE STARTED A SOCIAL EXPERIMENT: HE STARTED LIVING AS AN HOMELESS AS BOTH TO EXPERIENCE POVERTY AND TO CHECK HOW THE INSTITUTIONS WORKED FOR POOR AND EMARGINATED PEOPLE.
- IN 1928 HE MOVED TO PARIS, THERE HE RAN OUT OF MONEY, SO HE WAS FORCED TO WORK AS A DISHWASHER.

BACK FROM PARIS, HIS LIFE CHANGED COMPLETELY

HE CHANGED HIS NAME IN

# **GEORGE ORWELL**

GEORGE: THE MOST COMMON  
ENGLISH NAME

ORWELL: THE NAME OF A RIVER HE  
WAS FOND OF

WHY DID ORWELL CHANGE HIS NAME?

FIRST OF ALL BECAUSE HE WAS AN ENGLISH WRITER HE HAD A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENGLISH CHARACTER, OF ITS TOLERANCE, ITS DISLIKE OF ABSTRACT THEORIES . ON THE OTHER HAND HE HAD THE ABILITY TO SEE ITS COUNTRY FROM THE OUTSIDE AND TO APPRAISE THE STRENGTH BUT ALSO THE WEAKNESSES .

SO

BEING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE AT THE SAME TIME

HE REJECTED HIS BACKGROUNDS AND ESTABLISH A NEW IDENTITY ALSO TO BETTER IDENTIFY HIMSELF WITH HIS INNER CONFLICT BETWEEN HIS BOURGEOIS BACKGROUND AND HIS IDENTIFICATION WITH THE WORKING CLASS

IN 1932 HE STARTED WORKING AS A TEACHER

IN 1934 HE WORKED IN A BOOKSHOP FOR A WHILE

IN 1936 HE MARRIED EILEEN O'SHAUGHNESSY

IN 1936 HE WENT TO CATALONIA TO REPORT OVER THE SPANISH CIVIL  
WAR AND THERE HE JOINED THE PAUM

THERE HE CONVERTED TO SOCIALISM

AT THE BREAK OF WWII HE MOVED TO LONDON AND JOINED THE BBC,  
FROM WHICH HE RESIGNED IN 1943 TO BECOME EDITOR OF THE  
"TRIBUNE"

N.B: APART FROM BEING A NOTICEABLE WRITER, ORWELL IS  
CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE GREATEST JOURNALIST AND EDITOR OF  
HIS TIME

GEORGE ORWELL, THE WRITER:

IN 1945 HE PUBLISHED “ANIMAL FARM”, THAT HE HAD STARTED SOME YEARS BEFORE; THE NOVEL IS A SHORT NARRATIVE DESCRIBING A GROUP OF OPPRESSIVE ANIMALS ON A FARM WHO, INSPIRED BY THE TEACHINGS OF AN OLD BOAR, OVERCAME THEIR MASTER AND SET UP A REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT.

THE PARALLELS BETWEEN THE PLOT OF THE NOVEL AND THE URSS HISTORY BETWEEN 1917 AND 1943 IS CLEAR: THE SATIRE IS NOT ONLY ON THE SOVIET TOTALITARISM BUT ON ANY KIND OF DICTATORSHIP.

***“ALL ANIMALS ARE  
EQUAL, BUT SOME  
ANIMALS ARE MORE  
EQUAL THAN OTHERS”***

***George Orwell  
Animal Farm 1945***

IN 1940 HE STARTED WRITING HIS LAST NOVEL  
PROBABLY THE MOST FAMOUS OF ITS PRODUCTION  
PROBABLY THE MOST INNOVATIVE WORK OF HIS LIFE  
PROBABLY A REVOLUTIONARY NOVEL

# 1984

WHY THIS TITLE?

1984

1948



ORWELL DECIDED TO INVERT THE YEAR OF COMPOSITIONS  
AS TO ATTACK PRESENT SOCIETY AS MUCH AS TO WARN  
ABOUT THE FUTURE



1984:  
THE PLOT

THE NOVEL DESCRIBES A FUTURE ENGLAND NO LONGER THE HEAD OF AN EMPIRE, BUT AN OUTPOST OF OCEANIA, A VAST TOTALITARIAN SYSTEM INCLUDING NORTH AMERICA AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND EXTENDING OVER A THIRD OF THE GLOBE. THE WORK IS DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS.

**PART ONE:** IT INTRODUCES THE MAIN CHARACTER, WINSTON SMITH, IN THE CONTEXT OF A REGIMENTED OPPRESSIVE WORLD.

**PART TWO:** IT DESCRIBES HIS LOVE FOR JULIA AND THE TEMPORARY HAPPINESS THEIR RELATIONSHIP BRINGS TO BOTH.

**PART THREE:** DEALS WITH WINSTON'S IMPRISONMENT AND TORTURE BY THE THOUGHT POLICE AND THE FINAL LOSS OF HIS MORAL INTEGRITY

SETTING IN PLACE:

SET IN A GROTESQUE, SQUALID AND MENACING LONDON, 1984 DESCRIBES A WORLD WHERE THERE IS NO PRIVACY; IN WHICH *THE PARTY* HAS ABSOLUTE CONTROL OF THE PRESS, OF THE COMMUNICATION AND OF PROPAGANDA.

LANGUAGE, HISTORY AND THOUGHT ARE CONTROLLED AND ANY REBELLION IS PUNISHED WITH PRISON, TORTURE AND LIQUIDATION.

THE INDIVIDUAL HAS NO PLACE, EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE IS SUBORDINATED TO THE STATE.

THE CONTROL OF PEOPLE IS MADE THROUGH: THE POSTER CLAIMING “BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU”, THE TELESCREEN IN EACH ROOM, THE PERPETUAL STATE OF WAR, THE “TWO MINUTES HATE” AND THE GRADUAL INTRODUCTION OF “NEWSPEAK” THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE WHOSE LEXIS IS SO LIMITED THAT PEOPLE WOULD FIND IMPOSSIBLE TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINION.

## THE MAIN CHARACTER: WINSTON SMITH

WINSTON SMITH IS THE LAST MAN TO BELIEVE IN HUMAN VALUES IN A TOTALITARIAN STATE. HE REPRESENTS THE BEAUTY AND THE TRUTH OF THE CORE VALUES STILL REMAINED. HIS NAME, SMITH, SYMBOLIZE THE COMMON ENGLISH MAN, SO HE IS “EVERYMAN” ACTUALLY. HE EVOKES THE CHURCHILL’S PATRIOTIC APPEAL DURING THE WWII FOR “BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS”.

- HE IS WEAK, MIDDLE AGED AND ALIENATED FROM THE WORLD HE LIVES IN. HE WORKS AT THE “MINISTRY OF TRUTH” WHERE HE ALTERS THE RECORDS OF THE PAST TO

# THE PLOT

THE BOOK IS SET IN 1984 IN OCEANIA, ONE OF THE THREE PERPETUALLY WARRING TOTALITARIAN STATE. (EURASIA AND AESTASIA ARE THE OTHER TWO)

OCEANIA IS GOVERNED BY THE PARTY THAT HAS BRAIN-WASHED THE POPULATION INTO OBEDIENCE TO THE LEADER “THE BIG BROTHER”.

THE PARTY HAS CREATED A PROPAGANDISTIC LANGUAGE, THE “NEWSPEAK” THAT INCLUDES ALSO THE “DOUBLETHINK”



THAT IS TO SAY BELIEVE IN TWO CONTRADICTORY THINGS SIMULTANEOUSLY

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

WINSTON SMITH, THE PROTAGONIST IS A MINOR PARTY FUNCTIONARY, HIS JOB CONSISTS IN REWRITING THE HISTORY FOR THE MINISTRY OF TRUTH. BUT HE LIVES IN CONFLICT WITH HIS DESIRE OF TRUTH.

SO HE SECRETLY REBELS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT TAKING ON AN AFFAIR (=RELAZIONE) WITH JULIA, A WOMAN BELONGING TO A POOREST SOCIAL CLASS. HE ALSO BECOMES INTERESTED IN THE REBEL MOVEMENT OF THE "BROTHERHOOD".



IN THE MEANTIME HE IS APPROACHED BY A MAN, O'BRIEN WHO ACTS AS A FRIEND, AS IF HE WERE A MEMBER OF THE REBELS, BUT THAT HE IS AN AGENT OF THE PARTY

WINSTON AND JULIA ARE SO ARRESTED AND SENT TO THE MINISTRY OF LOVE TO BE EDUCATED AGAIN



THIS PROCESS OF EDUCATION IS MADE UP OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL TORTURES

IN ROOM 101 THEY ARE BOTH TORTURED

THEIR DIGNITY AS HUMAN BEINGS IS COMPLETELY OVERCOME

THE AIM IS TO CANCEL BOTH THEIR FEELINGS AND THEIR WILL OF REBELLION



IN THE END, WINSTON, AS FOR HELPING JULIA, PRETENDS NOT TO BE INTERESTED ON THE REBELLION AND SO HE CAME BACK TO HIS LIFE