

1984 – George Orwell

In 1948 George Orwell started writing one of his most famous novels, *Nineteen Eighty-four*. The book was published in 1949 and it is considered a fundamental milestone for the dystopian genre.

The story is set in London, in Airstrip One (formerly known as Great Britain) that was part of Oceania, one of the three countries (or superstates) existing at the time: Eastasia, Eurasia and Oceania. The leading political system is called *Ingsoc* (English Socialism), under the control of the Inner Party. Individuals are constantly controlled and independent thinking (*Thoughtcrime* in *Newspeak* – the new language invented by the Party) is persecuted.

The *Big Brother* is the head of the Party, but he may not even exist, since nobody has ever seen him. The only image we have of him is the one on the threatening posters saying *Big Brother is watching you*.

The main character is Winston Smith whose job is to revise and rewrite past newspaper articles in order to always support the Party's ideas. He is a hard-working man but he secretly mistrusts the Party. The novel opens with the image of Winston writing his journal, on April 6th 1984, where he confesses his hatred for the Party, therefore committing a crime, if discovered by the *Thought Police*.

The female character is Julia, a woman who Winston loathes at the beginning, but who becomes the love of his life later in the novel.

After that Julia slips a note into Winston's hand, where she confesses her love for him, the two characters start meeting secretly, until the moment when they are caught by the *Thought Police* and taken to the Ministry of Love for interrogation (and torture). Here they both undergo a re-education which is supposed to install in their minds the precepts of the Party and make them loyal to it. Facing the grief induced in *room 101*, both Winston and Julia betray their partner. At the end of the novel they confess this betrayal to each other and Winston seems to finally accept the doctrines of the Party.