

G. ORWELL

1984

This excerpt belongs to Orwell's novel *1984*, published in 1949. Through a third-person narrator we obtain a partial vision of the action. In this first chapter, Orwell, through the eyes of Winston, introduces some of the main characters of the novel: THE BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU.

The main idea is a man going into a building, his home. He sees London like a dark city. Colours of the setting: grey, everything is dirty, a ruin atmosphere. In the atmosphere, we can see a hierarchical society: it is a question of money. Somebody higher who sees everything (Big Brother). In the social classes, workers are the majority. The inner party is the government and there is another party over workers and they are fewer than the inner.

The excerpt is descriptive and in the first paragraph we notice it is typically English: glass doors of Victory Mansions (3), which seems like a picture. A window effect, the reader is watching what is happening through the window.

The setting is outdoors. Descriptive as a detail: vile wind (3) swirl of gritty (4).

An important contrast: bright cold day in April (1). Bright and cold: both elements next to each other. Usually, when a day is bright, it is hot. These two adjectives are clearly opposed. The author here shows us his pessimism. He draws a realistic and naturalist scene/setting. It is like a camera that is moved at the same time as the protagonist, who also moves. The first paragraph is outdoors and then, within the house. The author introduces us in the house in third person. The past tenses, means that the facts have happened but have not finished.

External description but acclimates it in a way that seems to give certain life and movement: in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass... (2-3). The use of animated verbs with inanimate things gives us the sensation of movement. The wind has not life and it is used slipped(3).

The second paragraph reflects the ordinary life of the person: the hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats (5), as well as its pessimism, because it is a bad smell and the mats were torn, these are negative adjectives.

After the war setting: cold wind and the same publicity in everywhere: Big Brother's poster.

The Poster stuck on the wall. It is a description where we can notice that he expresses feelings. It is a poster of a dictatorship, because the main dictator's figures are: Stalin, Lord Kitchener and even Franco in Spain; all of them had the same characteristics than the man described in the poster: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features (7-8-9) The poster does not say in any moment who he is he, his name, but it makes clear that he is a dictator. Dystopian fiction looks at totalitarian dictatorship as its prototype, a society that puts its whole population continuously on trial, a society that finds its essence in concentration camps, that is, in disenfranchising and enslaving entire classes of its own citizens, a society that, by glorifying and justifying violence by law, preys upon itself. Dystopian society is what we would call today dysfunctional; it reveals the lack of the very qualities that traditionally justify. Size is important, it is power an enormous face, more than a metre wide (7). The author wants to tell us the importance of this person with the posters' size, or not this person more than what represents. The eyes follow you about whom you move(15): Resources (no cameras) are watching you. Everything is controlled by a great abstract being: the Big Brother. The author makes a reference to the ideas of socialism or the communist world

with the image of the man. He speaks about his illness varicose ulcer(13) and tells about the situation of the stairs... but always there is the poster there, there is a repetition like saying you should not forget it. Wherever you are, always is watching you: opposite the lift-shaft(14) the eyes follow you about when you move (15) obviously, it is an exaggeration to emphasize the control. **BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU**, the caption beneath it ran(17). The capital letters are calling our attention. It is another element to emphasize. Big Brother is similar to America's "Uncle Sam", except this individual is the leader of the nation. In Oceania, Big brother is worshipped almost as if he were a god.

And just like the gods of most religions, Big Brother is most likely fictional. Orwell never refers to Big Brother by his 'real' name.

The syntax is very simple. Short phrases to fit the issue.

In the third paragraph he lowers the volume to telescreen. It is not possible to be extinguished absolutely and it is perceivable what says.

It goes towards the window: the figure that it is described does not leave very clear whether it is he who is reflected in the window or another person.

Clear concept of Dystopia: when he describes the telescreen. Why? Because the absence or lack of freedom is obvious; since it is impossible to switch it off completely.

The telescreen is a technological world's element of science fiction invented by Orwell. The author is very meticulous because to watch an invented world must give an exact image to put us in position: the voice came from an ablong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall(19–20–21).

Description of a figure that the protagonist sees: another dystopic element because it is quite sad and pathetic: a smallish frail figure, the meagreness of his body(24–25), his skin roughened by coarse soap(27)

After-war atmosphere is seen in the figure as well, because he wears the uniform of the party (26). Detail what means how important is politics in this period.

In the fourth paragraph he affirms the possibility that the figure is himself reflected by the glass, because as he says in the excerpt: even through shut window-pane2 (29) the window is closed, and normally, when we see a glass we see ourselves reflected in it. He defines the world as cold. Coming back to the repetition of animated verbs with inanimate objects: the wind. Sensation of movement "little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn to paper into spirals" (30–31) metaphor: here, the author tries to explain us with this stylistic device only the wind must "right" to revolutionize itself against the present situation, but only in part. It does not speak of an enormous gale, but of little eddies "(30) Repetition of the resistance about time: "the sun was shining and the sky to hars blue, there seemed to be not colour in anything". Although it describes luminous and colourful -->things[Author:R.V.N.] notice in gray or "not colour in anything" (32). Returning to predominate posters and the impression and the effects :"commanding"(34). There is a constant pessimism of the author and relevance of the political issue. It exists a permanence of an external political oppression and commits. The landscape is clearly urban: "every commanding to corner" (34), "house front inmediately opposite" (34), "streetlevel"(36). A monochrome context only stands out: the poster. Before, it described the landscape outdoors and after, the protagonist inside the house continues describing what he is watching, describes the anxieties of going out/scaping that he has. Even though he is inside, he is watching through the window and continues speaking of external elements whereupon the city this papered of such posters and does not exist another type of publicity.

Another technological element: the helicopter. A continuous joining between technology and science fiction with thought police(41–42) as well.

Continuous feeling of vigilance (aside the poster) "Patrol police SNOOPING into people's Windows" (40–41) "thought police"(41–42)

In addition to that, the last one is another dytopic element of science fiction invented by Orwell and his world. There is freedom to think, psychological torture.

In the last paragraph Winston gave his back to the telecamera. The author with this gesture wants to communicate his disagreement to this (dystopian) society.

Es consciente de que existen controles como la policía del pensamiento, el telescreen o el helicóptero y aún así, les da la espalda: gesto de rebeldía.

Ese gesto en este contexto nos da ciertos indicios del protagonista, de cómo piensa: que cuestiona la sociedad, esta teniendo ideas propias y eso está prohibido. Dar la espalda es también gesto de estar escondiendo algo que se supone está mal, para que nadie lo vea.

De ahí deducimos que está en desacuerdo con este mundo distópico y lo muestra con este gesto desafiante. Desafiante porque sabe que no sirve: as he well knew, even a back can be revealing (56–57)

He is aware that controls like the Thought Police, the telescreen or the helicopter exist, and even so, he gives his back to them: rebellion. That gesture in this context provides certain indications about the protagonist, about how he thinks: he questions society, he is having his own ideas and that is not allowed. Kept his back turned (55) is also a gesture to be hiding something that is supposedly bad, so nobody sees it. By this gesture, we deduce he does disagree with this dystopian world and shows it with this challenging gesture. Challenging because he knows that it does not serve: "as there am well knew, even to back dog be revealing" (56–57)

Despite all this, they have all the power; there is no possible escape, neither hope nor freedom of ideas: they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to.(52–53).

For the first time, the author names the city in which we are, although, we had already discovered it before: London. But it is not London as it was in 1984, it is the capital of Oceania in an invented world: this was London, chief city of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the provinces of Oceania (59–60).

Shown at the window, seeing the world passing in front of his eyes, he asks questions to himself, he tries to remember (makes an allowed function!), he tries to remember his childhood based on rhetorical questions: were there always in all directions?(65) and the bombed sites like chicken houses?(68) Through his vision, through its window he is wondering if it is the same city, London of his childhood.

ellipsis: an element disappears, two points "there am could not to remember: nothing remained of his childhood "(69) NOTHING. You completely imagine the effect of the figure, it does not remember: NOTHING. It urges to put ourselves in the book as a film. Figurative language: when it speaks about the outside world is discovered the author's interiority, a way to see the author's life. It is arrived as a pessimistic, as if he was shown to the world. Futurist. Feeling the protagonist's Oppression. It criticizes London, more than a critic, it is a pessimistic vision of London. Rhetorical questions are critics. Inintelligible: futurism.

No entiendo la frase