

BIG BROTHER

Big Brother is an image present everywhere in the state of Oceania. A strong, apparently benevolent face looks at all citizens from posters and television screens. 'Big Brother is watching you' is the slogan that we find everywhere, reflecting a regime in which all the citizens can be spied upon and where even thoughts are not private. Survival in this world demands love for Big Brother and unthinking orthodoxy of thought and behaviour. Big Brother becomes a threatening concept – all-knowing and all-seeing, much more sinister than its modern-day equivalent in the reality shows which have reduced the figure to trivial voyeurism.

THE INSTRUMENTS OF POWER: NEWSPEAK AND 'DOUBLETHINK'

Newspeak is the name of the reformed version of the English language (*Oldspeak*) which is being introduced in the society of 1984. It involves the elimination of all irregular forms, a drastic reduction of vocabulary but, most importantly, its aim is to reduce the possibility of independent or unorthodox thought by removing words which could express concepts like 'democracy' or 'freedom'. By the year 2050 *Oldspeak* will have disappeared completely and the revolution will be complete. *Newspeak* is an example of the way language can be used as an instrument for power and coercion.

The other instrument of power and mass control used by the Party is 'doublethink', the ability of holding two contrasting ideas at the same time, even when they are contradictory. This capacity is what enables the Party to erase the past and to make people believe in its truths. In other words, 'doublethink' represents the cancellation of human conscience and rationality.

