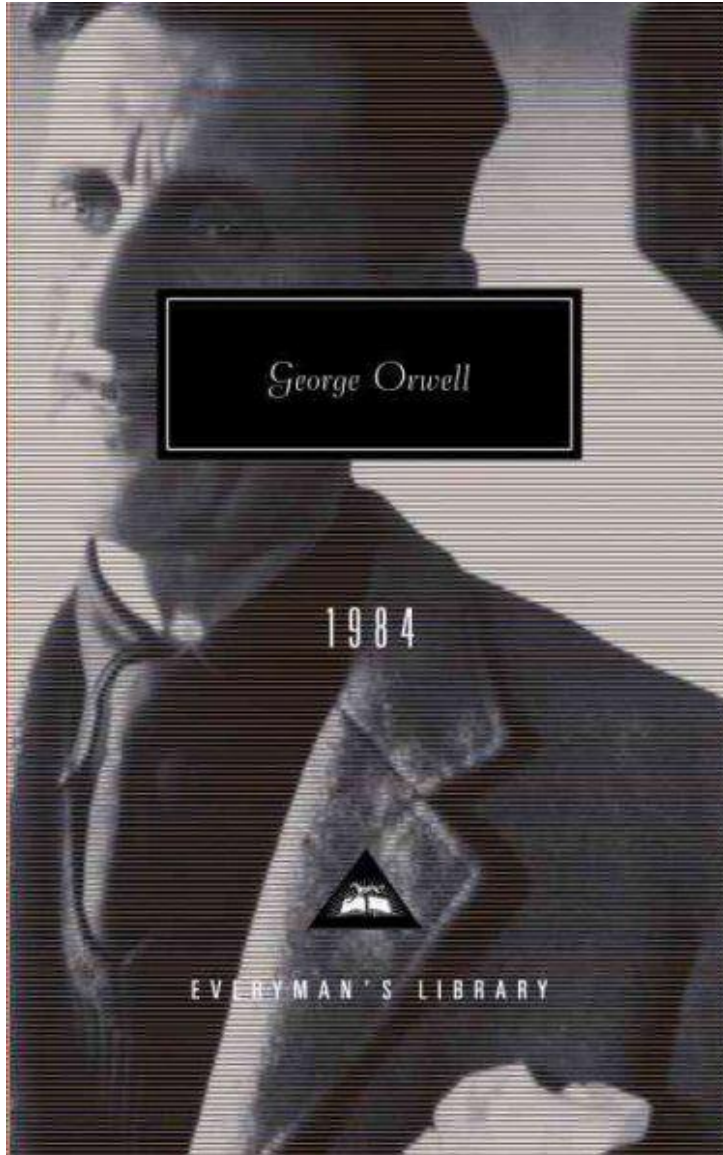


## "Ann Arbor District Library: Book Club to Go Discussion Guide"

### About the book...



In a grim city and a terrifying country, where Big Brother is always Watching You and the Thought Police can practically read your mind, Winston is a man in grave danger for the simple reason that his memory still functions. The year is 1984; the scene is London, largest population center of Airstrip One.

### About the Author... (*NoveList*)

George Orwell lived only forty-six years, but in that time, he produced two acknowledged classics of English literature, ironically, the last two works he wrote before his death. While the dark comedy of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four's* dystopic vision have a timeless quality, they also speak to the

urgent political and social issues of the day, with which Orwell was passionately engaged. His early comic novels, now little known, begin to outline his interest in the plight of individuals attempting to escape the social roles in which they are trapped, but until his last two novels, the political aspect of that problem is most fully addressed in his non-fiction books and essays.

Orwell was born Eric Arthur Blair in Motihari, India, on June 25, 1903. His father was a career bureaucrat in the Indian Civil Service, but his parents wanted Eric and his older sister Marjorie raised in the traditional English manner and educated in English public schools. His mother moved back to England with the children in 1904, while his father remained in India until his retirement in 1912. As a young child, Eric was a good enough student to win a scholarship to Eton, but at Eton he became an indifferent scholar, finishing near the bottom of his class. With no prospect of a university scholarship and no real inclination to continue his formal education, he joined the Indian Imperial Police in 1922 and was posted to Burma. There, he encountered the grinding poverty of Burmese peasants and came to see himself as the instrument of an oppressive and unjust regime. In 1927, he resigned his commission over his father's heated objections in order to pursue his dream of being a writer.

His writing career was, from the beginning, steeped in his growing sympathy with the poor and working classes. Partly out of necessity and partly in pursuit of his political beliefs, he lived for over a year among the working poor of Paris and London, an experience that produced his first book, a documentary of the life of the urban poor entitled *Down and Out in Paris and London*. With the publication of this work in 1933, with its critique of the English class system, Eric Arthur Blair became George Orwell. The new name marked a break with his past: Eric Blair, Eton graduate and colonial policeman, son of the British Imperial system, gave way to George Orwell, unflinching voice of British conscience and unrelenting advocate for the poor.

In the years following the publication of *Down and Out*, Orwell briefly settled into life as a village shopkeeper in Hertfordshire and published three novels and another documentary about the life of the poor, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1936). *Down and Out* had focused on the lives of the urban poor; *Wigan Pier* examines life in the mining communities in northern England. It also takes English socialism to task for its self-satisfied complacency and its middle-class roots. The Left Book Club, the English socialist organization that commissioned the book, was unhappily surprised, and prefaced the book with a long essay answering Orwell's argument. The same year *Wigan Pier* was published Orwell met and married Eileen O'Shaughnessy. At the end of 1936, he went to Spain as a journalist, intending to write about the Civil War

between the socialist Republic and General Franco's fascist military rebels. Caught up in the real sense of equality and shared hardship infusing Barcelona during the war, he enlisted in the socialist militia, returning to Britain in July 1937 after being shot in the neck. During his recovery, he contracted tuberculosis; his habit of neglecting his illness would eventually kill him.

When war broke out between Britain and Germany in 1939, Orwell wanted to join the fight again, but he was rejected due to his earlier injury and his tuberculosis. Instead, he worked for the BBC and served in the Home Guard, a civil defense organization. He left the BBC job in 1943 to begin writing the novel that would make his reputation, *Animal Farm*. In 1944, he and his wife adopted a son, Richard, but their happiness was short-lived; Eileen died during an operation in 1945.

The publication of *Animal Farm* in 1945 brought all of the burdens of sudden fame; Orwell moved to the island of Jura, off the coast of Scotland, to escape the unwanted attention. Jura's damp, dreary climate worsened his tuberculosis and sent him into depression. It was there that he wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; Orwell admitted that the unremittingly bleak atmosphere of that novel reflects Jura's dismal weather and the relentlessness of his suffering. The book was published in 1949, the same year that he married Sonia Brownell. Orwell did not enjoy the success of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or his new marriage for long; he died of tuberculosis on Jura in January 1950.

### **Awards Received**

George Orwell did not receive any awards for his writings. However, the George Orwell Book Award was created in 1975 by the NCTE Public Language Award Committee. The award is granted to writers whose work offer "Distinguished Contribution to Honesty and Clarity in Public Language." Award winners are listed at the organization's website at [http://www.digeratidesigns.com/charliesavage/files/Past\\_Recipients\\_Orwell\\_Award.pdf](http://www.digeratidesigns.com/charliesavage/files/Past_Recipients_Orwell_Award.pdf).

### **Literary Criticism**

George Orwell's dystopian (a fictional place where people lead dehumanized and fearful lives) vision of the year 1984, as depicted in what many consider to be his greatest novel, has entered the collective consciousness of the English-speaking world more completely than perhaps any other political

text, whether fiction or nonfiction. No matter how far our contemporary world may seem from 1984's Oceania, any suggestion of government surveillance of its citizens—from the threatened “clipper chip,” which would have allowed government officials to monitor all computer activity, to New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani's decision to place security cameras in Central Park—produces cries of “Big Brother is watching.” Big Brother, the all-seeing manifestation in 1984 of the Party's drive for power for its own sake, has come to stand as a warning of the insidious nature of government-centralized power, and the way that personal freedoms, once encroached upon, are easily destroyed altogether.

Critics generally agree that the hero of 1984, Winston Smith, may be recognized by his name as related to both the great British statesman and World War II leader Winston Churchill and a non-descript Everyman. However, the point is not that Winston is a great man, or even that he is one man among many; rather, O'Brien, while torturing Winston, says that if Winston is “a man,” as he claims to think of himself, then he is the last man. In fact this echo of the novel's original title, *The Last Man in Europe*, reveals Winston as symbolic of what critic Ian Watt has described as Orwell's conception of a dying humanism. Whether Winston Smith is truly a humanist, in the classical sense of the term, is of no matter; in comparison to the totalitarian regime which destroys him, Winston is, in fact, the last embodiment of the human. In converting Winston to the love of Big Brother, the last man in Europe is destroyed.

Winston maintains, throughout the novel, two avenues of hope for a life outside the confines of the Party and the watchful eyes of Big Brother, a life which may undermine or even overthrow the Party's hold on Oceania. One of these possibilities is conscious, spoken: the proles. Just as Marx foresaw, in the nineteenth century, that the Revolution would come from a spontaneous uprising of the proletariat as they shook off the chains of their oppressors, so Winston writes in his diary that if there is hope, it lies in this 85 percent of Oceania's population that exists outside the confines of the Party. And yet, the impossibility of a proletarian uprising presents itself to him at every turn. Echoing Marx, Winston writes: “Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious.” And, unfortunately, he is right; as O'Brien admonishes Winston in the Ministry of Love, “The proletarians will never revolt, not in a thousand years or a million. They cannot.” Thus this small bit of hope is crushed. The second possibility remains mostly unspoken and unconscious: desire. It is this possibility, the momentary destruction of the Party through intimate union with another person, which solidifies Winston's relationship with Julia.

Though they are drawn together at first by what seem to be basic animal urges, it is precisely the baseness and the animality of those urges that gives them their liberatory potential. As Winston relates earlier, in contemplating the sterility of his relationship with his wife: "The sexual act, successfully performed, was rebellion. Desire was thoughtcrime." Desire is thoughtcrime in Oceania because it elevates the human, the individual, above the powers of the state to control him. In fact, as Winston and Julia begin to make love for the first time, this piece of repressed knowledge becomes conscious; "the animal instinct," he thinks, "the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that could tear the Party to pieces."

The threat to the Party of the thoughtcrime that desire represents is sufficiently serious that the state must exert formidable control over any such human, instinctual reactions. In his essay "1984: Enigmas of Power," Irving Howe writes, "There can be no 'free space' in the lives of the Outer Party faithful, nothing that remains beyond the command of the state.

Sexual energy is to be transformed into political violence and personal hysteria." It is this recognition by the Party that there may be no element of "human nature" which can remain the province of the individual without endangering the Party's hold on its members that represents the great "advance" of Ingsoc (English Socialism, in Oldspeak) over previous totalitarian regimes. There was always room, notes Howe, in these previous regimes, for "'free space,' that margin of personal autonomy which even in the worst moments of Stalinism and Hitlerism some people wanted to protect."

The "advance" represented by Ingsoc, according to Emmanuel Goldstein's *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchal Collectivism*, the book written by a collective of Inner Party members including O'Brien, is the realization by the Party that all previous oppressive regimes were nonetheless "infected" with liberal ideas about the individual:

Part of the reason for this was that in the past no government had the power to keep its citizens under constant surveillance. The invention of print, however, made it easier to manipulate public opinion, and the film and the radio carried the process further. With the development of television, and the technical advance which made it possible to receive and transmit simultaneously on the same instrument, private life came to an end. Every citizen, or at least every citizen important enough to be worth watching, could be kept for twenty-four hours a day under the eyes of the police and in the sound of official propaganda, with all other channels of communication closed. The possibility of enforcing not only complete obedience to the will of

the State, but complete uniformity of opinion on all subjects, now existed for the first time.

With that development, the totalization of surveillance of Party members, not only does private life come to an end, but so does the possibility of sexual desire as truly liberating. Julia and Winston do manage to steal their moments together away from the Party. But the Party's enforcers, the Thought Police, are watching even when the lovers are convinced they are safe, and the revenge they exact for this transgression of Party control is enormous.

It is significant that the instrument of this totalized surveillance is the "telescreen," Orwell's projection of the future of television. As Orwell was writing *1984* in 1948, television was just emerging from the developmental hiatus forced upon the broadcasting industry by World War II. Many people were worried, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, about what this new medium would be, how it would function, how much control over its watchers it would create. Orwell's own concerns about the future development of television are reflected in *1984*'s telescreens, which on the one hand, broadcast an endless barrage of Party propaganda, and on the other hand, act as transmitters as well, enabling the Party to exercise the total surveillance it required.

Martin Esslin has claimed in his essay "Television and Telescreen," however, that Orwell's fears about television missed the mark on two counts. First, Orwell was evidently more concerned about the potential for televisions to become cameras, a technological development which has not taken place, overlooking the importance of "what they have actually become, the omnipresent, constant providers of highly colorful visual entertainment for the broad masses." Secondly, Orwell's notion of what these telescreens did transmit was the crudest possible sort of propaganda—martial music and endless lists of production figures—which overlooks the utility of entertainment as a form of mass manipulation. In Esslin's words:

There is, after all, not that much difference between a society that floods the masses with cheap, novelettish romance, raucous and sentimental pop music, and pornography to keep them amused and politically inert and one that does the same thing for commercial gain—but with the identical ultimate political result: apathy, ignorance of real issues, and acquiescence in whatever the politicians are doing. And does not commercial television do just that?

Furthermore, both Esslin and Irving Howe point out another weakness in Orwell's depiction of the telescreen when compared to the development that

television has actually taken in the latter half of the twentieth century: the proles—fully 85 percent of the population of Oceania—are not required to have telescreens. If the machine-made novels and songs are being put onto the market in order to keep the masses complacent, wouldn't the telescreen prove much more effective? Moreover, the proles, kept free of the telescreen's powers of surveillance, retain the ability to have a private life which Party members have lost. The Party clearly regards the proletariat as not being worth watching, as being unable to develop the "humanity" which must be guarded against in Party members. As it is stated in *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchal Collectivism*, "What opinions the masses hold, or do not hold, is looked on as a matter of indifference. They can be granted intellectual liberty because they have no intellect."

This division of society into Party members and proles in *1984* was clearly modeled on the division which was coming into focus in the Soviet Union in 1948, in which Party members were closely monitored while proles were less controlled. Both Esslin and Howe, however, point out that Orwell's vision of the powerlessness and inertia of the proles did not bear out, given the evidence of history. In fact, numerous uprisings against the Soviet machine, from the Hungarian Revolution to the student uprisings in France, from the Prague Spring to the rise of Solidarity in Poland, to the eventual fall of the Berlin Wall, demonstrate that the proletariat, and even party intellectuals, were not completely crushed by Party ideology, and that, in Esslin's words, "the totalitarian manipulation of popular feelings and ideas by the mass media is far less effective than Orwell had imagined."

Nonetheless, by the novel's end, Big Brother is ultimately victorious, having won over the last man in Europe. In today's world, Big Brother is still a force, especially to those who worry about the continued possibility of the rise of totalitarianism today. However, there is another face to Big Brother, which is precisely that "manipulation of popular feelings and ideas by the mass media" about which Orwell warned. If people find in government endless new reasons to be vigilant about the incursions into personal liberties which *1984* depicts, they would do well to remember, as Neil Postman claims in the introduction to *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, that there is a very different version of the dystopian universe presented in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, in which "no Big Brother is required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity and history. As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think." Big Brother may not be watching; he might be broadcasting.

*Source: Fitzpatrick, Kathleen. "An overview of 1984." Literature Resource Center. Detroit: Gale, 2011. Literature Resource Center. Available at:*

<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?&id=GALE%7CH1420005994&v=2.1&u=aa&it=r&p=LitRC&sw=w>

## Reviews

### *Kirkus:*

This projects life under perfected state controls. It presages with no uncertainty the horrors and sterility, the policing of every thought, action and word, the extinction of truth and history, the condensation of speech and writing, the utter subjection of every member of the Party. The story concerns itself with Winston, a worker in the Records Department, who is tormented by tenuous memories, who is unable to identify himself wholly with Big Brother and The Party. It follows his love for Julia, who also outwardly conforms, inwardly rebels, his hopefulness in joining the Brotherhood, a secret organization reported to be sabotaging The Party, his faith in O'Brien, as a fellow disbeliever, his trust in the proles (the cockney element not under the organization) as the basis for an overall uprising. But The Party is omniscient, and it is O'Brien who puts him through the torture to cleanse him of all traitorous opinions, a terrible, terrifying torture whose climax, keyed to Winston's most secret nightmare, forces him to betray even Julia. He emerges, broken, beaten, a driveling member of The Party. Composed, logically derived, this grim forecasting blueprints the means and methods of mass control, the techniques of maintaining power, the fundamentals of political duplicity, and offers as arousing a picture as the author's previous *Animal Farm*. Certain to create interest, comment, and consideration.

### *Amazon.com:*

"Outside, even through the shut window pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no color in anything except the posters that were plastered everywhere."

Airstrip One is part of the vast political entity Oceania, which is eternally at war with one of two other vast entities, Eurasia and Eastasia. At any moment, depending upon current alignments, all existing records show either that Oceania has always been at war with Eurasia and allied with Eastasia, or that it has always been at war with Eastasia and allied with Eurasia. Winston Smith knows this, because his work at the Ministry of Truth involves the constant "correction" of such records. "'Who controls the past,'

ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.'"

In a grim city and a terrifying country, where Big Brother is always Watching You and the Thought Police can practically read your mind, Winston is a man in grave danger for the simple reason that his memory still functions. He knows the Party's official image of the world is a fluid fiction. He knows the Party controls the people by feeding them lies and narrowing their imaginations through a process of bewilderment and brutalization that alienates each individual from his fellows and deprives him of every liberating human pursuit from reasoned inquiry to sexual passion. Drawn into a forbidden love affair, Winston finds the courage to join a secret revolutionary organization called The Brotherhood, dedicated to the destruction of the Party. Together with his beloved Julia, he hazards his life in a deadly match against the powers that be.

Newspeak, doublethink, thought crime--in 1984, George Orwell created a whole vocabulary of words concerning totalitarian control that have since passed into our common vocabulary. More importantly, he has portrayed a chillingly credible dystopia. In our deeply anxious world, the seeds of unthinking conformity are everywhere in evidence; and Big Brother is always looking for his chance.

## **Multimedia Resources**

### **Films Based On The Book**

*1984* (Released 1984)

**Synopsis:** "After The Atomic War the world is divided into three states. London is the capital of Oceania, ruled by a party who has total control over all its citizens. Winston Smith is one of the bureaucrats, rewriting history in one of the departments. One day he commits the crime of falling in love with Julia. They try to escape Big Brother's listening and viewing devices, but, of course, nobody can really escape..."

#### **Review:**

By Roger Ebert / Feb 1, 1985

George Orwell made no secret of the fact that his great novel *1984* was not really about the future but about the very time he wrote it in, the bleak years after World War II when England shivered in poverty and hunger. In a novel where passion is depicted as a crime, the greatest passion is expressed, not for sex, but for contraband strawberry jam, coffee and chocolate. What Orwell feared, when he wrote his novel in 1948, was that

Hitlerism, Stalinism, centralism and conformity would catch hold and turn the world into a totalitarian prison camp. It is hard, looking around (he globe, to say that he was altogether wrong.

Michael Radford's brilliant film of Orwell's vision does a good job of finding that line between the "future" world of 1984 and the grim postwar world in which Orwell wrote. The movie's 1984 is like a year arrived at through a time warp, an alternative reality that looks constructed out of old radio tubes and smashed office furniture. There is not a single prop in this movie that you couldn't buy in a junkyard, and yet the visual result is uncanny: Orwell's hero, Winston Smith, lives in a world of grim and crushing inhumanity, of bombed factories, bug-infested bedrooms and citizens desperate for the most simple pleasures.

The film opens with Smith rewriting history: His task is to change obsolete government documents so that they reflect current reality. He methodically scratches out old headlines, obliterates the photographs of newly made "unpersons," and attends mass rallies at which the worship of Big Brother alternates with numbing reports of the endless world war that is still going on somewhere, involving somebody.

Into Smith's world comes a girl, Julia, who slips him a note of stunning force. The note says, "I love you." Smith and Julia become revolutionaries by making love, walking in the countryside and eating strawberry jam. Then Smith is summoned to the office of O'Brien, a high official of the "inner party," who seems to be a revolutionary too, and who gives him the banned writings, of an enemy of the state.

This story is, of course, well known. *1984* must be one of the most widely read novels of our time. What is remarkable about the movie is how completely it satisfied my feelings about the book; the movie looks, feels, and almost tastes and smells like Orwell's bleak and angry vision. John Hurt with his scrawny body and lined and weary face, makes the perfect Winston Smith; and Richard Burton, looking so old and weary in this film that it is little wonder he died soon after finishing it, is the immensely cynical O'Brien, who feels close to people only while he is torturing them. Suzanna Hamilton is Julia, a fierce little war orphan whose rebellion is basically inspired by her hungers.

Radford's style in the movie is an interesting experiment. Like Chaplin in "Modern Times," he uses passages of dialogue that are not meant to be understood - nonsense words and phrases, garbled as they are transmitted over Big Brother's primitive TV, and yet listened to no more or less urgently than the messages that say something. The 1954-film version of Orwell's

novel turned it into a cautionary, simplistic science fiction tale. This version penetrates much more deeply into the novel's heart of darkness.

## **Films Inspired By The Book**

*Brazil* (Released 1985)

**Synopsis:** "Sam Lowry is a harried technocrat in a futuristic society that is needlessly convoluted and inefficient. He dreams of a life where he can fly away from technology and overpowering bureaucracy, and spend eternity with the woman of his dreams. While trying to rectify the wrongful arrest of one Harry Buttle, Lowry meets the woman he is always chasing in his dreams, Jill Layton. Meanwhile, the bureaucracy has fingered him responsible for a rash of terrorist bombings, and both Sam and Jill's lives are put in danger."

*Metropolis* (Released 2001)

**Synopsis:** Metropolis is a story of how important emotions are and how they separate humans from everything else. The movie follows a young boy and his uncle (a private investigator). The story is set in the far future where humans and robots live together, unfortunately not in harmony. Many robots are forced underground and are terminated for entering unauthorized areas. They are more or less servants to humankind. The plot starts to unfold when the boy meets a robot named Tima and they get in all kinds of trouble. Never a dull moment when you've got a robot by your side.

## **External Resources**

The NPR video linked to below examines the influence of Orwell's *1984* in today's culture. Christopher Hitchens, author of *Why Orwell Matters*, explains the novel's continued significance.

<http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=105126571&m=105126570>

## **Discussion questions**

From:

[http://classiclit.about.com/od/nineteeneightyfour/a/aa\\_1984question.htm](http://classiclit.about.com/od/nineteeneightyfour/a/aa_1984question.htm)

1. What is important about the title?
2. What are the conflicts in *1984*? What types of conflict (physical, moral, intellectual, or emotional) are in this novel?

3. How does George Orwell reveal character in *1984*?
4. What are some themes in the story? How do they relate to the plot and characters?
5. What are some symbols in *1984*? How do they relate to the plot and characters?
6. Is Winston consistent in his actions? Is he a fully developed character? How? Why?
7. Do you find the characters likable? Would you want to meet the characters?
8. Does the story end the way you expected? How? Why?
9. What is the central/primary purpose of the story? Is the purpose important or meaningful?
10. Why is *1984* controversial? Why has it been banned?
11. How does *1984* relate to current politics/society/etc.?

### **Read Alike** (*NoveList*)

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932).

**Synopsis:** Aldous Huxley's tour de force, *Brave New World* is a darkly satiric vision of a "utopian" future—where humans are genetically bred and pharmaceutically anesthetized to passively serve a ruling order. A powerful work of speculative fiction that has enthralled and terrified readers for generations, it remains remarkably relevant to this day as both a warning to be heeded as we head into tomorrow and as thought-provoking, satisfying entertainment.

Library Availability

- Call Number: Fiction Huxley, Aldous
- AADL carries Book Blub To Go kits for *Brave New World* for continuation of the discussion group.

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953).

Synopsis: Internationally acclaimed with more than 5 million copies in print, *Fahrenheit 451* is Ray Bradbury's classic novel of censorship and defiance, as resonant today as it was when it was first published nearly 50 years ago.

Guy Montag was a fireman whose job it was to start fires...

The system was simple. Everyone understood it. Books were for burning ... along with the houses in which they were hidden.

Guy Montag enjoyed his job. He had been a fireman for ten years, and he had never questioned the pleasure of the midnight runs nor the joy of watching pages consumed by flames... never questioned anything until he met a seventeen-year-old girl who told him of a past when people were not afraid.

Then he met a professor who told him of a future in which people could think... and Guy Montag suddenly realized what he had to do!

Library Availability

- Call Number: Fiction Bradbury, Ray
- AADL does not currently offer a Book Club To Go kit for this title at this time.

Colson Whitehead, *The Intuitionist* (1998).

**Synopsis:** The story begins with the catastrophic failure of an elevator which Watson had inspected just days before, leading to suspicion cast upon both herself and the Intuitionist school as a whole. To cope with the inspectorate, the corporate elevator establishment, and other looming elements, she must return to her intellectual roots, the texts (both known and lost) of the founder of the school, to try to reconstruct what is happening around her.

In the course of her search, she discovers the central idea of the founder of Intuitionism – that of the "black box", the perfect elevator, which will deliver the people to the city of the future.

Library Availability

- This title is not currently offered by the AADL, however the material could be provided through Interlibrary Loan.

Dai Sijie, *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* (2001).

**Synopsis:** *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* is an enchanting tale that captures the magic of reading and the wonder of romantic awakening. An immediate international bestseller, it tells the story of two hapless city boys exiled to a remote mountain village for re-education during China's infamous Cultural Revolution. There the two friends meet the daughter of the local tailor and discover a hidden stash of Western classics in Chinese

translation. As they flirt with the seamstress and secretly devour these banned works, the two friends find transit from their grim surroundings to worlds they never imagined.

#### Library Availability

- Call Number: Fiction Dai, Sijie
- AADL does not currently offer a Book Club To Go kit for this title at this time.

### Further Reading

*Down and Out in Paris and London* by George Orwell (1961)

**Synopsis:** This unusual fictional account, in good part autobiographical, narrates without self-pity and often with humor the adventures of a penniless British writer among the down-and-out of two great cities. In the tales of both cities we learn some sobering Orwellian truths about poverty and society.

**Library Availability:** Call Number Fiction Orwell, George

*London 1945: Life In the Debris of War* by Maureen Waller (2005)

**Synopsis:** Historian Waller begins with a physical description of her home town during the final year of World War II, but she is principally concerned with how people lived with the bombing, rationing, rubble, children away in evacuation, and soldiers still in danger. Annotation ©2004 Book News, Inc., Portland, OR (booknews.com)

**Library Availability:** Call Number 942.12 Wa

*Inside George Orwell* by Gordon Bowker (2003)

**Synopsis:** This new biography of the author of and seeks to explore Orwell's inner emotional life and passions and their relationship to his political activities, sympathies, and commitments. His sexual and romantic life, often full of deception, is accorded as much attention as the impact of European ideas and events on the work of the "great European writer." Annotation ©2004 Book News, Inc., Portland, OR (booknews.com)

**Library Availability:** Call Number 921 Orwell, George

### Suggested Activity

Eat "contraband" chocolate, jelly, and bread for the group's snacks and meet in front of a tv set at an obstructive volume.



Ann Arbor District Library