**Greg Burge Period 1A *1984* Notes Chapters 1-3 Date: 8/18/20**

**Summary:** These chapters introduce Winston Smith. He is a sickly, bland character so far. He has a disgusting ulcer and lives in a crappy walk-up apartment that is ironically called a “mansion.” He has to hide from a video surveillance apparatus called a telescreen in his apartment in order to write in his journal. He writes about a horrible night at the movies which were extremely violent and creepy. He eventually writes “Down with BIG BROTHER!” This is a crime that is punishable by death, even though there are no defined “crimes” or “laws.” He describes his job at “The Ministry of Truth” and the other ministries of government. He helps his neighbor Mrs. Parsons who also lives in there and her kids threaten to turn him into the government for being a spy. Winston dreams of his mother and his sister from a time long ago, perhaps before WWII? He reflects on the power of “The Party” and the government while doing forced exercises.

Vocabulary

1. **Contrived**- manipulated or planned. On page 1, the poster made it seem like the eyes followed you.
2. **Pig iron**- crude metal from a smelting furnace-On page 4 the telescreen announces the success of the government’s economy
3. **Vaguely**- uncertain, unclear- on page 29, Winston remembers his father less clearly than he remembers his mother-

**Passage Reflection: Page 1-2**

In his introduction to 1984, Orwell introduces the bleak and oppressive “future” world of the novel and its protagonist, Winston. The setting and mood of the novel’s first few paragraphs are bleak, drab, and shabby. Winston is not presented in any heroic light; he has an ulcer and is weak enough to be troubled by climbing the stairs. He has to climb the stairs because the lift (elevator) is broken. Orwell ironically calls the apartment or housing complex “Victory Mansions.” They are neither mansions nor typical house of a victorious people. They smell bad and are suffering from electricity shortages and poor maintenance. The fact that the clocks strike “thirteen” instead of One O’clock might be because Winston lives in a military state.

The poster with Big Brother is Watching You opens the novel with the themes of surveillance and oppressive government, and Winston’s apparent poverty shows that the citizens of this government are not doing very well. The fact that Winston can not turn off the television (Telescreen) which is delivering pro government propaganda shows how oppressive the government is.

I wonder why Orwell named this character the way he did. The novel was written in 1948, so anyone in England would have been familiar with Winston Churchill, one of the most influential and important figures in Europe. The combination of Winston as a first name and Smith as a last name is interestingly ironic in the same way that a crappy apartment project is named Victory Mansions. There seems to be a discrepancy in this novel between what things are named or called and what they are.