1984 Review Questions

Part 3

1. Why are the common criminals and political prisoners treated differently in the temporary lock-up?
   Political criminals are far more dangerous to society than the average murderer. This is another expression of The Party's control over their citizens.

2. How might the lack of windows in the Ministry of Love be symbolic?
   They are places of torture—it is a place with no darkness. On a symbolic level, the lack of windows is a representation of The Party's opposition to enlightenment. Windows as eyes to the soul.

3. Compare Ampleforth's and Parsons' reactions to their arrests.
   Ampleforth realizes that there is only one crime—thoughtcrime—and he knows that somehow he is guilty of it; he believes it is because he left the word god in a poem.
   Parsons has no clue. He is absolutely convinced of his own guilt. He trusts The Party will treat him fairly and hopes that they will punish him for an act that he can't even remember committing.

4. When does Winston first realize that O'Brien is directing his torture? Do you think that on some level he was always aware that O'Brien was an inner party member?
   When O'Brien allows a guard to physically punish Winston (smashing the elbow). Up until then, he thought O'Brien had been captured just like him.

5. How does Winston react to the first pain he suffers?
   He thought that he would double his own pain in order to save Julia, but his first real taste of pain disproves this thought.

6. Why does O'Brien want to convince Winston that two plus two equals five?
   O'Brien is not concerned with mathematics. Instead, he's concerned with the manipulation of ideas, of obedience and control. The Party is not interested in truth; it is interested only in controlling and maintaining its power. So if it says 2 + 2 = 5, you'd better believe it. Winston must abandon any belief in his individual perceptions.

7. What reason does O'Brien give for Winston’s bring brought to the Ministry of Love?
   Winston has a defective memory. He has not committed a crime but is mentally ill. He's there to be cured not punished.

8. Why doesn't The Party simply eliminate rebellious members?
   They don't want to make martyrs. Besides killing the person isn't the point, killing the ideas is key. The “re-education” of rebels is the ultimate expression of The Party’s control.

9. How do O'Brien and Winston each define existence?
   O'Brien says that existence is that which occurs in the mind.
   Winston understands reality in terms of objective, tangible criteria.

10. Summarize the three stages of treatment at the Ministry of Love.
    Learning—beatings, interrogation, confessions followed by more torture and even longer interrogations. Finally, electric shocks are used to disrupt the brains patterns.
    Understanding—victims are given a complete explanation of The Party’s goals. The purpose is to depict the futility of resisting The Party
    Acceptance—Prisoners are taken to room 101 and confronted with the thing they fear most. To escape, they must reject absolutely everything that they are and they hold dear. They must believe in it not just say it.

11. What does Winston find in Room 101?
    The rat cage
12. What does the scene of Winston in the Chestnut Tree Café reveal about him?
   Winston, just like Jones, Rutherford, and Aaronson, has submitted to The Party. He is doomed. He's engrossed in a chess game when the telescreen comes on and relates information about the war. He believes that information, quashing whatever hesitation was there, and accepts what The Party says without reservation.

13. What happens when Winston and Julia accidentally meet?
   Winston and Julia embrace but there is no feeling for them. Their once beautiful relationship is gone because they have betrayed one another. These betrayals make it impossible for them to ever be together again. The Party has control over them now.

14. How does Winston react to the news of victory in Africa?
   Winston is caught up in the hysteria of the crowd. Even though he should know that the war is unwinnable, he believes that Big Brother claimed victory. His reeducation is complete. He now loves Big Brother. His death may be either literal or metaphoric, it does not matter, as the Winston Smith of the beginning of the novel is dead.